

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

California State University,
San Bernardino
Journal of History

Volume Seventeen
2024

**Alpha Delta Nu Chapter, Phi Alpha Theta National History
Honor Society**

History in the Making is an annual publication of the California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) Alpha Delta Nu Chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society and is sponsored by the History Department and the Instructionally Related Programs at CSUSB. Issues are published at the end of the spring semester of each academic year.

Phi Alpha Theta's mission is to promote the study of history through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians. The organization seeks to bring students, teachers, and writers of history together for intellectual and social exchanges, which promote and assist historical research and publication by our members in a variety of ways.

Copyright © 2024 Alpha Delta Nu, California State University, San Bernardino.

Original cover art “Máscaras de colores” (2020) by Héctor Adolfo Quintanar Pérez, from Wikimedia Commons, Copyright © 2024

**California State University, San Bernardino
Land Acknowledgement**

We recognize that California State University, San Bernardino sits on the territory and ancestral land of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (Yuhaaviatam). We recognize that every member of the California State University, San Bernardino community has benefitted and continues to benefit from the use and occupation of this land since the institution's founding in 1965.

Consistent with our values of community and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make visible the university's relationship to Native peoples. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold California State University, San Bernardino more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	xi
Acknowledgments	xvii
Editorial Staff.....	xviii

Articles

Battle on the Home Front: The Black USO on Requa Street 1942-1944	
By Jean Martinez.....	1
A Question of Womanhood	
By Ayden Kelly	45
Woman and Death in Nineteenth Century America	
By Katheleen Boswell.....	75
Insinuating Fear and Hatred through Nazi Propaganda	
By Edgar Chavez Sosa.....	109
Cartoons to Outrage: The Muhammed's Face Cartoons and Danish-Iranian Relations	
By Edgar Noice.....	137

History in The Making

Biddy Mason Memorial Park	
By Ahlys Gandara.....	177
National History Day: An Essential Tool for the New Historian	
By Leslie G. Madrigal	189

Voices of New Historian

**Inaugural California Indian Studies and Scholars Association
Conference**

By Gabrielle Velázquez and Lina Tejeda 215

In Memoriam

Sinead O'Connor: Authentic Punk Meets Mainstream Pop

By Devin Gillen and Jessie Zepeda 239

Reviews

**Book Review: *From Back Alley to the Border: Criminal
Abortion in California, 1920-1969***

By Bshara Alsheikh..... 281

**Book Review: *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush
in Indigenous Northern California***

By Gabrielle Velázquez 290

**Book Review: *Judgment at Tokyo: World War II on Trial and
the Making of Modern Asia***

By Pamela Budinger..... 298

Television Review: *Marry My Husband*

By Isai J. Martinez..... 310

Film Review: *Napoleon*

By Martin Emmanuel Perez..... 332

Film Review: *The Zone of Interest*

By Rhian Reyes and Devin Gillen 351

Film Review: *Killers of the Flower Moon*

By Lina Tejeda..... 370

Museum Review: *Planes of Fame Air Museum*

By Henry Sigman 379

Exhibit Review: <i>Continuity: Cahuilla Basketweavers and Their Legacies</i>	
By Lina Tejeda.....	393
Exhibit Review: <i>Afróntalo: Confronting the Erasure of Afrodesendants in Mexico and California</i>	
By Morgan Hast, Fatima Vazquez and Evy Zermeno	399
Museum Review: Cape Town's Slave Lodge Recognition	
By Joanna Gonzalez	429

Travel

South Africa: Global Perspective of a Study Abroad Journey	
By Gustavo Alonso Chamu.....	455
Kanazawa: Off the Hidden Path and Into the Land of the Samurai, Ninja and Geisha	
By Martin Emmanuel Perez.....	503
Spicy, Sour, Bitter, Salty, Sweet: An Ancestral Trip to Vietnam	
By Christina Monson.....	523

History in the Making

Introduction

“Our role is to widen the field of discussion, not to set limits in accord with the prevailing authority.”¹

- Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1935-2003)

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of California State University, San Bernardino's (CSUSB) annual student-run history journal, *History in the Making*. As with previous editions, the journal is a collection of work from talented students and recent graduates from CSUSB and other collegiate institutions. Every year the editorial board strives to create an engaging volume of articles and reviews that capture the nature of historical inquiry in the past and present. This year's journal invites discussion on the intersectionality of race, gender and history and its portrayal throughout history, depiction and propagandist material and its effect domestically and internationally. The articles herein speak to past historical events while signifying their importance to present and future historical discourse. We hope that readers find this volume enlightening and engage in using the articles as discussion points and future topics of historical research.

This year's board is honored to present five full-length articles, three short articles, one in-memoriam piece, eleven reviews and three travel pieces. The seventeenth edition of the journal confronts prevailing themes of racial and social discrimination of Black servicemen during World War II, to predetermined notions of gender identity to women's roles in funerary practices, to the use of propagandistic material for indoctrination, and the depiction of religious iconography and the effect it has on international

¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25th Anniversary edition / with a new preface by the author (New York: Vintage Books, 2003) xxiii.

relationships. This year we are pleased to introduce a new section entitled Voices of New Historians, which seeks to highlight the perspectives of new historians as they begin their journeys into the world of academia and confront the prevailing perspectives and narratives in history.

The image on the cover of this year's journal was captured in 2020 during the Coyolillo Carnaval Afrodescendiente (Afrodesendant Carnival) before the global shutdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, and is entitled, "*Máscaras de colores*." The articles in this year's journal share a theme of confronting the absence of historical inquiry on topics, this image was chosen for its powerful showcasing of Afrolatin culture, which was highlighted this year at CSUSB.

Our first article is "Battle on the Home Front: The Black USO on Requa Street 1941-1945" by Jean Martinez. In the era of World War II, Martinez examines the perils that Black servicemen faced. She explores the racism and discrimination they faced during their military tenure fighting for democracy abroad and at home. She analyzes how the USO, specifically in Indio, California became a place for Black military personnel to receive support through the ongoing segregation and discrimination they faced and their resistance to oppressive policies as they fought for their agency.

The next article is "A Question of Womanhood" by Ayden Kelly, a historiographical essay that explores how current transmisogynistic attitudes can be traced to historical narratives. Kelly analyzes the weaponization of the term 'womanhood' and how it was used to exclude women of color, later expanding to LGBT+ and transgender communities. Kelly argues that the feminist revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth century paved the way for the reclamation and broadening of the term 'womanhood' to encompass present-day gender identities.

Following is our third article “Women and Death in Nineteenth-Century America” by Kathleen Boswell. Boswell examines the shift of funerary practices in the United States during the nineteenth-century by examining the role and influence women had in these practices. Exploring the cult of domesticity, Boswell analyzes how disease and mental illness shifted perceptions of death and death practices during the American Civil War.

Our fourth article is “Insinuating Fear and Hatred through Nazi Propaganda” by Edgar Chavez Sosa. During Adolf Hitler’s time in power, propagandistic material against German undesirables was used around the country. Chavez Sosa argues that by indoctrinating children at a young age with fear, hatred and paranoia through these materials, Hitler was able to build a dedicated and faithful army to achieve his imperialistic goals. Exploring how indoctrination of children and women occurred, Chavez Sosa analyzes the effects the material had on German citizens.

Our final full-length article is “Cartoons to Outrage: The Muhammed Cartoons and Iranian-Danish Relations” by Edgar Noice. In 2005, Danish Newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad inciting a global controversy. Noice analyzes the factors that led to the Danish newspaper’s publication and the global response. In particular, Noice dissects the Muslim communities and Iranian response to the publication of the cartoons and how it led to the deterioration of their international relationship.

Following our full-length articles is our History in the Making section which contains articles from two contributors. Ahlys Gandara, provides an overview and critique of the “Biddy Mason Memorial Park” in Los Angeles, California. Next, “National History Day: An Essential Tool for the New Historian,” by Leslie G. Madrigal, analyzes the impact that National History Day competitions have on the field of history and on budding historians as they learn to navigate the academic historical field.

Our newest section, Voices of New Historians, includes a co-authored article by Gabrielle Velázquez and Lina Tejeda. Velázquez and Tejeda provide their Indigenous/Native insights and perspectives on the “Inaugural California Indian Studies and Scholars Association Conference.” Lending their voices and platform to highlight the important topics discussed within the conference and the impact it will have on future scholarship in California Indigenous studies.

This year, the journal remembers the life of a prominent figure. Co-authors Devin Gillen and Jessie Zepeda reflect on the life and legacy of Irish musician and activist, Sinéad O’Connor in their in-memoriam entitled “Sinéad O’Connor: Authentic Punk meets Mainstream Pop.”

Our next section contains eleven insightful reviews on recent books, television shows, films, and museum exhibits. The literature reviews begin with Bshara Alsheikh’s book review of *From Back Alley to the Border: Criminal Abortion in California, 1920-1969*, which explores the history of illegal abortion clinics in California. Next, Gabrielle Velázquez reviews the book, *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California*, which focuses on the impact the Green Rush left behind for Native lands. Closing out of literature review is Pamela Budinger’s examination of *Judgment at Tokyo: World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia* by Gary J. Bass, which discusses the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and their prosecution of Japanese war criminals.

The television/film review starts with Isai J. Martinez reflecting on how Korean television series, such as *Marry My Husband*, have taken the world by storm, with their subtle societal meanings. The next three film reviews focus on historical figures and events. Lina Tejeda examines *Killers of the Flower Moon*, using her perspective and lived experiences as a native community member to critique and review the film. Co-authors Rhian Reyes and Devin Gillen

examine *The Zone of Interest* film and its portrayal of the Höss family during World War II, as they lived and worked beside and within a Nazi concentration camp. Martin Emmanuel Perez examines the life of Napoleon Bonaparte and focuses on the historical accuracy throughout his review and critique of Ridley Scott's *Napoleon*.

Starting the museum/exhibit reviews is Henry Sigman as he reviews the "Planes of Fame Air Museum" in Chino, California. Next, Lina Tejeda reviews "*Continuity: Cahuilla Basketweavers and their Legacies*" at the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College. Following are co-authors Morgan Hast, Fatima Vazquez and Evy Zermeno as they discuss the planning, fabrication, and debut of "*Afróntalo*." Concluding this section is a museum review of "Cape Town's Slave Lodge" in South Africa by Joanna Gonzalez.

The last section of *History in the Making* comprises our travel section from three contributors who highlight three countries. Starting the section is Gustavo Alonso Chamu's "South Africa: Global Perspectives of a Study Abroad Journey" which displays his travels abroad with CSUSB history students. Following, is "Kanazawa: Off the Hidden Path and into the Land of the Samurai, Ninja, and Geisha" by Martin Emmanuel Perez. Perez delves into Japanese culture and traditions in Kanazawa. Closing out this section and our journal is Christina Monson with her article "Sweet, Sour, Bitter, Salty, Sweet: An Ancestral Trip to Vietnam" Monson's insightful article highlights Vietnam and how returning to her ancestral lands aided in the reconnection of her Vietnamese identity.

**Evy Zermeno
Chief Editor**

History in the Making

Acknowledgments

The *History in the Making* journal is only possible with the hard work, dedication, and passion of CSUSB students, faculty, and staff. We would like to begin by thanking the talented authors and editors who contributed to this year's edition. From the "call for papers" to the meticulous editing process and the final copy-editing stage, the authors and editors worked diligently to produce the best long-form research pieces, short-form pieces, in memoriams, film/television reviews, museum reviews, book reviews and travel pieces possible. Due to their incredible commitment and passion for history, we created a timely and insightful edition of *History in the Making*.

The editorial board would like to extend their gratitude to Dr. Jeremy Murray for his diligence and constant availability. While the journal is a student-run publication, work of this caliber would not have been possible without his guidance, patience, and insight every step of the way. The editorial board would also like to thank Dr. Tiffany Jones for lending her expertise and knowledge of the editing and publishing process. Dr. Murray and Dr. Jones are integral to the publication of the journal. In addition, we must also acknowledge the contributions of CSUSB's History faculty who collaborated with the authors and editors to ensure the academic integrity of their work. The editorial board is grateful for their willingness and enthusiasm to work with the journal and its contributors.

Lastly, we would like to thank the History department administrative support coordinator, Pamela Crosson, for the vital support she provides year after year. We would also like to thank CSUSB's Michael Morse, Ernie Delgado, Kathy Luu, and Elizabeth Diaz in Printing Services and Keith Askew in Shipping and Receiving who offer their outstanding services and support to bring our journal to print every year.

History in the Making

Editorial Staff

Chief Editor

Evy M. Zermeno

Copy Editor

Gabrielle Velázquez

Section Editors

Gustavo Alonso Chamu
Pamela Budinger
Devin Gillen

Christina Monson
Lina Tejeda

Associate Editors

Ahlys Gandara
Brandon Kaufmann
Kelly Noyola

Margaret Phillips
Henry Sigman
Randi Stoner

Faculty Advisors

Dr. Jeremy Murray
Professor, Journal Advisor

Dr. Tiffany F. Jones
Professor, Journal Advisor



Articles

Battle on the Home Front: The Black USO on Requa Street 1942-1944

By Jean Martinez

Abstract: The intention of this paper is to explore what is currently known about the United Service Organizations (USOs) established for Black enlisted service members during the home front era of World War II (1941-1945). As USO locations provided recreational and support services for military personnel they simultaneously demonstrated steady resistance, resiliency, and agency facing segregation and discrimination. Through activism within the civic and community arenas, paired at times with civil disobedience and militancy, the USO support for Black enlisted members was secured. Though generally not well documented, this topic will concentrate on one USO for Black troops located in Indio, California on Requa Street in Southern California's Inland Empire. While few resources illuminating this subject are available, primary source newspaper articles were relied upon extensively for Indio's Requa Street USO as no formal historical submission to the national organization of the USO was found. These resources provide for analysis of designated USOs and Black troops roles, during an era of legislative protection for segregation. Broadening the legacy of Black troops' military service to America defending democracy overseas while simultaneously fighting for a domestic victory stateside of freedoms for all Americans.

This study will bridge what is currently understood about Black enlisted personnel during the home front era of World War II (1941-1945) and one United Service Organization's (USO) site that was established to give support to the troops. The history of instituting USO accommodations to provide recreational and support services may seem somewhat familiar, it is much less well-known for assistance to populations of Black military personnel in the region of Southern California. Though marginally documented, persistent resistance, resilience and at times militancy, reveals the fierce rejection of segregation and discrimination. The period illuminates a thriving history found among Black enlisted experiences. It is in the small town of Indio, part of the Inland Empire's Riverside County, California, that the memory of this period will more fully resonate as restored history in a deeply troubled United States. It was a nation fighting a fascist war where rights were denied among its own citizens that mocked democracy as an aberration. Similar contributions on this subject from other regions are scattered throughout the nation. They include journal articles, books, military documents, newspaper archives, photographs, and city council records. As no formal historical document to the national USO organization has been found to exist for the Indio, Requa Street USO, local newspaper archives give significant insight to the scope of inquiry. Expanded historical research of Black troops and the USO amid segregation and discrimination in the Inland Empire's domestic home front will reveal how the USO and visiting Black troops together forged resistance, resilience, and agency.

Discrimination against Black troops, already segregated in the Armed Forces, was evident in the many places they found themselves in. Although there existed the problematic issue of locating academic papers to address this topic in the Western United States, and more specifically, the Inland Empire, the use of comparative research from other regions of the country during the World War II era enhanced the known research of this topic. One objective was to include additional areas of the Western United States. Another aspect found was recognizing that the topic of

Black USOs was at times rarely addressed or excluded altogether from mention in some publications on the USO. This scarce documentation of Black troops by way of photographs, media, images, or written references creates concern for the consequences this may have had on our history. It further accentuates the critical need for more comprehensive restoration of this topic to fully understand America at home during World War II.

The persistence of ongoing discriminatory experiences existed on the bases where troops were frequently assigned. The mandatory segregation of the Armed Forces often resulted in upholding implicit barring of Black troops or subsequent impositions of marginalized access to the recreational facilities on bases. Problems that stemmed from segregation could be quite confrontational developing into punitive consequences borne by the servicemen involved. Often this did not result in constructive changes that provided the men with more equitable access to facilities.¹ Recognizing limited accessibility on bases weighed the efforts to help ground the off-base locations like those of the USOs to provide activities and supportive services for troops that frequently incurred racial prejudice on a regular basis both in the towns they visited and on their assigned bases.²

During World War II USOs were established for all military troops although mandatory segregation of Black troops existed. The communities that received the many military populations navigated their increased presence collaborating with residents, businesses, city officials and military representatives to determine how USOs would support all servicemen. Frequently Black troops encountered racially discriminatory practices ranging from limited to no business access to unwanted encounters with public and military law enforcement. Communities were pressed to

¹ Phillip McGuire, ed. *Taps for a Jim Crow Army: Letters from Black Soldiers in World War II* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 201-203.

² Patricia L. Dooley, "Jim Crow Stikes Again: The African American Press Campaign Against Segregation in Bowling During World War II," *The Journal of African American History* 97, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 270-90, <https://doi.org/10.5323/jafriamerhist.97.3.0270>.

develop strategies to provide services for Black troops despite some resident populations being less than welcoming. The practice of discriminatory behavior towards Black enlisted members during the war years occurred in many places throughout the United States with noted reprehensible events such as troops being placed on a chain gang in the Jim Crow South.³

This era's historical understanding has largely been viewed from the Northern, Eastern and Southern regions of the country while in the West, or more particularly, the Southwestern area of the Inland Empire, it is scantily documented. This location promises to add a critical dimension to the scholarship of Black servicemen and their relationship to their USO experiences as they served during World War II.

The United Service Organization (USO) Supporting the World War II Home Front

Months prior to the advent of World War II, the USO's mission was to provide recreational and support services to all enlisted military personnel in the Armed Forces.

To the 14,000,000 men and women who have served or are serving in the armed services of the United States, USO meant a "billion touches of home" - an infinite variety of personal services ranging from the routine provision of writing paper to the convalescent care provided by USO hostesses specially trained to help wounded veterans readjust to civilian life.⁴

³ Harvard Sitkoff, "Racial Militancy and Interracial Violence in the Second World War," *The Journal of American History* 58, no. 3 (December 1971): 661-81. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1893729>.

⁴ United Service Organization (USO), "Five Years of Service: Report to the President" (United Service Organization, Inc, February 4, 1946), https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1176&context=ww_re_g_his.

This endeavor was hampered on two fronts, “the democratic rhetoric of the U.S. government during the war years conflicted with the prejudice and discrimination that was commonplace in American society and institutionalized in the military itself.”⁵ Ultimately policies and practices created ambiguities establishing and sustaining a USO setting for Black servicemen. The long-held convictions of many in the national organization maintained that USOs in some communities should be indisputably segregated. It was resolved and became official: “The USO’s policy was to offer assistance and include Black servicemen in all programs but not to break the barriers of racial segregation and limit discrimination.”⁶

The creation of USOs for all military troops nationally and overseas was herculean, given the many troops and multiple locations they were stationed in. “At its height in 1944, the USO operated 3,035 clubs and canteens that assisted 1 million people each day.”⁷ The communities who received the armed forces populations were compelled to navigate these increases through collaboration with city officials, businesses, residents, and military representatives.

A Black Historian’s Recruitment Experience and Near Enlistment

Author Matthew F. Delmont’s work, *Half American, The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting World War II at Home and Abroad*, asserts that fighting fascism overseas collided with

⁵ Meghan K. Winchell, *Good Girls, Good Food, Good Fun: The Story of USO Hostesses During World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 8.

⁶ *USO General Operating Practice: A Manual of General Policies, Principal Organizing Relationships, and the Main Lines of Procedure in USO Operations, Continental United States* (New York: USO. Inc., 1944), SA Papers.

⁷ United Service Organization (USO), “Five Years of Service: Report to the President,” 5.

Battle on the Home Front

enduring discrimination in the United States. This double standard did not allow one to forget obvious prejudices. By championing the Double Victory (Double V) campaign, Black servicemen would “fight for the double victory of freedom at home and abroad.”⁸



*Figure 1: Handkerchief showing the Double V campaign design.*⁹

Yet Delmont suggests there is a running counterpart of persistent historical, social amnesia to “reckon honestly with the history of World War II and the historical relationship between Nazism and white supremacy in this country.”¹⁰ He notes that while “Black Americans were fighting against white supremacy, many Americans were fighting to uphold and strengthen the racial caste system where they held the dominant position.”¹¹

⁸ Matthew F. Delmont, *Half American: The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting World War II at Home and Abroad* (New York: Viking, 2022), 102.

⁹ *Handkerchief with World War II Double V campaign design, 1942–1945*, Synthetic dye on linen, 1942–1945, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington D.C., <http://n2t.net/ark:/65665/fd508a4b9cb-c357-45ec-8343-10696215e2a8>.

¹⁰ Delmont, *Half American*, xvii.

¹¹ Delmont, *Half American*, 104.

This understanding paralleled the personal experience of noted historian John Hope Franklin (1915-2009). Franklin explained that having earlier acquired his PhD from Harvard, he considered using his academic background to respond to the unrelenting call to assist the war effort. He remarked, “Several men who had not been able to obtain their advanced degrees had signed on as historians in the War Department, I made an application there.”¹² His ambition to join staff as a historian was refused: “I was literally rebuffed without the department giving me any serious consideration.”¹³ He persisted and next sought to respond to outreach for office work duties in the Navy, recalling that “the recruiter told me I had all the qualifications except color.”¹⁴ From this experience, he concluded it had “raised in my mind the most profound questions about the sincerity of my country in fighting bigotry and tyranny abroad. And the answers to my questions shook my faith in the integrity of our country and its leaders.”¹⁵ Delmont infers this potent fissure influenced Black Americans during that era, whether they were civilians *or* enlisted. But at war or not, America had informed Black citizens through their lived experiences that discrimination was prevalent, and here they recognized the unyielding truth they were not treated equally.

Delmont insists the certain inclusion of Black enlisted men’s World War II service be recognized as vital. He emphatically defends that we will know a more tenable history of the Second World War with it—and however somber—knowing it face-to-face is critical and therefore must not be excluded. Staff Sergeant David Carson Jr., who served in the European Theater in Italy with the 92nd Infantry Division chastised, “There are thousands of Black ex-GIs who will not talk about World War II because for the Black man it was humiliating, degrading, cruel--

¹² John Hope Franklin, *Race and History: Selected Essays 1938-1988* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 289.

¹³ Franklin, *Race and History*, 289.

¹⁴ Franklin, *Race and History*, 289.

¹⁵ Delmont, *Half American*, xvi-xvii.

and not by accident.”¹⁶ Similarly, General Benjamin O. Davis Jr (1912-2002), the first Black general in the Air Force, observed, “military training does not develop a cheerful acceptance of Jim-crow laws and customs.”¹⁷

However, there is one aspect of Delmont’s work which can be considered incomplete. It is found in Delmont’s delivery of Franklin’s reflection regarding his own experience being insulted during his efforts to join the military. While Delmont’s use of quotes accurately reflects Franklin’s thoughts, there was a more distinguishing outcome of how Franklin’s interactions with the military concluded. In John Hope Franklin’s book, *Race and History: Selected Essays, 1938-1988* Franklin renders a pivotal encounter:

which he responds to recruitment orders from the draft board instructing him to have blood work done. He travels to the staff physician’s location and is told he must sit outside the office on a bench and wait in the hallway. Indignant, Franklin refuses demanding to be treated fairly and insists on meeting with the doctor. Only then does the doctor appear.¹⁸

This proves to be a profoundly altering juncture for Franklin. He reveals:

By this time, I had concluded the United States did not need me or deserve me. I spent the remainder of the war, successfully outwitting my draft board, including taking a position at North Carolina’s College for Negroes whose president was on the draft-appeal board. Each time I think of these incidents, even now, I feel nothing but shame for my country—not merely for what it did to me, but for what

¹⁶ Delmont, *Half American*, xv.

¹⁷ Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State during World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 134.

¹⁸ Franklin, *Race and History*, 28.

it did to the million black men and women who served in the armed forces under conditions of segregation and discrimination.¹⁹

It was not enough for Delmont to tell of Franklin's unmoored faith in America. Learning of John Hope Franklin's success circumventing the United States' disloyalty to Black men and women in America resulted in sharing his own significant acts of defiance and resistance.

Segregation and Discrimination Practices within the Armed Forces

In a chapter on morale, Ulysses Lee's (1913-1969) book *Employment of Negro Troops: The United States Army in World War II*, introduces the preparations made by the Armed Forces for the anticipated addition of Black troops. "Increasingly the War Department realized that success in training and employing Negro troops depended as much upon measures to improve morale as upon attempts to improve leadership and methods of training *per se*."²⁰

Through the directive of the General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces during World War II, General George C. Marshall (1880-1959), a survey entitled, *What the Soldier Thinks: Digest, with Charts, of a Year's Research Studies Indicating the Attitudes, Prejudices, and the Desires of American Troops December 42-September 45*, commenced. The initial test survey began immediately with President Roosevelt's (1882-1945) declaration of war and was published within the year. Accessible only to commanders, it remained classified as confidential during its use with annual revisions until the war ended.

A sample of the questions on page 38 (figure 2) reflected the solicited feedback from three White troops of the Ground

¹⁹ Franklin, *Race and History*, 289-290.

²⁰ Ulysses Lee, *Employment of Black Troops: United States Army in World War II* (Washington: St. John's Press, 2016), 300.

Battle on the Home Front

Forces divisions. The responses were collected from the north and south regions of the United States and seemed to have had significant influence in informing commanders' attitudes, and in this instance, on "The Negro Problem."²¹ Outcomes indicated segregation would be the generally accepted option by most servicemen. What remains in this first attempt is the omission of a cross-section of Black enlisted. Certainly, the posit of "The Negro Problem," would appear characteristic of bigotry within the survey language at the outset.²²

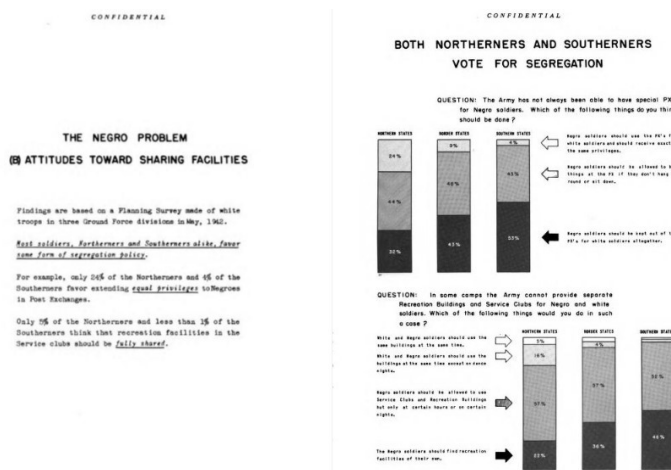


Figure 2: The Negro Problem Attitudes Toward Sharing Facilities.²³

²¹ Information and Education Division, War Department, "What the Soldier Thinks: Quarterly Report, with Charts, of Research Studies Indicating the Attitudes, Prejudices and Desires of American Troops" (Washington D.C.: Army Service Forces, War Department, December 1942-September 1945), <https://archive.org/details/WhatTheSoliderThinksNo021943/page/n1/mode/2up>.

²² Information and Education Division, War Department, "What the Soldier Thinks."

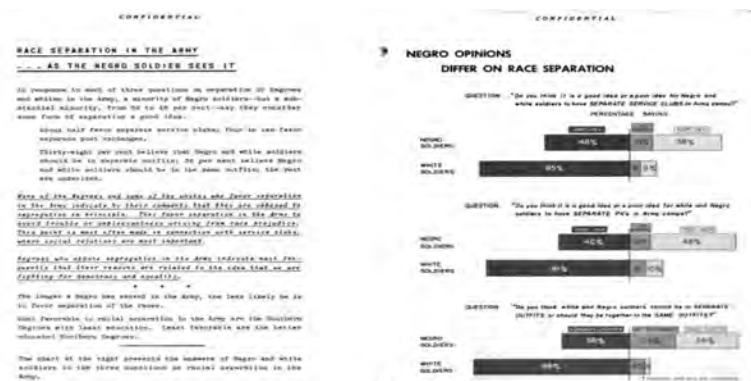
²³ Information and Education Division, War Department, "What the Soldier Thinks."

However, by the second publication in 1943, responses from both Black and White enlisted were collected. The following charts from page 60 are designated “Race Separation in the Army as the Negro Sees It,” of which the results from primarily Black enlisted data concluded:

Many of the Negroes and some of the whites who favor separation in the Army indicate that they are opposed to segregation in principle. They favor separation to avoid trouble or unpleasantness arising from race prejudice.

Negroes who oppose segregation in the Army indicate most frequently that their reasons are related to the idea that we are fighting for democracy and equality.²⁴

Over 80% of White enlisted responders continued to express that separation should continue in all group settings i.e. Service Clubs, PX's in Army camps and in Outfits.



*Figure 3: Race Separation in the Army as the Negro Soldier Sees It.*²⁵

²⁴ Information and Education Division, War Department, "What the Soldier Thinks."

²⁵ Information and Education Division, War Department, "What the Soldier Thinks."

The initial 1942 results produced a gauge to assist commanders in planning for increased numbers of Black troops.

At a December meeting, in 1942, of the commanding generals of service commands, with whom control of most posts rested, Brig. Gen. Frederick H. Osborn, director of the Special Service Division, observed: I think the results of this study are sufficient evidence of the wisdom, of the policy of the Army, in segregating Negro and White troops. It is perfectly evident- this and the following page- make it perfectly evident- that if you dropped the general policy of segregation and forced White and Negro troops together in the same units, you would build up friction which you couldn't handle. That would seem to be the meaning of these reports.²⁶

Comparatively, General Osborn (1889-1981) did not acknowledge that Black enlisted responses were not a part of the original report. This implied exclusive White based fact-finding responses. Seemingly, he used his leadership position to proffer a circuitous, meandering conclusion to the commanding generals of service commands. His communication to sustain segregation in the Army rested on, "you would build up friction which you couldn't handle."²⁷ One might consider too that the respondents' answers coerced General Osborn to openly admit to his subordinates that the military could not effectively quell unrest if segregation were eliminated. Despite Osborn's prediction of an unsuccessful military intervention, Osborn appeared convinced the situation could not be mitigated. Another view could be that he sought to construct a safety net to avoid any conflict with White military personnel. By saying the study was evidential of the wisdom of the policy of the Army seems more of a purposeful distraction from the elements of violence one could reasonably expect to erupt if integration were pursued. Additionally, closer examination of the

²⁶ Lee, *Employment of Black Troops*, 304.

²⁷ Lee, *Employment of Black Troops*, 304.

data exposes a critical reason for not wanting to handle friction. Likely it would mean force would have to be executed towards White military personnel. Unfortunately, Osborn's initial messaging on the study may have strategically served to reinforce the preservation of the White status quo within both rank and file.

The second chart from Black and White soldiers delivered a succinct message as to why most Black troops would opt to maintain segregation. It is also important to be aware of what may be "double speak" or the nuanced changes in language the survey takes on i.e. from the term segregation to a more frequent appearance of the word separation in its place. Perhaps language use changes would lend itself to attempt to lessen the brunt when discussing related violence. Nevertheless, safety remained a compelling influence for many. Historian Gilbert Ware notes:

It was observed, 'if not controlled by the War Department this 'situation of intrinsic difficulty' would worsen 'beyond separate units and evils thereto.' But the department vested responsibility and discretion in the local commander and was as likely to remove him because he insisted on fair treatment for his black troops as it was because disorders resulted from mistreatment he approved.²⁸

The attempt for the War Department to exercise control suggested that integration would worsen the situation. The War Department chose to lean on the decisions of commanders to guide the segregation practices of the military forces and thereby sidestepped ultimate responsibility. The War Department delegation was to rely on commanders who, by many accounts, were inept and expressly prejudiced against the Black servicemen they supervised. This placed many men at risk for disregard of their welfare under their commands.

Uncertainties continuously surfaced. This was due largely to fluctuating guidelines and procedures at posts, such as units

²⁸ Gilbert Ware, *Grace Under Pressure: William Hastie* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 99.

being separated by race, which particularly affected Black soldiers. Lower morale was also tied to changes in the comings and goings of unit and post commanders, as each had their own preferred procedures.²⁹ A wide range concerns began and inevitably included race and, in all practicality, the precautions they might need to exercise. Each camp site would be different, and the wondering created unease:

Would he be served if he tried to make a purchase at the main post exchange, or was there a special branch exchange for Negro units? Which theater, which bus stop, which barber shop could he use? Where could he place a long distance call? Which prophylactic station alley? Would the station cleaning and pressing concessionaire accept his soiled clothing? How would he be received in the nearby camp town?³⁰

But resistance exercised by Black enlisted, and civilians pushed for palpable changes in the lives of both service men and citizens. The persistent coalescence of activism would unravel erroneous perceptions, such as what was voiced during the War Council meeting May 1942:

Judge Patterson's remark in the War Council that in his opinion the illiterate Negro would probably make a better soldier than the educated Negro was a direct reflection, of the feeling gaining ground as the Negro soldiers increased, that better educated Negroes were less likely to adjust well to Army life and that they caused more trouble than their numbers in the nation's manpower warranted.³¹

The full tide of responses i.e. the double V campaign, advocacy of the Black Press and the legal redress of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

²⁹ Lee, *Employment of Black Troops*, 300.

³⁰ Lee, *Employment of Black Troops*, 300.

³¹ Lee, *Employment of Black Troops*, 306.

exemplified a refusal of the machinations of White domination within organized military life, despite unrelenting attempts to coerce a second-class role on Black citizens.

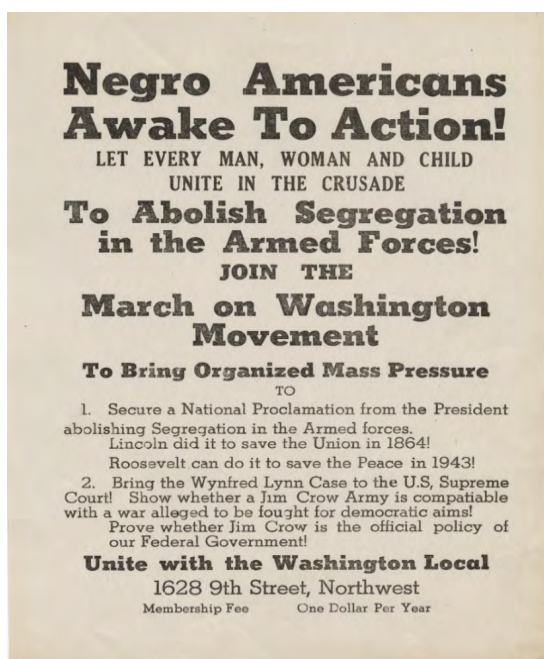


Figure 4. March on Washington Movement.³²

Illuminating injustices was highly discouraged and could arouse suspicion thought to counter wartime efforts. This could be viewed as disloyalty to the United States and might have been thought of as unpatriotic or even subversive. What remained was obvious to many: the country had been failing equality for some time.

Propaganda efforts were constantly utilized to produce allegiance to the country. Some of the messaging could affect

³² National Archives, David M. Rubenstein Gallery, "Negro American Awake to Action 1943," National Archives Records of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice, <http://recordsofrights.org/records/66/negro-americans-awake-to-action>.

worrisome behaviors. An example can be seen in the following banner:



Figure 5: Banner used to promote 100% Americanism.³³

Selective word usage, like “fumigate subversive elements,” demonstrated a dehumanizing attempt and may have influenced negative actions targeting American civilians, such as the February 16, 1942, Executive Order 9066 mandating the internment of Japanese American families. Correspondingly, in Riverside County, California, over one thousand residents in the town of Palm Springs organized a local response by obtaining signatures demanding an immediate and decisive solution “on the Japanese question.”³⁴ A telegram to Washington DC Senators, Congressmen and Lieutenant General De Witt (1880-1962) read in part:

Their farms surround and are contiguous to our airports,
our water supply, our oil supply depots, and our
transportation centers. The Japanese should be put in

³³ “100% Americanism Banner,” Political Poster Collection, A45, California State University Dominguez Hills: Gerth Archives and Special Collections, 1941.

³⁴ “Launch Move in Palm Springs to Have All Dual Citizenship Japanese Placed Under Guard,” *The Desert Sun* (Coachella Valley, CA), March 13, 1942.

guarded concentration camps inland and the Japanese frozen assets of 130,000,000.00 should be used to feed them, and they should be compelled to work.

If these dual citizens have any right as American citizens they should be suspended for the duration of the war. We are at war and first attention should be paid to the citizens rights of the real Americans. The Americans that have lived here for generations and constitute the bulk of our citizenship should be saved from saboteurs.³⁵

The protest listed many prominent members of the community and was proudly described as “the Palm Spring people dropping a bombshell’ in Washington.”³⁶ Among the endorsers was the “mother of Palm Springs,” Mrs. Nellie Coffman and Miss Katherine Finchy, each woman a prominent community member who later had schools named after them that still stand in the Palm Springs Unified School District.

The trepidation of the protestors reflected a belief that American citizens of Japanese descent could be denied their rights on the condition of their ethnicity. Moreover, they dangerously subscribed Japanese Americans and their families to working with the country of Japan to treasonously overthrow the United States. It also suggests that White settler arrival should be understood as the only true Americans, exemplifying the ideology of Manifest Destiny (1845). It disturbingly reiterated, whether in a state of war or peace, no one else should be considered American *and* the only individuals who should be perceived as Americans were of White/European heritage. The implied status of those fitting that elevated description could be found on the same front page with the above-mentioned protest. It is illustrative of a relevant article, appearing, not only as newsworthy, but that being White was noteworthy journalism. A wedding notice of a woman, Barbara

³⁵ “Launch Move in Palm Springs to Have All Dual Citizenship Japanese Placed Under Guard.”

³⁶ “Launch Move in Palm Springs to Have All Dual Citizenship Japanese Placed Under Guard.”

McKinney, read: “It’s not every day that the bride had the distinction of being the first white girl born in Palm Spring.”³⁷

The USO on Requa Street

Aghast at Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, affirmed the public’s conscience announcing war on December 8, 1941. Textualized in many publications, the harbor’s bombing wove itself into the narrative of *La Conchilla*, Coachella Valley Union High School’s 1942 yearbook.



Figure 6: *La Conchilla* 1942 Coachella Valley Union High School yearbook.³⁸

Grappling with the attack on Pearl Harbor it read:

³⁷ “Holder of Distinction of Being First White Girl Born in Palm Springs is Married in Arizona,” *The Desert Sun* (Coachella Valley, CA), March 13, 1942.

³⁸ *La Conchilla*, *La Conchilla Coachella Valley Union High School Yearbook*, 1942.

The students walked slowly to the bus stop this morning of December eighth. Where were the smiles—the ever common enthusiasm? Now no smiles... but rumors. All conversation centered around one thing—Pearl Harbor.

At school the President's message to Congress asking for a declaration of war was heard and heavy were the hearts of everyone for many had brothers, cousins, friends, in the service. 'Had this really happened to us?'³⁹

The Indio City Council report by Mayor Washburn, on April 15, announced the USO had requested a letter from the Council "inviting them to take charge of the recreational program for the soldiers and also that the WPA is willing to help with the entertainment."⁴⁰ A motion was carried unanimously to have the USO representative assume those responsibilities.

Resident, Porterfield Browning, approached the Indio City Council on May 6 expressing his interest in acquiring an application for a license to operate a pool hall:

He stated that 300 colored soldiers were stationed at the new camp and that they needed recreation as well as the white soldiers and at the present time the only Pool Halls in his district was for the Mexicans, and that, so far, he had been unable to purchase the pool hall license now held by J. Corral; and also that Mr. Corral was not operating a Pool Hall. This application was tabled until the next regular meeting and the Chief of Police was instructed to investigate the new location of Porterfield Browning.⁴¹

The next City Council meeting on May 20 resolved the matter and informed Mr. Browning that at the present time, there were no pool hall licenses available.⁴²

³⁹ *La Conchilla: 1942 yearbook* (Coachella Valley, Publisher unknown, 1942)

⁴⁰ Indio City Council minutes: April 15, 1942, Indio.org.

⁴¹ Indio City Council minutes: May 6, 1942, Indio.org.

⁴² Indio City Council minutes: May 20, 1942, Indio.org.

Porterfield Browning's advocacy for the 300 troops was astute. Early on he recognized the need for entertainment, bringing it to the attention of the town's governing body. Though he was denied, it would become apparent that not having a place for Black troops foreshadowed clashes ahead.

Late May Memorial Day plans were arranged for General George S. Patton (1885-1945), commanding officer of the Desert Training Center and general of the Army's 7th division, to address the Coachella Valley Cemetery audience in Riverside County, California.

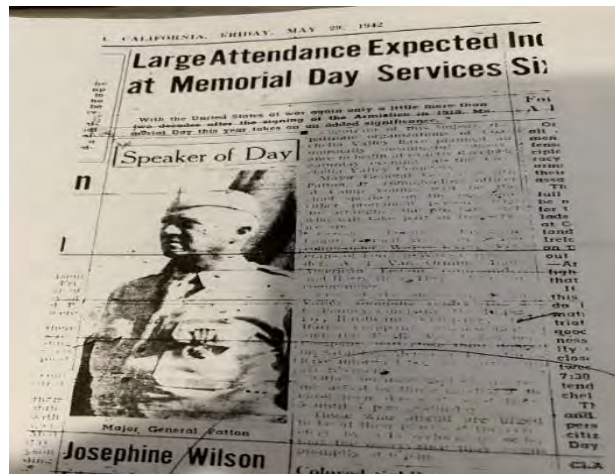


Figure 7: Article from *The Date Palm*, 1942.⁴³

Patton bluntly gave a prescient warning to the thousand assembled among the graves:

A soldier does not want eulogies over his grave. He wants guns to fight with. There will be many, many more hero dead not for the lack of bravery but for the lack of arms. And their deaths will be our fault for not providing them

⁴³ "Large Attendance Expected at Memorial Day Services," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), May 29, 1942.

with arms. Because of their apathy, the American people are made 'to eat turkey' by peoples who are only fit to be their servants.⁴⁴

The account of his speech highlighted Patton had drawn from Rudyard Kipling's (1865-1936) poem, "The Islanders." Patton's admonishment weighed his message with blame, hinting that the monetary support in war campaign funding could alter his disturbing projections. Moreover, Patton reinforced that Americans were entitled to assume their role as global superiors, and as such, were meant to prevail over enemies fit only for servitude. Patton's supposed admiration for Kipling, a proponent of Western imperialism and the author of "The White Man's Burden," was especially troubling facing off at war with fascist regimes. Propaganda and patriotism were persistently being fueled to produce allegiance to the United States. Certainly, some of the language used for messaging could instigate worrisome behaviors.

Defending liberty overseas could not shift the immediate and long-term challenges of the home front settings for many Black Americans stateside. In Indio, California, there was one active USO on Miles Avenue for soldiers, but it was not an integrated USO serving Black servicemen. However, on June 12, 1942, Black leadership for a future USO site was announced. Black residents identified Alberta King (1904-1974) and Viola Grace as general co-chairs, stepping in, as refreshment chair was Susie Maddox. Mrs. Massingale volunteered for the program supplies committee.⁴⁵ In July a location in the east wing of Lincoln School was negotiated with the Indio school district to be the setting of the USO for Black enlisted. There was great enthusiasm for the space. "Members of the Negro community here as well as the troops are highly pleased with the efforts being made to provide recreational facilities for the men and have responded by

⁴⁴ "Arms Not Eulogy' Is General Patton's Challenging Theme," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), June 5, 1942.

⁴⁵ "New USO Unit is Planned for Colored Troops," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), June 12, 1942.

immediately volunteering as hostesses and helpers.”⁴⁶ Requests for all types of furnishings were initiated and furnishings began to trickle in, even a piano was donated, all to create a more welcoming location for Black soldiers visiting Indio.

Unfortunately, the location needed many repairs to make it habitable. Black troops volunteered to do the necessary work if materials were supplied; a request was made for whitewash, a type of paint. Refurbishment of the building continued, and by November, 14 men from Co. B 47th Battalion and Co. B 65th Battalion arrived to assist with the projects. Financial strains continued to be an obstacle throughout its operation.

On a similar note, the following sentiment resonated with Black troops when on leave from the Desert Training Center.

In many instances the desires of Negro troops were not for the more elaborate forms of recreational facilities though their provision for neighboring white troops and not for Negroes continued to be a source of resentment. Sometimes lacking, any facility at all, Negro troops simply wished for a place to gather.⁴⁷

Still, the provision of a site would not ensure its suitability or that there would be activities of interest. One such locale was described in Pampa, Texas as a room designated for troops that measured approximately 30ft. by 100ft.⁴⁸ The matter of activities was addressed in another unnamed USO location. A soldier remarked: “Two civilians in town are in charge. They are colored. They tell the boys to come over and write letters. Why spend thirty-five cents to write a letter? There is no attraction.”⁴⁹

In early September, a disruption of the idea that America was a vibrant model of democracy occurred. September’s

⁴⁶ “Negro Troops will have Permanent USO Clubroom,” *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), July 9, 1942.

⁴⁷ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 306.

⁴⁸ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 310.

⁴⁹ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 310.

headlines on the front page of *The Date Palm* jolted its readers, “Indio Race Riots forestalled by USO members.” The USO Council expressed concern:

The danger of race riots in Indio has been averted by the establishment and maintenance here of, a colored USO clubhouse. Denied access to all eating and drinking locations in the main business section of Indio but one, shut out of the only theater, duck-pin alley, and skating rink Colored soldiers felt they were not getting a square deal.

In this angry, and resentful mood, violence, between the two, white and black races, was liable at any time to break out.⁵⁰

Here the USO Council’s response suggests the role of ally and advocate for the situation Black troops regularly faced. The Council did not appear to comply with USO guidance but rather spoke to the public plainly. Remarks pointedly expressed the seriousness of the lack of support for visiting Black troops and these restrictions were tethered to segregation. These persistent actions, while compelling introspection, equivocated only marginal changes in the town’s atmosphere towards Black soldiers.

No photograph has been located of the aforementioned USO serving Black enlisted on Requa Street. The USO on Miles Avenue where White soldiers frequented still stands and is currently a church.

⁵⁰ “Indio Race Riots forestalled by USO members,” *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), September 3, 1942.

Battle on the Home Front



Figure 8: Miles Avenue USO circa 1940s.⁵¹



Figure 9: Former USO location now a church, circa 2023.⁵²

⁵¹ Coachella Valley History Museum. *Miles Avenue USO* circa 1940s

⁵² Jean Martinez, *Miles Avenue and King Street (Southeast corner) Indio: former USO building*, Photograph, 2023.

The normalized patterns described in many regions of the country were the result of a long-ago Supreme Court action. Historians Merson and Schlossman connected the dots:

An implicit principle of ‘separate but equal,’ which gradually became explicit legal doctrine in several states and was affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the famous 1896 case *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, became the official touchstone of racial policy in both civilian and military settings.⁵³

Nevertheless, the decision by the Supreme Court had not been unanimous. Justice Marshall Harlan (1833-1911), a former slaveholder, rebuked the court and wrote:

In the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our constitution is colorblind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. . . The arbitrary separation of citizens on the basis of race, while they are on a public highway, is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality before the law established by the Constitution. It cannot be justified upon any legal grounds.

Furthermore, argued Harlan, the decision would poison relations between the races.

What can more certainly arouse race hate, what more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races, than state enactments, which, in fact, proceed on the ground that colored citizens are so inferior and

⁵³ Sherie Merson and Steven Schlossman, *Foxholes & Color Lines: Desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3.

degraded that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by white citizens? That, as all will admit, is the real meaning of such legislation.⁵⁴

Compliance with the statute could be observed in the following Friday newspaper posting a direct rebuttal to the USO Council's grievance a week earlier. Judge Leroy Pawley, proprietor, denied the reports of discrimination at his two theater locations. He defended his enterprises stating:

Colored patrons are asked to sit on the right side of the Desert Theater, explains Judge Pawley, in order to avoid any possible trouble with white people. 'These seats are just as good as those occupied by white people in the left side section hence there is not discrimination as the colored people understand. In the Coachella theater, where most of the patrons are Negroes and Mexicans, white people occupy the left side section, an arrangement that avoids friction between white and colored races.⁵⁵

Judge Pawley's comment of "friction between races" hinted at the need to head off disorderly to violent conduct.⁵⁶ In those conflicts, communication, resistance, and civil disobedience manifested itself in strategic ways that continued to erode the injustices against freedom and equality during wartime.

⁵⁴ Charles Thompson, *Plessy vs. Ferguson: Harlan's Great Dissent*, Louis D. Brandeis School of Law Library published with permission, <https://louisville.edu/law/library/special-collections/the-john-marshall-harlan-collection/harlans-great-dissent>.

⁵⁵ "Colored People Not Barred from Theater," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), September 10, 1942.

⁵⁶ "Colored People Not Barred from Theater."



Figure 10: Courtesy of Coachella Valley History Museum circa 1950s.⁵⁷



Figure 11: Fargo Street, Indio showing Desert Theater (Left).⁵⁸

An example of an Indio newspaper article in facsimile identifies some selectees as “colored” and can be seen on the following page illustrating the practice of segregation in print.

⁵⁷ Coachella Valley History Museum. *The Desert Theater*. 1950.

⁵⁸ Desert Theater in Indio on Fargo Street. Courtesy of Coachella Valley History Museum.

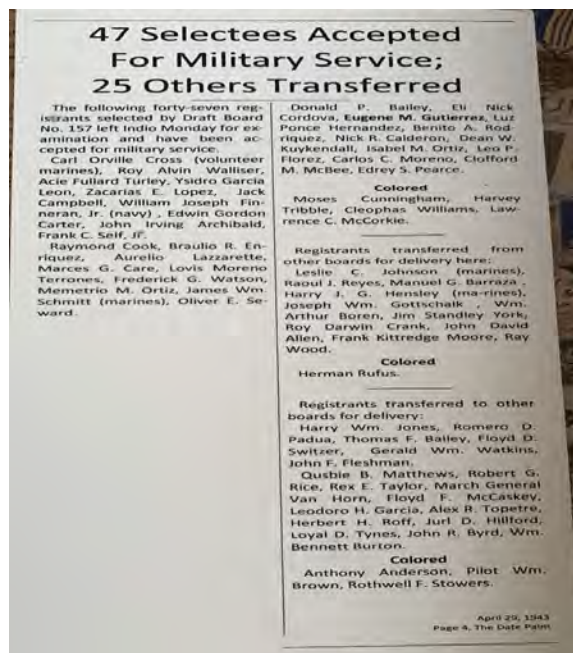


Figure 12: *The Date Palm*: April 29, 1943.⁵⁹

Black troops did face demoralizing encounters locally. Still the Black USO leadership, active community members, and allies' dedication to providing satisfying events and programs continued despite many difficulties. The potentially combusive situations called on Black volunteers to navigate the demanding and evolving circumstances while simultaneously generating support for Black servicemen as the mission of the USO outlined. However, the community practices of segregation and discrimination, combined with the lack of services, tested Black troops and weighed upon the volunteers of the Black USO staff. This experience mirrored similarities to many regions of the country:

⁵⁹ "47 Selectees Accepted for Military Service- 25 Others Transferred." *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), April 29, 1943.

To Negro troops the threat of disorder that might involve them was omnipresent; at times it was thought of as just one more of the inevitables of military service, or, at the least, of passes into certain nearby towns. Early in the war, the Negro public was convinced that the life of the Negro soldier was one of constant fear and danger, while his unit was still in training. The white public, especially in the towns near heavy troop concentrations, was often certain that the threat of town or post race riots was constant. Enough 'incidents' occurred during the war years to lend support to each of these views and to each of their infinite variants.⁶⁰

Eventually the reception in Indio resulted in multiple disturbances often resulting in force being used to further restrict Black servicemen to comply with the town's patterns. This led to militant responses at times stemming from the sheer exposure of exhausting discriminatory conditions experienced. Ulysses Lee notes that "racial friction, of one kind or another continued through the war, with the early summer of 1943, marking the high point, both of incidents of violence and of official concern."⁶¹

May 8, 1943: Policeman Attacked by Mob of Negro Soldiers is Seriously Injured

Police officer Russell M. Kelly and an unnamed MP were in the Adobe Café around 10:30 pm when about 35 Negro soldiers came in and started dancing. This alarmed the proprietor Millie Apodac who expressed she had no license for dancing in her restaurant.

'They wanted to know who was gonna stop them.'

One of the soldiers hit Apodac. Officer Kelly instructed the MP to get additional help and the MP left. Another

⁶⁰ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 349.

⁶¹ Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 348.

customer, a white soldier, took the MP's place next to Kelly to clear the café. During this effort the Black soldiers began dragging the white soldier out. The article states, Officer Kelly, was reluctant to use force but opened fire, 'to save the soldier's life.' The shot hit a 'colored soldier's leg' and his friends dragged him out of the place. Other Black enlisted hit Kelly with bricks and bottles causing injuries which nearly severed his jugular artery and resulted in his hospitalization including facial lacerations from a broken bottle used as a weapon. A white MP who was in The Adobe when the fight broke out had his leg broken. Indio officers have been given orders to shoot the legs out from under Mobsters if attacked as was Officer Kelly.⁶²

Three years later, in 1946, Sergeant Sidney L. Meller elaborated on the same incident characterizing Black enlisted men's attempt to take militant action that night:

Negro troops rioted in an Indio café and injured a police officer, some of the Negro soldiers went back to Camp Young and secured rifles and ammunition, and while returning to Indio for revenge were luckily stopped by Military Police. At least three factors contributed to the problem. The first was having White Military Police handle Negro troops. When colored Military Police were substituted the Negro troops behaved much better. The second cause was the setting aside of a restaurant for them. The colored servicemen resented this; they wanted to feel free to go wherever they desired. A third cause was the inadequate Negro USO whose development and

⁶² "Policeman Attacked by Mob of Negro Soldiers is Seriously Injured," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), May 13, 1943.

improvement was delayed until practically the close of the Center.⁶³

Meller's commentary exemplifies bias and inaccuracy. There were multiple "incidents," not one as Meller suggests. Evidence of "incidents" are found in the local newspapers. Bias is seen in the first aspect in his reference of "handling" troops and again in reference to "behaving." This demoralizing use of language demonstrated humiliation and egregious disrespect. Another aspect described resentment of the men to freely go where they wished, suggesting that Meller believed that the men should have accepted marginalization. The Black troops resisted and made their dissatisfaction known by rebuking this notion. Lastly, he restates, what has been obvious the whole time, that the Black USO was inadequate during its time of operation. Meller's penchant for siding with the Army and segregation practices and discrimination in town made clear his historical rendering of the Black soldiers' experiences was mired in the faulty legislation exercised by the Supreme Court in 1896 that "separate is equal." More time would pass before the 1954 Supreme Court decision would overturn *Plessy vs Ferguson* in *Brown vs Board of Education*:

While most white Americans did not accept the professed goal of the war as a struggle to end racism, such a goal did at least become part of mainstream discourse. As a result many Southern whites came to believe World War II marked the greatest threat to traditional race relations in their region since Reconstruction.⁶⁴

⁶³ Sidney L. Meller, "History of the Army Ground Forces, Study Number 15, The Desert Training Center and C-AMA, (California - Arizona Area)," 30. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADB959180>.

⁶⁴ James N. Leiker. "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All?," The US Army and the Reassessment of Race Relations in World War II, *Army History*, no. 82 (Winter 2012), 32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2.307/26296201>.

The reliance on force to direct Black troops would remain a default by numerous public and military persons in communities that adhered to segregation and discrimination. Scholars Nalty and McGregor point to that resolve as a predictable consequence of the persistent segregation and discrimination:

the fact that adjacent towns do not offer sufficient desirable recreational facilities for members of the colored race, with the results that they are, driven to the place which they would not frequent of their own choice. Every effort should be made to have the community concerned provide adequate recreational facilities. Lacking this cooperation, the only other method of preventing trouble is by extensive use of highly trained military police, both white and colored.⁶⁵

Compounding the tensions instilled in the of summer 1943, was the editorial in *The Date Palm*, by Norman H. Parks:

Race riots reached dangerous proportions during the last few days.

Lesser riots occurred in scattered parts of the country, all of which involved colored people, mostly soldiers.

This is a dangerous trend. But it is a natural one. For months...-the President's wife has been putting foolish ideas into the heads of colored people. She has been stirring up race hatred. She has taught the Negro he should have-yes, indeed, demand social equality. It put crazy ideas into the heads of many Negroes, but happily not the sensible, substantial type, who wisely do not advocate or aspire to social intercourse with white people.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Bernard C. Nalty and Morris J. McGregor, eds., *Blacks in the Military: Essential Documents* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1981), 161.

⁶⁶ Norman H. Parks, ed. "Negroes and Whites Clash," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), June 24, 1943.

July 29, 1943: Police Battle Mob of 200 Colored Soldiers, One Service Man Shot

Summertime was the second known incident of recorded unrest.

A Black MP was identified accompanying a local police officer in 'Mexican Town' as it was referred to. Together they attempted to place an individual out of uniform under arrest. Black troops interfered and fighting ensued. Efforts to secure, eventually two men, into the police car was met with more resistance with one individual running away. He was fired upon and hit. All police and MPs responded to the area to break up the 'mob.'⁶⁷

By September a response was ushered by the Indio City Council to create space for large populations of Black servicemen. Carl W. Woodhouse was granted a permit to operate a restaurant that would be available to Black troops. It is possible Indio generally practiced a White Trade Only policy. Even a section of town was referred to as "Mexican Town." The title of the article and the needed consideration for an eatery to serve specifically Black servicemen would support a policy like that. The article repeated the urgency. "Need for the restaurant catering to colored people has been acute here because of the presence of so many colored soldiers."⁶⁸ No acknowledgment was indicated that the problematic truth was they were not welcome in town.

Other circumstances Black enlisted troops experienced were a deadly disregard by command that put lives at risk. The desert training under General Patton was supposed to train troops for the North African campaign against Germany. Although many camps were spread out in the Mojave Desert for this preparation, Camp Young was Patton's headquarters near Chiriaco Summit. A

⁶⁷ "Police Battle Mob of 200 Colored Soldiers, One Soldier Shot," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), July 29, 1943.

⁶⁸ "New Restaurant Will Cater to Negro Trade." *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), September 23, 1943.

part of the Mojave Desert training grounds included Camp Clipper and though segregated, Black and White, units interacted for training purposes. The following incident was described:



Figure 13: Camp Clipper, a subcamp of the Desert Training Center in the California and Arizona deserts, June 1943.⁶⁹

The men faced endless days of reconnoitering in the blazing, dry heat of the desert. There was no running water and no electricity. Each soldier was given about one canteen of water to sip during the hiking and running exercises through the desert. The war games were rough and included one simulation that almost proved fatal. Bill Payne explained the exercise, which included chasing flags and ‘capturing’ enemy prisoners. On one flag chasing mission his men were duly captured and placed in a makeshift prison camp. Unfortunately, the strategic planners -all white officers- forgot about the prisoners and left them without any food or water for three days. Payne said the experience was worse than anything he experienced in combat in the South Pacific or later in Vietnam.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Camp Clipper in Desert Training Camp 1943. Courtesy of Patton Museum.

⁷⁰ Maggie M. Morehouse, *Fighting in the Jim Crow Army: Black Men and Women Remember World War II* (Lanham: Bowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000).

February 2, 1944: Woodhouse Quells Negro Soldiers with Six-Shooter

Describing an altercation between two Black enlisted in his restaurant, Woodhouse stated:

He intervened after the two men refused his request to stop fighting. He claimed he used the butt of his gun to knock out both men. He next outlined that later a squadron of Black soldiers with stolen Army trucks from Palm Village had arrived seeking vengeance and demanding to know his whereabouts from his wife. A machine gun was pressed into her side and she refused to say where he could be found. She screamed for help. Finding Woodhouse, they encountered him pointing his gun towards them. Police chief Ackley arrived with two tearbombs in his hands. The MPs arrived and took over. 'The fighting Negroes were taken into custody and marched off to camp.' The only colored eating house in this area was closed, Henceforth the Palm Café will cater only to white trade.⁷¹

As Mellen remarked, "The colored servicemen resented this; they wanted to feel free to go wherever they desired."⁷² Mellen's failure to recognize his statement fueled a prevalent and complicated practice determined not to see how Black troops were refusing a second-class status in small town America. Having a single location designated for Black troops was again confirmation that resistance to discriminatory treatment, whether designed in action or print, appears normalized in his 1946 interpretation of Coachella Valley World War II desert era history.

Well ahead of the war's end the Black USO on Requa Street permanently closed in Indio. "July 1, 1944 proved to be the

⁷¹ "Woodhouse Quells Negro Soldiers with Six-Shooter," *The Date Palm* (Indio, CA), February 3, 1944.

⁷² Sidney L. Meller, "History of the Army Ground Forces, Study Number 15, The Desert Training Center and C-AMA, (California - Arizona Area)," 30. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADB959180>.

end of the lease the government had with the Indio school district; a need for the building was cited.”⁷³ One cannot help but surmise other factors were at hand that contributed to not renewing the lease or, at the least, initiating a search for another location to accomplish the mission of the USO to serve all servicemen in the town of Indio.

Starkly, in a related note that same year, December 6, 1944, the Indio City Council unanimously approved acceptance of post war-low rent public housing as per an oral presentation by George Scott, Riverside Housing Authority. The minutes of that evening recorded ‘these homes will be rented strictly by percentage of income and race groups can be housed in different locations if desired.’⁷⁴ On January 3, 1945, a ‘negro subdivision,’ named after Washington Carver received unanimous council vote approval.⁷⁵ The residential area known as “Carver Tract” remains today.

For residents and visitors of color like the Black enlisted service members, the practices of segregation and discrimination were so inculcated in Indio’s society; like many locations nationwide the intolerable situations they faced continued to be evident throughout the years. Despite their service to the United States fighting against enemies abroad, the Black enlisted servicemen faced an even greater challenge at home, racism, discrimination and segregation. Such were the pervasiveness of these practices that it affected the realities of Indio community life for everyone, ranging from attending public facilities and housing to the creation of a second USO specifically for Black enlisted members. Black servicemen resisted the discriminatory practices they faced and became increasingly militant in response to the conditions they refused to accept. Fighting abroad and

⁷³ “Requa Street USO Closes its Doors,” *Indio News*, July 7, 1944.

⁷⁴ Indio City Council Minutes, December 6, 1944. Indio.org
<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=1841&repo=r-ed00e3aa>
accessed January 8, 2024.

⁷⁵ Indio City Council Minutes, January 3, 1945, Indio.org
<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=1839&repo=r-ed00e3aa>
accessed January 8, 2024.

Jean Martinez

domestically for freedom. Their agency insisted on equality by rebuking the second-class citizenship they were relegated to in America.

Bibliography

- “47 Selectees Accepted for Military Service- 25 Others Transferred,” *The Date Palm*, April 29, 1943.
- “100% Americanism Banner.” Political Poster Collection. A45. California State University Dominguez Hills: Gerth Archives and Special Collections, 1941.
- Alvarez, Luis. *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- “Arms Not Eulogy Is General Patton’s Challenging Theme,” *The Date Palm*, June 5, 1942.
- Baime, A. J., *White Lies: The Double Life of Walter F. White and America’s Darkest Secret*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2022.
- Burns, Robert E. *I Am a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang!* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997.
- Black History Month and the USO, United Service Organizations. February 18, 2010, Accessed March 1, 2022, <https://uso.org/stories/460-black-history-month-and-the-uso>.
- Brilliant, Mark, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Carson, Julia M. H. *Home Away from Home: The Story of the USO*. New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1946.
- Coachella Valley History Museum. *Desert Theater in Indio on Fargo Street*.
- Coachella Valley History Museum. *Miles Avenue USO*. C. 1940.
- Coachella Valley History Museum. *The Desert Theater*. C. 1950.
- Cohen, S. Mark. “William Hastie: Grace Under Pressure.” *Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 84, no. 4, 1986 Survey of Books Relating to the Law (Feb.-Apr. 1986), pp. 861-866. Accessed October 2, 2023, <https://www-jstororg.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/stable/pdf/1288855.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%>.
- “Colored People Not Barred from Theater,” *The Date Palm*.

- September 10, 1942.
- Dalfiume, Richard M. *Desegregation of the Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts 1939-1953*. Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1969.
- Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Verso, 2018.
- Delmont, Matthew F. *Half American: The Epic Story for African Americans Fighting World War II at Home and Abroad*. New York: Viking, 2022.
- Dooley, Patricia L. "Jim Crow Stikes Again: The African American Press Campaign Against Segregation in Bowling During World War II,": *The Journal of African American History* 97. No. 3 (Summer 2012).
<https://doi.org/10.5323/jafriamerhist.97.3.0270>.
- Franklin, John Hope. *Race and History: Selected Essays 1938-1988*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1989.
- Franklin, John Hope. *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2005.
- Gaines, Kevin K., *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1996.
- Heide, Robert and John Gilman. *Home Front America: Popular Culture of the World War II Era*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. 1995.
- "Holder of Distinction of Being First White Girl Born in Palm Springs is Married in Arizona." *The Desert Sun*, March 13, 1942.
- Hudson, Lynn M. *West of Jim Crow: The Fight Against California's Color Line*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 2020.
- Hughes, Langston. *Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc. 1962.
- Indio City Council Records. April 15, 1942. Indio.org.
- . May 6, 1942. Indio.org.

———. December 6, 1944. Indio.org.

———. January 3, 1945. Indio.org.

Information and Education Division, War Department. “What the Soldier Thinks: Quarterly Report, with Charts, of Research Studies Indicating the Attitudes, Prejudices and Desires of American Troops.” Washington D.C.: Army Service Forces, War Department, August 1943.
<https://archive.org/details/WhatTheSoliderThinksNo021943/page/n1/mode/2up>.

Jeffries, John W. *Wartime America: The World War II Home Front*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield. 2018.

Kryder, Daniel. *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State During World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2000.

Knapp, Gretchen. “Experimental Social Policymaking During World War: The United States Service Organizations (USO) and American War-Community Services (AWCS)1.” *Journal of Policy History* 12, no. 3 (2009): 321-38. <https://doi.org/10.135/jph.2000.0017>.

La Conchilla, *La Conchilla Coachella Valley High School Yearbook*, 1942.

“Large Attendance Expected at Memorial Day Services,” *The Date Palm*, May 29, 1942.

“Launch Move in Palm Springs to Have All Dual Citizenship Japanese Placed Under Guard.” *The Desert Sun*, March 13, 1942.

Lee, Ulysses. *Employment of Negro Troops: United States Army in World War II*. Washington, *The Center for Military History United States Army*, 2001.

Leiker, N. James. “Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All?: The U.S. Army and the Race Relations in the World War II.” *Army History*, No.82. pp, 30-41. Accessed September 13, 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26296201>.

Logan, Rayford W. *The Negro and the Post- War World: A Primer*. Washington: The Minorities Publishers. 1945.

Maureen, Honey, ed., *Bitter Fruit: African American Women in*

- World War II*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press. 1999.
- McGuire, Phillip. "Judge Hastie, World War II and Army Racism," *The Journal of Negro History*. October 1977, pp. 351-362. Accessed September 13, 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2717111>.
- McGuire, Phillip, ed. *Taps for a Jim Crow Army: Letters from Black Soldiers in World War II*. (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983).
- Meller, Sidney. "History of the Army Ground Forces. Study Number 15. The Desert Training Center and C-AMA, (California - Arizona Area)." Defense Technical Information Center, December 1945. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADB959180>.
- Mershon, Sherie, and Steven Schlossman. *Foxholes & Color Lines: Desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1998.
- Mjagkij, Nina. "Light in the Darkness: African Americans and the YMCA, 1852-1946." Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky. 1994.
- Morehouse, Maggi M. *Fighting in the Jim Crow Army: Black Men and Women Remember World War II*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2000.
- Murray, Pauli. *States Laws on Race and Color*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press. 1997.
- Mullenbach, Cheryl. *Double Victory: How African American Women Broke Race and Gender Barriers to Help Win World War II*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, Incorporated. 2013.
- Nalty, Bernard C. *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military*. New York, The Free Press. 1986.
- Nalty, Bernard C. and Morris J. MacGregor, eds. *Blacks in the Military: Essential Documents*. Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1981.
- National Archives; David M. Rubenstein Gallery, "Negro American Awake to Action 1943," National Archives

- Records of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice,
<http://recordsofrights.org/records/66/negro-americans-awa-e-to-action>.
- “Negro Troops will have Permanent USO Clubroom,” *The Date Palm*, July 9, 1942.
- “New USO Unit is Planned for Colored Troops,” *The Date Palm*, June 12, 1942.
- “New Restaurant Will Cater to Negro Trade.” *The Date Palm*, September 23, 1943.
- Norman H. Parks, ed. “Negroes and Whites Clash,” *The Date Palm*, June 24, 1943.
- Patton Museum. *Camp Clipper in Desert Training Camp*. 1943.
- Pleasants, Julian M. *Home Front: North Carolina During World War II*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2017.
- “Police Battle Mob of 200 Colored Soldiers, One Soldier Shot,” *The Date Palm*, July 29, 1943.
- “Policeman Attacked by Mob of Negro Soldiers is Seriously Injured,” *The Date Palm*, May 13, 1943.
- “Requa Street USO Closes its Doors,” *Indio News*, July 7, 1944.
- Riverside Historical Society, *Riverside During World War II: A Special Edition of the Riverside Historical Society Journal*, Riverside. 2022.
- Sitkoff, Harvard. “Racial Militancy and Interracial Violence in the Second World War.” *The Journal of American History* 58, no. 3. (December 1971).
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1893729>.
- Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. *Double Victory: The African American Military Experience, 1942-1945*.
<http://n2t.net/ark:/65665/fd508a4b9cb-c357-45ec-8343-1096215e2a8>.
- Sturkey, William. *Hattiesburg: An American City in Black and White*. Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2019.
- Takaki, Ronald. *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of*

- America in World War II*. New York: Bay Back Books, 2000.
- Taylor, Jon E. *Freedom to Serve: Truman, Civil Rights, and Executive Order 9981*. Critical Moments in American History. New York: 2013.
- Terkel, Studs, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II*. New York: The New Press, 1984.
- Thompson, Charles. Harlan's Great Dissent, 1996.
<https://louisville.edu/law/library/special-collections/the-john-marshall-harlan-collection/arlans-great-dissent>.
- United Service Organization (USO). "Five Years of Service: Report to the President." United Service Organization, Inc, February 4, 1946.
https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1176&context=ww_reg_his.
- USO General Operating Practice: A Manual of General Policies, Principal Organizing Relationships, and the Main Lines of Procedure in USO Operations, Continental United States* (New York: USO. Inc.,1944) SA Papers.
- Ware, Gilbert. *Willam Hastie: Grace Under Pressure*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- What The Soldier Thinks, No. 2, 1943/08: United States. Army Service Forces. Information and Education Division: Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming
<https://archive.org/details/WhatTheSoliderThinksNo021943/page/n3/mode/2up>.
- Winchell, Meghan K. *Good Girls, Good Food, Good Fun: The Story of the USO Hostesses During World War II*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 2008.
- Winkler, Allan M. *Home Front U.S.A.: America during World War II*. Illinois: Harlan Davidson Inc. 2012.
- "Woodhouse Quells Negro Soldiers with Six-Shooter," *The Date Palm*, February 3, 1944.

Author Bio

Jean Martinez is a recent graduate of California State University, San Bernardino as of December 2023 where she pursued a bachelor of arts in public history. Prior to returning to college Jean retired from the health field as a respiratory therapist. The opportunity to receive a degree in an area of study completely different from her career intrigued her and today that experience remains a source of continued satisfaction. She believes her academic accomplishment is not meant to be hers alone but rather a vehicle that enables the sharing of important history. Jean wishes to thank the many outstanding professors, her spouse Juan, family, and friends and one, Flora Mendoza, who never failed to enhance this journey. Jean extends her heartfelt thanks to Dr. Jeremy Murray, all the wonderful editorial staff and her own editor Kelly Noyola. In the future Jean's love for research has prompted serious consideration for a master's degree in history to continue pursuing eastern Coachella Valley's remarkable history within the Inland Empire.



A Question of Womanhood

By Ayden Kelly

Abstract: Ideologies surrounding gender and sexuality have shifted drastically within the past several decades as cultural perspectives broaden to be more inclusive of individuals belonging to communities, all with unique lived experiences. Recent discourses around womanhood and who is considered as “woman enough” have caused intercommunal tensions between White women, women of color, and LGBT+ women. This essay will explore how the rhetoric around who is and who is not a ‘real’ woman has remained the same but not which groups it has targeted, as well as examine the history of the conditional nature of womanhood from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Beginning with Indigenous American women, who have had their traditionally respected status as women stripped from them, and Black women, who have had to fight for their humanity since the nation’s “founding”, the concept of womanhood has been weaponized to exclude women of color. Since the 1960s when LGBT+ people began to fight for recognition, transgender women have had to prove their womanhood and fight on all sides against the narrative of who was allowed to be a woman.

The fields of transfeminist, Black feminist, and Native American feminist studies and histories focus primarily on the perspectives of marginalized women and the ways they are socio-politically and economically impacted by patriarchy, White supremacy, and queerphobia in the United States. Women across the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT+), Black American, and Native American communities encounter unique but intersecting issues

relating to gender, race, and class, all of which are historically connected and trace back to the American colonial era (1607-1775) and period of enslavement (1776-1865). Despite having historically been the most impacted by systems of oppression, the inclusion of Black and Indigenous women of color (BIWOC) and queer women in the feminist movement did not occur until the second wave of feminism during the 1960s and 70s. A hallmark of the second wave of feminism has been the rise of new feminist ideologies and approaches to activism that centered on BIWOC and LGBT+ women. At the time, activists considered this a fragmentation of what ought to be a unified movement, however, feminist scholars from the past thirty years maintain that second-wave feminism has marked a turning point for the growth and prosperity of the movement. In surveying history from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries through the perspectives of Native American feminist, Black feminist, and transfeminist historians and scholars, therein lies a connection between the current wave of transmisogynistic attitudes and historical narratives of racial misogyny directed towards Black and Indigenous women.

Relatively new as a field of study, transgender studies has garnered recognition through the works of transfeminist scholars, such as trans rights activists and writers Kate Bornstein and Emi Koyama, who both aimed to promote the education of transgender theory, studies, and rights. Koyama's work in particular, the "Transfeminist Manifesto," served as the foundation of transgender theory and has influenced other transgender and queer theorists. Another prominent scholar in transfeminist theory is biologist and gender studies professor Julia Serano, author of *Whipping Girl*, a compilation of essays that discusses trans theory and political scapegoating. Throughout the book, Serano argues that issues related to trans identity and struggles ought to be included in feminist efforts to combat patriarchy. Serano emphasizes that the recent rise of transphobic attitudes within the feminist movement, as well as in the LGBT+ community, did more in upholding patriarchy, systemic misogyny, and queerphobia than dismantling

those systems. Incorporating personal narrative with the works of other gender theorists, feminist scholars, and LGBT+ historians, Serano highlights the ways transmisogynistic attitudes are rooted in misunderstandings of the trans experience and calls for the end to the scapegoating and dehumanization of trans women everywhere.¹

Since Queer-led movements like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) began to organize in the late 60s, the involvement of trans women, such as early LGBT+ rights activists Marsha P. Johnson (1945-1992) and Sylvia Rivera (1951-2002), are seldom recognized despite helping start STAR; subsequently trans issues went ignored.² As a bisexual trans woman, Serano's motivation behind her work is to showcase the ways transwomen—and feminine people in general—have simultaneously experienced traditionally sexist notions surrounding femininity while also having had their womanhood either not taken seriously or outright denied.³ She also argues that while feminism focuses on cisgender women (women assigned female at birth), many transfeminist circles tend to focus on the gender binary of masculine or feminine, which neglects trans people who identify beyond or outside the gender binary, as well as any person who is gender nonconforming. While Serano does incorporate some historical elements to her work, there are also elements of transfeminist, gender, and queer theory that are prominent throughout the book. Overall, *Whipping Girl* is an influential piece of literature that educates readers on transfeminist and gender theory on an introductory level. Like other scholars of trans and gender theory or studies, Serano maintains that understanding trans womanhood allows for the general experience

¹ Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*, (New York: Seal Press, 2007), 19. Scapegoating is a tactic meant to shift blame or make a target out of a vulnerable individual, group or community that will experience unwarranted hostility or aggression. It is often accomplished by use of harmful rhetoric or fear mongering.

² Serano, *Whipping Girl*, 13-14.

³ Serano, *Whipping Girl*, 18.

of womanhood to be less exclusive, especially as conversations around womanhood have been tied to heterosexism and cissexism.⁴

The dehumanization faced by trans people and the exclusion of trans rights amongst feminist and even LGBT+ circles has historically been an issue for other marginalized groups as well, particularly women of color. Black feminist scholars—a few notable examples being bell hooks (1952-2021), Audre Lorde (1934-1992), Angela Davis (b. 1944), Alice Walker (b. 1944), and many others—have conducted historical research on this type of exclusion through the lens of intersectionality and Black womanhood. Black women have historically dealt with a combined oppression of being Black and of being women, and there are added layers of oppression for those who identify as LGBT+ or with multiple marginalized communities.⁵

Kimberlé Crenshaw (b. 1959), a notable Black feminist scholar, civil rights activist, and attorney, came up with the theory of intersectionality that excellently gives language and offers context to this experience, which she discussed in her article, “Mapping the Margins.” Intersectional feminism aims to draw attention to how the dimensions of race and gender shape the lived experiences of women of color, which Crenshaw illustrated through the survey of various cases of violence against women of color. The primary objective of Crenshaw’s essay is to showcase how both feminist and antiracist circles have historically failed to consider how the intersection of racism and sexism—as well as other -isms and phobias related to bigotry—factor into the lived experiences of Black women.⁶ Past approaches to racial and

⁴ Serano, *Whipping Girl*. Serano defined cissexism as, “... the belief that transsexuals’ identified genders are inferior to, or less authentic than, those of cissexuals (i.e., people who are not transsexual and who have only ever experienced their subconscious and physical sexes as being aligned).” (21) Serano defined heterosexism as “the belief that heterosexuality is the only ‘natural,’ legitimate, or morally acceptable form of sexual desire.” (124).

⁵ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1242, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>

⁶ Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins,” 1242.

feminist issues as being separate urged Crenshaw to observe the structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color using the frameworks of race and gender—although, she clarified other frameworks ought to be considered when looking at the history of any community that intersects with another.⁷ Crenshaw's work introduces a new approach to feminist thought that accommodates a wider scope of women with unique experiences, which quickly became a hallmark of third-wave feminism in the 1990s and has since been considered central to Black feminist ideology and theory.

Native American women have similar historical experiences with Black women as they, too, have been oppressed for being Indigenous and women. Notable Native American feminists Cutcha Risling Baldy (Hupa, Yurok, Karuk), Deborah A. Miranda (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen Nation, Chumash), Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo), Sarah Deer (Muscogee-Creek Nation), Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne, Hodulgee Muskogee), Mishuana Goeman (Tonawanda Band, Seneca), Joy Harjo (Muskogee), Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), and others in the field have worked to preserve, reclaim, and educate people about Native feminism.⁸ Native American feminism—a branch of global Indigenous feminism—is concerned with decolonization, sovereignty, environmentalism, Native rights, combating sexual-racial violence, and reclaiming the sacred position women once held across tribal nations and communities.⁹

Professor of Native American studies at Cal Poly Humboldt, Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy, explains the framework of Native feminism in her book, *We are Dancing for You*, through personal narrative and discussion of Native history. Risling Baldy

⁷ Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," 1244.

⁸ Baldy, Cutcha Risling, "Dining'xine:Wh-Mil-Na:Sa'a:N: Hupa People—With Them—It Stays, There Is a Hupa Tradition Oral Narratives and Native Feminisms," In *We Are Dancing for You: Native Feminisms and the Revitalization of Women's Coming-of-Age Ceremonies*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018) 29.

⁹ Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You*, 31.

recalls coming-of-age ceremonies held by her Hupa community as having sexist undertones, particularly with requirements women and girls had to meet to perform or dance that reflected European patriarchal worldviews surrounding virginity, sexuality, and gender.¹⁰ The author asserts that the implementation of patriarchy within Native spaces had been a major factor in the success of colonization and White hegemony in the U.S. that led to long-term impacts across many Native cultures.¹¹ Traditionally, Native women are central to Native culture and spirituality, yet as she has observed in her own nation, Risling Baldy argues that modern views of ceremony are often interwoven with misogyny and reinforced patriarchy that it became considered tradition.¹² Through the revitalization of traditional coming-of-age ceremonies, Native women could reclaim their equal standing amongst tribal nations, even leadership positions, that colonial concepts surrounding sex and gender had taken from them and denied them their womanhood.¹³

As women have once been respected across Native cultures, sexual and gender diversity were also respected and embraced amongst many Native communities. Moreover, those who may have identified as third gender or non-heterosexual have a historical presence dating back to pre-colonial times. The history of the erasure of what many Native communities have referred to as Two-Spirit, a term coined in 1990, is addressed in, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” by Deborah A. Miranda, professor of English Literature and renowned Native American scholar. Miranda conducts her research on sexuality and gender in Native Californian cultures by pulling archival resources from California missions to explore how Two-Spirit peoples were eliminated

¹⁰ Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You*, 29.

¹¹ Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You*, 29.

¹² Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You*, 30.

¹³ Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You*, 31.

during the mission period.¹⁴ In surveying those sources of how third-gender Indigenous peoples were targeted, Miranda was able to draw attention to the importance of reclaiming tradition along with larger efforts to reclaim Native identity in a way that would make room for Two-Spirit peoples.¹⁵

Upon first contact with the Native Nations of California, Spanish missionaries and soldiers encountered third gender people—referring to them as *joyas*, meaning “jewels” in Spanish—that lived amongst many of the Indigenous nations across California. Based on the recorded perspectives of mission Natives, Miranda discusses how the Spanish made immediate efforts to erase Indigenous cultural identities and traditions, which included the presence of early Two-Spirit peoples. As Miranda states, “Part of this massive loss were third-gender people, who were lost not by ‘passive’ colonizing collateral damage such as disease or starvation, but through active, conscious, violent extermination.”¹⁶ Spanish missionaries often forced Indigenous women and Two-Spirits to abandon traditional views of gender and sexuality by strictly emphasizing heteronormativity and female chastity.

According to Miranda, the soldiers viewed Two-Spirits with so much contempt that they tortured and mutilated them by throwing them to guard dogs, so much so that it eventually became common practice.¹⁷ Such atrocious acts against a double-marginalized group of people are some of the first acts of violence against those who were considered transgender or gender-nonconforming. Miranda emphasizes that while same-sex-attracted people were also targeted, the murder of Two-Spirits is more of an act of “gendercide” than it was homophobia as it had more to do with targeting a specific gender.¹⁸ As a result, Miranda asserts,

¹⁴ Deborah A. Miranda. “Extermination of the *Joyas*: Gendercide in Spanish California.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1-2 (Feb 2010): 254. muse.jhu.edu/article/372454.

¹⁵ Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” 254.

¹⁶ Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” 256.

¹⁷ Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” 257.

¹⁸ Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” 259.

“This tragic pattern in which one segment of the indigenous population was sacrificed in hopes that others would survive continues to fester in many contemporary Native communities where people with same-sex orientation are no longer part of a cultural legacy but feared, discriminated against, and locked out of tribal and familial homes.”¹⁹ Other forms of physical and emotional punishments were inflicted upon the *joyas* as well, but many were forced through a process of “regendering,” which is essentially an involuntary gender-reassignment.²⁰

Often Two-Spirits were prohibited from participating in womanhood by being forced to dress, act, and perform masculinity until they were eventually “regendered” as men according to European worldviews. Miranda added that forcing *joyas* into their “correctly” gendered spaces of either male or female likely disturbed Native men and women to see third gender people being forced to adhere to the colonial construct of gender that established a binary of only two.²¹ Transphobia remains a harmful ideology that was brought on and reinforced through assimilation until knowledge of pre-colonial *joyas* or Two-Spirits was nearly lost. However, as Miranda aptly explains, communities affected by colonialism continue to uphold many harmful and oppressive ideologies well enough on their own into the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly around Native women who were viewed as subhuman by White settlers.

Beyond the walls of the Spanish missions that line the coasts of Baja and Alta California, the experiences of Native women elsewhere are also marked by sexual violence at the hands of White male settlers. The sexual harassment and violence that quickly became part of the near-everyday experience for Indigenous women was discussed in the article, “I Know What an Indian Woman Can Do,” by Rose Stremlau, which was an analysis of Paiute author Sarah Winnemucca’s (1844-1891) autobiography. As was common and traditional amongst many

¹⁹ Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” 259.

²⁰ Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” 265.

²¹ Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*,” 266.

Indigenous nations across the Americas, women had equal socioeconomic and political standing in Paiute society, but fear of sexual assault and forced assimilation prevented women from fulfilling their daily roles, therefore interfering with Paiute values and worldviews of womanhood and femininity. According to Stremlau's analysis of Winnemucca's narrative, "... the Northern Paiutes' best chance at survival lay not in the assimilation to white culture but in the restoration of their economic autonomy, symbolized by women's ability to work without fear of sexual assault."²² Winnemucca proposes that Indigenous women resist White settler violence, recognizing how it was detrimental to not only Native lifeways but also the ways Paiute men viewed and treated women. Winnemucca witnesses this change in her own cousin, Numana "Captain Dave" Winnemucca, who abused his position as the police captain in the Pyramid Reservation, brutally murdered a young girl for refusing his advances, and prostituted his wife to White settlers.²³

In Paiute society, there were no institutions that legally bonded wives to their husbands and prohibited divorce because "... these societies valued the economic and social complementarity that husbands and wives provided each other."²⁴ Western notions of womanhood kept women subservient and dependent on men, but the roles Native women fulfilled in their respective cultures—whether it was gathering food, homemaking, child rearing, or community leadership—allowed them independence and agency. Womanhood was not defined by how Paiute women served their men but how they economically contributed to the community, as well as how they exhibited the political and spiritual powers they held. Motherhood garnered

²² Rose Stremlau "'I Know What an Indian Woman Can Do': Sarah Winnemucca Writes about Rape on the Northern Paiute Frontier," in *Portraits of Women in the American West*. ed. Dee Garceau-Hagen, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 229.

²³ Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*, (California: Arcadia Press, 2017), 124.

²⁴ Stremlau, "'I Know What an Indian Woman Can Do,'" 229.

status as well, whether it was growing life from the ground or giving life from their own bodies, women's responsibilities were considered sacred and respected.

In what was considered the first known autobiography by a Native woman, *Life Among the Paiutes*, Sarah Winnemucca (Northern Paiute) details the first encounters between the Northern Paiutes and White settlers in nineteenth-century Nevada. When Winnemucca was a child, White settlers began to attack nearby tribes, forcing the displacement of many, while others fled before an attack could occur. The following decades of Winnemucca's life were marred with racial violence, displacement, and a few notable instances of sexual violence against Native women. Before the arrival of settlers, Winnemucca remarks how Paiute women were freely able to venture out to gather food or hunt for small game as sexual harassment was unheard of in her culture. Whether they were teenaged, single, or married, women possessed agency and could expect to neither approach or be approached by teenaged boys or men (except during festivals or ceremonies), have her choice of suitors and of who can court her, and the right to divorce her husband if he failed his duties as a spouse and parent.²⁵

Not only that, but Paiute women also had political, economic, and spiritual influence, as well as the choice to fight alongside men in battle, and were actively involved in making decisions for the community. Winnemucca herself is the daughter of the Northern Paiute chief and became an activist who lobbied for Native American rights during the period when Native Peoples were being moved onto reservations. Regarding women's involvement in political affairs, Winnemucca states, "The women know as much as the men do, and their advice is often asked. We have a republic as well as you. The council-tent is our Congress, and anybody can speak who has anything to say, women and all."²⁶ The amount of self-determination that Paiute women—as well as women from most Native cultures—once possessed contrasted

²⁵ Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Paiutes*, 62.

²⁶ Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Paiutes*, 67.

with the limited autonomy that European women had, but that changed as White settlers continued to pour in as news of silver in the Lake Tahoe region spread.

The long-lasting impact of Eurocentric worldviews of gender and womanhood are carried into the following century within Native Nations; however, Native feminist scholars seek to remind readers of Native women's sacredness and of the Indigenous inspiration behind the mainstream feminist movement. In her book, *The Sacred Hoop*, feminist scholar Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) lays out the framework that Native feminist activists follow in recovering philosophical, social, and spiritual traditions that were suppressed as a lasting impact of colonialism. In Allen's own culture, the Laguna are a matriarchal, matrilinear, and women-centered society that teach girls the values of being assertive, decisive, and self-directing, whereas boys are taught to be compassionate, respectful, and nurturing. Many Native Nations abide by what Allen terms "gynocritic systems" which centers around women, mothers, and grandmothers and makes no room for the kind of toxic masculinity brought in by colonization and settler worldviews, and states,

In tribal gynocratic systems a multitude of personality and character types can function positively within the social order because the systems are focused on social responsibility rather than on privilege and on the realities of the human constitution rather than on denial-based social fictions to which human beings are compelled to conform by powerful individuals within the society.²⁷

Unlike in patriarchal societies, where only men could thrive while others were marginalized, matriarchal societies allow for women-centered social systems where women have agency and are given respect as well as men. Not only are women and men able to

²⁷ Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992,) 18.

thrive together, but there was also room for a diversity of experience and existence for people such as gay men, lesbian women, trans people, and third-gender individuals that were likely met with respect and possibly even honored.²⁸ While many Native societies became patriarchal due to colonial influence, the knowledge of women-centered social systems that managed to survive was considered by Allen to be a true testament of the human will to survive and the strength of Native communities. Of course, these traditional systems have existed for thousands of years, so it stands to reason that a few hundred years of colonization, while devastating, would not destroy Native lifeways, knowledge, and cultural values that included views on womanhood.

Native women were made aware of their capabilities and power as it was reaffirmed through their matriarchal cultures, a virtue that had not gone unnoticed by White women during the late nineteenth century when the women's suffrage movement began to form. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Nations are historically matriarchal and matrilineal cultures in which women enjoy political and economic power, which was protected by the Haudenosaunee constitution. According to Allen, "The Matrons held so much policy-making power traditionally that once, when their position was threatened, they demanded its return, and consequently the power of women was fundamental in shaping the Iroquois Confederation sometime in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century."²⁹

In the 17th century, Haudenosaunee women, tired of unregulated warfare, conducted a Lysistrata boycott on lovemaking and childbearing until the men gave women authority over declaring war or negotiating peace. The boycott was highly effective and was considered the first act of feminist resistance in U.S. history, but certainly not the last. Nearly two and half centuries later when Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) began her

²⁸ Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, 18.

²⁹ Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, 283.

“Votes for Women” movement, the Seneca Falls Convention was held nearby where Haudenosaunee women had planned their boycott, an event that inspired leading feminists such as Matilda Joselyn Gage (1826-1898)—who fought for Native rights—and the overall movement. The vision suffragettes had for women’s rights had long existed in Native societies, “Yet feminists too often believe that no one has ever experienced the kind of society that empowered women and made that empowerment the basis of its rules of civilization.”³⁰ Not only that, but Native women, along with Black women, women of color, and poor White women, were often left out of feminist circles as issues of race and class were not part of the core issues first-wave feminists were concerned with.

Interestingly, when notable suffragette Eva Emery Dye (1855-1947) searched for a symbol of female empowerment for White women to unite under, she “discovered” and chose Sacagawea (c.1788-1812) as that symbol, despite Native women not being included. The story of the Lemhi Shoshone teenager toting her infant son on her back while acting as a guide and translator for Lewis and Clark became synonymous with White progress and Native departure, her image a romanticization of White American conquest. The exclusion of Indigenous women left them to fight on their own, except for the occasional alliance with Black and Latina women, but being left out of women’s issues had solidified racist-sexist notions that Indigenous women were not women enough to have their issues and struggles recognized.

Violent methods used to implement European worldviews forced women into subjection and disrupted the social structures that gave women autonomy, as well as led to rigid ideologies concerning gender, sexuality, sociality, and identity. Such ideologies that stemmed from European worldviews eventually spread across not only Indigenous communities, but others as well. In the nineteenth century, the figure of the devoted wife, the doting

³⁰ Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, 284.

mother, the devout church goer, and the diligent homemaker became seen as the embodiment of a “true” woman.

Nineteenth century women were the center of the family, but they were not the masters of the house and had little autonomy despite having class privilege, but many middle- to upper-class women upheld the virtues of piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. These four virtues were central to ideologies upheld by what historians have referred to as the Cult of Domesticity or True Womanhood. During this time, middle- to upper-class European American women embraced these virtues that defined femininity, yet enslavement entirely denied Black women bodily autonomy and the self-determination to abide by those virtues.

The institution of slavery was responsible for the racist and hypersexual stereotypes that were placed on enslaved Black women throughout the antebellum period in the US and even up to the present day. The ideologies that came out of the South during this time are discussed by Hazel V. Carby in, *Reconstructing Womanhood*, which analyzes how Black women novelists turned to the written word as a way of reclaiming the narrative that subverted racist notions of Black womanhood. There is a stark difference between what womanhood and motherhood looks like for Black women versus how it looks for White women, which is solidified by the opposing figures of the enslaved Black woman and the White mistress represented in novels. Often, Black women are viewed as temptresses who sought to steal their White mistresses’ husbands, because Black female sexuality was defined by sexual promiscuity whereas White female sexuality was defined by virginal purity. In reality, and as many formerly enslaved women would later bring to light, Black women are often survivors of sexual violence that was inflicted upon them by White men, but per the virtues of true womanhood, a Black woman simply could not be chaste, a narrative which ignores the plight of Black women. Carby explains that this was due to “The interpretive ambivalence evident in the juxtaposition of ‘forced’ and ‘willingly’ indicates the spectrum of representation of the female slave from

victim to active collaborator and a historical reluctance to condemn as an act of rape what is conceived in patriarchal terms to be sexual compliance.”³¹ In this sense, Black women are seen not as victims of circumstance, but they were often viewed as complicit in their own suffering. As Carby explains, this made it seem as if Black women’s sexual victimization was something they simply allowed to happen, which allowed the inhumane ways they were treated while enslaved to be rationalized and/or dismissed.

Black feminist scholars who have surveyed this era of history agree that the exclusivity of womanhood has brought about the need for Black feminism, the inception of which occurred after Harriet Jacobs (1813-1897), a formerly enslaved woman, wrote and published her personal narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Considered to be one of the first pieces of Black feminist literature, Jacobs has often been credited for laying the foundations of Black feminist theory and thought. Not only did Jacobs’ narrative challenge the institution of slavery but she challenged the capitalist economic-political system that depended on the violent exploitation of people of color and the working class. She particularly draws attention to how the exclusive ideologies of “true” womanhood—again, the four virtues of purity, piety, submission, and domesticity—are simply unobtainable and impossible for enslaved Black women to abide by. Pulling from her own experiences of bondage and intense isolation during the years she hid from her master, Jacobs brings attention to the amount of sexual harassment and violence Black women dealt with on top of the cruel, inhumane treatment all enslaved people endured. Jacobs tactically utilizes sentimentality as she knew it would appeal to her White female audience by speaking on the many incidents of sexual harassment that began from when she was a child of fourteen.

³¹ Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*, (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1988), 21-22.

But where could I turn for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by fiends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage.³²

In the nineteenth century, speaking on a subject as taboo as sexual violence and calling out White women for their complicity was likely the most effective way for Jacobs to illustrate the ways slavery denied Black women humanity, while sexual violence denied them womanhood and painted them as hypersexual jezebels. If Black women are denied their autonomy and humanity, then how can they remain pure when White men rape them, how can they be pious when European Christians enslave them, what husbands could they have if they could not marry, what house could they keep if they had no right to property, or children could they raise when they were ripped from them and sold? To counter the sexual advances of her master, Jacobs began a relationship with Mr. Sands, a White lawyer, and emphasizes that she initially began their relationship partly out of necessity. Jacobs recognizes that due to nineteenth century values on sexual purity, she would receive negative reactions from readers, so she implores her readers not to judge her harshly as she did what she had to survive.

If slavery had been abolished, I, also, could have married the man of my choice; I could have had a home shielded by the laws; and I should have been spared the painful task of confessing what I am now about to relate; but all my prospects had been blighted by slavery. I wanted to keep myself pure; and, under the

³²Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 2005), 65.

most adverse circumstances, I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair.³³

Since Black women were not legally able to marry, nor were they lawfully protected from sexual violence while categorized as property, the deeply personal disclosure of what Jacobs endured for her survival and dignity sheds light onto the double-jeopardy Black women existed in. For Jacobs, she could either lose her chastity to a man she at least had a mutual affection for or fall victim to her master's repeated attempts of sexual conquest, so she chose what she considered "something to triumph over my tyrant even in that small way."³⁴ Later in her narrative, she makes yet another difficult decision to choose between her children being placed at the plantation or being an active part of their lives as their mother, which leads her to famously hide in a crawl space to at least watch her children from afar while they lived in relative freedom. All the choices Jacobs was forced to make in her time in bondage showcases the intersections of racial and gender issues that Black women have overcome since enslavement, which became foundational to Black feminism and central to a Black womanhood that has historically been rooted in abolition and sexual freedom.

Interestingly, while Jacobs' personal narrative has offered a perspective into the horrific realities of enslaved Black women, her work was not nearly as recognized as the works of other Black women authors who came after her. Laurie Kaiser's essay, "The Black Madonna: Notions of True Womanhood from Jacobs to Hurston," comparatively analyzes the literary works of Jacobs and author Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*), as

³³ Jacobs. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 109.

³⁴ Jacobs. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 110.

well as other nineteenth and twentieth century Black authors such as Frances Harper (1825-1911) (*Iola Leroy: Or, Shadows Uplifted*) and Nella Larson (1891-1964) (*Passing* and *Quicksand*). When Jacobs, an enslaved woman, and Harper, a free-born woman, published their respective works in the mid-nineteenth century, White Victorian society was obsessed with morality, sexual purity, and gender roles, the character that Kaiser referred to as a “Black Madonna” was born. The “Black Madonna” figure, particularly Harper’s titular character, was meant to “compete” with the White Madonna figure that reflected the virtues of true womanhood. Quoting the statement by feminist scholar Frances Smith Foster, Kaiser asserts, “The earliest and most pervasive image of the female protagonist in Afro-American literature is that of the tragic mulatto, the epitome of True Womanhood. Not only is she pious and pure, but she is also beautiful and more refined than most white women.”³⁵ Harper may not have tried to imply that mixed Black women were more deserving of humanity simply because they were half White and light skinned like the fictional Iola Leroy, however, Iola Leroy seems to have been written with the intention that White readers find her acceptable.³⁶ Not only that, but Harper’s choice to make her main heroine light skin perpetuated colorist stereotypes of dark-skinned women.

On the other hand, Jacobs did not shy away from explicitly stating that she had endured sexual violence. Although she did not go into such vivid detail, Kaiser notes what was likely the reason White abolitionists preferred the works of Harper while twentieth century White readers preferred the works of Hurston and Larson. Of course, Kaiser did not try to argue that Harper, Hurston, and Larson were not deserving of their places as respected authors or that their respective works were not impactful in drawing attention to the plights of nineteenth and twentieth century Black women. Kaiser instead offers an interesting perspective of how Jacobs’ work was received by Victorian readers who, due to the values and

³⁵ Laurie Kaiser, “The Black Madonna: Notions of True Womanhood from Jacobs to Hurston.” *South Atlantic Review* 60, no. 1 (1995): 98.

³⁶ Kaiser, “The Black Madonna,” 101.

morals upheld at the time, did not appreciate the abolitionist efforts Jacobs made, but acknowledged as a foundational figure in Black feminism today.

Newly emancipated Black women were determined to establish a place for themselves in a White-patriarchal society that was rapidly progressing and in the sphere of womanhood that centered White women. While Reconstruction was short-lived, the post-Reconstruction period (1863-1877) and first decades of Jim Crow (c.1865-c.1965) served as a catalyst for African Americans to advocate for their rights as U.S. citizens and participants in democracy, the history of which was explored in part one of *Colored No More* by Treva B. Lindsey, professor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department at Ohio State University. The novel begins with Howard University, which, due to having no restrictions on race, sex, class, religion, or color, was instrumental in offering Black women opportunities to seek higher education and social advancement.³⁷ Lucy Diggs Slowe (1885-1937), the first dean of women to be officially elected at the university in 1922, was recognized by Lindsey as the most prominent proponents of new age ideologies of Black womanhood by which women of color could be empowered and hope to gain opportunities in leadership. Above all, Lindsey states, "Through her works as dean and in her writing about black women in higher education, Slowe sought to reconceptualize African American gender ideology to encompass respect for and appreciation of black women's intellectual and leadership capacities and the affording of equal opportunities in development and training."³⁸

While Black women were making incredible strides during the early twentieth century, the Women's Suffrage movement (1840-1920) was at its peak, which many students from Howard along with women of color from other backgrounds played a significant role in. Despite their influential involvement in women's suffrage, White women were granted the right to vote

³⁷ Treva B Lindsey, *Colored No More: Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington, D.C.* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 67.

³⁸ Lindsey, *Colored No More*, 67.

whereas women of color continued to fight, mirroring the exclusion Black women endured in the centuries before emancipation. Other issues arose for Black women during the first-wave era of feminism (1848-1920) that seemed to mark the beginning of Black women's subjection at the hands of their male counterparts in 1926 with the arrival of Mordecai Johnson (1890-1976), Howard's first African American president. According to Lindsey, Johnson was a member of the Baptist church, who held conservative views on Black women's roles in higher education, stating "His rigid position on 'the woman question' mirrored that of many black men's attempts through both secular and religious institutions to control, limit, and dictate the behaviors of black women in public life."³⁹ An opponent of Johnson's views, Slove was known to critique the kind of religious and social conservatism that many Black families lived by, and she seems to have recognized the pattern that would eventually place Black women behind men of color, similar to how they were forced to stay behind White women during the suffrage movement.

Bodily autonomy, sexual liberation, and self-determination are some of the core principles for feminists since the late nineteenth century, but second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 70s witnessed an incredible expansion of the movement. Women of different backgrounds and experiences brought attention to issues outside the scope of what mainstream feminists aimed to tackle, which often did not include women of color or LGBT+ women, who recognized the need to organize interconnected branches of feminism to serve the interests of all women. At the turn of the 21st century, Emi Koyama wrote, "The Transfeminist Manifesto," which addresses the purpose, principles, and intentions of transfeminism. Transfeminism aims to give focus and voice to transwomen on the basis of two fundamental principles. The first principle is that every individual has the right to define her, his, and their own identity, as well as societal respect for their existence and livelihoods. The second principle asserts that trans

³⁹ Lindsey, *Colored No More*, 98.

people are the sole decision makers regarding their own bodies and that no political, medical, or religious entity ought to be allowed to impede upon them. Koyoma offers a disclaimer that while these principles reflect inalienable rights that all people deserve, she states, “However, no one is completely free from the existing social and cultural dynamics of the institutionalized gender system. When we make decisions regarding our gender identity or expression, we cannot escape the fact that we do so in the context of the patriarchal binary gender system.”⁴⁰ Womanhood is different for everyone, but all women are met with the expectations that they behave, speak, dress, and act in accordance with a narrow, patriarchal perception of femininity. Transgender women, on the other hand, are pushed, and even required, to perform traditional femininity to be granted womanhood by the medical community. In other words, trans women must “prove” they are woman enough by taking on, perhaps even internalizing, the very gender stereotypes that harm transgender and cisgender women in similar ways, making womanhood less unique or diverse.⁴¹

The insistence that transwomen at least achieve the ability to “pass” or look like a “real” woman has only upheld Western patriarchal standards of gender and has left transwomen, especially those who could not afford to transition, vulnerable to transphobia. British author Lola Olufemi discusses in her article, “Transmisogyny: Who Wins?” the effects of transphobic rhetoric and transmisogynist rationalizations that trans women are not real women. According to Olufemi, it is controversial American writer Janice Raymond’s (*Transsexual Empire*, 1979) transphobic claims of “transsexualism” reaffirming gender stereotypes and violating the “harmony—wholeness, being” of womanhood that has been partially responsible for opening the doors for anti-trans rhetoric in

⁴⁰ Emi Koyama, “The Transfeminist Manifesto,” In *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier (Massachusetts: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 2.

⁴¹ Koyama, “The Transfeminist Manifesto,” 2.

the US and in the LGBT+ community.⁴² Olufemi adds that Raymond's work arguing against transgender identity, as Olufemi explains, "Though disguised, the credence given to biology in these arguments affirmed the idea that women are born, and not made or named; that there is something inherent in biology that is crucial to womanhood."⁴³ Biological and gender essentialism are two of the primary stances transphobes and TERFs (trans exclusionary radical feminists) have taken to argue against social and medical acceptance of transgender people, but as Olufemi brings up, science is not on the side of transphobia either. Gender is widely known as a social construct, leaving room for several possible gender identities that have not yet been given language, and neither has biological sex existed on a binary despite past attempts to ignore what science has to say concerning it.

Intersex people's existence has always discredited the claim that there has only ever been males and females, and yet this assertion has placed intersex and trans people in a dangerous limbo that has forced those born with variations of 'male' and 'female' sex characteristics to undergo surgery to "correct" their bodies without their consent.⁴⁴ Even when born outside the sex binary, it is enforced anyway: "This demonstrates the power of sex as a classification system that makes us intelligible; we do not live in a society that knows what to do with bodies that do not conform to rigid binaries."⁴⁵ Interestingly, this showcases the irony of transphobic rhetoric that transgenderism demands the castration and sexualization of children, when in truth it is parents of intersex and trans children who are forcing heterosexist and cissexist concepts of gender and sexuality.

Referring to the work of American author, philosopher, and gender studies professor Judith Butler (they/them), Olufemi went on to include Butler's assertion that, like gender, people ought to

⁴² Lola Olufemi, "Transmisogyny: Who Wins?" In *Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power*. (Chicago: Pluto Press, 2020), 51.

⁴³ Olufemi, "Transmisogyny: Who Wins?" 51.

⁴⁴ Olufemi, "Transmisogyny: Who Wins?" 52.

⁴⁵ Olufemi, "Transmisogyny: Who Wins?" 52.

view sex as a social construct as well, particularly in recognizing the way that it has been used to establish supposed inherent differences between males and females. In no way was Butler trying to imply that sex and gender are unimportant or that there are no differences in physical capabilities between female and male bodies. Butler instead says that those differences are exaggerated and inaccurate, because there are a wide range of variables where even cisgender men and women are not born conforming to the mold of their assigned sex in physicality, personality, cognitive ability, and sociality. In such cases, people were policed: “Gender harms us all when it is used as a vehicle for violence and exploitation. But when feminists adopt a binary understanding of gender and an essentialist idea that biology is destiny, they put trans women at risk.”⁴⁶ In the real world where women could be stronger or taller than some men and men weaker or shorter than some women, it would not reflect their sexuality or gender identity. Due to transmisogynistic assumptions that surrounded trans women, gendered violence against trans people who lived in the Americas placed the life expectancy of trans individuals at an average of 35, with 80% of the trans people murdered at aged 35 years or younger.⁴⁷

The erasure that trans people in Indigenous communities went through during colonialism and the resurgence of violence against them since the twentieth century has placed trans women in the odd position of being viewed as “men dressed as women,” while still being met with the kind of sexual and physical violence all women have endured. For trans Black women, or transmisogynoir, there is the issue of the hypermasculinization of Black women, of anti-Black racism, and of the sexual victimization of Black women that makes Black transwomen the most vulnerable across women, Black, and LGBT+ communities. Olufemi expanded on this point by stressing how the intersections

⁴⁶ Olufemi, “Transmisogyny: Who Wins?” 54.

⁴⁷ Olufemi, “Transmisogyny: Who Wins?” 53. This information was based on a registry that documented violent cases in which LGBT+ people were victimized that occurred between January 2013 and March 2014.

of what transwomen deal with is part of why it is vital that feminists and anti-racist activists recognize that women's oppression never stemmed from a singular place.

Race and sexuality, both colonial concepts, have always been deeply intertwined with one another and serve as tools of dehumanization, the combined effects of which most harmed BIPOC women, but has lately targeted transgender women.

Chapter five of historians John D'Emilio and Estelle B.

Freedman's collaborative work, *Intimate Matters*, is an excellent summary and analysis of what connects the ways Black and Native American women were originally sexualized and racialized during the nineteenth century and onward. Native women were considered racially and sexually inferior compared to White women since European settlement first began in present-day Mexico and the Southwest, idealizing White women as sexually pure, while Native and Black women were stereotyped as prostitutes or temptresses.⁴⁸ Interracial marriages were one way Anglos established racial and sexual dominance over Native American and Mexican women, but rape and sexual violence remained a primary method White males used against Native women.⁴⁹

The sexual violence that stemmed from settler colonialism added to the sexual abuse women and girls already suffered at the missions.⁵⁰ When the missions were disestablished, residential schools replaced them and continued the violent assimilation of

⁴⁸ John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 90. According to D'Emilio and Freedman, the small number of white male settlers that were migrating were willing to marry into Native and Mexican families as a means of obtaining economic standing in the Southwest, but surprisingly wound-up assimilating into Indigenous cultures. White male settlers even recognized their mixed children as their own as well as acknowledging their Native or Mexican maternal heritage. Eventually, the ratio between people of color and whites evened out and white people expected their Native and Mexican spouses and mixed children to assimilate to Anglo customs and forced Native women to essentially "be white."

⁴⁹ D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 91.

⁵⁰ D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 91.

Native and First Nations peoples through the state-sanctioned kidnappings of Native children across the country. All children suffered under this system, but girls were taught additional lessons in shame for their bodies and impending womanhood, as well as Christian ideologies of domesticity and subservience to men. The generational impacts of the missions and residential schools are one of the main concerns that contemporary Native feminists, like Paula Gunn Allen and Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy, aim to counter through the revitalization of women-centered systems and coming-of-age ceremonies that affirm the sacredness of girls and women.

Similarly, racial dominance over Black women was cruelly accomplished through sexual violence and denial of personhood. The ideals of sexual purity were reserved for White women whereas Black women, freed or enslaved, were stereotyped as sexually immoral by Whites in the North, where interracial marriage was illegal to prevent Black women from achieving status and segregation was in effect. Interestingly, albeit unsurprising, White women's sexuality was martially and reproductively restricted, especially in the South, whereas White men had the license to sexually victimize Black women to satisfy their sexual outlet while also maintaining racial domination.⁵¹ The restrictions White men placed on White women and the ownership they had over Black women's bodies perpetuated the notion that Black women made themselves sexually available to White men, but as D'Emilio and Freedman state, it was the master who had total power over the enslaved.

Marriages between Black people were only recognized amongst other Black people, but they could be separated if sold or forced to work on different plantations, and any children Black couples had were viewed as the result of premarital sex, as their parents could not legally marry.⁵² In Black communities in the South, there was no stigma attached to women who had children

⁵¹ D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 94-95.

⁵² D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 97. White plantation owners did encourage monogamous relations between enslaved Black peoples, but this was more in the interest of enslaving any children Black couples had.

outside of marriage, although there were expectations to have monogamous relationships and have Christian marriage ceremonies that integrated Black American culture. Black women were given some agency and protection through these conditional marriages as well as the chance at having families, however, Black women remained victimized by a system that denied them dignity, humanity, and womanhood.

Feminist revolutions that came at the end of the nineteenth century and exploded in the mid twentieth century allowed Black and Indigenous women to reclaim womanhood and open it for other groups of women, including LGBT+ women who were able to further expand the definition of what it meant to be a woman. Lesbian and bisexual women were at the forefront of the feminist movement, but like women of color and queer people of color had done in the Civil Rights movement (1954-1968), they split from the mainstream movement as a response to the hostility they received from White heterosexual feminists who viewed Queer issues as insignificant or divisive.⁵³ Before Queer women joined the movement, ideologies of womanhood were centered around wifehood (to men), motherhood, and domesticity, something Queer women supposedly threatened, despite being a necessary part of sexual liberation and expression.

A split occurred between 1969 and 1971 when lesbian and bisexual feminists joined with gay liberation circles to form lesbian-feminist organizations that shined a spotlight on the Queer community, which helped women realize their sexuality after years of believing they were straight. However, nothing had drawn more attention to gay rights than the Stonewall Riots that occurred in June of 1969, which led to the formation of the Gay Liberation Front that gay men, lesbian women, bisexual people, and gender-nonconforming people organized under. The trans-led movement of the 1960s and 70s that began with LGBT+ rights activists Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera were seldom recognized, and

⁵³ D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 316.

Rivera's famous speech that called out gay men and lesbian women for not advocating for trans people was even met with resounding boos from the crowd.

Womanhood ought to consider the unique lived experiences of women across every community, and it should be recognized that the narratives used to exclude transgender women has a connection to the dehumanization of Native women and Black women. The sexual victimization of Native women and the hypersexual jezebel caricature that has followed Black women are related to the dehumanizing image of the awaiting LGBT+ monster in the closet, ready to "turn" children gay or trans. Such narratives perpetuate the racist-sexist notions of womanhood that have upheld the powers of coloniality and continued the marginalization of women with intersecting identities. Since the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though, women of color and Queer women have resisted these traditionally racist and sexist notions of womanhood. From Indigenous women reclaiming their sacred roles as matriarchs, Black women fighting for freedom and autonomy, and to transwomen of all backgrounds marching for the right of medical self-determination, marginalized women challenge narratives that seek to force ideas of how "real" enough a woman must be to be considered a part of womanhood.

Bibliography

- Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- Baldy, Cutcha Risling. "Dining'xine:Wh-Mil-Na:Sa'a:N: Hupa People—With Them—It Stays, There Is a Hupa Tradition Oral Narratives and Native Feminisms." In *We Are Dancing for You: Native Feminisms and the Revitalization of Women's Coming-of-Age Ceremonies*, 28-50. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018.
- Carby, Hazel V. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>.
- D'Emilio, John, and Estelle Freedman. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 2005.
- Kaiser, Laurie. "The Black Madonna: Notions of True Womanhood from Jacobs to Hurston." *South Atlantic Review* 60, no. 1 (1995): 97–109.
- Koyama, Emi. "The Transfeminist Manifesto." In *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier. Massachusetts: Northern University Press, 2003.
- Lindsey, Treva B. *Colored No More: Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington, D.C.* Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2017.
- Miranda, Deborah A. "Extermination of the *Joyas*: Gendercide in Spanish California." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1-2 (Feb 2010): 253–284. muse.jhu.edu/article/372454.
- Olufemi, Lola. "Transmisogyny: Who Wins?" In *Feminism*,

Interrupted: Disrupting Power, 49-66. Chicago: Pluto Press, 2020.

Serano, Julia. *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*. New York: Seal Press, 2007.

Stremlau, Rose. “‘I Know What an Indian Woman Can Do’: Sarah Winnemucca Writes about Rape on the Northern Paiute Frontier,” in *Portraits of Women in the American West*. Edited by Dee Garceau-Hagen, 227-237. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Winnemucca Hopkins, Sarah. *Life Among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. California: Arcadia Press, 2017.

Author Bio

Ayden Kelly recently earned his bachelor of arts in history from California State University, San Bernardino. His area of focus is on United States history, with a particular interest in Chicana/e/o, Latina/e/o studies and Native American/Indigenous Peoples studies, as well as in feminist studies, gender and sexuality studies, African American history, and Asian American history. He has been committed to learning about historically marginalized communities, or “marginalized history,” and how the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and other forms of identity affect the ways people survey the often systematically suppressed or overlooked histories of marginalized peoples in the U.S. In the fall of 2024, Ayden plans to return to CSUSB to continue his education by pursuing a master of arts degree in history and eventually earn a PhD as part of his aspirations to become a professor. Born and raised in Southern California, Ayden had a culturally rich upbringing and proudly embraces his identity as a mixed Chicano (mestizo) and South Indian (Malayali and Telugu).



Woman and Death in Nineteenth Century America

By Kathleen Boswell

Abstract: The nineteenth century saw a shift in the perceptions of death, as historians have noted how Victorian peoples (1837-1901) had a strange fixation with morbidity that we today find odd. This article seeks to understand these fixations with death within the context of nineteenth-century femininity, or what has been termed the Cult of Domesticity. As the topic of women and death is sparse, the examinations of leading death historians are compared while some new historical perspectives are used to address some gaps between death and domesticity. The context of Victorian societal norms is examined, along with popular mourning practices and the reasons these practices gave comfort to those still living. Periods of social upheaval are also examined in this paper, like the effects of disease or mental illness and the American Civil War (1861-1865), as these events exacerbated the already shifting fixations on death. It is through the examination of morbidity that historical empathy with atypical topics can be achieved, while a greater understanding of the United States can be achieved through examinations of American women in the nineteenth century.

As we exit the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19 or COVID) pandemic, our lives have been forever altered and we find ourselves contemplating the effects of the loss of life on our futures. But despite the tragedy the COVID pandemic caused, it is important to remember those who have passed and that pandemics like this have happened before. One of the most notable examples

of previous pandemics is the 1918 Influenza Pandemic (1918-1920), nicknamed the Spanish Flu. Much of the information practices seen during COVID can be traced back to the 1918 pandemic.¹ This shows how valuable reflection on the past can be for future generations, especially in times of turmoil. The historical boundary for the topic of death should be pushed further back in time, as much can be gained through the examination of lesser-reviewed topics. Because this topic is so broad, the examination within this article will focus on women in the nineteenth century and their experiences.

A woman's role in Victorian society (1837-1901) was elevated to a cult-like status during the nineteenth century. In the United States, an obsession over etiquette and a person's place in society became a focal point of that century's culture. Strict societal rules needed to be followed in order to obtain status and acceptance and death was no exception. The cultural standards upheld by the broader society subjected women to executing prescribed methods of burial and drawn-out mourning rituals. When examining the overall opinions of historians on the subject of women and death, one finds that there is a gap in historical research. Women of the nineteenth century were placed within specific societal standards through the process of grieving, which was enforced with strict etiquette, though many expectations were next to impossible. The strain society had put on women coupled with the vast amounts of misunderstandings revolving around a woman's body, and the upheavals of society due to war or disease, resulted in a great many stressors for both women and the general population. The death rate of women and children was far higher than today, making the reality of death a more central aspect of a woman's life, although death was already prevalent in the lives of many during this period. There is a historical disconnect between the examination of death and the examination of women during the

¹ Matthew Boyce and Rebecca Katz, "The 1918 Influenza Pandemic and COVID-19," *American Experience PBS*, March 18, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/1918-influenza-pandemic-and-covid-19/>.

nineteenth century. However, this disconnect can be remedied through the examination of funerary and mortuary practices, the sphere of domesticity, sickness, and mental health, and the American Civil War (1861-1865).

The Importance of the Study of Death History

There is a tendency for people to shy away from morbid or uncomfortable historical topics, making the historiography of death sparse. If the study of death in general is infrequent, then the research connecting women and death is further scattered. Death history can be seen as a morbid topic because it forces us to acknowledge our own mortality and the inevitable death of the people we hold dear. However, if the context of uncomfortable historical topics is better examined, we might also discover something beneficial to our society. This period of history directly influences some modern aspects of grieving. For example, the Civil War helped to change the public's opinion on embalming, as men who died far from their families could be embalmed and brought back to their homes for burial.²

Before conducting an examination of women, it should be understood that major cultural shifts can also be seen in the way a culture acknowledges death. Nineteenth-century death obsession can be seen as incredibly morbid by today's standards. It may seem that today Americans have moved away from the macabre standards of the past, however, the line on what is and is not taboo has simply shifted to include what matters to Americans today. This includes topics like the Right to Die movement, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recently overturned Roe V. Wade. Gary Laderman discusses this in *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883* which gives an overview of America's practices involving death and explains the evolution of mortuary rituals through the nineteenth century. Laderman rejects

² Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 113.

the idea of a disconnect between the past and today's idea of morbidity, as he feels that the American conception of death today is still firmly rooted in "extremely emotional issues... including abortion, euthanasia, violence, suicide, genocide, and AIDS."³

Laderman is heavily influenced by Philippe Aries' work in *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, in which Aries stresses the emotional disconnect that began in the nineteenth century.⁴ Aries explains that this emotional disconnect is caused by a change in personal attitudes, as previously the focus of death was on "one's own death," the nineteenth century shifted to focus on the death of another person.⁵ Aries stretches the history of death even further back in time than his contemporaries, by examining how medieval sentiments on death were marked with a calm acceptance.⁶ Aries elaborates on the long period of death acceptance in history and our modern perceptions of death by saying: "People had been dying like that for centuries or millennia. In a world of change the traditional attitude toward death appears inert and static."⁷ Some level of disconnect may be correlated with the breakdown of social norms in times of turmoil, such as epidemics of disease or the American Civil War. This explains a later, twentieth-century emotional disconnect with death, which may have been caused by the tumultuous nature of two world wars and the Holocaust (1941-1945).⁸

Mortal Remains: Death in Early America is a collection of articles based on a symposium held in 2001 with the same name and edited by Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein. These articles allow for the more unseen sides of death to be better examined. The overall goal of *Mortal Remains* is to examine what Isenburg

³ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 7.

⁴ Philippe Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M Ranum (London: Marion Boyars, 1976), 13.

⁵ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 55-56.

⁶ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 13.

⁷ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 13.

⁸ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 7.

and Burstein describe as “neglected aspects of American culture.”⁹ The history of a woman’s role in death should be included among these neglected aspects, as women’s history can be misappropriated, and the original contexts can be lost or changed to fit a new narrative. With this in mind, it is important to note that the average woman discussed in this essay is usually White, protestant, and within the newly emerging middle class. This leaves a window of opportunity for the historical analysis of poor women, women of color, or queer individuals and their experiences with death in the nineteenth century that hopefully will be examined in the future.

The introduction to *Mortal Remains* also gives an examination of the ways in which historians, and average people, rationalize death. By using the phrase *life goes on*, we, as modern-day people, “are doing more than sighing in the acceptance of some passage, we are also asserting the power of the living to rationalize and remember death in new ways.”¹⁰ These re-remembrances of deaths that have long passed can be extended into the methodology of history, as events can be re-analyzed in their full context and with a complete view of information. Parallel to *Mortal Remains*, Matthew Dennis’ “Natives and Pioneers: Death and the Settling and Unsettling of Oregon” also stresses the need for re-examining historical interpretations to include past intentions, especially when the dead have long passed and can no longer speak for themselves.¹¹ Dennis’ article suggests that perceptions of historical events can change with time and that today’s people will often have a very different perception of events than the people who were alive at the time.¹² The reality of

⁹ Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein, *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 1.

¹⁰ Isenberg and Burstein, *Mortal Remains*, 2.

¹¹ Matthew Dennis, “Natives and Pioneers: Death and the Settling and Unsettling of Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 115, No. 3 (Fall 2014): 288.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5403/oregonhistq.115.3.0282>.

¹² Matthew Dennis, “Natives and Pioneers,” 292.

historians being the only voice for the long dead is extended into women's death history as well. For example, the Temperance movement was spearheaded by progressive-minded women during the nineteenth century but could also be viewed as extreme to a modern woman whose life is so far removed from the historical context of the time. Today's historians should ask themselves if the people of the past would agree with their modern interpretations of their lives, and in the context of this article, readers should ask themselves if the mourning practices featured in this article are truly morbid.

The Cult of Domesticity

The family structure was incredibly important to a Victorian woman, as her life revolved around the need to care for and curate the household. A home decorated with finely made crafts showed guests that the female domain was well cared for. A need to purchase or craft items for the home became more prominent during this time, as the purchasing of goods was considered to be under the woman's sphere of influence.¹³ Spurred by the advanced technology that allowed for industrialization, the growing middle classes caused an increase in consumer culture and in turn heavily impacted the nineteenth-century funeral industry as wakes were often held in the home. Despite the feminine social structures of the nineteenth century revolving around the home, domesticity was supposed to be inclusive of many aspects of a proper woman – even a woman who chose to incorporate herself in social advocacies.

To better understand the historical discourse of a woman's social standing during this period, readers should first be reminded of Barbara Welter's influential article *The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860*, which stresses the four major aspects of

¹³ Helen Sheumaker, *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 136.

an ideal woman: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.¹⁴ Expanding upon the core values of domesticity, Ellen M. Plante's book *Women at Home in Victorian America: A Social History* also gives a broad overview of the domestic social standards of women of the nineteenth century while also giving readers a glimpse into a woman's daily life. Throughout the book, Plante uses the term *cult of domesticity*, a variation of Welter's *Cult of True Womanhood*, to refer to the reverence the home was given.¹⁵ From these examples, the condition of a woman's home was directly correlated to her value and self-worth.¹⁶

There are recent debates on the legitimacy of Welter's original analysis on domesticity.¹⁷ *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States*, written by Teresa Anne Murphy, focuses on women's nationalism and debates the prevalent ideas on citizenship in early American history. Murphy's examinations center around what she calls *domestic citizenship*, a term she uses to describe the blending of domestic values and the yearning some women had for a place in the newly formed United States. Murphy argues that the overall goal of female historians at this time was not to earn citizenship for women but to "create an alternative to full citizenship."¹⁸ Murphy's writings, along with Mary Kelly's "Beyond the Boundaries," help to dispel the idea that women at that time were all compliant domestic beings. Kelly breaks down Welter's four sub-divisions of domesticity, stating that the values of a *true woman* may have been empowering to women instead of restricting.¹⁹ Murphy's major theme throughout the book revolves around domestic writers, which included female

¹⁴ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," in *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1966), 151-74, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2711179>.

¹⁵ Ellen M. Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America: A Social History* (New York: Facts on File, 1997), 68.

¹⁶ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 68.

¹⁷ Mary Kelly, "Beyond the Boundaries," *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 73-78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3125096>.

¹⁸ Teresa Anne Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 193.

¹⁹ Mary Kelly, "Beyond the Boundaries," 75.

historians, though these historians in the nineteenth century did not always agree on how much participation women should be allowed to have, if any. Murphy elaborates on this herself in her thorough examination of how women studied history in early America by stating, “One of the most important studies of nineteenth-century women’s history argues that it involved no political engagement.”²⁰ It should not be lost on the reader that the nineteenth century included the height of the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840) and encouraged individuality among women and other minority groups, which in turn influenced women to participate more in social reform.²¹ Those women who were involved with social reformations during the nineteenth often focused on the politics of the home, like abusive families or childcare.

Although Plante’s book mostly examines the social structures of women, she also includes the changing family structure in her analysis. Children were beginning to be viewed as innocent, which strayed away from the protestant view of inherent evil residing within each soul.²² Therefore, as seen in Murphy’s *Citizenship and the Origins of Women’s History in the United States*, women needed to be educated, and in turn, they could better educate their children. However, Murphy’s examination also shows that an educated woman was seen as threatening to the status quo of society.²³ Plante’s analysis aligns with Murphy’s, as Plante examines how women authors of the nineteenth century were harshly criticized because what a woman read or wrote could

²⁰ Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women’s History in the United States*, 5.

²¹ Lance Sum, “The Omnipresence of Christianity in the United States: An Analysis of the Second Great Awakening (1790-1850),” (Master’s thesis, Bard College, 2023), 3, https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=history_mat.

²² Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 79.

²³ Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women’s History in the United States*, 31.

negatively impact their morality.²⁴ Instead, women were encouraged to read magazines or periodicals that sought to teach a woman her proper place in society, both Plante and Murphy's books highlight *Godey's Lady's Book* as a popular method for women to understand their place within domesticity while expressing their opinions on where a woman stands within society. Magazines like *Godey's Lady's Book* were also a method of understanding how women should conduct themselves, for example, it offered ladies the correct attire for mourning.²⁵

The question arises, why were women of the nineteenth century so hyper-focused on domesticity? Murphy's answer: Many women's histories at this time were examining the faults of women in the past. One of these past faults was consumerism, which nineteenth-century women could see increasing with the rise of industrialization.²⁶ Industrialization was dependent on laborers, and this even included some middle-class women working outside of the home. Murphy gives an example through Paulina Wright Davis's 1853 examination of the evolving industrialization in America, Davis argued: "that women's [home] work became devalued as a result."²⁷ Industrialism also led to excess wealth within the middle class, which meant that they could now afford to memorialize their loved ones in the manner they saw fit.

Another reason for the advocacy of domesticity was because it could elevate women to a companion of men, instead of just subservience.²⁸ To be a good companion, a good mentor to her children, and a good citizen, meant that a wife needed to be educated. In response to the growing support for women's education, women began to involve themselves in politics and

²⁴ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 170-171.

²⁵ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 201.

²⁶ Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States*, 18-19.

²⁷ Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States*, 126.

²⁸ Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States*, 24.

began voicing their own opinions through their historical analyses of the women who preceded them. Murphy found through her research that domestic histories created by women at this time were unifying.²⁹ However, this same type of womanhood also stressed that a woman's place in society was without political rights. With the context of women's roles during the nineteenth century in mind, readers can now understand the surrounding circumstances of domesticity as we explore funerary and mortuary practices.

Nineteenth-Century Funerary and Mortuary Practices

In any period of history examining methods of mourning can provide insight into what a culture views as important, and this is especially true in the nineteenth century. This period of American history saw an increase in obsessions with memorializing the dead. What was worn during mourning and the objects people purchased or crafted could show their personal relation to the deceased, following the mourning etiquette showed respect for both the dead and the living. Though the nineteenth century saw an increase in industrial-made goods, handmade crafts were still widespread and could showcase a woman's tactile skill in homemaking. What a woman made often depended on her class, as a middle-class woman could afford to stay at home and care for the family. If the family could afford it, more elaborate and time-consuming memorialization practices would be used. As the century progressed, a woman's role in mortuary practices moved from an active role to a passive one. Women and their associations with domesticity helped to encourage this passive role, as more gruesome death aspects were believed to be too much for a woman's light and pure demeanor.

To understand how women and death history connect, an understanding of death rituals in the nineteenth century must be

²⁹ Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States*, 133.

established. Gary Laderman is one of the leading historians on the examination of death in America and one of the main themes in his *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883* explains why burial practices are important; they give closure to the living.³⁰ A variance in gender examinations can be studied in both Laderman and Ellen M. Plante's book *Women at Home in Victorian America: A Social History*. Laderman describes the careful preparation of the body along with more physical aspects of mourning, while Plante describes the intense social aspects. Plante's analysis of mourning includes descriptions of a woman's roles in middle-class, nineteenth-century America which was much more restrictive compared to women before or after this period. It is interesting to note that both authors mention that women were not required, or sometimes even not allowed, to attend the burial. Laderman suggests that this was because of strict societal standards set on women.³¹ These strict standards can be seen through the obsession with domestic values that arose during this period.

A change occurred around the social aspects of womanhood in the nineteenth century, as the social conditions women were subjected to meant that some aspects of death were viewed as too gruesome for a delicate woman to see.³² In fact, Laderman states that women were expressly separated from mortuary rituals as the nineteenth century came to a close, claiming that women were "replaced by male professionals with technical expertise in the treatment of the dead."³³ This is more closely examined in Georganne Rundblad's article "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," in which she shows the importance and prestige "shrouding women" had in their

³⁰ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 3.

³¹ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 157.

³² Georganne Rundblad, "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," *Gender and Society* 9, no. 2 (April 1995), 181, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/189870>.

³³ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 157.

communities in the first half of the nineteenth century.³⁴ Shrouding Women bathed, dressed, and arranged a body for burial before the rise of the funeral industry.³⁵ Rundblad notes a special trust was given to Shrouding Women, as they were highly trained in natural methods of body preservation which their communities relied on.³⁶ Shrouding women were exclusively female, with male involvement in body preparation being especially strict to the point where men were expressly banned from the room when the body was being prepared.³⁷ Men were excluded from body preparations perhaps because it was commonly a woman's role to care for the newborns and the sick, which could easily extend into elderly and death care. However, shrouding women's prestigious positions within communities would diminish as embalming practices increased. Again, the grim work associated with embalming a body was seen as a man's task, which pushed women into a more passive funerary role.³⁸ This passiveness can be seen in Figure 1, which shows an advertisement from a funerary magazine titled *The Casket*, which Rundblad examines in their article. This advertisement showcases a woman placed on a pedestal, symbolizing the elevated status of young White women while admiring herself in a mirror, which shows the woman's vanity toward herself. Rundblad notes that women within advertisements in the later nineteenth century "were limited to the role of prop" instead of actively engaging in mortuary practices.³⁹

³⁴ Rundblad, "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," 174.

³⁵ Rundblad, "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," 178-179.

³⁶ Rundblad, "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," 179-180.

³⁷ Rundblad, "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," 180.

³⁸ Rundblad, "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," 183.

³⁹ Rundblad, "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," 186.

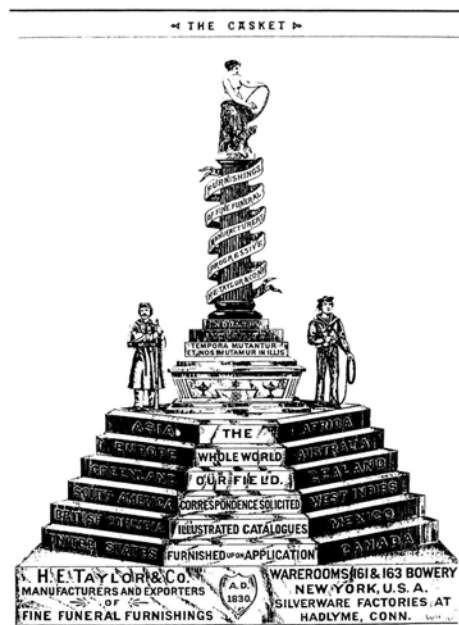


Figure 1: An advertisement from the mortuary magazine *The Casket*, which features a woman in a passive role in funerary rituals.⁴⁰

Another aspect both Plante and Laderman mention in their respective works is the mention of funeral mementos, like hairwork, which was a common craft for women to make during mourning.⁴¹ Hairwork is the practice of using human hair to form personal keepsakes memorializing a lost loved one. Hairwork and other forms of creative expression in mourning incorporated themes popular within the nineteenth century, mainly Greek or Roman revival, Romanticism, and Christian themes.⁴² For

40 Rundblad, “Exhuming Women’s Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead,” 186. It should be acknowledged that this image was first examined by Rundblad in their article. I attempted to find my own advertising example from issues of *The Casket*, however my access to issues is limited. So, I decided to include it in my article too, as this advertisement is a prime example of both funerary and domestic values in the 19th century.

⁴¹ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 166.

⁴² Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 17.

example, it is common to find hairwork chains with Christian symbols as shown in Figure 2. Nature was another incredibly common theme women chose when working with hair, as this period saw an uptick in nature appreciation. Hairwork could be crafted into flowers, trees, or other plants that were framed. These framed artworks usually included hair from multiple people, often with varying colors of hair, to form a harmonious bouquet or reef of hair. The hair used could be from both the dead or the living and sometimes was used as personal gifts. For example, men were given watch chains made from their still-living lover's hair.⁴³ More subtle forms of hairwork include thinly woven sheets of hair placed in a locket or draped carefully over an image to form the branches of a willow tree or ground up into a pigment and used to paint small mourning scenes.⁴⁴



Figure 2: A pendant that incorporates a cross, made of woven human hair and capped with gold ends.⁴⁵

⁴³ Sheumaker, *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America*, 140.

⁴⁴ "Mementos of Affection," *Google Arts & Culture*, Accessed December 6, 2023, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/mementos-of-affection-cincinnati-art-museum/kgUx-6ikEsZhIA?hl=en>. The Cincinnati Art Museum curated an excellent collection of hairwork with descriptions and dates of each.

⁴⁵ Unknown Maker, *American Cross*, Early 1800s, Hair with gold caps, 5.1 cm, RISD Museum. https://risdmuseum.org/art-design/collection/cross41001?return=%2Fartdesign%2Fcollection%3Fsearch_ap

Helen Sheumaker, in *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America* breaks down the emotional connection to such a strange art form. While Sheumaker expressly claims hairwork as a feminine art form, she does state that some men enjoyed this activity as well.⁴⁶ Laderman examines why these mementos became so popular: people “expressed a need for maintaining physical proximity and resisting the finality that comes with bodily disintegration.”⁴⁷ A self-instruction book marketed towards women and published by a male entrepreneur named Mark Campbell gave weaving patterns that could be followed from within the comfort of the home.⁴⁸ Campbell shows himself as the demonstrator for his book, as shown in Figure 3. The inclusion of men suggests that, despite hairwork and associated mourning crafts being women-centric, the need to express grief through tactile arts has always existed beyond genders. Despite the need to grieve being universal, there was still a negative connotation when men attempted to enter the sentimental world of women’s domesticity.⁴⁹ Men’s inclusion in hairwork exemplifies the diversity between gender norms during this period. However, men’s inclusion in the craft is an exception, which rejected previously dominant historical ideas, like those examined in Barbara Welter’s “The Cult of True Womanhood,” which focuses on the restrictive and gendered standards of the

[i_fulltext%3Djewelry%2B%26field_type%3DAll#content_section--use--1185196](#). Christian symbolism was common in memorial hairwork. The hair chains featured in this pendant are similar to the hair chains demonstrated in Mark Campbell’s manual on hairwork.

⁴⁶ Sheumaker, *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America*, 125.

⁴⁷ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 76.

⁴⁸ Mark Campbell, *Self-Instructor in the Art of Hair Work, Dressing Hair, Making Curls, Switches, Braids, and Hair Jewelry of Every Description*, (New York: M. Campbell, 1867), Project Gutenberg ebook, (2013), 8, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/38658/pg38658-images.html>.

⁴⁹ Sheumaker, *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America*, 136.

nineteenth century.⁵⁰ Both men and women were forced into rigid boundaries, but as previously discussed, there is room for examinations of the people who did not conform to this period's gender roles.

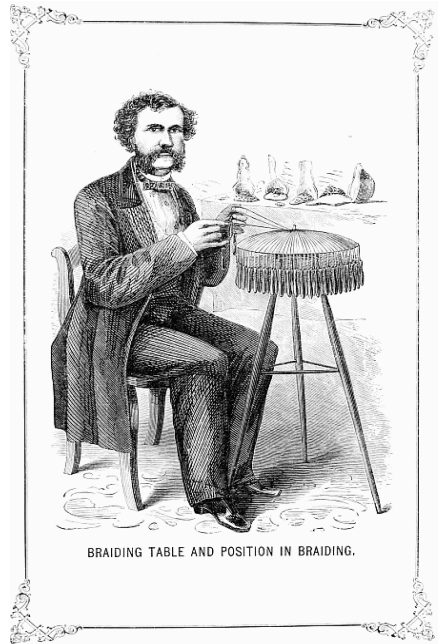


Figure 3: Though the braiding table was marketed towards women, Mark Campbell chose to demonstrate the correct use of a braiding table for hairwork in his instruction manual for hairwork chains.⁵¹

⁵⁰ For more on the rejection of Welter's influential article see: Mary Kelly's "Beyond the Boundaries," in *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 1 (2001): 73–78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3125096>.

⁵¹ Mark Campbell, *Self-Instructor in the Art of Hair Work, Dressing Hair, Making Curls, Switches, Braids, and Hair Jewelry of Every Description*, (New York: M. Campbell, 1987), Project Gutenberg ebook, 8, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/38658/pg38658-images.html>. Campbell's book is heavily marketed towards both genders, as there are advertisements for a cure-all with their benefits towards men and women on page 269-270. This cure-all was also manufactured by Campbell.

Remembrance practices evolved through the nineteenth century and as technology progressed. During the early period of the nineteenth century, painted memorial portraits were a popular way to memorialize loved ones. These types of portraits were embroidered and then filled in with watercolor paint to create more detail.⁵² They were often created by schoolgirls as practice for both artistic skills and proper grieving.⁵³ An example of a memorial portrait can be seen in Figure 4, with closer inspection of the portrait showing the intricate stitches that make up her dress and revealing the level of care placed in the craftsmanship. Later in the nineteenth century, photography became a popular form of memorialization. In most death portraits the deceased were situated in a way that allowed them to appear to be sleeping, as seen in Figure 5. Physical depictions of the dead coincide with Aries' proposition that people tended to grieve for longer periods during the nineteenth century, instead of the idea of letting go that mourners often utilize when grieving today.⁵⁴ Both constructed objects, like hairwork or photographs of the deceased, help create a sense of permanence for a grieving person.⁵⁵

⁵² Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 197.

⁵³ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 197.

⁵⁴ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 13.

⁵⁵ Maureen Daly Goggin, and Beth Fowkes Tobin. *Women and the Material Culture of Death*, (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013), 2.

Woman and Death



Figure 4: Memorial portrait of Catharine Schultz. Her dress is embroidered with silk string, while her body has been painted. Shultz died at the age of forty-three, but this portrait portrays her at around the age of fifteen, suggesting a need to express an idealized version of the deceased.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ *Memorial Portrait of Catharine Schultz, 1789-1832, c.1838 Oil paint and silk thread on silk, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, United States, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/16588>.*



Figure 5: A daguerreotype of a deceased woman named Harriet Lamb. In this photo, Lamb has been placed, as if sleeping, in her coffin. The inclusion of photography moves away from the idolization seen in mourning portraits.⁵⁷

Poems were another popular way of expressing oneself throughout the Victorian era. Many of the surviving poems we have today were kept in personal journals or diaries, and the contents range from the death of a child to the memorialization of a friend. Nineteenth-century women's death poems can also be found published in newspapers or periodicals from the time. More popular writers would release a collection of their poems to be purchased as books, which often contained multiple poems referencing death within. An example of a particularly moving

⁵⁷ Marcus A. Root, *Portrait of Harriet Lamb*, 1/2 plate daguerreotype, Philadelphia: 1853. Lamb-Sykes Family Papers Collection at the University of Michigan William L. Clements Library, Michigan, <https://clements.umich.edu/exhibit/death-in-early-america/post-mortem-phototypes>.

poem from the time contains themes of the viewing of the long past dead, the death of a young child, and the attempt to understand the nature of death:

*All waiting: the new-coffined dead,
The handful of mere dust that lies
Sarcophagused in stone and lead
Under the weight of centuries:
Knight, cardinal, bishop, abbess mild,
With last week's buried year-old child.*

*After the tempest cometh peace,
After long travail sweet repose;
These folded palms, these feet that cease
From any motion, are but shows
Of—what? What rest? How rest they? Where?
The generations naught declare.*

*Dark grave, unto whose brink we come,
Drawn nearer by all nights and days;
Each after each, thy solemn gloom
We pierce with momentary gaze,
Then go, unwilling or content, to
The way that all our fathers went.⁵⁸*

The questioning of death proposed in this poem was still a new occurrence that began in the eighteenth century, flowing into the nineteenth century, and differs from the quiet acceptance that came before.⁵⁹

When the poem's author compares the death of a child to that of high-ranking church officials, the reader is reminded of *the great equalizer*. The great equalizer is a term for the concept that all beings are made equal through death. Though the anonymous

⁵⁸ Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, "The Cathedral Tombs" in *Poems*, (Boston, Ticknor and Fields, 1866), 221-222.

⁵⁹ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 13.

author lived in the United Kingdom at the time of the poem's publication, it was reprinted in the United States presumably because of its popularity. Another change that occurred during the nineteenth century concerned whose death was the focus. While previously the focus was on "one's own death"; the focus shifted to "the death of another person."⁶⁰ Women seem to be especially vibrant in their questioning of death because they not only dealt with the death of loved ones but faced the possibility of their own mortality during childbirth.

Apparel etiquette standards during mourning periods were especially restrictive for both genders. The time dedicated to wearing mourning clothes varied depending on a person's personal or familial relationship with the deceased.⁶¹ However, women's mourning dress and the accompanying period of observance were even more restrictive and went on for a longer period.⁶² Plante states that strict adherence to mourning rituals was expected to be practiced by women.⁶³ This responsibility was also coupled with the need to purchase or make new mourning clothes for the upcoming funeral.⁶⁴ Magazines and other printed publications often devoted entire sections to adherence to correct mourning attire. However, these practices varied as the nineteenth century progressed and customs changed.⁶⁵ Plante makes note of the few similarities that authors of mourning etiquette manuals of the time concurred upon, stating that "Most authors agreed that 'deep' mourning prohibited wearing kid gloves. Rather, cloth or silk were an acceptable substitute. Also, no jewelry was to be worn for the first month, and trim work (embroidery, puffs, plaits on dresses) was not allowed. Mourning handkerchiefs of fine linen were required to have a black border, as were mourning cards."⁶⁶ This

⁶⁰ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 55-56.

⁶¹ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 197.

⁶² Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 199.

⁶³ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 197.

⁶⁴ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 199.

⁶⁵ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 201.

⁶⁶ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 201.

very public display of mourning was attributed to being respectful to the deceased person but also shows the outward need for grieving that verge on the performative.

Despite women's roles becoming more passive, this does not mean that women themselves were passive mourners. Expressions of grief were very important to the people of the nineteenth century and women still had to show their community support. Calling cards were popular before the widespread use of phones, as visitors could leave them by the door if the homeowner was gone.⁶⁷ Most women's calling cards were often decorated with floral motifs. Figure 6 shows a mourning calling card, which is indicated through the black border.⁶⁸



Figure 6: A man named Gustave Doré's calling card.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 124.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, "Gustave Doré, calling card," Engraving. 2 3/8 in x 4 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/722745>.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, "Gustave Doré, calling card." This card shows a black border, which is customary for a person in mourning. Though this calling card is from France, cards like this one were used in nineteenth-century America as well.

Contributions to Death: Sickness, Mental Health, and War

As many of the books examined in this essay mention, life expectancies during nineteenth-century America could be very short. Historians sometimes debate whether mortality rates are skewed because of the high mortality rate of infants and children. However accurate the death statistics are, the reality of death was vivid in the minds of Americans in the nineteenth century, especially women who were preparing for birth. Plante lightly touches upon the topic of death in her book as she examines etiquette rituals that nineteenth-century mourning involves.⁷⁰ The preparation mothers took on as they awaited childbirth often included the acceptance of death, as many women heard or saw others die from childbirth.⁷¹ As technology progressed, new treatments and medicines were being applied to women in labor. This could include potentially toxic chemicals, like chloroform, but also drugs like opium and laudanum which were administered to relieve labor pains.⁷²

The idea of revolutionary medical practices extends into women's mental health as well, with the nineteenth century seeing the rise of the "new treatment," or what was believed to be more humane treatments of mental health. Yet, while there was a push to treat those in need of mental aid with more stability, the reality was far from ideal.⁷³ In a time when women's mental health was terribly misunderstood, the dangers of being emotionally unwell could tarnish a woman's reputation, or worse, it could cause her to

⁷⁰ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 196-201.

⁷¹ Robert V. Wells, "A Tale of Two Cities: Epidemics and the Rituals of Death in Eighteenth-Century Boston and Philadelphia," in *Mortal Remains, Death in Early America*. Edited by Nancy Isenberg and Adrew Burstein. 56-67 (University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc, 2012), 61.

⁷² Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 73-75.

⁷³ Colin Jones, "The 'New Treatment' of the Insane in Paris: The Formation of the Lunatic Asylum under the French Revolution," *History Today*, (1980): 10. This article shows the way in which the "New Treatment" disguised the ongoing brutality against mentally ill individuals.

be locked in an asylum indefinitely.⁷⁴ It is here that we do not see the physical death, but the social death as women were now out of society's vision and therefore forgotten. Outside institutions, attempts to cure a woman's "hysteria" could range from bed rest and exercise to more dangerous prescriptions. For example, cure-alls were commonly prescribed and marketed to women. However, it was known that these medicines contained high amounts of alcohol, which could lead to addiction.⁷⁵ This incomprehension coupled with the strain of unrealistic standards in the cult of domesticity, shows the mental strain that women were subjected to. Plante concurs with this sentiment as she describes the nineteenth-century women's lifestyle as having "had a negative impact on [women's] general well-being."⁷⁶ Plante continues by suggesting that one of the common causes of mental anguish was as a woman aged, she was outliving her usefulness because women were the primary caregivers and age reversed their caregiving role onto their families.⁷⁷ Historically, women were the caregivers to children, the elderly, and the sick and dying, but as they aged they could no longer properly hold these customary roles.

Caring for the sick was often seen as a woman's duty to her family and community because compassion was seen as a virtue. The spread of disease during the nineteenth century created epidemics within highly populated areas, and the worse those epidemics became, the more societies' funerary structures began to break down. Robert V Wells's "A Tale of Two Cities: Epidemics and the Rituals of Death in Eighteenth-Century Boston and Philadelphia" examines how epidemics can lead to the "temporary abandonment" of normal death rituals.⁷⁸ The social rituals

⁷⁴ Nellie Bly, *Ten Days in a Mad-House; Or Nellie Bly's Experience on Blackwell's Island*, (New York: Norman L. Munro, 1877), 162. Nellie Bly's undercover journalism of an American insane asylums during the nineteenth-century showcases multiple women assigned to internment, despite being completely sane.

⁷⁵ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 185.

⁷⁶ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 185.

⁷⁷ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 178.

⁷⁸ Wells, "A Tale of Two Cities," 56.

associated with death were the first to break down, as fears of catching the sickness influenced people to stay apart. Wells includes examples of the social breakdown witnessed by a woman named Elizabeth Drinker during a yellow fever epidemic in 1793 in Philadelphia:

On September 4, she recorded the “sad story” of a young woman who had been serving as a nurse, but when she herself took sick, neighbors sent her off. Eventually, a magistrate arranged for a cart to take her to the hospital, and there she was denied admittance, only to be found dead in the cart the next morning. The story of Robert Broker was further evidence of social disarray. The night Broker died of yellow fever, his wife went into labor. She called out her window for help, but no one responded until the following morning, when she, too, was found dead, though the newborn was alive. Given Drinker’s own eagerness to care for her family and friends, this violation of social duty must have appalled her.⁷⁹

Elizabeth Drinker’s account is an example of what an already vulnerable woman can be subjected to when faced with extreme circumstances. Not only were yellow fever epidemics common but also “whooping cough, cholera, diphtheria, influenza and tuberculosis.”⁸⁰ Women were often the primary caretakers for their sick family members in times of turmoil. However, as seen in the case of Shrouding Women, women were also discouraged from becoming physicians as it was believed that the vulgarity was too much for a delicate woman to handle. This was not the universal opinion of all nineteenth-century persons, as seen in an 1875 issue

⁷⁹ Wells, “A Tale of Two Cities,” 65.

⁸⁰ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 178.

of *Godey's Lady's Book*, where the argument for the inclusion of female physicians was made.⁸¹

Concerns with the decay of bodies also became an issue as medical professionals during the nineteenth century worried that putrefaction could be dangerous to nearby communities.⁸² As cemeteries near cities became overfilled, the rural cemetery movement was born which was the practice of moving cemeteries away from populated areas. This idea is reinforced in Laderman's *The Sacred Remains*, which describes the need to lay bodies to rest in a natural setting.⁸³ The push to lay individuals within the beauty of nature coincides with the nature appreciation seen in morning rituals, like previously discussed hairwork bouquets. Laderman adds that another contributing factor to rural cemeteries was the church's loss of power, as "the church began to lose its close association with the space of death."⁸⁴ Industrialization and urbanization were increasingly associated with disease and sickness within cities, to combat this, people began wanting to lay their loved ones to rest in beautiful pastures instead of city cemeteries.

Waves of disease were not the only major event during the decade that caused an upheaval of social norms. It is estimated that the death toll during the American Civil War was about 600,000 in both the North and South.⁸⁵ Before the acceptance of embalming, the remains of soldiers were buried in nearby cemeteries or mass graves. Laderman also recognizes the impact the Civil War had on death culture and the role women played as families and nurses to soldiers. Despite the breakdowns of funerary practices during wartime, there were attempts to give the bodies of soldiers who passed in makeshift hospitals proper burials. Laderman mentions

⁸¹ Sarah J Hale and Louis A. Godey, "Ladies Physicians in England" in *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, Vol 90., (Philadelphia, Jan - June 1875), 185, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00322058h&seq=7>.

⁸² Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 1799-1883, 96.

⁸³ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 1799-1883, 69.

⁸⁴ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 1799-1883, 69.

⁸⁵ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 1799-1883, 96.

“Hospital Nurses, along with members of the Sanitary Commission and Christian Commission,” who buried soldiers in simple coffins with a White grave marker inscribed with the information of the deceased.⁸⁶ Laderman parallels the improvised funerary practices during the war with the fact that burial practices could become cruder as one got closer to the front lines, noting the accounts of tightly packed graves and mounds of unburied amputated limbs.⁸⁷

Much of the feminine perspectives of the American Civil War come from the memoirs of nurses. According to Ashley Byock in her examination of nurse’s memoirs, most of the context within was about the mechanics of hospitals and the suffering of dying soldiers in contrast to “the epic scale of the war’s battles, generals, and even political contexts” that can be seen in a male perspective.⁸⁸ It should be noted that most published memoirs were from the perspectives of northern women, who had better access to publishers, leaving a slightly skewed historical representation.⁸⁹ Despite this, the memoirs of female nurses in the Civil War show an attempt to bring the normal social aspects of domesticity to the chaotic sidelines of the war.⁹⁰ One theme Byock finds throughout many memoirs is “the re-unification of family... as the nurse becomes the mother/wife/sister of the soldier and attends to him in place of these women.”⁹¹ Survivors of the Civil War, from both the North and South, male or female, had to collectively mourn the massive amounts of dead.⁹² Death was a great unifying aspect of nineteenth-century people, yet the limitations of technology meant that some aspects typical in nineteenth-century mourning were unachievable during the war. However, some women still

⁸⁶ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains, 1799-1883*, 107.

⁸⁷ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains, 1799-1883*, 108.

⁸⁸ Ashley Byock, “Domesticating Death in the Sentimental Republic: Commemoration and Mourning in U.S. Civil War Nurses’ Memoirs,” *Women and the Material Culture of Death*, (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013), 158.

⁸⁹ Byock, “Domesticating Death in the Sentimental Republic,” 158.

⁹⁰ Byock, “Domesticating Death in the Sentimental Republic,” 160.

⁹¹ Byock, “Domesticating Death in the Sentimental Republic,” 161.

⁹² Byock, “Domesticating Death in the Sentimental Republic,” 159.

journeyed to battlegrounds and hospitals in search of lost loved ones.⁹³ As grieving families do today the retrieval of remains can help to form some form of closure from seeing and preparing the body as they normally would have.

The Impact on Today

It is true throughout American history that mortuary practices aid in easing the suffering of the living, but that can be specifically applied to the nineteenth century as the connection with death is a prominent aspect of this period's culture. As the decade progressed and technology advanced, funerals made their way further from the homes of women and instead became another product of industrialization. Indications of the funeral industry that are so familiar to us today are traced back to the nineteenth century. Yet there seems to be a modern disconnect between today's America and death that has evolved since the nineteenth century passed. This idea is only emphasized by Laderman's proposal that, through the trauma caused by the violence in the twentieth century, acceptance of death culture was less prevalent and resulted in "the gradual displacement of death in daily living."⁹⁴ To corroborate this Philippe Aries explains the calmness people preceding the nineteenth century had as they prepared to die, as they were portrayed "with no theatrics."⁹⁵ Aries continues his comparison of the old and new by saying: "the old attitude in which death was both familiar and near, evoking no great fear or awe, offers too marked a contrast to ours, where we dare not utter its name... I do not mean that death had once been wild and ceased to be so. I mean, on the contrary, that today it has become wild."⁹⁶

Though the beautifully macabre is now a taboo in our society, it has not altogether disappeared. A fascination with death persists through the popularity of true crime, and other morbid

⁹³ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 1799-1883, 111.

⁹⁴ Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, 7.

⁹⁵ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 13.

⁹⁶ Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 13-14.

media, which has its own deeply misunderstood history.⁹⁷ Today as in the past it is important to process grief through memorializing the dead. Women today still provide a sense of comfort to their families and friends during periods of mourning, but this role is not only designated to them. The people of the past were not afraid to face death head-on because they dealt with it so frequently, but with the upheaval of norms caused by the COVID pandemic, we now relate to the past a bit more than before. Even though life expectancy today has increased with modern medicine and science, current citizens should remember to live life more fully because we too will transition to the next phase of existence, a fact that the people of the nineteenth century knew so well.

⁹⁷ For more on the roots of America's obsession with true crime see Daniel A Cohen, "Blood Will Out: Sensationalism, Horror, and the Roots of American Crime Literature" in *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 31-55.

Bibliography

- Anonymous. "Gustave Doré, calling card." Engraving. 2 3/8 in x 4 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/722745>.
- Aries, Philippe. *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*. Translated by Patricia M Ranum. London: Marion Boyars, 1976.
- Bly, Nellie. *Ten Days in a Mad-House; Or, Nellie Bly's Experience on Blackwell's Island*. New York: Norman L. Munro, 1877.
- Boyce, Matthew, and Rebecca Katz. "The 1918 Influenza Pandemic and COVID-19." *American Experience PBS*, March 18, 2020.
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/1918-influenza-pandemic-and-covid-19/>.
- Byock, Ashley. "Domesticating Death in the Sentimental Republic: Commemoration and Mourning in U.S. Civil War Nurses' Memoirs." In *Women and the Material Culture of Death*. Edited by Maureen DalyGoggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013.
- Campbell, Mark. *Self-Instructor in the Art of Hair Work, Dressing Hair, Making Curls, Switches, Braids, and Hair Jewelry of Every Description*. (New York: M. Campbell, 1867)
Project Gutenberg ebook, 2012.
<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/38658/pg38658-images.html>
- Craik, Dinah Maria Mulock. *Poems*. Boston, Ticknor and Fields, 1866. Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/24031528/>.
- Dennis, Matthew. "Natives and Pioneers: Death and the Settling and Unsettling of Oregon." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 115, No. 3 (Fall 2014): 282-297.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5403/oregonhistq.115.3.02>.
- Goggin, Maureen Daly, and Beth Fowkes Tobin. *Women and the Material Culture of Death*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315084008>.

- Hale, Sarah J. and Louis A. Godey. "Ladies Physicians in England" in *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*. Vol 90. Philadelphia, Jan-June 1875.
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00322058h&seq=7>.
- Isenberg, Nancy and Andrew Burstein. *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- Kelley, Mary. "Beyond the Boundaries." *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 73–78.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3125096>.
- Jones, Colin. "The 'New Treatment' of the Insane in Paris: The Formation of the Lunatic Asylum under the French Revolution." *History Today*, (1980): 5-10.
- Laderman, Gary. *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
- "Mementos of Affection." *Google Arts & Culture*. Accessed December 6, 2023.
<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/mementos-of-affection-cincinnati-art-museum/kgUx-6ikEsZhIA?hl=en>.
- Memorial Portrait of Catharine Schultz, 1789-1832*, Oil paint and silk thread on silk, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, United States.
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/16588>.
- Murphy, Teresa Anne. *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Plante, Ellen M. *Women at Home in Victorian America: A Social History*. New York: Facts On File, 1997.
- Root, Marcus A. Portrait of Harriet Lamb, 1/2 plate daguerreotype, Philadelphia: 1853. Lamb-Sykes Family Papers Collection at the University of Michigan William L. Clements Library, Michigan. <https://clements.umich.edu/exhibit/death-in-early-america/post-mortem-photo-types>.
- Rundblad, Georganne. "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in

- the Care of the Dead.” *Gender and Society* 9, no. 2 (April 1995): 173–92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/189870>.
- Sheumaker, Helen. *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
- Sum, Lance, “The Omnipresence of Christianity in the United States: An Analysis of the Second Great Awakening (1790–1850).” Master’s thesis, Bard College, 2023. Digital Commons. https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=history_mat
- Unknown Maker, *Cross*, Early 1800s, Hair with gold caps. 5.1 cm. RISD Museum. https://risdmuseum.org/art-design/collection/cross-41001?return=%2Fart-design%2Fcollection%3Fsearch_api_fulltext%3Djewelry%2B%26field_type%3DAI.
- Wells, Robert V. “A Tale of Two Cities: Epidemics and the Rituals of Death in Eighteenth-Century Boston and Philadelphia.” In *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America*, edited by Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein, 56–67. University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc, 2012.
- Welter, Barbara. “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860.” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151–74. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2711179>.
- West, Nancy M. “Camera Fiends: Early Photography, Death, and the Supernatural.” *The Centennial Review* 40, no. 1 (1996): 170–206. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23740730>.

Author Bio

Kathleen Boswell is a student at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) and is currently working to earn her bachelor of arts in history degree. She transferred to CSUSB with an associate of arts degree in history from Victor Valley College. Her interest in history stems from the many museums she visited as a child and from her desire to understand her own family's heritage. Kathleen strives to become a history teacher in the near future and ultimately hopes to achieve a master's degree and potentially a PhD in her pursuit of higher education. She hopes to continue researching similar atypical and underrepresented historical topics in the future.



History in the Making

Insinuating Fear and Hatred through Nazi Propaganda

By Edgar Chavez Sosa

Abstract: This article delves into the sheer impact that propaganda material had on the German people in the days of early Nazification through the end of World War II (1933-1945). This paper will not cover everything there is to know about the German premeditated murder of their undesirable populations. Although it will focus on how the German propaganda machine centered its resources towards the youth in attempt to influence and guide their mindsets before adulthood. In addition, this essay investigates how propaganda targeted women during wartime, and how their defiance of Nazi ideology cost them their life. The majority of this article's sources includes German propaganda posters which contains racist remarks towards the Jewish community, readers are to use cautionary discretion. Furthermore, derogatory remarks contained within the posters and their descriptions do not reflect the author's views. Sources shed light on how the cohorts born in the 1920s and 30s are considered to be an antisemitic German generation.

The Holocaust (1941-1945) is an event that still holds many questions for historians and the world. The Holocaust was Adolf Hitler's (1889-1945) idea of cleansing the world of the supposed "threat" that was the Jewish community, and any group of people deemed undesirable by Nazi ideology such as: Roma (Gypsies), Communists, and the disabled community. This mass premeditated murder took the lives of roughly "six million Jews, and five

million non-Jewish” people.¹ Which begs the question, how did Germany get to this point? To bloody its hands with the murder of millions. This paper will delve into the factors that led Germany to that point by focusing on the effect that anti-Semitic propaganda circulating at the time, as well as other forms of propaganda that helped press the Nazi sentiments and rhetoric in Germany. Which includes normalizing racial imagery, xenophobia against any and all non-Aryans, and normalizing and desensitizing the murder of millions across Europe.

What better way to begin imprinting this highly racialized and discriminatory ideology, than with those who do not know about the world around them. Children were not exempted from the grasp and beliefs of the Nazi Party, the mind of a child is considered pure; it reminds one of their former selves and of a time when the world seemed bigger, and the possibilities never-ending. But, when a child is forced to undergo racially propagandized lectures in classrooms it banishes their innocence, and breeds fear instead. This fear is transformed into hate, and then unleashed onto those deemed undesirable by the party. This indoctrination method paved a path for Nazi ideology to fester and grow amongst the future generation of Germans. By controlling the educational system, the party controlled what the upcoming generation of citizens and soldiers thought and believed.

¹ “Holocaust Misconceptions,” Illinois Holocaust Museum, June 1, 2023. <https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/holocaust-misconceptions/>.

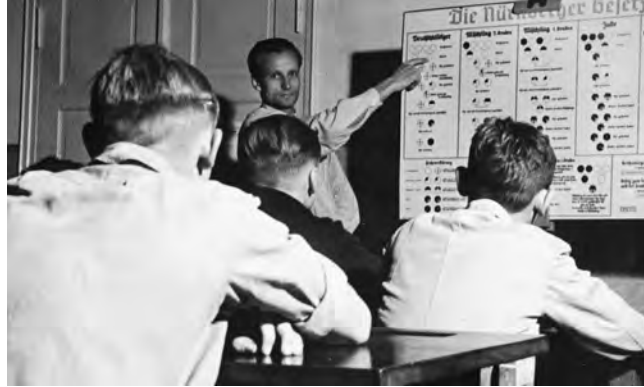


Figure 1: A Hitler Youth instructor teaching the definitions of “race” laid down by the Nuremberg Laws.²

At school, teachers, under the influence of the Nazi Party policies, taught the “dangers of racial mixing,” specifically that of the Germans and the Jewish communities. This subject insinuated the German Aryan superiority to the common Jewish individual, including blaming all socio-economic and political problems of the time on the Jews. In the words of Karl Bareth and Alfred Vogel authors of *Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools* “Racial mixing, and the resulting decline in racial quality, is the single cause for the death of ancient cultures.”³ How can a child’s mind process this? As children, they would have

² “For The Future: Indoctrinating Youth - State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1933-1939-dictatorship/for-the-future-indoctrinating-youth>; Hohenelse, Germany, 1937. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Photo/ Scherl, Munich, Germany. The Nuremberg Laws (1935) consisted of two racially charged policies: The Reich Citizenship Law, which promised only pure Germans were allowed citizenship, and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, which banned race-mixing and interracial marriages that they believed would taint their pure German bloodline.

³ Karl Bareth and Alfred Vogel, *Erblehre und Rassenkunde für die Grund- und Hauptschule* [hereinafter “Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools”] 2nd edition (Bühl-Baden: Verlag Konkordia, 1937). <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/erblehre.htm>.

no choice but to listen to the misinformation of Nazi ideology. According to Bareth and Vogel, “German youth! You, too, must fight the battle and must therefore know the destroyer of all ethnic life: the Jew!”⁴ The Nazi ideology consisted of hate and fear rhetoric that was ingrained at a young age. But for what purpose? It became clear their agenda involved the displacement of the undesirable population, however, to achieve that they first needed an army of individuals whose sole purpose in life was the party.

Nazi ideology did not conclude when schooltime ended, but rather it followed them afterhours and later into their adolescence and adulthood. An example of this is the mandatory Hitler Youth program, a paramilitary organization, their equivalent of the Boy Scouts of America. The goal of this organization was to establish a basis for brainwashing. The National Holocaust Centre and Museum’s *The Hitler Youth* put forward “intended to ensure, through academic and physical education, that the future of Nazism was secure in the hands of an ideologically and racially aware youth.”⁵ The fragility of a child’s mind, undoubtedly proved to be beneficial for the party. Ensuring the indoctrination of the party’s rhetoric increases the Nazis ability to control them. Moreover, the party held a strict outcome if any parent failed to register children to the program. The *Hitler Youth* explains “Parents who did not enroll their children into the Hitler Youth were penalized in conjunction with the law. A fine of 150 marks, or confinement.”⁶

There was no hiding from the party, and the incitement of racial hatred that it marketed to “tune” the minds of the youth to do their bidding. The child’s mind is absorbent like a sponge, as it retains all information that is thrown in its direction. The party knew this, and took advantage, by allowing only Nazi propaganda to make its way to the eyes and ears of the German youth. The

⁴ “Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools.”

⁵ HolocaustCentUK. “The Hitler Youth.” The National Holocaust Centre and Museum. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/the-hitler-youth>.

⁶ HolocaustCentUK. “The Hitler Youth.”

Hitler Youth made sure to grab the attention of young boys who yearned to belong in a society where honor, and racial purity are deemed most important.

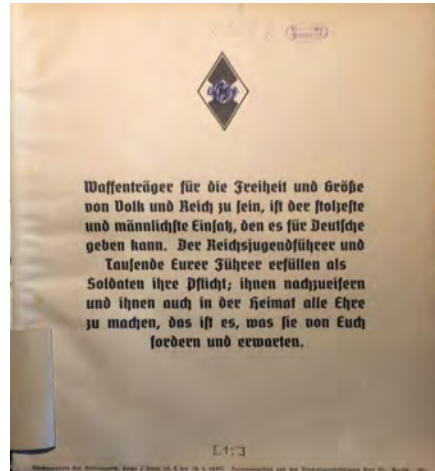


Figure 2: Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940: 10 - 18 March.⁷

According to the above *Hitler Youth Quotation Poster* which states: “The proudest and most manly thing a German can do is to bear weapons for the freedom and greatness of his people and Reich. The Reich Youth Leader and thousands of your leaders are doing their duty as soldiers.”⁸ This of course can lead some men to enlist in the armed forces. How does the same phenomena that persuades men to give up their lives affect the mind of a child? A child does not necessarily see the hidden message of these propagandized sentiments. Children stand unaware of the

⁷ *Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940: 10 - 18 March*,# on the German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hj-wochenparole.htm>; English translation “The proudest and most manly thing a German can do is to bear weapons for the freedom and greatness of his people and Reich. The Reich Youth Leader and thousands of your leaders are doing their duty as soldiers. We require and expect you to imitate them, and also here in the homeland to behave honorably.”

⁸ “Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940.”

mischievous and true intentions these orchestrated subliminal messages hold to capture their minds. Using propaganda posters similar to figure 1, the party is able to mold them into a servant of Germany, and Adolf Hitler. If the schools' curriculum is on the dangers of racial mixing and preserving racial inheritance then, what could the Aryans learn outside of school? Sacrifice.

The Hitler Youth paints a heroic picture of taking up arms for the Fatherland, and the constant sacrifice that is enacted in the frontlines. This idyllic picture is nothing but a ploy to turn young German boys into fighting men. Accordingly, the *Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940*, it explains "The Reich Youth Leader and thousands of your leaders are doing their duty as soldiers. We require and expect you to imitate them, and also here in the homeland to behave honorably."⁹ Dissecting this quotation, imitate them how? By liquidating the Jewish public? By banishing hundreds of thousands into communities not fully equipped to hold that many. Is this the imitation that the party called for? Is this method of brainwashing the nation's children into devoted Nazi's its future? To create children who do only what their country, and their precious Führer ask?¹⁰



⁹ "Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940."

¹⁰ Führer is a German word referring to a leader; Führer is strongly associated with Adolf Hitler, which is the intended purpose of the word throughout the paper.

Figure 3: Führer Adolf Hitler (center) with the Hitler Youth Group, 1935.¹¹

What opportunities do these children, growing up in a world of racially subjected hate, have? They can only fall in line like everyone else or be viewed as outsiders who cannot be trusted. Nazi ideology seeps into the deepest crevices of their minds and takes hold. But, what about the public, and the individuals who maintained skepticism even after the regime change? A trance-like state that has the capability to channel minds into a desired path. The Nazi party used every tool in their arsenal to enhance their image, especially for those who doubted the party's leadership, and ideology. One of the methods to promote their beliefs was film, and one of the most popular films of Nazi Germany is Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*). A film's grandeur can captivate an audience with great effectiveness. Although this film was marketed as a documentary, it was extremely propagandistic. It painted the Nazi Party as a friendly entity that brought all Germans and Germany together.

The film opens with Hitler's aircraft flying over the medieval city of Nuremberg. At the three minutes, and mark Riefenstahl showcases the city from above the sky.¹² This scene shows Hitler as the great, all judging messiah above, coming down from the heavens to unite the German people. As the film progresses, the audience is bombarded with a myriad of flags flapping against the wind in the medieval city riddled with the party swastika.¹³ During the fourteenth minute, the scene changes to images of the children, where viewers are presented with the boys of the Hitler youth organization, who are happily fed, clothed, and taking part in fun activities.¹⁴ This is an attempt to demonstrate

¹¹ Erin Blakemore, "How the Hitler Youth Turned a Generation of Kids into Nazis," HISTORY, June 29, 2023, <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-hitler-youth-turned-a-generation-of-kids-into-nazis>.

¹² Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*, (1935) Universum Film (UFA) 3min 30 sec.

¹³ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*.

¹⁴ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*, 14 min.

the great life that awaited those who chose the party. Reinforcing how their recruitment methods were aimed at children by showing the benefits that are associated with the program and all the fun that awaited them. The Nazi Party wanted Germans to believe they were safe, and protected from all evils foreign, and domestic due to the party and leadership. The film gave the illusion of that being the case, however, it provided no insight into how the party treated those it deemed inferior. Therefore, it failed to show how some Germans, mainly Jewish Germans, were not protected. But it did provide a nurturing image of togetherness within the German Aryan community.

The question then becomes, at what cost? By choosing the party, they were taking the side that sees the Aryans, and most importantly the architect of the party, Adolf Hitler, as the master of the world, and holding the belief that all who are deemed inferior are sworn enemies of Germany. The narrative of which the Nazis have used to shape the nation's hate towards others. Showcasing the love for their people, they gained followers, and these followers in return offered their service to the Fatherland. At the end of the film, a massive image of a swastika becomes transparent only to be followed by the scene of a marching German army.¹⁵

¹⁵ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*.



Figure 3: Scene from *Triumph of the Will* movie.¹⁶

This conveys to the audience that the party is Germany, and that Germany is the party, they are one in the same; to be German is to be a member of the party. As a result, a nationwide ideology was set into motion. One flag, one government, and one Führer, this was the message being relayed. In gaining the confidence of the people, through actions such as feeding them, and incorporating them into something bigger is how the party took total control of their actions and will. Yet even though this film was constructed to gain the favor of the German populace, in the same year it released propagandist materials that were in abundance pacifying the minds of the Aryan communities, assuring them that their fight against Jewry is justified, no matter the cost.

Propaganda had its use in time of war such as aiding the spread of misinformation, a concept that the National Socialist Party took great advantage of. They began publishing a monthly selection of propagandistic material for orators entitled “*Advice for Nazi Speakers*.”¹⁷ This allowed them to relay indoctrination to the

¹⁶ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*.

¹⁷ *Aufklärungs- und Redner-Informationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP.*, [hereinafter *Advice for Nazi Speakers*] Lieferung 20, 21, 23, 24

people in public spaces where they could socialize and continue to spread the party's message. According to *Advice for Nazi Speakers*, "It is equally obvious that we need to wipe out the sympathy for this element, destructive to our people, that one still finds in some intellectually deficient brains."¹⁸ What message was the party trying to convey? How was being sympathetic to another human considered destructive? These messages were developed by the party to assign blame for Germany's problems such as the failure of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) on the Jewish population. According to the *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, "This regime disabled Germany financially, increasing violence and created political turmoil and economic hardship."¹⁹ The Nazis shifted the blame of their problems towards the Jewish community building resentment in German communities. In turn, the people who were deemed special by the party due to their Aryan heritage shifted away from viewing the Jewish community as human beings and began to blame them for all German problems.

The Nazi propaganda machine tangled its followers' minds into believing that the real problem of Germany—the Jew—existed long before the rise of the National Socialist Party, though they failed to provide any evidence, only slanderous misinformation. The party acted as father and mother making sure the people, or its children, fell in line with the doctrine of their Führer. How does a nation convert its population to hate a religious group of people? How can they persecute a group of people, based not on their place of origin, but on the religion, they follow? The Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda) pushed forth the proposition of misinformation to the masses. A sample of this comes from the

(August, September, October, November, December 1935), pp. 1- 25 (Juden Allgemeines). <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/rim3.htm>.

¹⁸ *Advice for Nazi Speakers*.

¹⁹ "Holocaust Encyclopedia." United States holocaust memorial museum. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-weimarrepublic#:~:text=The%20Weimar%20Republic%20is%20the,where%20the%20constitutional%20assembly%20met>.

article *Advice for Nazi Speakers on the Jews* which states, “The Jew belongs to a different race; that is what is decisive. That is hardly new knowledge. Jewry itself has proclaimed this in countless statements and has kept itself apart from other peoples over the millennia of its existence.”²⁰ By profiling the Jewish community as a race, and not as members of the same religion, the party provided an easier means to isolate, and persecute Jews. Though one must ask themselves, how did the Nazi Party encourage its followers to commit to their ideology with such veneration that they would go on to commit heinous acts against people who only practiced a different religion?

Along with the propaganda materials, the Nazi Party called on the masses to take an oath to Adolf Hitler, similar to Americans pledging their allegiance to the United States. How can one find purpose, and certainty in a reality of racial mixing, and Jewish deceit? Why, by swearing an oath of course, to the one man who had promised them liberation from the unworthy Jewish people, that threatened the livelihood of the “true” Aryan Germans. As Rudolf Hess (1894-1987), Hitler’s right-hand man, states in *The Oath to Adolf Hitler* “Through your oath you bind yourselves to a man who — that is our faith — was sent to us by higher powers.”²¹ A man who is your faith? Who was sent by higher powers? Any attempt to deify the man whose agenda is nothing short of barbarity on a scale never before witnessed by humankind.

The pledge to Hitler was seen as a pledge of salvation and deifying him enabled him to become the ultimate ruler. Those who believed his narratives felt that they were protected by something much greater than themselves. Having this power over his subjects, Hitler and the party were able to control the Aryan community, and thus allowed their ideology to flourish. Though deification was not enough to inspire people’s duty for the future of the Reich. According to *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, Hess was a “long standing personal aide to Adolf Hitler, and deputy party leader of the Nazi

²⁰ Advice for Nazi Speakers.

²¹ Rudolf Hess, *The Oath to Adolf Hitler* (1934)

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hess1.htm>.

Party until 1941.”²² Hess chose his words accordingly to persuade his audience to do what he wanted accomplished in the name of the party, and Hitler. How can words accomplish this? How can people take this to heart? According to *The Oath to Adolf Hitler* he states “Adolf Hitler is Germany and Germany is Adolf Hitler. He who takes an oath to Hitler takes an oath to Germany!”²³ Now that the union of both nation, and party leaders had been made public they would have a means to control the masses at their disposal, whose indoctrination began years ago. How? By taking violent action against the perceived “unfit” ones as their duty. This validation of violence pushed the Germans, who had pledged their loyalty to Hitler and Germany, to enact any means of cruelty towards the undesirables of Germany. By doing so enabled his followers to “protect” the interests of Hitler, and therefore Germany. However, the party’s grip on its citizens does not stop there.

As we have seen, no one was exempt from the grasp of the Nazi party, not even women, who in a patriarchal Germany were seen only as caregivers while men went off to fight. Why was there a need to target women? Well, how else could the party be sure that their edicts are being followed, especially those who were able to pass on the edicts to their families. Those seen as loyal to the party were targeted for further indoctrination. By focusing on a single group or community, the party had a greater chance of dictating the minds, feelings, and on occasion the actions of any group. One piece of propaganda, an instructional manual entitled *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls (1944)* states, “We say today, and forever more: The Jew is the parasite among the peoples! He can as a parasite attack individual, whole people, indeed, all of humanity.”²⁴

²² Holocaust Encyclopedia.

²³ Hess, *The Oath to Adolf Hitler*.

²⁴ *Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend*, [hereinafter *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls*] Gebiet Mainfranken 39, February 1944. German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/mainfranken-1944.htm>.



Figure 4: The 'Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls', an instructional manual for Hitler Youth girls which contains lectures on the Nuremburg Laws and the negative effects of racial mixing.²⁵

How were women supposed to rationalize this? The Nazis knew how to paint a picture of fear, and hatred amongst their followers. And, in doing so they explicitly controlled the fears, and aggressions of their designated audience which allowed them to choose an enemy. To be clear, not all German women fell for these ideologies. For example, Sophie Scholl (1921-1943), a member of the non-violent resistance group The White Rose movement defied Nazi ideology by distributing anti-Nazi pamphlets and in doing so,

²⁵ Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend roughly translates to "Leadership service of the League of German Girls in the Hitler Youth." Figure 4 is an image of the instructional manual distributed to young girls in the Hitler Youth program which taught them how to fight rumors, the evils of the Jews, and established the claim that only the best Germans can become Nazi Party members; *Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend*, [hereinafter Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls] Gebiet Mainfranken 39, February 1944. German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/mainfranken-1944.htm>.

Sophie was “sentenced to death for treason.”²⁶ The women who fell for Nazi propaganda believed that the Jewish “parasite’s” goal was global domination, and that fear kept the Nazi doctrine firmly in their minds. To the National Socialist Party, women and girls were not just mothers, sisters, caregivers, or nurses, but an entity they needed to retain control over to control the future of the nation. As the war raged on around Germany, the deaths of many plagued the battlefields, and streets of the world.

By 1944, the Holocaust was well underway, and yet the radical misinformation still made their way into the public sphere. Though most of the Holocaust had passed, the Nazi Party wanted the public to continue fearing the Jewish communities to ensure their hate would later fill in the gaps of their fear. According to *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls*, “The single feeling that must fill each German is not pity for the Jew, but rather thanks for the Führer who saved us from this fate.”²⁷ Perhaps it was this sentiment that encouraged death upon a radical scale. With the location of the death camps having been in the general government it made it easy for most Germans to avoid learning the full truth about the Holocaust; there were hints that the party gave to better prepare its citizens for the sinister truth.

The Nazis believed that Germans should not feel sad for the cruelty shown against the Jews, instead that they should be thankful to Hitler for saving Germany from the Jews, and their evil ways. The women of Germany were not to think for themselves anymore, instead the glory of Germany, and more importantly its new architect Adolf Hitler. No one was to argue with this as they would be arguing against Hitler himself. And how could one argue against their self-imposed “liberator”? Women were not pushed to the frontlines in battle to bear arms against the enemy, but what of

²⁶ Tanja B. Spitzer, Sophie Scholl and the White Rose.” The National WWII Museum <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/sophie-scholl-and-white-rose>.

²⁷ *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls*.

the men that were? The propagandistic material that young boys were exposed to made sure that when they reached the appropriate fighting age they would enlist. The party invested time and effort to condition young men.

In order for Nazi doctrine to be credible, the party had to push it in all life stages of an individual. By the time young men were eligible to enlist, they believed that Jews, Roma, Sinti, and Bolsheviks were their sworn enemies. They readily believed this since they had been hearing it their entire lives. Ever since 1933, the party had been forcing these ideas into their lives and minds during school and in the Hitler Youth program. When the time came for them to enlist, they received specific indoctrination intended to cause fear, and hatred. This time the marketing did not come in the form of a pamphlet, nor a film but perhaps the oldest propaganda method, a poster.

Imagine an eighteen-year-old boy walking down the sidewalk in 1941 Berlin and spots a poster urging young men, such as himself, to help kick the Jewish Bolsheviks out of Russia. The boy, having seen the same sort of hate speech his entire life, now sees this as his duty for the party, for Germany, and for Hitler to rid the Jewish population. When Germany broke the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939, they needed people to fight in the war they caused. The party sought to include the Soviet Union with the long list of “enemies” of the German people. According to the poster, *Get the Jewish-Bolshevist warmongers out of Europe*, the blame had been shifted militarily to Jewry and Bolsheviks.²⁸ The call to fight against the Jews was applied to Russians.

²⁸ “Get the Jewish-Bolshevist warmongers out of Europe!,” (1941) German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters3.htm>.



Figure 5: “Get the Jewish-Bolshevik warmongers out of Europe” poster.²⁹

Figure 5 showcases a cartoon version of Jewish men, with disproportionate noses in Soviet uniforms, who are running away from bayonets attached to rifles. It is as if this poster was aimed at, not only the men back home in Germany, but also against the people of the Soviet Union. This can be attributed to hoping that the blame would be shifted towards the government of the Soviet Union, and not Nazi Germany as the cause for their ongoing war. To further limit any opposition encountered from home during the invasion of the East, the Wehrmacht, (Heer (army), Luftwaffe (air force), and Kriegsmarine (navy)), and any other German fighting force had to be viewed as the liberating force, and not the conquering force that it was. Hitler knew that Eastern Europe was massive and had never been successfully invaded. Therefore, he used his successfully tested propaganda campaign which had worked with the German population and employed it to shift the minds of the Soviet Union residents.

²⁹ “Get the Jewish-Bolshevik Warmongers out of Europe!” *German Propaganda Archive*.

According to Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls, “We see in Bolshevism Jewry’s attempt in the 20th century to gain world domination.”³⁰ Even though Communism predates Nazism. Hitler, and the Nazis eagerly portrayed themselves as liberators and when foreign, and domestic entities arose to challenge them, they were quickly seen as competitors, as seen in figure 6. The massive propaganda machine of the Reich made it possible to defend their own interests while at the same time slandering the opposition. This ensured that German citizens were fed with misinformation on the events transpiring during the Holocaust by the party. Therefore, Hitler, Germany and the party were able to continue battling the enemy with no concern of morality or uprising at home. As the war carried on, losses were at an all-time high and existed on all fronts. Hitler and his Nazis began to lose the grip they had over Europe. Yet, they continued their system of blaming others (mainly the Jews) for causing the war. Even with all the anti-Bolshevism/Semitism being pushed into the very existence of these young fighting men, what was the effect that it had on the Germans on the Eastern front?

Nazi Germany propaganda gambled its way into Eastern Europe. The men on the Eastern Front went through some of the harshest weather conditions such as the Russian wet season, and bitter cold winters. Slandorous propaganda that further vilified the enemy was indeed beneficial for these men as it had allowed for justification that what they were experiencing was righteous; therefore, they believed in the fallacies of Germany as the victim, rather than the aggressor. For instance, the article *Domestic Propaganda in Wartime* shows how the propagandists “portrayed Germany as a victim that was fighting to defend itself from foreign threats.”³¹

³⁰ Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls.

³¹ Unknown artist, 1942. *Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, Germany*.; “Domestic Propaganda in Wartime.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/reactions-to-nazi-antisemitism>.



Figure 6: Nazi propaganda poster, translated “Germany’s Victory, Europe’s Freedom”³²

The importance of using propaganda against the enemy is that it built fear and hatred amongst the German ranks. The depiction of the enemy is usually of a bestial nature. This brings fear that the enemy was in fact a bestial creature. One that can only be stopped by Germans. So how did the Wehrmacht, and other Nazi fighting forces take in the propagandistic sources? According to Omer Bartov’s *Hitler’s Army*, in Donald L. Niewyk’s book *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* “Many soldiers’ letters revealed the impact of years of anti-Semitic indoctrination and deeply rooted prejudices.”³³ These men who grew up as boys under Hitler’s regime had been calibrated to

³² “Domestic Propaganda in Wartime.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. A German soldier vanquishes the red dragon symbolizing bolshevism, or communism. Using lightning bolts in a V shape that represented victory, German propagandists hoped to diminish the power of the Allied “V for victory” sign by using it themselves.

³³ Omer Bartov’s “Hitlers Army” in Donald L. Niewyk, *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, (Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company 2003) , 79.

believe in the malicious lies of his party. Children in the eyes of Hitler and the party were seen as nothing more than tools to fight and property to be used as they wished. Property that one day would grow up to do their bidding. Hitler's army was an experiment; an experiment to further develop new ideas of maintaining obedience. And, yet what did the men who underwent every inch of party indoctrination, have to say about their situation?

The men of the Wehrmacht, and any other German fighting forces through the years have soaked up an abundance of party lies, and schemes used to mobilize the nation for their fight against the "world-dominating Jew." Foolish to us, but to those growing up under Hitler's Reich? These images were a matter of life, or death. Thus, what did the men, who entered the military duty phase of their life, have to say regarding their experience? Bartov informs us what Lance-Corporal Paul Lenz had to say on the matter "Only a Jew can be a Bolshevik, for this bloodsucker there can be nothing nicer than to be a Bolshevik."³⁴ It appears Lance-Corporal Lenz, has taken the fight against global Jewry personally, and the distinction between Jew and communism became non-existent. In other words, they are one, and the same. This fueled the hatred needed to disassociate with morality, dismember people, and build a governing force. The hatred imposed by the party has greatly benefited them, controlling the emotions and fears of their populace allowed for their Nazi doctrine to develop further. The party continued its attempts to enable this hatred with those who were eager to play their part in National Socialism.

As time went by, entering the mid to final stages of the war in 1943-1944, many young men were thankful for all the aid the party supplied, and were willing to fight for their National Socialist ways. What they did not know was that they were hurtling towards destruction. Perhaps unaware of this reality, posters insisting that the Jew is the cause of the war and was the driving cause behind the conflict's longevity remained. The poster is one that has been

³⁴ Bartov and Niewyk, "Hitlers Army", 79.

shown tirelessly across the nation, an image of a Jewish man with a disproportionate nose who looks angry. As a remark to the Germans, that the Jew is unfriendly and angry therefore a threat to the Reich. That he is the enemy who desires nothing more than the downfall of Germany. The image provided a double entendre.



Figure 8: “The Jew: The inciter of war, the prolonger of war” released c.1943³⁵

The poster “*The Jew: The inciter of war, the prolonger of war.*” by Hans Schweitzer, shown above, showcases the Jew as the culprit who lingers behind closed curtains to control the downfall of the German Reich.³⁶ The unseen enemy, who will stop at nothing to bring the Fatherland to its knees, or so many Germans were told. Despite all the atrocities, the proclaimed dictator did inevitably employ a genius tactic that allowed him and his party to tiptoe and strategically play on the emotions of the public. By establishing an invisible force, who worked primarily in the shadows to destroy everything that their enemies held dear, striking paranoia and fear into the minds of all who looked up to the party. Creating an invisible monster lurking in the shadows,

³⁵ Hans Schweitzer, *The Jew: The inciter of war* (1943 or 1944)
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters3.htm>.

³⁶ Schweitzer, *The Jew: The inciter of war*.

every child's nightmare. The image visually explains the destruction that laid ahead awaiting those who did not rise up. The poster insinuates that only those who become aware have the opportunity to rise against this domestic foe.³⁷ With more, and more ploys to incite people into paranoia; fear only strengthened the party's position. Thus, allowing them to feed the public doctrines, that would result in the party holding an ever more grip. This poster shows us that even when close to the bitter end, the Nazi ideology stayed firm in the beliefs it presented to the public.³⁸ As many different iterations of the inviable monster behind the scenes poster were published, further highlighting how this was a main point in German propaganda.



Figure 7: Nazi propaganda poster used to show how the Jewish population was the driving force behind their enemies. Highlighting how Germany was pulling the curtain back to reveal the true enemy.³⁹

³⁷ Schweitzer, The Jew: The inciter of war.

³⁸ Schweitzer, The Jew: The inciter of war.

³⁹ English translation: Behind the Enemy Powers: The Jew; "Domestic Propaganda in Wartime." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/reactions-to-nazi->

Hitler and the Nazis would have known by now that victory was uncertain, and yet they continued to push the idea that the Jews were to blame for the onslaught that had begun to cripple the Reich. They continued using these propaganda methods to further distance themselves from the possibility of being blamed for the destruction done throughout Germany, despite its direct result of Hitler's attempt to expand Germany's borders. After five and a half years of war, Nazis never missed their chance to misinform their public on a grand scale.

In molding their ideology, Hitler, and the Nazi propaganda machine used the elements of fear, and hatred. What were the long-term effects on those subjected to the Nazi ideology? It is easy to say that those who were raised during Nazi occupied Germany grew to hate the Jewish community, and to resent those who were not Aryan. Children who had been subjected to pure hate, had repeatedly been told that it was their patriotic duty to hate the Jew, and anyone else who did not qualify as "pure" German blood. After the war ended, did these children grow up to overcome this narrow mindedness, or did they continue to believe what they were taught in the schools of the Third Reich?

According to Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth's article, *Nazi indoctrination and anti-Semitic beliefs in Germany*, "Cohorts born in the 1920s were also exposed to Nazi indoctrination."⁴⁰ These Nazi generations such as those born in the 20s and 30s held equally higher sentiments of antisemitism than any other German generation. "Individuals in the cohort 1930–1939 have significantly more pronounced anti-Semitic attitudes, even after controlling for personal characteristics such as education or the perception of the economic situation."⁴¹ They grew up with

antisemitism. Figure 7 depicts Jews as the driving inviable force behind the Allied powers of Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union.

⁴⁰ Nico Voigtländer, and Hans-Joachim Voth. "Nazi Indoctrination and Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Germany." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 112, no. 26 (2015): 7931–36. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26463612>.

⁴¹ Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

party slogans, laws, and most importantly indoctrination, therefore it made logical sense that they clung more tightly to antisemitism. By not allowing any breathing room, they took away any chance of rebellion from Nazism upholding its way of life with racism, being at the center. In addition, regional behaviors played a variation of the phenomena. Location played a major role in shaping the outcome of an individual's belief system. The variation of cities, accumulated into different outcomes in results, for example lower Bavaria was five times higher in antisemitism sentiment than that of Hamburg.⁴²

What are the long-lasting impressions that Hitler, and his ideals left on Germany? Those who were subjected to Nazi propaganda, did they remember their teachings, or simply chose to forget the intolerance of the party? In fact, there still exists antisemitic sentiments within Germany. Voigtländer and Voth express how "One quarter of the German population holds mildly or strongly negative views of Jews."⁴³ This means that a quarter of the population has accepted, to some extent, the idea that Jews are a menace. Though their anti-Semitism doesn't compare to the public hatred once imposed by the Nazis, it still exists.

That fear has lingered intact for years and needs only a new Hitler to mold into hate and action. Voigtländer and Voth express that "Areas in which respondents do not want a Jewish neighbor are more likely to deny them equal rights, too, and they believe that Jews have too much influence in the world."⁴⁴ The effect of Nazi doctrine against undesirable communities still holds its grip as it did since the thirties. The same belief system still resides in many German minds. Hitler, and his party dramatically changed a nation in under a decade, changing the way people thought, expressed themselves, and most importantly changed the way they viewed the world.

⁴² Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

⁴³ Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

⁴⁴ Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

In conclusion, the National Socialist Party used various methods of propaganda to mold their indoctrination of the German populace. Beginning with children who were yet to fully comprehend what was happening, the party enforced its agenda into their minds and schooling. In films, they showcased their “nurturing” side to convince people that the party was for the people, and simply wanted to unify Germany under Hitler. The propagandist method which the party used made sure to incorporate all who were “racially desirable,” and sought to make them fall in line under the Nazi beliefs, including non-combatants, such as women. They used antisemitic propaganda to help stir the hearts of men into enlisting for the battlefield playing on their fears of the hidden Jewish foe. Hitler and the Nazis used fear, and hatred to establish the basis for their Thousand-Year Reich, and to keep the German people subservient to the regime. The grip that antisemitism has had on the German public still exists today. Although this grip is not as strong as it once was, it leaves us with a reminder that prejudice no matter how old lingers like skeletons in the closet.

Bibliography

- Aufklärungs- und Redner-Informationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP.*, [hereinafter Advice for Nazi Speakers] Lieferung 20, 21 23, 24 (August, September, October, November, December 1935), pp. 1- 25 (Juden Allgemeines).
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/ri3.htm>.
- Bareth, Karl, and Alfred Vogel. "Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools." German Propaganda Archive. Accessed April 21, 2021.
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/erblehre.htm>.
- Bytwerk, Randall. Rudolf Hess Speech (25 February 1934). Accessed April 07, 2021.
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hes1.htm>.
- "Domestic Propaganda in Wartime." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed May 5, 2024.
<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/propaganda-in-the-face-of-defeat>.
- "Domestic Propaganda in Wartime." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/eactions-to-nazi-antisemitis>.
- "For The Future: Indoctrinating Youth - State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda" United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,"
<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1933-1939-dictatorship/for-the-future-indoctrinating-youth>.
- Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend*, [hereinafter Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls] Gebiet Mainfranken 39, February 1944. German Propaganda Archive.
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/ma>

[nfranken-1944.htm](#)

“Get the Jewish-Bolshevist Warmongers out of Europe!” German Propaganda Archive. Accessed April 12, 2021.

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters/chasing.jpg>.

Gorillas, Film. “Triumph of the Will (1935) - (Documentary, History, War, Foreign) – Video Dailymotion.”

Dailymotion. September 27, 2018. Accessed April 07, 2021. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6uajey>.

“Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940: 10 - 18 March.” German Propaganda Archive.

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/images/hj/2-10-3-40.jpg>.

Hohenelse, Germany, 1937. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Photo/ Scherl, Munich, Germany.

HolocaustCentUK. “The Hitler Youth.” The National Holocaust Centre and Museum. Accessed May 24, 2024.

<https://www.holocaust.org.uk/the-hitler-youth>.

“Holocaust Encyclopedia.” United States holocaust memorial museum. Accessed May 24, 2024.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-weimar-republic#:~:text=The%20Weimar%20Republic%20is%20the,where%20the%20constitutional%20assembly%20mt>.

“Holocaust Misconceptions.” Illinois Holocaust Museum, June 1, 2023.

<https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/holocaust-misconceptions/>.

Niewyk, Donald L., and Omer Bartov. “Hitler’s Army.” In *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 76-83. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

Schweitzer, Hans. “The Jew: The Inciter of War, the Prolonger of War.” German Propaganda Archive. Accessed April 12, 2021.

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters/derjude.jpg>.

Spitzer, Tanja J., “Sophie Scholl and the White Rose: The National WWII Museum: New Orleans.” The National WWII Museum New Orleans, February 21, 2020.

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/sophie-scholl-and-white-rose>.

Voigtländer, Nico, and Hans-Joachim Voth. “Nazi Indoctrination and Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Germany.” PNAS. June 30, 2015. Accessed April 20, 2021.

<https://www.pnas.org/content/112/26/7931>.

Author Bio

Edgar Chavez Sosa is a current graduate student working on his master of arts degree in history, at California State University, San Bernardino, where he is expected to graduate in May of 2025. Edgar's points of interest revolve around the military, and Chicano history. He hopes to utilize his degree as part of a collections team in a museum, while teaching part time in a college setting. After graduation, he plans on applying for a PhD program for the following Fall semester. Edgar comes from a proud Mexican background and his parents, Francisco and Rosa have encouraged him to keep pursuing his academic dreams. Equality is at the core of Edgar's belief system. Naturally as a historian he questions and views the world with a unique set of lenses. He would like to thank his mentor Dr. Thomas Long who helped him so graciously since his days as an undergraduate. In part he dedicates this article to his family who have never doubted him, and to Dr. Long for believing in him.



Cartoons to Outrage: The Muhammed's Face Cartoons and Danish-Iranian Relations

By Edgar Noice

Abstract: This paper delves into the intricacies of the Danish Cartoon Controversy, sparked by the publication of twelve cartoons depicting the Islamic Prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten in 2005. The controversy ignited a global debate on the boundaries of freedom of expression, particularly when it clashes with religious sensitivities. While the Western perspective often champions unlimited freedom of expression, this study seeks to scrutinize the sincerity of such claims. The paper begins by contextualizing the controversy, examining the historical background of cartoons and satire in Iran and the evolving relations between Denmark and Iran up to 2005. It analyzes the factors within Denmark that led to the publication of the controversial cartoons, highlighting the intersection of politics, culture, and assimilation efforts. Crucially, the study dissects the responses to the cartoons, both globally within the Muslim community and specifically from Iran. Despite Denmark's relatively minor diplomatic significance to Iran, the Iranian response was notably severe, indicating deeper social, cultural, and political motivations. The analysis extends to the aftermath, exploring the long-term impact on Danish-Iranian relations up to 2017. This research fills a scholarly void by providing a comprehensive examination of the Danish-Iranian dynamic in the context of the cartoon controversy. It underscores the collision of cultures with divergent values and beliefs and emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences in an increasingly interconnected world.

“Our purpose is to examine the limits of freedom of expression. The West claims that freedom of expression has no limits, and we want to know whether they are honest or not.”¹

On September 30th, 2005, one of Denmark’s largest Newspapers, *Jyllands-Posten*, published the article “Muhammad’s Face” which contained twelve cartoons depicting the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (c.570-632) in various ways, which ranged from good-faith depictions to ones that insinuated the supposedly inherent backwards or “uncivilized” nature of Islam. These cartoons were commissioned and published at the behest of the newspaper’s Cultural Editor, Fleming Rose, in response to his perception that Danish reporters, writers, and cartoonists had been self-censoring regarding Islamic topics.² The publication of the cartoons sparked international outrage within Islamic communities as a large portion of the Islamic faith believe depicting Muhammed in any fashion is considered blasphemy.³ Thus, these cartoons resulted in at least two hundred deaths globally and countless more injured along with the destruction of multiple Danish embassies in the Middle East.⁴ Beyond the initial insensitivity of depicting their prophet in human

¹ AP Archive, “Major Iranian Newspaper Launches Holocaust Cartoon Competition,” YouTube (July 30, 2015),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADskiYjT9-E>.

² Flemming Rose, “Why I Published Those Cartoons,” *Washington Post*, February 26, 2024,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2006/02/19/why-i-published-those-cartoons/f9a67368-4641-4fa7-b71f-843ea44814ef/>.

³ Mahmud Farjami, “Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom: A Review of Political Satire in the Iranian Press During the 2000s,” *Iranian Studies* 47, no. 2 (March 1, 2014): 217–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2013.860325>.

⁴ Patricia Cohen, “Danish Cartoon Controversy,” *The New York Times*, August 12, 2009,

https://web.archive.org/web/20130203172241/http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/subjects/d/danish_cartoon_controversy/index.html;

Svenning Dalgaard, and Klaus Dalgaard, “The Right to Offend: The Causes and Consequences of the ‘Danish Cartoon Affair’,” *The RUSI Journal* 151, no. 2 (April 2006): 30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071840608523147>;

Farjami, “Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom.”

form at all, several of the cartoons were outright derogatory towards Muhammad and the Islamic faith; one cartoon by Rasmus Sand Hoyer uses Muhammad to criticize violence and poor treatment of women within Islam. Others portrayed Muhammad in a much more innocent manner, such as the one by Lars Refn which depicts him as a teen boy named Muhammed, and not the actual prophet. However, there are exceptions, such as in Iran where images of the prophet have historically been acceptable preceding 2014.⁵

While many Muslim majority countries responded to the publication of the cartoons (which can be seen linked in the corresponding footnote below, but will not be republished here), either through governmental channels or simply via protests by the general population, some countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, and Yemen went so far as to threaten severing trade ties with Denmark; a threat in which the Iranian government followed through on with the overwhelming support of its parliamentary members.⁶ Iranian citizens, however, went beyond the actions of their government, with the domestic response ranging from violent attacks on Denmark's embassy in Tehran to the renaming of a popular Danish pastry.⁷ Within the larger scope of the response by the global Muslim community, Iran's response was not overly drastic but seems peculiar considering Danish-Iranian relations

⁵ Oleg Grabar, "The Story of Portraits of the Prophet Muhammad," *Studia Islamica*, no. 96 (January 1, 2003): 19–IX, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1596240>;; Christiane Gruber, "Images of the Prophet Muhammad in and Out of Modernity: The Curious Case of a 2008 Mural in Tehran," in *Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East: Rhetoric of the Image*, ed. Christiane Gruber and Sune Haugbolle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 3–31.

⁶ Hakki Taş, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," in *Religion and Violence: An Encyclopedia of Faith and Conflict from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Jeffery Ian Ross (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2011), 229–233.; "Arab-European Relations - Denmark Faces Iran Trade Ban Threat," *APS Diplomat Recorder* 64, no. 8 (2006).; After careful consideration and discussions cartoons depicting the prophet were removed from the final printed article, however they are available to be seen here: <https://x.com/NoiceEd/status/1790923330901692468>.

⁷ Taş, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 232.

were not extensive or significant for either country. However, regardless of relation levels, Iran has historically reacted strongly to negative depictions of Islam.⁸

Identifying the reasons for the deterioration of relations, though, is not so simple that it can be figured out with a purely materialist examination of Danish-Iranian geopolitical and trade relationship before and after the cartoons were published; that examination alone may indicate *how* relations were affected, but not *why*. The overall issue is much more complicated as the resulting response from Iran was influenced by a mix of both social, cultural, and religious factors that require close examination to understand the whole picture. The overarching Danish cartoon controversy and the ensuing backlash from the Islamic community exquisitely exemplifies the fallout that can occur when tenacious free-speech clashes with strong religious values that designate certain remarks as blasphemous. Additionally, an analysis of the specific Iranian response can provide deeper insight into how secular social factors can alter a reaction which initially began as a religious objection. Furthermore, an examination of Iran on the world stage will indicate that the movement was partially used to draw global attention away from nuclear activities that the country did not want in the public eye, indicating that non-related political motivations played a role in the severity of Iran's reaction to the cartoons.

The study presented in this paper will be broken into eight distinct sections, the front half containing vital background information for understanding the cartoon controversy and its impact, and the latter half incorporating those findings into an examination of Danish-Iranian relations. First, an overview examination of Iran's history with cartoons and satire during the

⁸ Nikahang Kowsar, "Being Funny Is Not That Funny: Contemporary Editorial Cartooning in Iran," *Social Research* 79, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 117–144, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23350301>.; "Iran Says Rushdie Fatwa Still Stands." *Iran Focus*, February 14, 2006. <https://www.iranfocus.com/en/terrorism/5768-iran-says-rushdie-fatwa-still-stands/>; Esposito, "The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?"

late Qajar period (1794-1925), from 1900 to 1925, will provide insights into what religious and social factors played an influence in the publication of cartoons in Iran, which is a key part in understanding and contextualizing the Iranian response to the cartoons. Though late Qajar Iran has fundamental differences from the Iranian Islamic Republic (1979-), it is important to understand the effects of government action on the acceptability of satire and cartoons in Iran. Second, a look at the relatively young relations between Iran and Denmark up to 2005 will provide a benchmark for examining those same relations following the publication of the twelve cartoons. Next, the factors within Denmark that led up to the cartoons being commissioned and subsequently published will be considered, which will indicate that the Danish political climate and the desire to assimilate Danish-Muslims within Denmark had a significant role in the cartoons' publication, as well as the spread of the outrage over the cartoons outside of Denmark.

Once the essential background has been established, the three most prominent of the twelve Muhammed cartoons will be introduced and analyzed. This examination is crucial for understanding the views of Muslim's towards the cartoons and their subsequent responses. The fifth segment will evaluate the response of the global Muslim community to the cartoon controversy, which was originally slow to take off despite the quick response of Danish-Muslims. Sixth, the stronger response of Iran vis-à-vis other Muslim countries to the cartoon controversy will be analyzed to detail exactly how and why relations between Iran and Denmark began to deteriorate in the short term as a direct result. Seventh, an examination of how Denmark's reaction compounded to further deteriorate relations between the two countries, making the post-controversy recovery much more difficult. The trade and political relations for the years following the cartoon controversy up to 2017 will then be analyzed to determine the long-term impact and recovery of Danish-Iranian relations. The goal of this study is to illustrate and sustain the argument that although Iran's response to the Danish Cartoon Controversy was largely influenced by the broader global Muslim

response, Iran had its own additional motivations that led to a deteriorated relationship with Denmark which took nearly a decade to rebuild.

While much has been written about the global Muslim response to the Danish cartoons, very little exists regarding the Iranian response.⁹ In several instances, Iran is off-handedly mentioned in academic research detailing the global Muslim response without any substantial length of examination, which is surprising yet simultaneously expected.¹⁰ What makes it surprising is the fact that Iran's response to the controversy was more severe than most other Muslim majority or Islamic centered countries, yet the relative insignificance of Danish-Iranian relations places the lack of substantial analyses into the realm of expectations.¹¹ Dating back to 1933, Danish-Iranian relations up to the Islamic Revolution of 1979 largely revolved around the construction of a trans-national railroad, but also involved minor trade as well. After 1980, trade and political relations between the two countries grew warmer but never became very significant for either country. For the most part, Denmark's relations with Iran have largely been in line with the policies of the European Union, and as a result, discussions of Danish-Iranian relations often come as a passing mention within research focusing on broader EU relations with Iran.¹² This essentially leaves an academic void in the discussion

⁹ Mónica Codina and Jordi Rodríguez Virgili, "Journalism for Integration: The Muhammad Cartoons," *Javnost* 14, no. 2 (June 2007): 31-46. <https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/10.1080/13183222.2007.11008940>; Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend."; To be quite clear, the research laid out therein does not seek to justify the controversial publication of the twelve Muhammed cartoons nor does it hope to justify the sometimes-violent response of Iran or the global Iranian population. Simply put, the aim of this research is to explain why and how Iran responded to the cartoons without attempting to condone their reactions, violent or otherwise, while simultaneously filling a void within the overall discussion of the cartoon controversy.

¹⁰ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 230; Codina and Rodríguez Virgili. "Journalism for Integration."

¹¹ "Arab-European Relations."; Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis."

¹² Javad Kachouian, "Ties and Economic Relations Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union," *Studia Diplomatica* 55, no. 2 (May

of both Danish-Iranian relations as well the Iranian response to the Danish cartoons, which ultimately means that a thorough examination of the cartoons' impact on those relations is all but non-existent.

While this research hopes to fill that void it contends that while the relations of the two countries are of relatively minor importance, understanding the strong Iranian response to the Danish cartoons provides important insight into the collision of two different cultures with very different core beliefs and values. The world is more connected now than it has ever been and while many different cultures can integrate quite well, it is important to understand that not all values are universal.¹³ A set of global mono-syncretic values is simply untenable, and humanity bears the responsibility of helping to maintain the distinct cultures found across the globe.

Cartoons and Satire in Iran, Imagery in Islam

An essential component of understanding the Iranian response to the Danish cartoons is the relationship dynamic of the Iranian people and their government. The two parties often oppose each other on the matter of cartoons and satire, with the government generally holding a harsher condemnatory stance. Religious and social factors that play key roles in what Iranians or their government determine to be offensive outline the divide between the two countries. This section will also include a brief look at various times in Iran's history when satire and cartoons were freely allowed, semi-suppressed, and fully suppressed as well as the reasoning behind the suppression.

While satirical print media existed in Iran since at least 1888, the Iranian cartoon industry did not begin developing until

2002): 36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44839676>. Amin Saikal, *Iran Rising: The Survival and Future of the Islamic Republic*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019), 236.

¹³ Giacomina De Bona, *Human Rights in Libya: The Impact of International Society Since 1969*, (New York: Routledge, 2017), 153.

1907.¹⁴ Cartoon's introduction as a source of news media, alongside printed articles usually covering the same topic, came while the Iranian population had a high illiteracy rate, and as such cartoons served as a means to make the news more widely accessible.¹⁵ While this new mode of delivering the news to a wider audience was initially successful and garnered a decent amount of popularity by 1914 only one major satirical paper was still in circulation, and once Reżā Shah (1878-1944) took control of the country in 1925 political satire or criticism became extremely dangerous to publish.¹⁶ When Reżā Shah was replaced by his son Mohammad Reżā Pahlavi (1919-1980) in 1941, freedom of the press flourished into the 1950s and no less than nine satirical papers enjoyed wide circulation within the country.¹⁷ Then, in August of 1953 a Western-backed coup against the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammad Mosaddeq (1882-1967), took place which strengthened the rule of the monarch, Mohammad Reżā Pahlavi, who was favored by Western powers. After the 1953 coup harsh restrictions were once again placed upon newspapers and satirical print.¹⁸ Despite this, a select few satirical outlets remained in print and Iran's most popular satirical newspaper, *Towfiq*, attracted talented Iranian artists who later gained international fame; the paper was, however, banned by the Pahlavi government in 1971.¹⁹

Iran's freedom of the press, and their ability to print satire, saw a brief respite in the spring of 1979 with the onset of Islamic Revolution (1978-1979), but within just one month of the revolution, a popular satirical column, *Kayhan*, was shut down and

¹⁴ Farjami, "Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom," 217.

¹⁵ Shiva Balaghi, "Print Culture in Late Qajar Iran: The Cartoons of 'Kashkūl,'" *Iranian Studies* 34, no. 1/4 (Summer/Fall 2001): 168, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4311428>.

¹⁶ Balaghi. "Print Culture in Late Qajar Iran," 168.; Farjami, "Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom," 219.

¹⁷ L. P. Elwell-Sutton, "The Iranian Press, 1941-1947." *Iran Volume 6, 1968* (1968): 65-104. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4299603>.

¹⁸ Farjami, "Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom," 219.

¹⁹ Farjami, "Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom," 220.

its author, Hadi Khorsandi, fled the country in exile following violent protests.²⁰ By 1981, all satirical papers in Iran had been shut down by the government following waves of violent attacks, and countless satirical writers and cartoonists, including Khorsandi and Manuchehr Mahjoubi went into exile while continuing to produce Iranian political satire.²¹ For the next twenty years, satire and cartoons faced multiple bouts of repression and freedom, but by 2000 the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (b. 1939), began ordering the closure of several satirical outlets, after which he announced that ten or fifteen separate news outlets appeared to “be directed from the same centre,” adding that he believed these to be “enemy bases” wishing to make the Iranian populace “pessimistic about the system.”²² Whether these accusations are true is hard to discern, and despite the closures, many satirical outlets were allowed to continue publishing and maintained the freedom to criticize the president, so long as they refrained from publishing content satirizing Islam.²³

In the period before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, repression of satirical news and cartoons had largely been engaged in by the government for political purposes as a means to suppress opposition and criticism. This is not to say that religious objections did not exist, but they were not a driving factor. While political motivations remained a contributing component in the post-revolution era, religious concerns regarding the medium of satire and cartoons became more prominent, though with varying extremes. Although the Quran does not explicitly prohibit satire of any form, many Muslims believe that any form of satire went against the teachings of Islam, while others argue that satire and cartoons are acceptable, with only the depiction of certain subjects

²⁰ Farjami, “Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom,” 220.

²¹ Farjami, “Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom,” 220.

²² Khamenei, Ayatollah Ali. “Supreme Leader’ Speech During a Meeting With Youth.” The Great Musalla of Tehran. April 20, 2000.

<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=bayanat&id=1897>.

²³ Farjami, “Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom,” 221.

is off limits, such as the Prophet Mohammad.²⁴ It is a core value, however, of the fundamental Islamic faith that Muhammad should not be depicted in any manor, as it is considered a form of idolatry, and again while this is not prohibited within the Quran, those of the Islamic faith who believe idolatry to be prohibited use the following passage of the holy book as a clear indication that even a picture of Muhammad equates to idolatry:

52. When he said to his father and his people: What are these images to whose worship you cleave?

53. They said: We found our fathers worshiping them.

54. He said: Certainly you have been, (both) you and your fathers, in manifest error.²⁵

The wording of this passage has led to different interpretations. It is seen by fundamentalists as a ban on depictions of Muhammad, as prayers should be directed straight to heaven and not to an image of the prophet. Less strict Muslims believe it to simply be a prohibition of worshiping false idols.

It is important to note that depictions of the Prophet have proliferated throughout history and were produced by Muslims themselves.²⁶ This is true for both the general Islamic population and within Iran; images of the prophet could be seen, and even purchased on postcards, keychains, etc., in Iran until at least 2004.²⁷ By 2012, souvenirs with the Prophet upon them were all but non-existent in Iranian markets.²⁸ However, in 2008 the Iranian government did what no other Muslim majority country had done and commissioned a mural of Muhammad upon his Burāq (during his famous journey into heaven) a clear indication that Iranians

²⁴ *The Quran, 2008*; Farjami, "Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom."

²⁵ *The Quran* 21:52-54

²⁶ Grabar, "The Story of the Portraits of the Prophet Muhammad."; Gruber, "Images of the Prophet Muhammad In and Out of Modernity."

²⁷ Gruber, "Images of the Prophet Muhammad In and Out of Modernity," 22.

²⁸ Gruber, "Images of the Prophet Muhammad In and Out of Modernity," 22.

generally accept positive depictions of the Prophet.²⁹ These examples of the recent availability of Iranian produced images of the prophet serve to indicate that not all Iranians, let alone all Muslims, believe depicting Muhammad to be prohibited and that this belief seems to be more strongly obeyed by fundamentalists of Islam who find any depictions of Muhammed, positive or negative, to be blasphemous.³⁰

While Iranians have clearly found depictions of Muhammad acceptable in positive formats, they debate whether important figures, such as the President and Supreme Leader, can be depicted in a negative or critical manner. It is evident, however, that at the very least other important religious figures are generally off-limits to Iranians, as evidenced by a country-wide uproar caused by a cartoon satirizing the prominent Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi (1931 - 2021) in which he was equated to a crocodile.³¹ The cartoon's publication in Iran immediately spawned countless death threats towards the artist, Nikahang Kowsar (b. 1969), and resulted in the temporary closing of Islamic seminaries and a four-day protest held by thousands of clergy students.³² After a brief imprisonment by the Iranian government before posting bail, Kowsar was forced to flee the country and has never been able to return.³³ This extreme reaction to the cartoon satirizing the Ayatollah was not one rooted in the government's desire to suppress criticism, nor was it a matter of worshiping false idols. Instead, the resulting anger was directly related to Ayatollah Yazdi's highly regarded position of leadership within the Muslim faith, and as such, an attack on him was seen by many Iranians as an attack on the faith.³⁴

²⁹ Burāq is the name of Muhammad's donkey-like animal which transported the prophet to heaven.

³⁰ Kowsar, "Being Funny Is Not That Funny."; Farjami, "Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom."; Balaghi, "Print Culture in Late Qajar Iran."

³¹ Kowsar, "Being Funny Is Not That Funny."

³² Kowsar, "Being Funny Is Not That Funny."

³³ Kowsar, "Being Funny Is Not That Funny."

³⁴ Kowsar, "Being Funny Is Not That Funny," 117.

Another incident that indicates Iran's intolerance of negative depictions of the Islamic faith can be seen in the fallout that occurred after British author Salman Rushdie (b. 1974) published a 1988 book, *The Satanic Verses*, supposedly inspired by the life of the prophet Muhammed. The title itself refers to a set of verses supposedly spoken to the prophet by the devil who was trying to deceive Muhammed into thinking they came from God. These verses allowed for the worship of three pre-Islamic deities, and once the deceit had been discovered they were quickly removed from scripture. Within the book itself, Iranians found a great deal to be offended by, chief among them was the use of a derogatory version of Muhammed's name which was popularized during the Crusades (1095-1291).³⁵ The anger that arose within Iran led Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) to issue a fatwa (a religious ruling based upon a point of Islamic rule) calling for Rushdie's death along with a \$2.8 million ransom, which led to numerous killings, bomb attacks, and attempted killings.³⁶ When Mohammad Khatami (b. 1943) rose to the Iranian presidency in 1998 he announced that the government no longer supported the bounty placed on Rushdie, yet the fatwa towards him was not revoked.³⁷

The Iranian response to both Rushdie's book and Kowsar's cartoon serves as clear indicators as to the limits of both the Iranian people and their government in regard to tolerating works which depict Islam or religious figures in a negative manner, which provides context to their reaction to the publication of the twelve Danish cartoons.

³⁵ Esposito, "The Islamic Threat" 250.

³⁶ "Iran Says Rushdie Fatwa Still Stands."; Jessica Jacobson, *Islam in Transition: Religion and Identity among British Pakistani Youth*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 34.

³⁷ Barbara Crossette, "Iran Drops Rushdie Death Threat, And Britain Renews Teheran Ties," *The New York Times*, September 24, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/25/world/iran-drops-rushdie-death-threat-and-britain-renews-teheran-ties.html>.; "Iran Says Rushdie Fatwa Still Stands."

Danish-Iranian Relations 1933-2005

Before the influence of the Iranian history of satire in general and cartoons specifically can contextualize the Iranian response to the twelve Muhammed cartoons and its effect on Danish-Iranian relations, it is necessary to understand the extent of these relations, or lack thereof, prior to 2006 and the developmental pattern in order to compare the deterioration and rebuilding of relations in the wake of the controversy. Denmark's relations with Iran were a stark departure from the approach used by other colonial/imperialist European powers, such as Russia and Britain, who both actively worked to transform Iran into a pseudo-colony for their own benefit.³⁸ The two powers had been competing for influence in Iran since the eighteen-hundreds, and in 1907, without any consultation by Iranian officials, the Anglo-Russian Accord was signed between Britain and Russia which partitioned Iran into geographical spheres of influence and disabling Iran's ability to leverage one country to help resist the other.³⁹ Throughout World War I (1914-1918), Iran's neutrality was frequently violated by Russia and Britain, and the two countries pursued their own geostrategic and economic goals within Iran until the 1950s when British power began to wane and the United States began to get involved in the Middle East.⁴⁰

While Russia and Britain were heavily involved in Iran, Denmark stood in stark contrast as their relations with Iran were never of any major importance and remained largely economic from the onset, while showing little signs of any political influence from either direction. Early in 1933, a Danish railroad company, Kampsax, signed a contract with the Iranian government for the construction of a trans-national railroad, and a concurrent Treaty of

³⁸Mehdi Heravi, *Iranian-American Diplomacy*, (New York: T. Gaus' Sons, 1970).

³⁹ Heravi. *Iranian-American Diplomacy*.

⁴⁰ Heravi. *Iranian-American Diplomacy*.

Friendship was signed between the two countries.⁴¹ This treaty marks the beginning of official relations between Iran and Denmark, as prior to 1933 the only noteworthy contact between the two came in 1691 when an Iranian envoy to Denmark sought reimbursement from their East India Trading Company after the confiscation of Iranian goods being carried on a Bengali ship.⁴² Later in 1933, Denmark upgraded its consulate in Tehran to a full embassy, making it one of only two Danish missions in the Middle East up into the 1970s.⁴³ Despite this early flagship move in Iran by Denmark, it took until 1959 for an Iranian embassy to open in Denmark following Moḥammad-Rezā Shah's eventual visit to Denmark.⁴⁴ This event provides one of the first indicators that relations with Iran were more important to Denmark than Danish relations were to Iran—this importance would later turn to a brief dependency as Denmark increasingly imported Iranian oil.

Leading up to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, relations between the two countries revolved almost exclusively around mutual trade, with political relations being little more than superficial.⁴⁵ While visits between the two governments ensued during those years, they were limited to visits by the royal families of either country, with a lack of any political bilateral cooperation.⁴⁶ While political relations remained virtually stagnant until 1998, trade between the two countries steadily increased throughout the 1970s.⁴⁷ Although trade balances have been historically in Denmark's favor, their short dependency upon Iranian oil during this time vastly shifted the scales as oil imports

⁴¹ "Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark," Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Copenhagen, <https://denmark.mfa.gov.ir/en/generalcategoryservices/9081/political-relations-between-iran-and-denmark>.

⁴² "Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark."

⁴³ "Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark."

⁴⁴ "Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark."

⁴⁵ "Denmark: Relations with Persia," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII, no. 3 (December 15, 1994): 289–92.

⁴⁶ "Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark."

⁴⁷ "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

into Denmark, worth \$261 million, peaked in 1977 at a value of three-and-half times the amount of goods they were exporting to Iran, worth \$79 million.⁴⁸ Even with this sizable change in balance, the amount of Iranian oil exported to Denmark was an inconsequential drop in the bucket within the contexts of Iran's overall oil sales, but for Denmark this flow of oil was crucial to their economy as one of their major sources of fuel.⁴⁹

It was not long, however, before the Danish economy flipped the tables once again: by the end of the 1970s, they began working towards oil independence as a result of their newly found sources of crude oil on their own land which plummeted the total value of Iranian exports to Denmark.⁵⁰ By 1993 Danish crude oil had nearly completely eliminated their dependence upon Iranian crude oil, and the total number of imports to Denmark dropped drastically to just 3.8% of their peak levels in 1977 while Danish exports to Iran simultaneously doubled.⁵¹ This shift in the Danish oil sector happened while Iran was ravaged during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88, and although Denmark maintained neutrality during the conflict, they accepted nearly 9,000 Iranian refugees by 1993, after which increased trafficking crime and ethnic tensions forced the Danish government to restrict the flow of Iranian refugees.⁵² While this did little to impact Danish-Iranian relations, Muslims from other countries continued pouring into Denmark, increasing the Muslim population there from just 0.32% of the population in 1980 to nearly 3% by 2005; a large enough population to push the Danish Muhammad cartoon controversy onto the global stage.⁵³

⁴⁸ "Denmark: Relations with Persia."; Danish-Iranian exports/imports graph in "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

⁴⁹ Danish-Iranian exports/imports graph in "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

⁵⁰ "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

⁵¹ "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

⁵² "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

⁵³ Houssain Kettani, "Muslim Population in Europe: 1950 – 2020.," *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development* 1, no. 2 (June 2010): 158. <https://doi.org/10.7763/ijesd.2010.v1.29>.

Despite Denmark's short reliance on Iranian oil during the 1970s and the historical Danish-Iranian trade balance favoring Denmark, the fact remains that Danish-Iranian relations were never very significant for either country, which helps to explain the relative stagnation of bilateral political cooperation. For the most part, the insignificance of relations left Denmark to follow the lead of the European Union when it came to political dealings with Iran.⁵⁴

Just before the turn of the millennium bilateral cooperation between the two countries began reaching new heights as high-ranking officials from both powers began holding more frequent meetings, but this progress once again stagnated in 2001 as Denmark's prioritizing of relations with Israel and the United States overshadowed those with Iran.⁵⁵ Regardless, trade maintained a beneficial balance for Denmark, which caused certain deviations from its own morality when dealing with human rights issues around the globe.⁵⁶ The Danish government is generally swift to issue condemnations to country's regarding human rights violations within their borders, but despite clear violations within Iran, a Danish condemnation has never been issued toward them.⁵⁷ Though Iran is not a large importer of Danish goods, this calculated and continual decision by the Danish government helps to highlight the importance of these trade ties, providing an indication that they did not wish to create an environment of retaliation that would impact their economic ties to the country.

Danish-Iranian relations never reached any great significance, and tended to fluctuate in response to the immediate needs of Denmark; whether their desire for a railroad or need for oil, but have otherwise not developed in relation to the needs of

⁵⁴ Kachouian, "Ties and Economic Relations," 36.

⁵⁵ "Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark."

⁵⁶ "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

⁵⁷ Ann Elizabeth Mayer, "Islamic Rights or Human Rights: An Iranian Dilemma." *Iranian Studies* 29, no. 3/4 (Summer-Autumn 1996): 269–96. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4310998>; "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

Iran.⁵⁸ While the Iranian population developed a high demand for Danish goods, Iranians were not *dependent* upon these imports, as they were largely luxury or less than essential commodities.⁵⁹ And while these Danish exports to Iran did not constitute a large portion of their export economy, it was a significant enough factor that the Danish government found it prudent to avoid disrupting their Iranian sales. It is this trade dynamic that provides crucial insight and context that will help provide a more thoughtful examination of the Iranian decision to sever trade ties with Denmark in the fallout of the cartoon controversy.

The Danish Reach for Free Speech

However, to fully understand the Iranian response to the publication of the Muhammed cartoons an examination of Denmark's domestic sphere during the lead up to the publication is required - especially with regard to the sizable Muslim population living within Denmark at the time, which played a leading role in spurring the international Islamic response.⁶⁰

Following the Soviet Union's dissolution in December of 1991, Denmark joined the United States in its ostensible, if disingenuous, stated efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East.⁶¹ In this Western crusade to transform the region (spurred into action under the crushing weight of the White man's burden to civilize these people) the idea of free speech, and other Western conceptions of individual liberal and political rights were pushed as a universal value despite the fact that certain elements of this value contradict strongly held beliefs in Muslim majority

⁵⁸“Denmark Exports to Iran 1993-2021 Historical.” Trading Economics.

Accessed April 22, 2022. <https://tradingeconomics.com/denmark/exports/iran>.

⁵⁹ “Denmark Exports to Iran 1993-2021 Historical.”

⁶⁰ Kettani, “Muslim Population in Europe: 1950 – 2020,” 158.; Tas, “Danish Cartoon Crisis,” 230.

⁶¹ Marina Ottaway, “Promoting Democracy in the Middle East: The Problem of U.S. Credibility,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, no.35 (March 2003), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12977>.; Dalgaard and Dalgaard, “The Right to Offend,” 29.

countries.⁶² Immanuel Wallerstein (1930-2019), of World-Systems Analysis fame, referred to this misguided at best, racist, and potentially deceptively malicious attitude as European Universalism - which blinds most observers and even Western academics to the common sense conclusion that indigenous forms of democracy, political, and human rights must develop naturally; which the imposition of foreign ideals under threat of the barrel of gun and explosive shrapnel to be counterproductive to the very cultivation of democracy these Western nations claim to care for and jump rhetorical hoops to justify.⁶³ It was this inability to recognize the incompatibility of total free speech with Islamic beliefs (and seeming incompatibility with Western society as the unprecedented and extrajudicial imprisonment of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange demonstrates) that partially contributed to the twelve cartoons being published, as well as an array of other social factors.

The individual who effectively started the controversy was Flemming Rose, the Cultural Editor for one of Denmark's largest newspapers, *Jyllands-Posten*, whose September 30th, 2005, article published in the *Posten* stating that he had encouraged artists from the Danish Editorial Cartoonists Union "to draw Muhammed as they see him:" of the twenty-five active cartoonists, twelve responded with drawings, all of which were published.⁶⁴ This call for the cartoons was driven by Flemming's personal rationale, who had become increasingly concerned over supposed self-censorship at the hands of Danish artists and journalists who supposedly feared Islamic retaliation.⁶⁵

⁶² Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend," 29.

⁶³ De Bona, *Human Rights in Libya: The Impact of International Society Since 1969*.

⁶⁴ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis." 229; Considering the prolific nature of negative perceptions of Islam, this open-ended call was sure to inspire some less than positive cartoons full of stereotypical imagery.; Flemming Rose, "Muhammeds Ansigt." *Jyllands. JP/Politikens Hus A/S*, September 30, 2005. <https://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/ECE4769352/Muhammeds-ansigt/>.

⁶⁵ Rose, "Muhammeds Ansigt."

Several factors led him to this line of thinking, some verifiable while others are hard to corroborate outside of his claims. In one instance, a children's book author, Kare Bluitgen, was struggling to find an artist to depict Muhammed in their new book, only finding an illustrator willing under the condition of anonymity—this same condition was also requested by translators of Islam-critical essays from West Europe, both of which are corroborated in independent research.⁶⁶ Other factors Flemming took issue with included the removal of potentially offensive/Islamophobic artwork from a popular museum, the Tate gallery in London, as well as Rose's claim that an Imam met with Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh (b. 1953) in September of 2005, seeking to apply pressure for positive media portrayals of Islam.⁶⁷

As Flemming characterizes his position, he states that he remains "sensitive about calls for censorship on grounds of insult," as he believes this slippery slope will lead to, in his mind, a totalitarian society that indefinitely imprisons artists for critical portrayals of leaders and religious figures.⁶⁸ Flemming's belief that the Muslim rejection of a secularism was incompatible with / hostile to free speech and democracy generated a deep seated fear that this supposed Islamic ideal would create a fundamental change in Danish society, led him to his commissioning and publication of the twelve Muhammed cartoons in defiance of the all encroaching inexorable Islamic march towards the installation of Sharia law in his local 7 Eleven.

Flemming's rationale is not representative of Denmark's relationship with its own, or global, Muslim populations, but it does provide insight into the Eurocentric/racist political ideology that enabled the cartoons to be published.

⁶⁶ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 231.

⁶⁷ Rose, "Muhammeds Ansigt."

⁶⁸ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 231.; Rose, "Muhammeds Ansigt."

The Cartoons Seen Around the World

The twelve Muhammed cartoons published by *Jyllends-Posten* varied widely between benevolent depictions of the prophet, and depictions riddled with racism and Islamophobic stereotypes. While this analysis will not provide the images out of respect for Islamic beliefs, the three most prominent will be discussed and analyzed to examine their various aggravating factors that create offense to the Muslim community (aside from the most baseline prohibition against depicting Muhammed).

The first cartoon, by Kurt Westergaard, is the most blatantly anti-Islamic and incorporates the most prolific War on Terror-era stereotype of the religion as a cover for violent terrorism, or that terrorism is somehow endemic and inherent to the religion itself.⁶⁹ Muhammed is presented with a turban that has been merged into a bomb containing the Islamic Creed written across it. The message the cartoon portrays is strikingly clear, and not hidden behind any kind of tongue-in-cheek or metaphorical analogy that requires deep analyses; as it is obviously repulsive to those operating in good faith, while it simultaneously reaffirms all previously held prejudicial beliefs of those who claimed there are no innocent Muslims like American pundit Ben Shapiro did during the Iraq War or Israeli officials contemporaneously claim that “there are no uninvolved” inside Gaza for all Arab/Muslims are collectively guilty - even the children.⁷⁰ It is for this reason that this specific cartoon became the face of the entire controversy and overshadowed the fact that not *all* the cartoons contained direct insults towards Islam. While the artist later came out with the claim that the cartoon was strictly directed at Islamic fundamentalists and not the whole religion, this explanation did little to temper the outrage over the cartoons; as it is akin to a racist anti-black cartoon afflicted unto the world only for the White American author to say, “it’s not all blacks, only the *uppity* ones.”

⁶⁹ Rose, “Muhammeds Ansigt.”

⁷⁰“Potentially Genocidal Quotes by Shimon Boker.” The Zionism Observer, May 6, 2024. <https://zionism.observer/shimon-boker>.

The second cartoon, by Erik Poulson, still portrays Muhammad in what can be interpreted as a demonizing manner, yet it is done in a style containing a much higher degree of subtlety.⁷¹ Though Muhammad is standing in an innocent pose, the Islamic crescent rests above the prophet's head, serving as a halo that presents as though they are devil's horns. Even though the artwork itself does not immediately strike the audience as hostile to Islam, the message is still clear—it is an evil religion posturing as a benevolent one—which just so happens to provide another justification for US and Israeli forces to wash their hands of the blood of the civilians they murder, for by the cartoon's logic, these are devils pretending to be civilians.

The third cartoon, by Claus Seidel, was selected not because of its overly offensive message, but because it has two offensive components without actually including a negative portrayal of Muhammed.⁷² The image itself simply depicts Muhammed in plain clothes and a turban walking with his donkey. To the unknowing eye, one may find it unreasonable to take any offense to this cartoon, yet for strict adherents within the Islamic faith depicting Muhammed in *any* way, good or bad, is blasphemy. Beyond that, some few Muslims find it to be a taboo to even create depictions of his famous donkey—this creates a cartoon that contains, to some, two taboos without any obvious malicious intent by the artist.⁷³

The Muslim World Reacts

To understand the Iranian response, it is first essential to understand the global Muslim response, as without its occurrence and the pressure exerted from a series of grassroots demonstrations and protests it is less likely that Iran would have felt it was in a position it must respond to.⁷⁴ As briefly mentioned, Danish-

⁷¹ Rose, "Muhammeds Ansigt."

⁷² Rose, "Muhammeds Ansigt."

⁷³ Kowsar, "Being Funny Is Not That Funny."

⁷⁴ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 230.

Muslims were quick to respond to the September 30th publication of the cartoons, and by the next day, 3,500 Danish-Muslims participated in non-violent protests in the Danish capital, Copenhagen.⁷⁵ Despite this quick reaction at the center of the controversy, it took several weeks before any major reaction came from global Muslim communities, which unlike the Danish backlash, turned violent on several instances around the world.

Danish-Muslims had originally garnered support from eleven ambassadors to Denmark from Muslim majority and Islamic countries who then, on October 20th, sent the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, a formal letter of grievance urging a meeting be convened to discuss the cartoon issue.⁷⁶ The Prime Minister (PM) rejected any such meeting and dismissed the concern as, under their interpretation, the cartoons fell under free speech and did not violate any laws. This rebuff of the eleven representatives of the Islamic world sparked criticism from within Denmark itself, but also helped to spur the spread of outrage to the global Muslim community. In order to increase the pressure on the Danish government to respond in a way favorable to the Islamic community, several Danish Imams departed to the Middle East within days after the Danish PM rejected a meeting, taking with them a 43-page dossier regarding the cartoon controversy that they presented to multiple Islamic majority governments, first visiting Egypt and Lebanon.⁷⁷

This specific action taken by the Danish Imams to spread outrage over the cartoons deeply contributed to the scope of the international Muslim response, as *Jyllands-Posten* was a local Danish newspaper whose readership was almost exclusively within Denmark, though it was one of the country's most prominent newspapers.⁷⁸ By January of 2006, the Danish Imams led the Organization of Islamic Conferences to petition the United Nations

⁷⁵ Klausen, Jytte. *The Cartoons That Shook the World*. London: Yale University Press, 2010.

⁷⁶ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 230.

⁷⁷ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 230.

⁷⁸ Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend," 30.

(UN) to issue a condemnation of Denmark for the cartoons and their failure to appropriately and respectfully react to the situation in an inclusive manner.⁷⁹

As the reaction spread within Islamic communities, many protests began turning violent and lethal as a direct result. In the first wave of violent protests, the Danish embassy buildings in both Lebanon and Syria were attacked by arsonists on February 5th, 2006. For reasons unknown, the Syrian security forces were absent from the embassy when the attack happened, and Lebanon blamed Syria for the attack on their Beirut embassy.⁸⁰ Both of these attacks came four months after an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting in which a UN nuclear watchdog reported on Iranian nuclear activities. When considering the close relationship of Lebanon and Syria to Iran, it is extremely possible that these specific attacks were an attempt to divert attention from Iran's nuclear activity.⁸¹

Further violent protests occurred after *Jyllands-Posten* issued an apology on February 19th, 2006, following countless calls, emails, and bomb threats levied at the newspaper. The apology, however, was not an expression of genuine regret or reconciliation and reflection in regard to the publishing the cartoons, but simply an apology for the way it offended the Islamic community, as that was not the paper's intention, indirectly placing blame back onto the Islamic community for misunderstanding the paper's intentions.⁸² This so-called-apology, understandably, did little to placate the outrage permeating the Islamic community. And in February 2006 the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus and Beirut were completely burned to the ground out of protest, while the Iranian protestors attacked the French, Danish,

⁷⁹ Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis," 230.

⁸⁰ Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend," 30.

⁸¹ Art Spiegelman, "Drawing Blood: Outrageous Cartoons and the Art of Outrage," *Harper's Magazine*, June 2006.; Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend," 30.

⁸² Spiegelman, "Drawing Blood."

and Austrian embassies in Iran.⁸³ In Nigeria and Lebanon, Western businesses and Christian assets were attacked by protestors and the burning of the Danish flag became a staple action in the majority of demonstrations related to the cartoons.⁸⁴ Additionally, many Muslim majority and Islamic centered countries proposed a boycott of Danish goods, and Iran completely severed trade ties with Denmark on January 6th, 2006 leading to a decline in Danish exports to the Middle East by 15.5 percent, equating to \$280 million.⁸⁵ The harsh, and sometimes violent, international response of Muslim communities influenced the particular Iranian response to the publication of the cartoons.

Iran Responds

Although it is clear that the Iranian response to the cartoon controversy was a direct result of the international Muslim response galvanized by the actions of the Danish imams, Iran's had its own set of domestic motivations that were independent of the global movement.⁸⁶ That being said, the first action taken by Iran citizens was not directed at Denmark, but instead towards Austria when Iranian protestors attacked the Austrian embassy in Tehran early on February 6th. As was aforementioned, political ties between the two countries were minimal, and usually dictated by the general parameters of how the European Union (EU) interacted with Iran. At the time of the controversy Austria held the EU

⁸³ Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend," 30; Norway became an additional target of frustrations after they republished the cartoons in solidarity with Denmark.

⁸⁴ Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend," 30.

⁸⁵ Codina and Rodríguez Virgil, "Journalism for Integration."; RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, "Iran Cuts Ties With Denmark Over Cartoon Furor," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, February 6, 2012. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1065489.html>.

⁸⁶ Codina and Rodríguez Virgil, "Journalism for Integration."; Tas, "Danish Cartoon Crisis."; Dalgaard and Dalgaard, "The Right to Offend," 30.

presidency, and as such they took the initial brunt of Iran's outrage.⁸⁷

It did not take long, however, for the Iranians to begin taking their frustrations out directly on the perpetrating country, and protestors attacked the Danish embassy in Tehran later in the day of February 6th.⁸⁸ In the wake of the attack, both Denmark and Iran recalled their ambassador's home, signaling an almost complete severing of ties between the two countries.⁸⁹ In quick succession, the Iranian citizenry also took up the fight and began boycotting Danish imports, and even went so far as to rename Danish pastries "Roses of Muhammed."⁹⁰ On that same day, news reports indicate that Iran's Commerce Minister, Massoud Mirkazemi (b. 1960), announced that all trade ties had been severed with Denmark, effective the following day no Danish goods would be accepted by Iranian customs.⁹¹ In response to this severance, the EU threatened Iran that canceling trade contracts with any member was to be considered a boycott of all EU imports, a threat that did not disconcert the Iranian government as they maintained their broken trade ties with Iran.⁹²

The Iranian response went beyond governmental and political channels, producing a cultural opposition that Iranians believed attacked Western values to the same degree that the cartoons attacked their own. On February 12th, 2006, four months after the twelve Muhammad cartoons were published, Iranian newspaper *Hamshahri*, in conjunction with the with House of Iran

⁸⁷ "Arab-European Relations."

⁸⁸ "Protesters Besiege Danish Embassy in Tehran," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, February 2, 2012, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1065487.html>.

⁸⁹ "Iran Cuts Trade Ties With Denmark," BBC News, February 6, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4687116.stm>.

⁹⁰ Spiegelman, "Drawing Blood."

⁹¹ "Iran Cuts Ties with Denmark Over Cartoon Furor," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, February 2, 2012, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1065489.html>.

⁹² "Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark."; Spiegelman. "Drawing Blood."

Caricatures, announced that they would be holding an International Holocaust Cartoon Contest as a direct response to the Danish cartoons.⁹³ The announcement was published in Iranian newspapers and abroad, additionally the news outlet released a video in which the newspaper's graphic editor, Farid Mortazawi, discussed the motivations behind holding the contest: "our purpose is to examine the limits of freedom of expression. The West claims that freedom of expression has no limits, and we want to know whether they are honest or not."⁹⁴ In the view of those that organized the competition, portraying Muhammad in a negative or satirical manner was equivalent to giving the same treatment to a genocidal event that saw the death of six million Jews and at least five million other innocent lives. While this research does not seek to justify or vilify the comparison, it is important to understand the rationale behind the competition; it was strongly felt that the attitude of western pacifism regarding insults to Islam were a direct contradiction to the Western suppression of anything regarded as anti-Holocaust.⁹⁵ In the video, Mortazawi continued on to "assure the Jewish community not to be worried,"⁹⁶ telling them that he did not believe they would be insulted. In his opinion, the rationale behind the contest was the direct desire to upset the western world by choosing an extremely sensitive topic, the goal was not to create any doubts regarding the actual events of the Holocaust (1941-1945).⁹⁷

⁹³ "Major Iranian Newspaper Launches Holocaust Cartoon Competition." YouTube, July 30, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADskiYjT9-E>.

⁹⁴ "Major Iranian Newspaper"

⁹⁵ "Major Iranian Newspaper"

⁹⁶ "Major Iranian Newspaper"

⁹⁷ "Major Iranian Newspaper"



Figure 1: “Major Iranian Newspaper”: “Holocaust Denial: Iran Holocaust Cartoon Exhibition.”⁹⁸

The contest was undeniably successful in achieving the goal of exposing what Iran perceived as western hypocrisy and caused widespread backlash from around the world.⁹⁹ This strong opposition to the contest, though, did not deter organizers and over twelve-hundred drawings poured in from sixty different countries.¹⁰⁰ The chosen winner, by Derkaoui Abdellah, depicts an Israeli crane constructing a wall with Auschwitz on it around the

⁹⁸ “Holocaust Denial: Iran Holocaust Cartoon Exhibition.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/holocaust-denial-and-distortion/holocaust-denial-antisemitism-iran/2016-holocaust-cartoon-contests-in-iran>

⁹⁹ Ishaan Tharoor, “An Exhibition in Iran Will Mock the Holocaust,” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, December 1, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/04/07/an-exhibition-in-iran-will-mock-the-holocaust/>; Matt Schiavenza, “The Hypocrisy of Iran’s Holocaust Cartoon Contest,” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, February 2, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/01/the-hypocrisy-of-irans-holocaust-cartoon-contest/385058/>; Christine Hauser, “Holocaust Conference in Iran Provokes Outrage,” *The New York Times*, December 12, 2006,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/12/world/middleeast/13holocaustcnd.html>.

¹⁰⁰ “Holocaust Denial: Iran Holocaust Cartoon Exhibition.”

Old City of Jerusalem containing the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam. The cartoon effectively depicts Zionists using the Holocaust as an excuse to take Old Jerusalem for themselves and prevent Muslims from being able to access one of their holy sites. Other notable entries into the competition followed a similar theme, with one portraying an Israeli soldier standing in front of iron gates containing the Star of David and blocking off Al-Aqsa Mosque.¹⁰¹ A group of Israeli artists responded by hosting, what they described as their own antisemitic contest out of Tel Aviv, claiming that they will “show the world [they] can do the best, sharpest, most offensive Jew hating cartoons ever published! No Iranian will beat [them] on [their] home turf!”¹⁰² For this competition, the author of the Holocaust graphic novel *Maus*, Art Spiegelman was invited to judge the entries, which he accepted. As a fellow cartoonist, he believed “in the right to insult even if it sometimes puts me in the position of feeling personally insulted.”¹⁰³ The success of this content, however, was as underwhelming as the quality of the cartoons submitted, and as a result created very little noise on the world stage. Opposite that, the success and support that came out of Iran’s Holocaust competition resulted in the hosting of two more Iranian Holocaust contests that continue to draw massive public criticism.

Strangely, these rather extreme reactions by Iran began nearly a month after the Organization of Islamic Conferences petitioned the UN, which appears to be a relatively delayed response. Additionally, the Iranian events that began unfolding came just two days after the International Atomic Energy Agency voted on February 4th, 2006 to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council for ongoing nuclear activities within the country.¹⁰⁴ Within two days of the vote, two different embassies

¹⁰¹ Clearly bitterness over the loss of Palestinian land was not subtle.

¹⁰² Spiegelman, “Drawing Blood” 51.

¹⁰³ Spiegelman, “Drawing Blood” 46.

¹⁰⁴ “UN Nuclear Watchdog to Report Iran to Security Council,” RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, February 2, 2012, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1065435.html>.

had been attacked on Iranian soil and within a week a highly controversial competition had been announced with official government support, both events effectively drawing large attention from the global community. The same day as the embassy attacks, Iran had severed ties with Denmark, drawing further attention from the European Union. Keeping in mind the relatively low importance of Danish-Iranian trade relations, and to a greater degree political relations, at the time of the controversy, the timing and specific nature of Iran's actions point to a desire to draw attention away from its nuclear activities. Whether or not this was truly a motive of the Iranian outrage, in no way should it be seen as the *only* motivation for their actions. With Iran being a Muslim majority country, it is highly probable that Iranians truly were outraged by the Danish cartoons, and there is plenty of cultural and religious evidence to support that point. With that being said, it is important to bear in mind the ways in which this potential underlying motivation affected the severity of Iran's response when such a reaction created a long-lasting impact on what were relatively stable ties with a friendly country.

A Double-Edged Reaction

Considering what has already been discussed, it may be no surprise that Denmark did not quietly bow down to the demands of Iran and the rest of the global Islamic community as the cartoon controversy continued to unfold. Their reaction was quite the opposite, and, in some ways, they doubled down on their pro-free speech stance regarding the cartoons. In an article detailing his motives on February 16th, 2006, Flemming Rose restated his motivations that the cartoons were an exercise in free speech as a response to self-censorship regarding Islam, but he then took his justification even further, adding that

[t]he cartoonists treated Islam the same way they treat Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions. And by treating Muslims in Denmark as equals they made a point: We are integrating you into the Danish

tradition of satire because you are part of our society, not strangers. The cartoons are including, rather than excluding, Muslims.¹⁰⁵

Even if this justification was accepted at face value, it did little to mitigate the fallout of the cartoons' publication and tensions remained high between Denmark and Iran, as well as the global Muslim community. While he offered an apology, it was not for the act of publishing the cartoons, but for *how* they made the Muslim community feel and subsequently react. He felt regret for the death and destruction that was caused as a direct result, but he held no guilt over the publication, a stance that he maintained even ten years after the controversy.¹⁰⁶ Rose's remarks coupled with Denmark's continued persistence in not interfering with legal free speech continued to fan the flames of the controversy, resulting in Iran severing trade ties two days later on February 18th. While discussed above in Iran's response, this essentially acts as the first marker of the two country's reciprocating responses, further compounding the effects of the cartoon and continuing to drive a wedge between Iran and Denmark.

The reciprocal actions taken by Iran and Denmark made for shaky ground when it came to rebuilding relations between the two, and while plans to reopen the Danish embassy in Tehran were announced on March 22nd, 2006, just six weeks after being attacked, relations did not miraculously recover to the pre-controversy levels.¹⁰⁷ Months later, on October 6th, 2006, a publicly broadcast video showed members of the nationalistic right-wing Danish People's Party (the third largest party in

¹⁰⁵ Rose, "Why I Published Those Cartoons."

¹⁰⁶ Simon Cottee, "Flemming Rose: The Reluctant Fundamentalist," *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, March 28, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/03/flemming-rose-danish-cartoons/473670/>.

¹⁰⁷ "Denmark to Reopen Embassy in Iran," *Hindustan Times*, Press Trust of India, Copenhagen, March 21, 2006. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/denmark-to-reopen-embassy-in-iran/story-MzKFo3oyz065iODrmoorSP.html>.

parliament at the time) drawing depictions of Muhammad.¹⁰⁸ On October 9th, the Iranian government protested by once again recalling their Danish ambassador, and the next day, 232 of Iran's 290 parliamentary members signed a letter calling for President Ahmadinejad to sever trade ties once again.¹⁰⁹ Then, two years after the embassy attacks, multiple Danish newspapers reprinted one of the cartoons, invoking Iran's parliament once again to ask the president to sever trade ties with Denmark, and while not as widely supported as previous attempts, 215 parliamentary members were still in favor.¹¹⁰

While neither of these later two attempts to cut trade ties with Denmark succeeded as the initial severance did, they help serve as a clear indication that the sting Iranians felt at the publication of the cartoons was legitimate, and the resulting outrage was not simply a political tool to draw attention away from Iranian nuclear activities. While these actions by both Iran and Denmark mark the end of the cartoon controversy's direct and immediate impact on Danish-Iranian relations, economic and political ties took nearly a decade to successfully recover, which requires a thoughtful examination in order to understand the long-term impact that the controversy had on relations.

Relations on the Rebound

During the interim between parliamentary calls to sever ties, relations remained tense in the first year following the controversy until the Permanent Secretary of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Tehran for the first time in April of 2007. This was followed by a visit to Copenhagen by Iran's Foreign Minister the

¹⁰⁸“Danish Sites Pull Videos Mocking Muhammad,” *NBCNews.com*, October 9, 2006. <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna15199156>.

¹⁰⁹“Iran's Lawmakers Urge Economic Break with Denmark,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, April 8, 2008, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1071922.html>.

¹¹⁰Parisa Hafezi and Reuters. “Iran MPs Want Action on Dutch, Danes Over Cartoon.” *Reuters*. February 18, 2008. <https://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSHAF8443632000218>.

next month, marking an unprecedented step forward in Danish-Iranian relations. That progress, however, was obviously derailed upon the republication of one of the Muhammad cartoons in 2008. For the next year, relations remained somewhat stagnant with minor improvements and the renewal of suspended parliamentary visits between the two countries in 2009.

Unfortunately, relations again took a step backwards after the 2009 Iranian presidential election during which Danish news outlets revived their negative public relations (PR) campaign against Iran.¹¹¹ Before the close of the year, however, both countries saw a change in ambassadorship which enabled a rekindling of Danish-Iranian relations, and even though the boycott of Danish goods had ended almost four years prior, trade levels remained below the 2005 level and political meetings remained infrequent.¹¹²

After four years of relative political stagnation in Iran, the 2013 presidential election taken in tandem with positive steps towards nuclear negotiations helped to strengthen Danish-Iranian relations. The next year the Danish Foreign Minister visited Tehran for the first time in ten years, marking a new stage in bilateral cooperation. As Danish-Iranian political and economic meetings began occurring more frequently their bilateral relations continued to improve through 2018, reaching a level that had not been previously achieved before, and officially marking a complete rebuilding of political relations after their deterioration over the cartoon controversy.

While political relations were being rebuilt in the decade after the cartoon controversy, economic ties were slowly recovering as well. Between 1996 and 2005, Iranian exports to Denmark had grown from \$8.5 million to nearly \$12 million while in that same period Danish exports to Iran had grown from \$35

¹¹¹ "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

¹¹² "Denmark Exports to Iran"; "Iran Exports to Denmark 1997-2018 Historical." Trading Economics. Accessed April 22, 2022. <https://tradingeconomics.com/iran/exports/denmark>.; "Denmark: Relations with Persia."

million to just shy of \$200 million.¹¹³ The brief rupture of economic and political ties saw those numbers drop to \$10 million and \$90 million, respectively, in 2006 following the crisis. During the decade that followed, those trade numbers fluctuated significantly, and hit a significant downturn in 2013 when Danish exports to Iran hit their lowest at only \$60 million.¹¹⁴ By 2017, Iranian imports from Denmark finally returned to the level that had been obtained in 2005,¹¹⁵ with their exports to Denmark surpassing the 2005 value by nearly \$1 million.¹¹⁶ It is hard to decipher exactly how the cartoon controversy affected trade relations in the following ten years, but the fact remains that import and export levels between the two countries were drastically impacted by the controversy in the first year, and based upon the hardship of rebuilding political relations, it is apparent that the correlation does exist.

Conclusion

Overall, the publication of the cartoons, and the reaction of Iran amongst other Islamic communities, boils down to the fundamental inability of either party to respect different cultures. For the part of Flemming and Denmark, they disregarded core tenets of Islamic faith, choosing to satirize it in a manner that was known to be unacceptable to Muslims. Furthermore, as has been discussed, these negative stereotypes of Muslims that some of these comics, such as the one with Muhammed with a bomb in his turban, propagated an image which has been, and still is, used to justify deadly hostile interventionism in the Islamic world. For the part of Iran and Muslim communities, they were unable to accept that these depictions were coming from a region that prized unadulterated free speech as one of their core liberties, and had every legal right to create the depictions without fear of violence.

¹¹³ “Iran Exports to Denmark.”; “Denmark Exports to Iran.”

¹¹⁴ “Denmark Exports to Iran.”

¹¹⁵ “Denmark Exports to Iran.”

¹¹⁶ “Iran Exports to Denmark.”

Cartoons to Outrage

All of this is not to place blame on one party or the other, but simply to illuminate how easily avoidable the entire controversy could have been. In the end, many human lives were lost as a result of the cartoons being published while economic and political ties between Denmark and Iran were severely damaged, taking a decade to fully recover, and ultimately tarnishing Denmark's reputation among global Muslim communities.

Bibliography

- AP Archive. 2015. "Major Iranian Newspaper Launches Holocaust Cartoon Competition," YouTube. July 30, 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADskiYjT9-E>.
- "Arab-European Relations - Denmark Faces Iran Trade Ban Threat." *APS Diplomat Recorder* 64, no. 8 (2006).
- Balaghi, Shiva. "Print Culture in Late Qajar Iran: The Cartoons of 'Kashkūl.'" *Iranian Studies* 34, no. 1/4 (Summer/Fall 2001): 165–181. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4311428>.
- Codina, Mónica & Rodríguez Virgili, Jordi. "Journalism for Integration: The Muhammad Cartoons." *Javnost* 14, no. 2 (June 2007): 31-46.
<https://doiorg.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/10.1080/13183222.200.11008940>
- Cohen, Patricia. "Danish Cartoon Controversy." *The New York Times*, August 12, 2009.
https://web.archive.org/web/20130203172241/http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/subjects/d/danish_cartoon_controversy/index.html.
- Cottee, Simon. "Flemming Rose: The Reluctant Fundamentalist." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, March 28, 2016.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/03/flemming-rose-danish-cartoons/473670/>.
- Crossette, Barbara. "Iran Drops Rushdie Death Threat, And Britain Renews Teheran Ties." *The New York Times*, September 24, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/25/world/iran-drops-rushdie-death-threat-and-britain-renews-teheran-ties.html>.
- Dalgaard, Svenning, and Klaus Dalgaard. "The Right to Offend: The Causes and Consequences of the 'Danish Cartoon Affair'." *The RUSI Journal* 151, no. 2 (April 2006): 28–33.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03071840608523147>.
- "Danish Sites Pull Videos Mocking Muhammad." *NBCNews.com*, October 9, 2006.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna15199156>.

- De Bona, Giacomina. *Human Rights in Libya: The Impact of International Society Since 1969*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- “Denmark Exports to Iran 1993-2021 Historical.” Trading Economics. Accessed April 22, 2022.
<https://tradingeconomics.com/denmark/exports/iran>.
- “Denmark to Reopen Embassy in Iran.” *Hindustan Times*. Press Trust of India, Copenhagen, March 21, 2006.
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/denmark-to-reopen-embassy-in-iran/story-MzKFo3oyz065iODrmoorSP.html>.
- “Denmark: Relations with Persia.” *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII, no. 3 (December 15, 1994): 289–92.
- Elwell-Sutton, L. P. “The Iranian Press, 1941-1947.” *Iran Volume 6, 1968* (1968): 65–104. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4299603>.
- Esposito, John L. *The Islamic threat: Myth or reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Farjami, Mahmud. “Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom: A Review of Political Satire in the Iranian Press During the 2000s.” *Iranian Studies* 47, no. 2 (March 1, 2014): 217–39.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2013.860325>.
- Khamenei, Ayatollah Ali. “Supreme Leader’ Speech During a Meeting With Youth.” The Great Musalla of Tehran. April 20, 2000.
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=bayanat&id=1897>.
- Grabar, Oleg. “The Story of Portraits of the Prophet Muhammad.” *Studia Islamica*, no. 96 (January 1, 2003): 19–IX.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1596240>.
- Gruber, Christiane. “Images of the Prophet Muhammad In and Out of Modernity: The Curious Case of a 2008 Mural in Tehran.” In *Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East: Rhetoric of the Image*, edited by Christiane Gruber and Sune Haugbolle, 3–31. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16gh950.5>.
- Hafezi, Parisa and Reuters “Iran MPs Want Action on Dutch,

- Danes Over Cartoon.” Reuters. Thomson Reuters, February 18, 2008.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSHAF84436320080218>.
- Hauser, Christine. “Holocaust Conference in Iran Provokes Outrage.” *The New York Times*, December 12, 2006.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/12/world/middleeast/13holocaustend.html>.
- Heravi, Mehdi. *Iranian-American Diplomacy*. Brooklyn, NY: T. Gaus’ Sons, 1970.
- “Holocaust Denial: Iran Holocaust Cartoon Exhibition.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/holocaust-denial-and-distortion/holocaust-denial-antisemitism-iran/2016-holocaust-cartoon-contests-in-iran>.
- “Iran Cuts Trade Ties With Denmark.” BBC News, February 6, 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4687116.stm>.
- “Iran Cuts Ties with Denmark Over Cartoon Furor.” RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, February 2, 2012.
<https://www.rferl.org/a/1065489.html>.
- “Iran Exports to Denmark 1997-2018 Historical.” Trading Economics. Accessed April 22, 2022.
<https://tradingeconomics.com/iran/exports/denmark>.
- “Iran Says Rushdie Fatwa Still Stands.” Iran Focus, February 14, 2006. <https://www.iranfocus.com/en/terrorism/5768-iran-says-rushdie-fatwa-still-stands/>.
- “Iran’s Lawmakers Urge Economic Break with Denmark.” RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, April 8, 2008.
<https://www.rferl.org/a/1071922.html>.
- Jacobson, Jessica. *Islam in Transition: Religion and Identity among British Pakistani Youth*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Kachouian, Javad. “Ties and Economic Relations Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union.” *Studia Diplomatica* 55, no. 2 (May 2002): 33–38.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44839676>.
- Kettani, Houssain. “Muslim Population in Europe: 1950 – 2020.”

- International Journal of Environmental Science and Development* 1, no. 2 (June 2010): 154–64.
<https://doi.org/10.7763/ijesd.2010.v1.29>.
- Klausen, Jytte. *The Cartoons That Shook the World*. London: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Kowsar, Nikahang. “Being Funny Is Not That Funny: Contemporary Editorial Cartooning in Iran.” *Social Research* 79, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 117–44.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23350301>.
- “Major Iranian Newspaper Launches Holocaust Cartoon Competition.” YouTube, July 30, 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADskiYjT9-E>.
- Mayer, Ann Elizabeth. “Islamic Rights or Human Rights: An Iranian Dilemma.” *Iranian Studies* 29, no. 3/4 (Summer–Autumn 1996): 269–96.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4310998>.
- Ottaway, Marina. “Promoting Democracy in the Middle East: The Problem of U.S. Credibility.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, no. 35 (March 2003).
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12977>.
- “Political Relations Between Iran and Denmark.” Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Copenhagen.
<https://denmark.mfa.gov.ir/en/generalcategoryservices/9081/political-relations-between-iran-and-denmark>.
- “Potentially Genocidal Quotes by Shimon Boker.” *The Zionism Observer*, May 6, 2024. <https://zionism.observer/shimon-boker>.
- “Protesters Besiege Danish Embassy in Tehran.” RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, February 2, 2012.
<https://www.rferl.org/a/1065487.html>.
- RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. “Iran Cuts Ties With Denmark Over Cartoon Furor.” RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, February 6, 2012. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1065489.html>.
- Rose, Flemming. “Muhammeds Ansigt.” *Jyllands. JP/Politikens Hus A/S*, September 30, 2005. <https://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/ECE4769352/Muhammeds-ansigt/>.

- Rose, Flemming. "Why I Published Those Cartoons." *Washington Post*, February 26, 2024.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2006/02/19/why-i-published-those-cartoons/f9a67368-4641-4fa7-b71f-843ea44814ef/>.
- Saikal, Amin. *Iran Rising: The Survival and Future of the Islamic Republic*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019.
- Schiavenza, Matt. "The Hypocrisy of Iran's Holocaust Cartoon Contest." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, February 2, 2015.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/01/the-hypocrisy-of-irans-holocaust-cartoon-contest/385058/>.
- Spiegelman, Art. "Drawing Blood: Outrageous Cartoons and the Art of Outrage." *Harper's Magazine*, June 2006.
- Taş, Hakki, "Danish Cartoon Crisis." in *Religion and Violence: An Encyclopedia of Faith and Conflict from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by Jeffery Ian Ross, 229-233. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2011.
- Tharoor, Ishaan. "An Exhibition in Iran Will Mock the Holocaust." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, December 1, 2021.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/04/07/an-exhibition-in-iran-will-mock-the-holocaust/>.
- "UN Nuclear Watchdog to Report Iran to Security Council." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, February 2, 2012.
<https://www.rferl.org/a/1065435.html>.
- The Quran*, 2008.

Author Bio

Edgar Noice graduated in 2022 with a bachelor of arts in history from California State University San Bernardino. His journey into the realm of historical research was driven by a profound desire to delve into underserved territories. Recognizing the scarcity of attention given to the interactions between Middle Eastern and Western cultures and religions, he felt compelled to illuminate this vital yet often overlooked aspect of global history. Motivated by a fervent belief in the importance of understanding these dynamics, Edgar embarked on a quest to unravel the misinformation and propaganda surrounding the subject. Presently, Edgar thrives as a leather worker and successful business owner in Washington state, where he resides with his wife and cherished pets. Alongside his entrepreneurial endeavors, he continues to delve into historical inquiries, passionately exploring the depths of his academic



History in the Making

Biddy Mason Memorial Park

By Ahlys Gandara

The Biddy Mason Memorial Park is a boon to Spring Street. Visually interesting and centrally located, it offers a nice reprieve in the crowded Downtown Los Angeles area. Unfortunately, it is so hard to find that it may as well not exist at all. Sandwiched in the middle of a city block by an assortment of buildings such as the famous Bradbury Building, two parking structures, and a derelict shopping alley, it is genuinely impossible to see the park from the street. Even someone who knows the location of the park would be hard-pressed to find it, as there are only two small plaques to mark the two “suggested” entrances, both of which have plaques so heavily scratched that they are illegible. The entrances themselves, besides not revealing the location of the park, are not welcoming to women walking in off the street.



Figure 1: The Broadway Street Entrance.¹

As for the actual memorial of the Biddy Mason Memorial Park, it looks like a brutalist art fixture from a distance and up close it looks like someone put a timeline on a black concrete wall. There is nothing explicitly wrong with the memorial itself, everything on it is factually correct and portrays the biggest facts of Mason's life: she was a slave, she won an important court case, she was a midwife, and she once owned the area where the memorial stands. The memorial also gives information on the area: that the majority of the first Los Angeles settlers, Los Pobladores (original settlers), had African ancestry, that Spring Street was named Calle Primavera at its founding, and that Los Angeles had a Black population of 1,258 in 1890. The memorial does not say much else and leaves visitors with those facts and little to contextualize them. There is no mention of the anti-slavery

¹ All pictures provided by the author. To reach the memorial, you enter through here and then down the covered alley that holds (apparently) shuttered shops on each side. The memorial itself is in an open courtyard.

agitation in Los Angeles and no mention of the importance of midwives to enslaved people or to the community at large.



Figure 2: Portrait of Biddy Mason.²

Biddy Mason (1818-1891) was one of the first women to own her own property, a fact that goes unmentioned, although there is a picture of the deed containing her name, and they do not explain why they called Biddy Mason “Grandmother” despite the memorial having it carved very largely on the timeline. To be fair to the memorial, it celebrates the diversity of the city and the narratives that exist outside what is commonly taught at school and is significant in terms of acknowledging her memory in the area where she once lived while adding to the community around Spring Street. However, it still withholds on contextualizing the importance of her life within Los Angeles and what she represents to the history of the city. Biddy Mason’s life is significant to

² Photo courtesy of the Miriam Matthews Collection at Los Angeles Public Library, entitled *Headshot of Biddy Mason*.

African American women in California and is especially important as an inspiring story of how she was able to gain control over her life and improve life for her family.

The memorial is effective in informing the public on the bullet points of Mason's life but fails in informing visitors on the deeper aspects of being an African American woman in Los Angeles, instead focusing on the bare bones progression of the area as equally as it celebrates Mason as an individual. It also fails equally in fully acknowledging Mason's dedication to her community and in explaining the progression of the area. The memorial is a welcoming space that celebrates Biddy Mason and the development of Los Angeles, but it lacks background for the casual viewer and fails to fully encapsulate why Biddy Mason was remarkable.



Figure 2: The memorial which consists of the wall pictured here.³

³ The farthest point of the picture with the metal structure is the Broadway Street entrance as well as the elevator to the parking structure that has the assemblage mentioned later in this article.

Biddy Mason came to Los Angeles during an often-ignored time for the area, with the transition from Spanish rule (1776-1821) to American underway and an influx of people coming into California looking to profit from the Gold Rush (1848-1855). There were a number of African Americans migrating to California at this time, with their numbers more than tripling during the period from 1850 to 1860 and the majority of those migrants were settling in cities. African American women were still very much in the minority in the area, with only 31% of the African American population being female in 1860. Most of these women came to California with family, but it wasn't uncommon for them to come alone and then send for the rest, often raising money to buy their freedom. There were a number of enslaved people in California at this time, despite California nominally being a free state, having been transported to the state by their owners who were also looking to join the economic rush.⁴

Mason was one of those who was brought along with her family by her master, Robert Smith. Mason was already a knowledgeable midwife with three children of her own, while her owner Robert Smith was a Mormon who came west from Mississippi to help build Mormon territory. She and another enslaved woman named Hannah were taken with their children first to Salt Lake City in Utah territory between 1848 and 1851, living there for three years before continuing on to San Bernardino for the newest Mormon outpost. These women would have had the most difficult duties during the journey and would have been forced to walk behind the wagons, tend to the pregnant travelers, look after livestock, and care for their own children.⁵ In California, Mason and Hannah would have found a more welcoming community with free African Americans, who were often and

⁴ Willi Coleman, "African American Women and Community Development in California, 1848-1900," in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, ed. Lawrence B. de Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), 101-103.

⁵ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995), 141-144.

actively defending their civil liberties both in court and out on the street.

California was technically a free state but during this period was operating under three types of law administration: Mexican, military, and American as they transitioned into the union. The Fugitive Slave Act (1850) further complicated matters and by 1855 there was so much agitation against slavery that Smith began to prepare to take his family to Texas along with Mason, Hannah, and their eight or so children. As they prepared to move, the entire family was taken to a canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains where Charles Owens, a man in love with one of Mason's daughters, and Manuel Pepper, a man in love with one of Hannah's daughters, became involved. Both men were free African Americans who lived in Los Angeles and had close ties to the community there.

Bob Owen, the father of Charles and a business owner, would get the law in the Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties involved. Mason and her family would be put under the charge of the Los Angeles' sheriff, challenging Smith's right to move them out of the state against their will. They would petition the court for their freedom and to remain in California as free citizens, but they were not able to speak in court under California law. Despite this, Mason was acknowledged as the head of both families and was often deferred to as such.⁶ This summary does not do justice to the complications and the terror that all those enslaved must have felt, nor does it encapsulate the hope or the joy when the case was won in their favor. This was a singular case in that not only did the African Americans win their case against a well-to-do White man, but also in that the courts did their utmost to maintain their integrity and make a compassionate ruling.

After the case was won, Mason would accept an offer by the Owens to stay with them in Los Angeles, where she would gain a job under Dr. John Strother Griffin (1816-1898) as a midwife; earning a reputation for herself while simultaneously becoming a

⁶ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 144-149.

celebrated member of the community for risking her life as a nurse during a smallpox epidemic. Mason would have earned the title “Grandma” or “Aunt” as a symbol of her importance to the community. Mason did not live in Los Angeles until after the trial for her freedom, and it would be another ten years before she was able to save enough money to buy the property on Spring Street. She was one of the first African American women to own their own property in Los Angeles, which would become an economic base for her and her family. Mason developed the land into a commercial building with space for her family to live, allowing her grandsons to establish businesses on the land. Her home was also the first meeting place of the Los Angeles branch of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church.⁷ Telling the story of Biddy Mason makes it clear that she was a product of her times and was active in her community. She was able to gain her freedom, employment, respect, and a future for her grandchildren through her connections and the help of those around her. Biddy Mason also represents a moment of social upheaval and community building in the Los Angeles area, and her story relays the ideas of new starts and opportunity as well as hope for the future that would be attractive to the area at large. Unfortunately, none of this is relayed through the Biddy Mason Memorial.

⁷ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 151-157; Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 158-161



*Figure 3: A section of the memorial, with a picture of Biddy Mason.*⁸

To be fair to the Power Of Place, the project that erected the monument, the Biddy Mason Memorial Park was conceived as one of four works of art along with a public history workshop and an article on Biddy Mason. There was a poster that was given away to school trips, a letterpress artist book which was donated to the Los Angeles Public Library and Archive, and the “assemblage” located in an elevator lobby nearby that contains artifacts from the site. This memorial was possible due to the happy accident of the owners of the site reaching out to the Power Of Place to find what properties they owned were historic and their ability to get a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The entire project was done in conjunction with a group of artists, graphic designers, researchers, and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).⁹

⁸ The memorial continues like this along the timeline with an image or two, a representative carving (with unclear meaning), and a small paragraph, which here says “Spring Street between Fourth and Seventh is the financial center of Los Angeles, a city of over 50,000, including 1,258 blacks. 1890.”

⁹ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 176-181; 170; 172-173.

A great deal of effort was put into this project, with an eye to represent Black history in Los Angeles through public history while utilizing the foot traffic of downtown. The effort is wonderful, but the issue is that they did not anticipate the longevity of the park versus the rest of the project. This monument was erected in the 1980s and forty years later it must stand alone without the other half of the art projects done to supplant it as well as without the lectures or urban tours that included it at the time. The Biddy Mason Memorial Park now must speak alone, and it fails.

There is a lack of historical sites in Los Angeles, most probably because of the premium on land but also because of a lack of care about the history of the area. The Biddy Mason Memorial is remarkable in how neatly it fits into Spring Street and conserves space while teaching passersby about the street and a remarkable citizen who once lived there, but it is also remarkable in how it fumbles in all these aspects. In James Loewen's book *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*, one of the functions of public history is that monuments can provide a shared community heritage and play the role that stories have for communities. Loewen mentions from the first page that these sites usually arise from local initiatives and are often meant to tell a favorable story about the community in which they are situated.¹⁰ The overarching theme of *Lies Across America* is to explore how that often means a misrepresenting of historical facts and using language that ignores unpleasant politics.

The Biddy Mason Memorial seems to take that to heart and attempt to be as unbiased as possible, stating bland facts without interpretation that are so apolitical that they are almost a political statement in itself. The memorial is so underwhelming that it even fails on the counts of providing stories for the community. Which is a shame as through the Biddy Mason Memorial the story of Los Angeles finally includes that of African Americans and women

¹⁰ James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 25-26; 2.

who succeed rather than just being victims or playing passive roles in the world around them. It should be said that while the memorial is not perfect, it opens up the idea of who has history in Los Angeles, and it is in many ways a wonderful start but one that has no follow through. The key point is that the memorial needs more and could have been more with the inclusion of more dates and facts about what Los Angeles would have been like during Mason's time and the cultural significance of her life.

Biddy Mason lived an interesting life during an interesting time. She was a slave in the south who was transported through Utah to California and had lived among the Mormon settlers, she gained extensive medical knowledge, and was a single parent who famously won freedom for herself and her family in court. It would be very hard to convey all the nuances of these facts in a memorial in a crowded area, but it seems that for the Biddy Mason Memorial they decided to do the bare minimum and it shows. There is nothing truly wrong with the memorial and in fact it is a step forward for a more inclusive history of Los Angeles, but it is a place of unrealized possibilities that makes one wonder why they could not fit in a few more sentences.

Bibliography

- Coleman, Wili. "African American Women and Community Development in California, 1848-1900." In *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, edited by Lawrence B. de Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor, 98-126. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001.
- Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995.
- Loewen, James. *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*. New York: The New Press, 1999.

Author Bio

Ahlys Gandara is currently finishing her first year in the master of arts in history program at California State University, San Bernardino. She has earned her bachelor of arts in history from California State University, Northridge and is specializing in the history of the American West with a focus in California and food history. Previously, they had majored in English and sociology before realizing their passion for American history. He is an ardent fan of local tourism and volunteers with the astronomy group the Sidewalk Astronomers. She plans to work in the public sector following graduation and would like to reaffirm, once again, that they are not cut out for teaching.



National History Day: An Essential Tool for the New Historian

By Leslie G. Madrigal

The National History Day (NHD) organization hosts an annual 4th-12th grade competition, under the same name, where thousands of schools participate in the production of historic projects, ranging from plays, to documentaries, and to museum-grade exhibits, under an assigned theme, with 2024's theme being "Turning Points in History."¹ The organization begins their cycle with every new school year, encouraging children and educators to collaborate and dedicate hours of work apart from their regular curriculum for a reward, which consists of scholarly recognition, awards, and the creation of precious memories and skills that will stay with them forever. Most importantly, it single-handedly fosters the new generation of public historians and academics through accessible development of research and collaborating skills; both extremely important in creating an innovative and diverse future in the realm of the social sciences. Through examination of the establishment of NHD and its impact on students, educators, and the field of public history, this paper seeks to argue that the organization is indispensable to public schools. Furthermore, it serves to stress how student's access to this competition would not only change their lives and relationship with academics, but it would assist in the fostering of a new generation of historians who understand the importance of proper and just documentation, as well as the consequences behind weaponizing history in order to maintain modern political and social imbalances. While many educators raise concerns over the

¹ NHD, "Contest," National History Day, February 17, 2023, <https://nhd.org/en/contest/>.

lack of passion in their work and with the youth, NHD prioritizes education, collaboration, and experience as a forefront for enriching the minds of budding historians, proving the need for flexible curriculums and activities that push students and educators past standardized boundaries, into a future that rewards creative individual thinking. I would urge every school, from K-12 to higher academic institutions, to begin turning their attention towards National History Day, and encourage the expansion of young historians' toolkits so they may be well equipped to tackle the many issues seen in both the field of the social sciences and every aspect of our lives.

NHD began in Cleveland, Ohio in 1974 under the direction of Dr. David Van Tassel, Professor Emeritus of History at Case Western Reserve University, with the intent to, "improve academic achievement and critical thinking skills while promoting student competency and interest in carrying out original research in history."² Despite its beginnings as "a small day-long contest," by 1980, the competition would spread to nineteen neighboring states, as educators and students alike became enthralled with the science-fair style history competition.³ With the drive for competition as a leading motivator, students conduct research for their projects, prioritizing diverse perspectives, the annual theme, and student and educator collaborations as a means of communicating their topics. By the 1990s, NHD developed an official framework which schools could closely follow to complete their projects efficiently and incorporate it within their curriculums.⁴

² Marilyn L. Page, "National History Day: An Ethnohistorical Case Study," (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, 1992), 106, https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/4913. Dr. Marilyn Page, former Professor of Education at both Johnson State College in Vermont and Penn State University, refers to her study subjects with minimal descriptors to preserve their anonymity, my paper therefore will closely follow her provided descriptions and categorization for her study's individuals and schools.

³Page, "National History Day," 103.

⁴Page, "National History Day," 1.

NHD For Our Teachers

The process begins in late July, following the conclusion of the previous year's national contest, with the introduction of the new theme.⁵ Educators then begin to guide students, who often have little experience in how to conduct academic research of this scale, through the broad research phase. This step, often stretching the span of a month, typically consists of selecting a variety of topics that may fit under the annual theme, finding a set number of secondary sources that prove their selected topic is a viable option, creating outlines for their projects that will serve as a road map for the rest of their journey, and learning how to write citations and annotations for their required annotated bibliography. This is all done separately from school objectives, which adds a mound of work to both students and teachers alike. School districts, depending on their level of involvement with the program, host local competitions or send the participating projects directly to their corresponding county competition. At this stage, official judges review the students' projects and "give... feedback on their work and select projects to advance to the next level of the competition."⁶ There are three main contests, the first of which is hosted at a county level, which is a daylong competition, then state, which is usually hosted on a weekend spanning two to three days, and finally Nationals, which lasts the duration of a week and draws a conclusion to that year's competition at the University of Maryland, College Park.⁷ Throughout every step, students are encouraged to revise their work based on the judges suggestions, thus having their best work presented at Nationals in Maryland.

⁵ NHD, "Get Started on Your Project," National History Day, September 13, 2023, <https://nhd.org/en/contest/get-started/>.

⁶ NHD, "Contest," 2023.

⁷ NHD, "National Contest," National History Day, April 30, 2024.



Figure 1: Pictured above are “table-top” style projects at the Iowa National History Day State Competition.⁸

When first introduced, NHD began with only “table-top,” or hand-built exhibits, that resembled museum-like styles of displays, which include quotes and images, or performance categories.⁹ Through time, the organization adopted a variety of categories, including historical papers, websites, podcasts, and posters (for the elementary division), all of which may represent different areas of work that could be found within the field of Public History.¹⁰ It would not be until the 1980s that the organization would see a massive jump from a couple of thousand contestants to close to 500,000 participants.¹¹ While there are several external factors that contributed to this, such as Dr. Van

⁸ Hanna Howard, “State Historical Society of Iowa: National History Day Projects,” Projects - State Historical Society of Iowa, Accessed January 30, 2024.

⁹ Page, “National History Day,” 98.

¹⁰ NCPH, “About the Field,” National Council on Public History, June 28, 2022, <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>.

¹¹ Page, “National History Day,” 103.

Tassel's outreach efforts to obtain funding and sponsors, a large motivator is the self-direction and self-representation that the competition offers to students and teachers alike. Additionally, the 1980s marked a time where the education system underwent a reevaluation of its methodology, following a national decline in test scores, student outcomes, and instructor performance, which resulted in returning "back to a conservative, accountable, no-nonsense, back-to-basics, standardized curriculum philosophy."¹² This, no doubt, resulted in a demotivated instructor who then would seek to find an outlet of creativity that would enable them to exercise their skillsets, regain control over their pupils, and re-engage them in their instruction of the social sciences; many desirable factors teachers still seek today.¹³

Through time, an increase in student engagement and overall improvement in the classroom confirmed teachers' decision to implement NHD as part of their curriculum, as well as an extracurricular activity, reinforcing the idea that giving control and self-direction to an instructor yielded positive results in the face of a forced uniform curriculum.¹⁴ Each competition category requires a different set of rules and regulations to ensure judges rank entries unbiasedly and fairly. However, compared to modern institutional frameworks, like that of the California State Legislature, which was released in 2016 but has yet to update text materials, these regulations are minimal and allow instructors like NHD instructor and subject in Dr. Pages study, Ms. White, to eagerly encourage this program to their students.¹⁵ As Ms. White states, "they can do

¹² Page, "National History Day," 315.

¹³ Liana Loewus, "Why Teachers Leave-or Don't: A Look at the Numbers," *Education Week*, January 10, 2022, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/why-teachers-leave-or-dont-a-look-at-the-numbers/2021/05>.

¹⁴ Kay Sloan and Saul Rockman, "National History Day Works: Findings from the National Program Evaluation," *Rockman et al* (2010): 20, https://nhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/NHDSReport_Final3.pdf

¹⁵ Williamson M. Evers, "California's History Curriculum—Objectionable, Not Objective," *Eureka: California's Policy, Economics, and Politics*, August 17, 2017, <https://www.hoover.org/research/californias-history-curriculum-objectionable-not-objective>.

an extended project such as this [NHD] which helps to save my sanity . . . getting involved with these projects and getting into depth instead of going over the same stuff day after day in the classroom . . . gives me sort of a reason for existence.”¹⁶ The success of NHD is reflected in students’ attitudes while working in preparation for the competitions, as NHD instructor, Jim states, “History Fair really lets the student get involved with history simply because they get to pick their own topic to research—something that they are initially interested in. . . . That way they can learn more about it.”¹⁷ Similarly to the instructor, the student is presented with a unique opportunity to seek out their own interests, express them in a manner not found in a typical classroom, and choose the pace and knowledge they wish to digest and furthermore defend.¹⁸ This is further expressed by Dr. Van Tassel, in Dr. Marilyn L. Page’s 1992 doctoral dissertation, *National History Day: an ethnohistorical case study*, in which he states:

The purpose of doing a project or a performance or a media presentation not just a paper is really two-fold. It’s one, to give kids a creative outlet for the research, make it a lot more fun and interesting and exciting, but also not all kids can write very well. They can’t express themselves that way, so for students who can’t do that, we give them another opportunity and that’s worked well. We’ve had many, many, many students who are described by their teachers as underachievers or below average students do very, very well with NHD which they probably wouldn’t be doing if they had to sit in school and write a term paper,¹⁹

¹⁶ Page, “National History Day,” 198-199.

¹⁷ Page, “National History Day,” 255.

¹⁸ Page, “National History Day,” 336.

¹⁹ Page, “National History Day,” 104-105.

thus, igniting a passion for student learning and simultaneously proving the benefits this organization could provide educators. When these interests align, it is not surprising that NHD serves as a bridge between instructor and student understanding.

NHD For Our Students

The early intention for the organization was to provide students with an opportunity to practice history in a manner representative of the real field, as Dr. Carl Ubbelodhe, National History Day co-founder, comments in Dr. Page's study,

At the beginning the assumption was you could 'do' history. You could illustrate a historical past in writing or in a tabletop exhibit... [History Day] has stayed really close to this idea that students do research. It is not a contest of memory or a contest of factual recall or anything like that at all. . . Students not only are involved in the process [of research and doing history], but know they're involved and can talk about their involvement.²⁰

In order to achieve these goals, Dr. Van Tassel reached out to a plethora of organizations who could support a program as ambitious as National History Day.²¹ The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) would be one of the first organizations to authorize grants for NHD and be one of the early stakeholders for it, contributing to the national expansion of the program.²² Throughout the early expansion of NHD, Dr. Van Tassel accumulated a staff that not only shared his vision for the competition, but who put in the work into obtaining additional financial support and developed a network of affiliates that would streamline NHD's reach within the nation. Organizations such as

²⁰ Page, "National History Day," 104-105.

²¹ Page, "National History Day," 104.

²² Page, "National History Day," 101.

the History Channel, the National Parks Service, and the African American History Commission, among many more, began supporting NHD in their endeavors, contributing to the recognition of “exceptional projects that explore specific areas of history at the National Contest.”²³

Today, NHD has affiliates nationwide that contribute to rewarding the experience and efforts of participants, in and out of the contest setting. For example, California’s implementation of their Civic Summit at their state competition provides students with the opportunity to “engage in civil discourse with other students on their topic in a conversation moderated by a community activist, lawmaker, or expert in the topic,” meeting some requirements for the California State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE), which is a state recognition granted to high school graduates that demonstrates their active role in community and social projects on college applications and work resumes.²⁴ At Nationals, scholarships and recognitions, such as the prized designation given by the National Endowment for the Humanities Scholars for, “entries [who] win 1st place in each category,” encourage students to pursue their passion in this field of study in higher education institutions.²⁵ The recognition of achievements and the competitive atmosphere are primary factors driving students’ unwavering commitment to the program, leading them to eagerly participate in the competition each year, regardless of the outcome. Students and teachers would use their loss as a recognition of gaps in their research, and would refuse to let it dissuade them from trying again in the future as stated by Dr. Page in her study, “While the teachers and students described emotional reactions to the anticipation of competition and to the consequent winning or losing, they all agreed... none of the reactions were permanent or harmful or resulted in feelings of low self-esteem and

²³ NHD. “National Contest,” 2024.

²⁴ NHD-CA, “National History Day California: Civic Summit,” Sacramento County Office of Education, 2024, <https://www.nhdca.org/civic-summit/>.

²⁵ NHD. “National Contest,” 2024,

in fact were often part of the fun and excitement and future motivation.”²⁶

Even without recognition from the contest, students who thrive in the experience that NHD provides continue to seek it out following their departure from the program, as did 1989-1992 alum Crystal Johnson, who states:

I came back from College Park that year completely pumped. I immediately contacted the Iowa NHD coordinator, told her my story, and volunteered to do whatever I could to help the Iowa program... Clueless 22-year-old Crystal had no idea that one could actually make a career out of doing NHD, but the stars aligned for me to be hired as the Iowa coordinator about 18 months later.²⁷

Recognition of students’ hard work and gratification towards teachers’ efforts allowed this program to begin fostering passion for a field that was born in higher institutions at the same time of National History Day’s creation, Public History.

Public Historians have been cataloging, working in archives, and curating museum exhibitions for generations, but it would not be until the 1970s “public history movement” that academia would recognize the public historian as an essential component to the public’s communication of history in contemporary settings.²⁸ Following the same structure as academic historians, public historians seek to use historical rhetoric and perspectives as a driving force for combating modern issues in areas, such as social justice, museum decolonization, and community engagement. Similarly, NHD was founded with the intention of creating an accessible program for students that allowed them to conduct real-world historical research and to

²⁶ Page, “National History Day,” 325.

²⁷ NHD, “National History Day: Join the Alumni Network,” National History Day, January 4, 2024, <https://nhd.org/en/get-involved/join-the-alumni-network/>.

²⁸ NCPH, “About the Field,” 2022.

demonstrate the intersectionality of past problems with contemporary issues. In the words of Dr. Van Tassel:

Studying history is not memorizing names and dates. That's a very important element in NHD... It's a process. . . They have to... understand research techniques, understand what an annotated bibliography is, what primary sources are. We want to teach children how to be historians, how to do history the way historians do it and ... to make history come alive for them, make it more interesting, get them into archives and see a primary source. ...That's a lot more fun than reading history out of a textbook in a classroom. ... We want to create thinking individuals.²⁹

As previously stated, a defining trait of NHD is that it offers every student the ability to exercise their creativity, regardless of academic background. NHD does not have a targeted audience; in fact, they specifically state that this competition is “open to all students and teachers without regard to race, sex, religion, physical abilities, economic status, or sexual orientation.”³⁰ The notion that NHD provides an effective learning opportunity for all styles of students can be further proved by educators' use of the program as an incentive for student success. The 2010 study by Rockman et. al, “*National History Day Works: Findings from the National Program Evaluation*” further confirms this through firsthand accounts of educators choosing to use NHD for struggling students because of its unique approach to historical instruction. As one teacher states:

We have students of all ability levels participating. I have a student who is classified as a 504 student—

²⁹ Page, “National History Day,” 105-106.

³⁰ NHD, *National History Day: Contest Rule Book*, 2020 ed, College Park, Maryland: National History Day, 2020.

she is legally blind—working on a documentary. While we have had to adapt many things for her, she has a wonderful feel for what should be included. I’ve had many students who feel their accomplishments in NHD, no matter what level they progress to, are the pinnacle of their high school careers. I’ve had students who were failing classes rise to the occasion because they must be passing to compete. Some students change their entire view of school as a result of participation in the program. One young man went from failing regular classes to excelling in AP classes as a result.³¹

The 2024 *San Bernardino County Judging Instructions* video, released to all volunteer judges a few days prior to the county competition, instructs judges to look for “Historical Quality” which accounts for eighty percent of the projects overall score, while “Clarity of Presentation” covers the other twenty percent, which also demonstrates how the judging process will help determine the winner.³² This process includes hosting a ten to fifteen-minute conversation with the students, to get to know the people behind the project, while assessing their understanding of their topic; judges are then provided official judging sheets which have categories entries that must be ranked, such as, “Historical Argument (Thesis or Claim)” and “Wide Research.”³³ Additionally, judges are encouraged to alert officials if they

³¹ Kay Sloan and Saul Rockman, “National History Day Works,” 36. Rockman et. al’s 2010 study for National History Day provides limited descriptors for its study participants and will therefore similarly be reflected in my paper.

³² Fermin Jaramillo, *San Bernardino County Contest Judge Orientation 2024* v.2, Directed by Fermin Jaramillo (2024; San Bernardino: San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 2024) Video. (8:18).

³³ NHD, “National History Day: Exhibit Evaluation Form,” National History Day, February 17, 2023, <https://nhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Copy-of-NHD-Evaluation-Forms-1st-Round-2022-Exhibit.pdf>.

suspect any official rules or instructions have been violated, such as surpassing word count limits or sizing restrictions. Each category is then given five potential scores listed from the highest possible score to lowest as: exemplary, proficient, developing, novice, and not evident.³⁴ While the judging sheet and training video are clear in defining the goal of the judge's role, it lacks a road map as to how a judge should rate exhibits categories unbiasedly, what to do in the event they lack the historical knowledge to efficiently understand a topic, or how to read an entry in the short time frame provided prior to the official interview. Because of the inconsistency of NHD judging experiences, the judging phase is often the most intimidating aspects of the competition for its participants, but also one of the most memorable moments as Fermin Jaramillo, Academic Events & Initiatives Coordinator at San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, states, "your mission... is to foster the love of history...and most importantly create happy memories for those students," which echoes what many coaches tell their students as they prepare for this rigorous phase.³⁵ The instructions provided still allow for freedom of expression and interpretation of research for participants as they prepare to construct their exhibits, despite their demanding nature. The flexibility of the rules is best reflected in the exhibit category of the competition. Some rules for this category include: not exceeding 500 student-composed words, encouraging students to guide their analysis using quoted non-student-composed words and historical images, ensuring the student voice is a leading factor, not surpassing certain sizing restrictions of the board, and the inclusion of written materials such as an annotated bibliography and process paper the day of the competition.³⁶ These rules do not dictate how a project is researched (although a healthy mix of primary and secondary sources are encouraged) or the physical presentation design

³⁴ NHD, "National History Day: Exhibit Evaluation Form."

³⁵ Fermin Jaramillo, *San Bernardino County Contest Judge Orientation 2024* v.2, (2:25).

³⁶ NHD, *National History Day: Contest Rule Book*, 31.

students use to display their narrative.³⁷ Students are encouraged to explore the time period and historical context of their topic, all within the year's theme, and use it to inspire an interactive design, after which, students write text labels, find sources to support their analysis, including pictures and quotes, and organize it all in a manner meant to allow for easy public digestion. In short, NHD students who choose a physical presentation are curating a museum-grade exhibit, with university-level research, at the ages of eleven through eighteen, with no prior curatorial experience, yet producing visually and factually appealing displays.

The National Council on Public History (NCPH) guide, *Best Practices in Public History: Public History for Undergraduate Students*, highlights several essential components for a successful undergraduate Public History program; while many goals of this program align with those of NHD, there are three that parallel both organizations overall objectives: emphasis on research and writing, strong historical competency and analysis skills, and a prioritization of hands-on experience.³⁸ The first, as stressed by the NCPH, is the "emphasis on teaching students the best methods in researching and writing history," which the same study conducted in 2010 for NHD revealed that on a 4.0 scale for the "Confidence Ratings on College and Career-Ready Skills: Coming Up with a Research Plan," NHD students obtained a 2.9 as opposed to a 2.7 by Non-NHD Students.³⁹ NCPH also recommends that "Students at the undergraduate level still are predominantly consumers of history and need a strong background in their chosen fields of study in order to become effective researchers."⁴⁰ The 2011 study reveals, on the same 4.0 scale, that

³⁷ NHD, *National History Day: Contest Rule Book*, 31.

³⁸ Cherstin Llyon, "Best Practices in Public History: Public History for Undergraduate Students," National Council for Public History Curriculum and Training Committee, October 2009, <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Undergrad-Best-Practice.pdf>.

³⁹ National History Day & the National Evaluation, *National History Day: Key Evaluation Findings*, College Park, Maryland: National History Day, 2010; Cherstin Llyon, "Best Practices in Public History."

⁴⁰ Cherstin Llyon, "Best Practices in Public History."

NHD students' "Knowledge of events not studied in school" is an astounding 2.7 as compared to the 2.2 of Non-NHD students.⁴¹ The difference being that NHD provides students with the opportunity to develop and research niche interests, further encouraging those interests through the recognitions their sponsors provide to students who excel in their area of study, as opposed to a school curriculum which focuses on uniformity and memory retention rewarding students only on systemic academic achievements. Finally, NHD reports that NHD students "were 18% better overall than their peers at interpreting historical information," which not only attests to their critical thinking abilities but given the context of how they conduct their research, speaks volumes on their abilities to, "collaborate with team members, talk to experts, manage their time and persevere."⁴² These ideas are representative of the NCPH's aspirations for college-level students:

Undergraduate[s] ... should be given the opportunity... to complete at least one external internship in the field of public history. Internships encourage students to think beyond their professors as their primary audience. Students who engage in internships also see the benefits of clear writing and oral presentation, professional conduct, and enjoy opportunities to present their work to a public audience. These experiences give students the active learning they desire, as well as opportunities for hands-on research and the exposure to public history careers that will guide them in making long-range educational and professional goals.⁴³

When taking into consideration the multiple areas NHD is encouraging participants to explore and incorporate in their project-building phase, there is no doubt the field of public history

⁴¹National History Day, *National History Day: Key Evaluation Findings*.

⁴² National History Day, *National History Day: Key Evaluation Findings*.

⁴³ Cherstin Llyon, "Best Practices in Public History."

will benefit from the tools and skill sets NHD is eager to equip on to new generations of students.

NHD For Our Future

NHD's mission to teach budding historians the significance of past issues on contemporary problems, one of which is the inclusion of diverse perspectives in their research, which is best paralleled in the ongoing conversation regarding museum decolonization. Field professionals often conclude that the slim chance of changing museum standards for the better is often stalled by "white guilt [which] leaves little room for genuine deconstruction, reflection, and relationship-building."⁴⁴ For many institutions, such as the Field Museum of Natural History, based in Chicago, Illinois, outdated museum practices have been the core issue of present complications with improper label creation, exhibit curation, and lack of community involvement with the exhibits.⁴⁵ As former Indigenous curator for the Field Museum, Dr. Meranda Roberts exclaims, "As Native people, many of us have walked through a museum staring at important cultural items from our own tribes as they are displayed inside glass boxes... those items end up in museums for the general public to learn from. Although those museums are prioritizing education, they are forgetting about the real people who these items came from and belong to."⁴⁶ These failures often come at the cost of proper representation of

⁴⁴ Leah Huff, "Museum Decolonization: Moving Away from Narratives Told by the Oppressors," *Currents: A Student Blog Exploring the Intersections of Water, People, and the Environment*, May 2022, <https://smea.uw.edu/currents/museum-decolonization-moving-away-from-narratives-told-by-the-oppressors/>.

⁴⁵ Lauren Frost, "What Is the Field Museum Changing about Its Native North America Hall? 'Everything,'" *WBEZ Chicago*, November 6, 2018, <https://www.wbez.org/stories/changing-the-narrative-in-the-field-museums-native-north-america-hall/4646fd66-8839-43fc-9c8c-f6eafa8dd3c8>.

⁴⁶ Emily Clarke and Meranda Roberts, "An Interview with Dr. Meranda Roberts," *News from Native California*, August 2022, <https://newsfromnativecalifornia.com/an-interview-with-dr-meranda-roberts/>.

marginalized communities, who are consequently pushed further away from wanting to share their stories with the public. This not only results in institutions receiving critical backlash that damage their reputation and regular proceedings, but it also discourages the implementation of a diverse museum staff because of their misconduct, as seen at the Field Museum during their creation of the 2022 exhibit *Native Truths*, where they witnessed “members of some Native groups... drop out of the exhibition creation process in protest” of problematic stakeholders associated with the institution.⁴⁷ National History Day, through their prioritization of diverse perspectives and in-depth research, helps reform this biased method of thinking beginning in the classroom at a younger age than non-NHD students.

Teaching social science, as stated by Dr. Page in her study, is “[in] most school curricula... the development of critical thinking and responsible citizenship skills,” which is a dull representation of the subject when explored in this sense and is “more often than not forgotten and/or unmet”.⁴⁸ Unless in Advance Preparation (AP) classes offered by the College Board that actively encourages students to develop independent thinking and collaboration skills used in the field of public history, high school students are given little to no ideas as to what a career in history can look like besides becoming a teacher.⁴⁹ NHD, in collaboration with the NEH, offers educators lesson plans such as the 2021 plan, *Building a More Perfect Union*, which focuses on themes of, “events, legislative accomplishments, and civic actions throughout U.S. history—from foreign policy to civil rights to debates surrounding citizenship— that collectively moved us toward a

⁴⁷ Sarah Kuta, “Field Museum Confronts Its Outdated, Insensitive Native American Exhibition,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 26, 2022, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/field-museum-confronts-outdated-insensitive-native-american-exhibition-180980148/>.

⁴⁸ Page, “National History Day,” 65.

⁴⁹ Linda Hargrove, Donn Godin, and Barbara Dodd. “College Outcomes Comparisons by AP and Non-AP High School Experiences.” College Board Research Report No. 2008-3:(2008), 2, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561030.pdf>.

more perfect union.”⁵⁰ These plans provide flexibility for educators to incorporate this unique style of researching in accordance with predetermined curriculums, while encouraging students to view the lessons with an active mind and search for information that contributes to the creation of their projects. In NHD’s words, this alternative method of teaching, “benefits both teachers and students. For the student, NHD allows control of his or her learning...NHD supports teachers by providing instructional materials and hosting workshops at local, affiliate, and national levels.” In career paths that involve curation and research, it is especially important to have a mindset that allows for culturally sensitive interpretations of historical topics, and to have critical and proper collaboration with communities involved in the histories, which is something encouraged in NHD competitions. Active and engaging learning experiences create a shift in attitudes regarding histories influence on present issues, as 2024 NHD student and San Bernardino County Champion Alyha “Gabe” Madrigal states, “It’s nice to see how past problems had affected our past, and it forces us to rethink how we act in the future... also seeing who is involved in history, helps paint a full picture and understand which group has had a stronger voice and which group has been suppressed longer... and I like including groups who don’t really get a voice... It feels like my job to give them one.”⁵¹ Through their support for diverse perspectives and plethora of resources NHD, “equips students with college- and career-ready skills of collaboration, research, writing, and innovative thinking that come from the study of history and civics. Through participation, students are prepared to handle impending—and complicated—global challenges. NHD is providing essential skills to empower successful citizens to strengthen the democracy of the

⁵⁰ Lynne M. O’Hara, ed, *Building A More Perfect Union*, College Park, Maryland: National History Day, 2021, 45.

⁵¹ Leslie G. Madrigal and Alyha Gabe Madrigal, Interview with Alyha ‘Gabe’ Madrigal, Personal, March 17, 2024.

future.”⁵² This can be further demonstrated in how past participants educate new generations of NHD students, as Brian Garay, 2018-2020 Alum and current NHD Coach, states:

It [NHD] teaches you there is a narrative in the first place... It requires your research to be historically accurate... things aren't always black and white, it forces you to experience the nuance that is history... through historical perspectives, it forces you to change your mentality, rather than just picking up a series of skills... One thing I hope for them [his students] to learn is how their existence influences history more than they think. History is about connecting the dots and turning it into a story. History is not built for one to personally have, but for culture and for humanity to remember. They are the ones who make a historical event important, not the other way around.⁵³

Under NHD's guidance, students develop the skill sets to become forward-thinking historians and develop decolonial attitudes for the re-evaluation of museum frameworks. Furthermore, NHD has the same potential to serve students in higher institutions who are preparing for a career in public history, in a manner that could benefit all parties involved.

NHD is not without flaws, however. The present lack of a conventional framework to prepare judges to dissect projects at the county and state level left many less than satisfied with local affiliates' performance, as evident in the 2024 County History Day contest in San Bernardino, California.⁵⁴ Much of this is due to the

⁵² NHD, "Why NHD Works," National History Day, February 17, 2023, <https://nhd.org/en/about/why-nhd-works/>.

⁵³ Leslie G. Madrigal, and Brian Garay, Interview with Brian Garay, Personal, March 17, 2024.

⁵⁴ Leslie G. Madrigal, and Dr. Michelle Lorimer, Interview with Dr. Michelle Lorimer, Personal, March 20, 2024.

fact that NHD relies solely on volunteer judges who do not have extensive training on the ins and outs of judging a project. Often, a team of judges consists of a judge captain who often works for NHD, or in the experience of Dr. Michelle Lorimer, is assigned in a rush.⁵⁵ Present with her group of volunteer student judges, Dr. Michelle Lorimer, Assistant Professor at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) and coordinator for future National History Day interest in the Inland Empire, stressed that “judges were offered a 30-45 minute training the day of the competition... and were very rushed.”⁵⁶ These miscalculations are at the cost of student experiences, as seen with Summit High Schools’s Nayleen Pulver and Angel Garay, a Senior Group Exhibit who were left in disbelief following their loss at the local county competition; they state “We worked so hard on our exhibit for so long, we went to the competition sure that we would win...then during the awards, our name wasn’t called... we thought that was it for us, and we would have to wait until next year,” however, three days later the school would receive notification that there was a “scoring glitch that miscredited the win at the regionals award ceremony.”⁵⁷ These experiences are not new, as stated by Dr. Page in her 1992 study, “Teachers submitted that the judging had not always been fair, competent, or thorough. Compositely they determined the problems to be time constraints, insensitivity, incompetency, favoritism and bias, and inconsistency.”⁵⁸ Negative experiences can prove to be critical in the motivation students and educators present for their projects, contradicting the need for the organization as a whole. Like the experiences of Garay and Pulver, Dr. Page’s School A instructor,

⁵⁵ Leslie G. Madrigal, Interview with Dr. Michelle Lorimer.

⁵⁶ Leslie G. Madrigal, Interview with Dr. Michelle Lorimer.

⁵⁷ Russ Ingold, ed, “Three Summit Students Triumph at S.B. County History Day Competition, Qualifying for State Finals,” *Fontana Herald News*, April 25, 2024, https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/three-summit-students-triumph-at-s-b-county-history-day-competition-qualifying-for-state-finals/article_5f7b185c-fea8-11ee-9581-e3cfe9c8c2f6.html.

⁵⁸ Page, “National History Day,” 187.

Mrs. Bender, expresses her dissatisfaction with the judge's organization, "Bender's (School A) main complaint is related to the lack of time for judging. She asserted that this had been a particular problem in judging the written papers at all levels of the competition and contended that judges needed more time to review papers thoroughly."⁵⁹ Additionally, Bender argues that most judges lacked the competency to understand the organization's goals and formats, often judging projects biasedly, or were clueless when presented the research on projects as she exclaims, "This is an academic high school and these kids are very, very bright. ... A lot of the judges are traditional teachers who teach the words out of the end of the chapter, and they don't know what they're looking at."⁶⁰ Whether a consequence of not being involved with the program previously or an oversight by the organization itself, a lack of an effective judging format has left many dissatisfied for decades, putting the effectiveness of the organization at risk. This can be remedied with more attention bestowed upon the program, through collaboration with higher education institutions.

For institutions that offer Public History Degrees, such as CSUSB, a collaborative program that allows its students to become well-prepared judges for local competitions, while personally working with educators in developing a system that blends their method of instruction and working with students who have already developed a drive for the program as well, could prove invaluable for students future prospects and careers. Dr. Michelle Lorimer, who seeks to promote the inclusion of NHD to local teachers soon states, "National History Day could benefit from a collaborative program with universities... When working with my *Teaching History* students, much of it is in theory... unless they are working in schools, they aren't engaging with students, engaging with teachers... if we could bring a group of interested students and teachers to the campus, it [NHD] would make the abstract a reality."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Page, "National History Day," 188.

⁶⁰ Page, "National History Day," 189.

⁶¹ Leslie G. Madrigal, Interview with Dr. Michelle Lorimer.

A practical experience system such as this could see university students engaging with in-person activities with NHD participants, in which students guide research sessions using the university's libraries, teach NHD student's curatorial practices, teach them how to label and create text using the on-campus museum, The Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum of Art, and expose university students into dissecting a historical exhibit conducted by 4th-12th grade students. Students in programs intended for the digestion of historical analysis could prove valuable to NHD, remedying issues regarding judge competency voiced by Mrs. Bender, and contribute to the creation of an impactful experience for all parties involved. Additionally, it allows for all parties involved to open their horizons to a broader scope of collaboration that enables unique learning experiences in the realm of the social sciences.

National History Day has proactively voiced the need for students' early involvement in historical careers and has enabled passions of historical research for students and teachers alike. Despite experiencing persistent issues in their judge organization, NHD is filling a vacuum of historical passion and need within communities, redefining the passion and necessity for historians. Through the collaborative efforts of students and educators, the development of research techniques that echo those found at university-level courses, and access to motivating factors, such as competition and scholarly recognition, NHD is prepares students for the diverse field that is Public History, ensuring that our future looks promising under the leadership of field professionals who seek to establish history for humanity's benefit.

Bibliography

- Clarke, Emily. "An Interview with Dr. Meranda Roberts." News from Native California, August 2022. <https://newsfromnativecalifornia.com/an-interview-with-dr-meranda-roberts/>.
- Evers, Williamson M. "California's History Curriculum Objectionable, Not Objective." Eureka: California's Policy, Economics, and Politics, 2017. <https://www.hoover.org/research/californias-history-curriculum-objectionable-not-objective>.
- Frost, Lauren. "What Is the Field Museum Changing about Its Native North America Hall? 'Everything.'" WBEZ Chicago, November 6, 2018. <https://www.wbez.org/stories/changing-the-narrative-in-the-field-museums-native-north-america-hall/4646fd66-8839-43fc-9c8c-f6eafa8dd3c8>.
- Hargrove, Linda, Donn Godin, and Barbara Dodd. "College Outcomes Comparisons by AP and Non-AP High School Experiences." College Board Research Report No. 2008-3: (2008), 2. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561030.pdf>.
- Howard, Hanna. "State Historical Society of Iowa: National History Day Projects." Projects - State Historical Society of Iowa. January 30, 2024. <https://history.iowa.gov/history/education/national-history-day/projects>.
- Huff, Leah. "Museum Decolonization: Moving Away from Narratives Told by the Oppressors." Currents: A Student Blog Exploring the Intersections of Water, People, and the Environment, May 2022. <https://smea.uw.edu/currents/museum-decolonization-moving-away-from-narratives-told-by-the-oppressors/>.
- Ingold, Russ, ed. "Three Summit Students Triumph at S.B. County History Day Competition, Qualifying for State Finals." Fontana Herald News, April 25, 2024. <https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/three-summit->

[students-triumph-at-s-b-county-history-day-competition-qualifying-for-state-finals/article_5f7b185c-fea8-11ee-9581-e3cfe9c8c2f6.html](https://www.sanbernardino.k12.ca.us/news/students-triumph-at-s-b-county-history-day-competition-qualifying-for-state-finals/article_5f7b185c-fea8-11ee-9581-e3cfe9c8c2f6.html).

- Jaramillo, Fermin. *San Bernardino County Contest Judge Orientation 2024 v.2*. Directed by Fermin Jaramillo. 2024; San Bernardino: San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 2024. Video.
- Kuta, Sarah. "Field Museum Confronts Its Outdated, Insensitive Native American Exhibition." *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 26, 2022. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/field-museum-confronts-outdated-insensitive-native-american-exhibition-180980148/>.
- Loewus, Liana. "Why Teachers Leave-or Don't: A Look at the Numbers." *Education Week*, January 10, 2022. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/why-teachers-leave-or-dont-a-look-at-the-numbers/2021/05>.
- Lyon, Cherstin. "Best Practices in Public History: Public History for Undergraduate Students." National Council for Public History Curriculum and Training Committee, 2009. <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Undergrad-Best-Practice.pdf>.
- Madrigal, Leslie G., and Alyha Gabe Madrigal. Interview with Alyha 'Gabe' Madrigal. Personal, March 17, 2024.
- Madrigal, Leslie G., and Brian Garay. Interview with Brian Garay. Personal, March 17, 2024.
- Madrigal, Leslie G., and Michelle Lorimer. Interview with Dr. Michelle Lorimer. Personal, March 20, 2024.
- National History Day & the National Evaluation. *National History Day: Key Evaluation Findings*. College Park, Maryland: National History Day, 2010.
- NCPH. "About the Field." National Council on Public History, June 28, 2022. <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>.
- NHD-CA. "National History Day California: Civic Summit." Sacramento County Office of Education, 2024. <https://www.nhdca.org/civic-summit/>.

- NHD. "Contest." National History Day, February 17, 2023.
<https://nhd.org/en/contest/>.
- . "Get Started on Your Project." National History Day, September 13, 2023. <https://nhd.org/en/contest/get-started/>.
- . "National Contest." National History Day, April 30, 2024.
- . "Special Prizes." National History Day, April 12, 2024.
<https://nhd.org/en/contest/national-contest/additional-specialprizes/>.
- . "National History Day: Join the Alumni Network." National History Day, January 4, 2024.
<https://nhd.org/en/get-involved/join-the-alumni-network/>.
- . *National History Day: Contest Rule Book*. 2020 ed. College Park, Maryland: National History Day, 2020.
- . "National History Day: Exhibit Evaluation Form." National History Day, February 17, 2023.
<https://nhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Copy-of-NHD-Evaluation-Forms-1st-Round-2022-Exhibit.pdf>.
- . "Why NHD Works." National History Day, February 17, 2023. <https://nhd.org/en/about/why-nhd-works/>.
- O'Hara, Lynne M., ed. *Building A More Perfect Union*. College Park, Maryland: National History Day, 2021.
- Page, Marilyn L. "National History Day: An Ethnohistorical Case Study." PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, 1992. ScholarWorks.
https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/4913.
- Sloan, Kay and Saul Rockman. "National History Day Works: Findings from the National Program Evaluation." *Rockman et al* (2010): 1-44. https://nhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/NHDReport_Final3.pdf.

Author Bio

Leslie Madrigal is graduating in Spring 2024 from California State University, San Bernardino with a bachelor of arts degree in public history and certificate in museum studies. Born and raised in the Inland Empire, she has developed an interest in heritage preservation within the region and relationships between people and place, which she will continue to study this coming fall at the University of Southern California in their master of heritage conservation program. In her free time, she volunteers at local schools in conducting their National History Day program, providing guidance from her decade of experience with the organization, and hopes to one day become an official advisor for the program. Leslie would like to thank all her professors that provided guidance and ignited her passion for history, her parents, José and Ana, for supporting her dreams no matter how far the end goal appeared to be, and her partner, Brian, for his unyielding support and confidence in the face of uncertainty, that inspires her to continue chasing her impulsive ideas.



History in the Making

Voices of New Historians

Inaugural California Indian Studies and Scholars Association Conference

By Gabrielle Velázquez and Lina Tejeda

We are both graduate students studying history at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), with a special interest in Indigenous California history. Our faculty advisor, Dr. Daisy Ocampo-Diaz, Assistant Professor of History at CSUSB, suggested we attend a two-day conference in Santa Cruz, California; held on April 14th and 15th, 2023. It was the inaugural conference for the California Indian Studies and Scholars Association (CISSA). The conference was held at the Seymour Marine Discovery Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz and a Zoom option was available for those who could not attend the conference in person.

The Conference

California Indian Studies and Scholars Association (CISSA) was founded in February 2020, but on September 14, 2021, adopted their bylaws and developed their membership and general assembly. CISSA's mission statement says:

The California Indian Studies and Scholars Association is a decolonial organization consisting of California Indian people committed to the intellectual and cultural sovereignty of California Indian Studies and scholarship. The purpose of

CISSA is to support and increase exchange of the diversity of knowledge of California Indian perspectives and ways of knowing of the over two hundred sovereign tribal nations Indigenous to what is currently called California. Our purpose is to identify, develop, and implement Native California-focused curricula, to promote, produce and disseminate California Indian-related research and pedagogical strategies and to support the continued growth of California Indian Studies.¹

After reading their mission statement and attending the conference, it was clear what CISSA represented and what their goals were. CISSA is open to the definition of the word *scholarship*. The organization believes this word is diverse and is not limited to those in academia. Scholarship includes Native community members who hold cultural knowledge that cannot be learned in the confines of academia such as basket weaving, traditional song and dance, bead work, language revitalization, traditional medicine, etc. There were Native community members in attendance who practiced these traditional customs within their communities, however, did not obtain a degree from a four-year university. CISSA values these contributions to one's own tribal community to be as equal as academic contributions to the conversation of California Indian Studies.

The first morning of the conference was launched with a fantastic breakfast spread, general mingling and networking opportunities amongst the various Indigenous academics in attendance. They included Indigenous professors, authors, secondary educators, museum curators, high school principals, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Upon engaging with various Indigenous academics present, it was clear that we all had impactful stories and experiences to share. We were all proud

¹ "Who We Are." California Indian Studies and Scholars Association. Accessed May 6, 2024, <https://www.californiaindianstudies.org/>.

to come together and see so many Indigenous nations in the same room discussing key points, learning how to improve spaces for Indigenous Peoples, and learning from one another's life experiences. The energy was positive and electrifying as we took to the open room and found our seats.

Welcoming remarks were given by Valentin Lopez, Chairman of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band since 2003, and President of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust. He is also a Native Advisor to the University of California, Office of the President on issues related to repatriation, the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology. Chairman Lopez proceeded to tell the audience about the land on which they were, Santa Cruz.² He said Santa Cruz is the site of one of the most brutal missions of the Spanish Mission system in California. He said that Indigenous people have historic trauma, and that Native People need to heal from our history of brutality. He explained that in order for Indigenous Californians to heal, the truth must be told by teaching young students the true history of California, as well as having Indigenous people tell/teach their own stories. While he acknowledged the healing process California Natives have undergone, he also imparted that the perpetrators of their traumas needed to heal as well. He went on to state that Indigenous People do not blame the descendants of settlers, but that the descendants of settlers need to recognize how they benefit from this historical trauma to our Indigenous nations and recognize that we survived for a reason! He emphasized that our effort to make Indigenous presence must continue because our history was covered up, and those who covered up our history must deal with their actions. In parting, he encouraged us all to create healthy relationships with one another for ourselves, our healing, and for our descendants. There was no better way for the conference to welcome us as Indigenous academics than by hearing the words of

² The Conference was held on the traditional lands of the Awaswas Nation of Ohlone people. To see what Native land you live or work in, visit the Native Land website: <https://native-land.ca/>.

Chairman Valentin Lopez. Upon the end of his remarks, we proudly honored this Elder and his words with a standing ovation.³

Discussion 1: “Kinship and Being in Relation”

The first panel discussion of the day, titled “Kinship and Being in Relation,” began and it included many Indigenous academics from all over California including Mark Minch-de Leon (Susanville Indian Rancheria) Assistant Professor, University of California Riverside, Michelle Napoli (Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria), Assistant Professor of Art Therapy, Stephanie Lumsden (Hupa), Postdoctoral Fellow, University of California Santa Cruz, and Nicole Lim (Pomo), California Indian Museum and Cultural Center. The diversity of this panel presented the audience with various opinions, thoughts, and knowledge from different genders, career backgrounds, and education. Mark Minch-de Leon facilitated the discussion with an introduction explaining how California Native communities have always been in relation to one another AND in relation to non-humans as well; stating that California Native communities have a strong connection to their ancestors and creation. He went on to express how Natives of California have been subjected to suppression in the fields of education, economics, and government. He emphasized this is a blatant way to eliminate California Natives and other Indigenous modes of thinking and histories of resistance. In the end, it is kinship and being in relation with one another that remains vital to the California Native way of living, studying, struggling, and having the will to thrive. He went on to ask the panel questions such as: How does relationality inform our work, research, and/or teaching? What kind of interventions in the education system do you see as necessary to improve the conditions just described? What are some of the most pressing issues or questions for our communities and for California Indian Studies in terms of kinship and being in relationship? Each panelist

³ This is a summary of Chairman Lopez’s opening remarks and welcome.

offered their perspectives and opinions on the questions that were asked.

Michelle Napoli, Assistant Professor of Art Therapy at Lesley University, who teaches people to be art therapists, shared with us her way of being in relation to the culture with her work. “The whole profession is based on taking Indigenous ways of knowing and cultures of art and healing and teaching it, and then combining that with psychology, history, and now counseling... My idea of healing is culture. Culture is healing.”⁴ She is an artist who uses her work to create stories and songs through her paintings. She shared with us that her methodology includes song and storytelling in her paintings. The work she does comes from the woodpecker’s relationship with the live oak tree. The tree is “home” for her and how the woodpecker created holes in the tree, filled it with acorns, and stored them there is the song and storytelling. Each hole is a story and like the woodpecker creating stories, she tells stories and sings songs in her paintings. She told us a story about how she saw many woodpeckers poking holes and taking over the “house” [tree], filling the holes with acorns. She called this “LandBack”.

One question in the Zoom chat after Napoli’s words said, “Who has the best vision for the future? Humans? Maybe acorn woodpeckers?”. This question led us perfectly into a discourse of California Native people, as well as many other Indigenous groups of people, who look at the ecosystem of animals and plants as being in relation to each other and the Land.

Cutcha Risling Baldy, Associate Professor of Native American Studies at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt), shared with us that the Hupa word for *human being* translates to Acorn Eater. “A lot of indigenous peoples from around the world also eat acorns. There’s something very important about the way acorns sustain us... And I wonder how we can start to really connect through acorns, understanding

⁴ Michelle Napoli, “Kinship and Being in Relation,” Panel Discussion, California Indian Studies and Scholars Association Conference (University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023).

we are different, but also very very similar.”⁵ She provided an example of salmon and how they travel through borders, comparing them to how humans can interact in the world. Her examples demonstrate the Indigenous belief that everything on the Earth is connected, humans, animals, and the environment. Risling Baldy pointed out that there is a lot to be learned from the ecosystem. Many, if not all, Indigenous people are always looking to take knowledge and teachings from animals and plants. There is plenty to be learned from them such as how to interact with one another.

The panel would go on to discuss and go into detail about the historical trauma and heartache California Natives have experienced, describing how the state of California was known for its laws of conquest and policing Native nations. They went into detail about the creation of reservations and settler homes in the state. The panel said that presently, California Native People are still subject to being killed, assimilated, displaced and colonized by the California state laws. They noted that the identities of California Natives are still being stolen. A broad identity crisis is still afoot as well as confusion and questioning of oneself. In the end, they affirm that California Natives are still processing trauma. It was easy to see the panel were in agreement that relation was fundamental, and California Natives are still being punished for their Indigenous identities today.

Nicole Lim, from the California Indian Museum located in Santa Rosa, California, focuses a lot of her work on ensuring that the Native youth feel a sense of belonging through learning and taking pride in their culture. She provided examples of learning basket weaving, gathering traditional raw materials, and learning about traditional food sources. Lim discussed her own family history, she recalled how they were disenfranchised from her Pomo tribe and how her family has now dedicated their lives to fighting against disenrollment but are also working towards creating a

⁵Cutchá Risling Baldy, “Kinship and Being in Relation,” Panel Discussion, California Indian Studies and Scholars Conference (University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023).

space for Native youth to feel welcomed no matter what their tribal status is. She said, “I wanted the museum to be a place where young Pomo, Miwok, Native American children could come to engage with culture and history and learning, but many of the children... often come in and say that they don’t feel Indian enough... What’s going to happen to our future generations when they are being told they don’t belong?”⁶

Lim’s concern about Native American youth and their sense of belonging transcends to some concerns on how these feelings might affect their futures when they grow into adulthood. This concern was echoed throughout the conference on how future identities would be for those whose tribes participated in disenrollment. Blood quantum is defined as requiring a portion of one’s blood coming from Native American ancestry.⁷ It consists of percentages that correspond to how much Native blood you have, and tribes have the authority to determine if they will enforce this type of membership. If you do not have the percentage required for membership, blood quantum becomes an issue that can contribute to the denial of individual and whole families’ tribal membership (or citizenship). While tribal councils give many reasons people are disenrolled or are denied enrollment, many scholars and tribal community members at CISSA’s conference disagreed with the concept of any person being denied Native American identity.

“There are three things in America that require a pedigree: dogs, horses, and Indigenous people of this land.”⁸ This quote, or some variation of it, is something many Native people across North America grew up hearing. The history of disenrollment is so vast and different for each tribe, each council, each individual. For

⁶ Nicole Lim, “Kinship and Being in Relation,” Panel Discussion, California Indian Studies and Scholars Association Conference, (University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023).

⁷ Matthew L.M. Fletcher, “Tribal Membership and Indianhood,” *American Indian Law Review* 37, no. 1 (2012): 1–17.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41940639>.

⁸ Jay Tavaré, “Longmire: Dogs, Horses, and Indians,” *Huffpost Online*, Aug 8, 2012, Updated Dec 16, 2017, accessed May 8, 2024.
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/longmire-dogs-horses-and_b_1730910.

a Native American, the saying about pedigree cuts deeply because it dehumanizes Native Americans by putting us in the same category as dogs. This concept of pedigree is what is meant when we talk about “colonial standards of identity”, which makes it that much worse when it is our own tribal communities that are enforcing these standards.

It may be difficult for some to understand why this notion of “pedigree” is so important to Native American people, however there are many benefits that come along with having the “proof of Native”, “proof of Indian”, or more simply, tribal affiliation/identification. Due to settler colonialism (the removal or erasure of Indigenous people by settlers to replace with the new settler society permanently) and the Spanish Mission system in California, Native Americans in the state are by default at a disadvantage due to the trauma from these colonial systems. This trauma has contributed to alcoholism, drug dependency, and violence within Native American communities. Lack of resources for education and the poor living conditions that take place on some reservations has established a very high need for social service programs. Although there are more resources available to Native Americans today, to qualify for many of these programs and resources (some state, federal, and/or tribal) it requires the “*proof of*” documentation mentioned above. Without that documentation, California Natives will not qualify for the resources that many Native families desperately need.

Many people, both non-Natives and Native Americans, often ask “how much Native are you?” expecting Native Americans to provide a blood percentage that has been verified by somebody with authority over Native Americans. Another common question is “What is your tribal affiliation?” or “What tribe are you from?” For someone who has proof of enrollment, these questions can be easily answered. For someone without proof of enrollment, these questions can cause a lot of dread and uneasiness. Being told, “You are not Indian enough,” many times over leads you to believe you are in fact “not enough.” Over time, one can begin to feel like an imposter who does not belong to the

Native community, resulting in disconnectedness from their cultural traditions and identity.

Lim focuses on mitigating this consequence of disconnectedness by providing a space at the California Indian Museum that welcomes all Native youth to partake in cultural activities regardless of their ability to provide proof of tribal enrollment. Aside from tribal disenrollment, there are other reasons Native youth may feel disconnected. Many reasons can include living away from the reservation in an urban setting and not being taught about your traditional culture. These can all lead to Native youth and Native adults to question their lineage and identity.

It is heartening to see and learn that many California Native people are focusing on the importance of making the youth feel connected to their cultural traditions. The work being done by these people are going to help preserve and bolster Native American identity whether or not proof of tribal enrollment can be provided.

In an echo of agreement, a Hupa Valley School principal and cultural scholar, Maggie Peters, suggested that CISSA do more outreach to Native American youth to elevate their voices and visibility. She would like to see CISSA members in academia using their platforms to uplift students, especially ones in more rural communities who have less access to universities and resources. Peters also addressed her concerns with traditional knowledge having value and scholarship within academia. By this, to name a few, she was referring to basket weaving, traditional regalia making, language, hunting and gathering food and supplies, song, and dance. There is little to no academic scholarship on Native traditional knowledge, leaving a gap in this field which can provide pathways to understanding and respecting Native culture and traditions that is needed in the academic field. She expressed her hope for the future of CISSA and the future work that CISSA does with youth and traditional knowledge.

Nicole Lim was not the only person to speak out against tribal disenrollment and disenfranchisement, audience member and later panelist Joely Proudfit (Luiseno/Payomkawichum) said that

enrolled members of tribes have a duty to stand up and advocate for those who do not meet colonial standards of Native American identity. Many have argued that tribal disenrollment is a modern and present-day form of genocide. For many Native American people and families, having this documentation is a matter of life or death. She addressed ideas of saving California Native people, especially students, by prioritizing them in financial aid and scholarships, student housing, and health care. She highlighted the importance of centering California Natives in all areas (housing, health care, mental health resources, childcare, child protective services, food programs). While talking about this, she said one of my favorite quotes from the whole conference:

If we are card carrying members, or have our papers, and we have our descendant papers, and we can be viewed as California Indians through IHS; we were able to get those shots through our Indian clinics first. So it's a matter of life and death. If you're a member of a recognized tribe, you can get a 180 housing loan. And in California, that's a big deal. So we can't talk about LandBack and leave our own relatives homeless. Shouldn't California Indians at least be at the top of the Section 8 housing list? Isn't it okay to center ourselves when it comes to health care in this state?... Can we be at the top of the list for seeking support for mental health services? When this is our homeland I think it's okay to have these conversations.⁹

Fuifuilupe Niumeitolu (Tongan), a Principal Faculty of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, wanted to express her gratitude to California Indigenous people, some of which was spoken in her

⁹Joely Proudfit, "Kinship and Being in Relation," Panel Discussion, Californian Indian Studies and Scholars Association (University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023).; IHS stands for Indian Health Service.; shots refers to the COVID-19 Vaccine.

Native language, “Thank you relatives for saving our lives, it is because of the work of protecting the sacred that also brings us back to re-indigenize our own communities and to remember so many stories we have been taught to forget through our missionization...”¹⁰ She shared about the People of the Pacific and the long lasting effects colonialism and the settler-state has had on them. She said that many Pacific People are using the examples and models already made by California Indigenous people to get back to their cultural traditions and to revitalize traditions that have been lost over the period of colonization and missionization by the Mormon Church. Her words were a reminder to all conference attendees of how important the work being done by California Natives is for other ethnic groups working towards decolonization and revitalization of their cultural traditions.

There is an active hope as California nations are working towards a better future, building for future generations of California Natives. They are being vocal about change, re-indigenizing their culture, protecting their sacred sites, and taking their land back. They are reclaiming their original languages, food, and ceremonies.

This first panel set the tone for the rest of the conference and the discussions that would take place over the next few days and even beyond. The panelists were passionate, powerful and uplifting, which transferred to the audience and the rest of the conference. The next two panels would give expression to these tones as well, and to an engaged and hopeful audience.

Discussion 2: “The Future of California Indian Studies”

The second panel discussion was titled “The Future of California Indian Studies.” Caitlin Keliiaa (Yerington Paiute/Washoe), Assistant Professor at the University of California Santa Cruz was

¹⁰Fuifuilupe Niumeitolu, “Kinship and Being in Relation,” Panel Discussion, Californian Indian Studies and Scholars Association (University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023).

the moderator. Panelists included Joely Proudfit (Luiseño/Payómkawichum), Professor at Cal State University San Marcos. Cutcha Risling Baldy (Hupa/Yurok/Karuk), Associate Professor at Cal Poly Humboldt, and graduate student Gabrielle Velazquez (North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California) from California State University, San Bernardino. The introduction of this discussion spoke about the field of California Indian Studies and how it has changed dramatically over the last five to ten years. The panel gave the example of CISSA being newly formed and how their existence alone helps bring changes to the field.

They went on to say that California Native History was occasionally highlighted in academic texts but can be seen in various articles, mainstream books, films, and other sources. The panel further explained how colleges and universities have begun to consider California Native Studies in their curriculum and hiring of California Native scholars. The guiding questions were: what does this mean for the future of California Indian studies? What does this new attention bring to the field and California Indian scholars? What considerations should we, as California Indian scholars, need to make moving forward? While considering the strides in California Native Studies as the panel shared, they still asked what else could be done and what will continue to move forward. The guest speakers opened with the Native American Studies Model Curriculum (NASMC). In their PowerPoint presentation, there was a slide entitled: TRIBALLY DRIVEN AND AUTHORED RESOURCES. It reads as follows:

Currently, the instructional resources available for use in California public schools do not include accurate historic and contemporary information concerning Native Americans in the United States and especially in California. Because this expertise resides within the tribes themselves,

all efforts to develop a model curriculum for Native American studies will be tribally driven.¹¹

This statement was impactful, truthful, and powerful. This slide set the tone and purpose of the panel and presentation. The speakers explained that NASMC is defined as lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist educators in teaching about Native American Studies. There are two lead agencies in the facilitation and development of NASMC: the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) which works with 54 California tribes and the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) which works with 55 California tribes. This model curriculum was intentionally created in partnership with California Tribes, other county offices of education, and Native youth-serving organizations. NASMC is a statewide partnership that is funded through the California Department of Education. This project has been funded by the County of Education for \$3,900,000 (\$1.95 million to the Humboldt County Office of Education and \$1.95 million to the San Diego County Office of Education). The purpose of the project is to respond to the urgent need to design culturally responsive, place-based instructional resources to champion California Indian and Native American-authored digital units and resources. It will improve representation and classroom climates for teaching and learning about California's first people. It will help teachers and schools educate children and youth about the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions of California Native peoples. It will give voice and authority to California Indians and Native Americans on how they want their stories, culture, traditions, and history to be told. The objective is:

The K-12 NASMC courses, units and resources, including A-G approved Native American Studies courses within

¹¹ Lim, Nicole, Joely Proudfit, and Cutcha Risling Baldy. "CA Native American Studies Model Curriculum Listening Circle." Lecture, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023.

California's curriculum, will prepare all pupils to be global citizens with an appreciation for the contributions of multiple cultures, will close the opportunity gap, reduce pupil truancy, increase pupil enrollment, reduce dropout rates, and increase graduation rates.¹²

The topics and themes for NASMC were discussed by grade levels. For transitional kindergarten (TK)-3rd grade, the topics provided to them would surround histories and stories of Native land, giving thanks, stories of ancestors, and honoring traditional food (Native foods, deer, salmon, and acorns). For fourth grade, the topics would be tribal homelands (exploring California before statehood), California Indians of the Mission Era, California Gold Rush (1848-1855): impact on Native tribes, Ishi, and repatriation. In fifth grade, the topics would be Indian Relocation Act (1956), tribal homelands (colonization, devastation, and resilience), stewardship (honoring and protecting the land), federal and state tribal treaties, and basketry unit-mathematics integration. For grades sixth through eighth, they would focus on food sovereignty, the U.S. Constitution in Indian Country, and California's genocide of Indigenous People. In high school, the discussions would turn towards tribal government and sovereignty, California Tribal law and policy, an introduction to American Indian studies, California American Indians (Indian People, identities, diversity, and complexity), tribal activism, and Red Power, along with Indigenous women change makers.

Along with these topics and discussions that the students will learn throughout their education, additional resources will be provided. Starting from TK to twelfth, there would be teacher instructional guides to support decolonizing and Indigenizing methodologies in classrooms and libraries. The panel concluded by asking questions of the audience and gathering recommendations

¹² Lim, Nicole, Joely Proudfit, and Cutcha Risling Baldy. "CA Native American Studies Model Curriculum Listening Circle." Lecture, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023.

and suggestions for various ways of participation in these lesson plans, and educational resources.

Discussion 3: “California Indian Homelands and Land”

The third and final discussion was entitled “California Indian Homelands and Land.” The panelists were Kaitlin Reed (Yurok Tribe), Assistant Professor at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, Tsim Schneider (Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria), Assistant Professor of Anthropology at UC Santa Cruz, Brittani Orona (Hoopa Valley Tribe), Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies at San Diego State University, and Kimberly Johnson (Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians), University of California, Davis. The panel talked about many hashtags that have been floating around social media such as: #LandBack, #WaterBack, #FireBack, #AncestorsBack, #Basketsback, and these are just to name a few. One can see these hashtags being used by many Native activists and Native People in general. The panel went on to explain that Indigenous people have always been scholars of the land and with heritage memory. They are scholars who must know how to prepare to build the next world, a place where all will be able to breathe, drink water, have food to eat, to care for one another and for more than human relatives (nature). The panel went on to say how California Indian Studies is a process of radical imagination change that looks toward Indigenous futures. And the future is now.

We continue to see how the “radical” becomes possible with every reconnection, and every land return. We continue to be scholars created from this land. Some of the beginning guiding questions were: What is your vision for #LandBack? What is a California Indian land ethic? What does it mean to live and work in occupied California Indian territories? How do you approach land, land relations, and land justice in your work in the academy and

beyond? This panel discussed how the land is sacred and important to California Indigenous People. This can be a very difficult discussion to have and expresses to others how as Native People, we feel the land itself is alive, has a beating heart, and can speak. It was comforting to have this discussion with others who understand the importance of taking care of the land, seeing it as a living being. It was the first time I was able to be around people who thought like me.

Most non-natives and academics do not understand how Native People view the land we live on. It was a great feeling to be understood. Indigenous People have traditional ecological knowledge and use it on an everyday basis. Though this kind of knowledge is looked down upon. There are many Native nations in California who are fighting to take care of the land. They are fighting to make sure the land, water, forests, animals, and air are not destroyed. They are fighting to take care of what is left after the colonization of the land and people. They are teaching the youth how to use traditional ecological knowledge and to keep taking care of this sacred land. For Indigenous People believe that the sacred land is a gift. They believe the land takes care of the people and it gives the people their nourishment, medicine, shelter, and many other gifts. It is their responsibility to take care of and protect the land.

Final Thoughts

Gabrielle: As the last panel ended, I was emotional and overjoyed, I felt I had found people who understood me and valued my thoughts. I also felt I had found people who were impressed with the work I was doing and want to continue doing as I start my career. I felt heard for the first time as an Indigenous woman. I treasure that feeling and the people I met at this conference. As the conference was coming to a close, I shook many hands and gave lots of hugs. I collected emails so I could keep in touch and continue to learn from and be inspired by these great people.

Walking out of the conference, I took one last look at the California ocean, and I smiled, I knew I had found my place in this world. I knew that all I was doing, and the years it took me to get back to graduate school, had all been worth it. I look forward to attending CISSA's second conference next year and the many more that are sure to come down the line. I felt embraced by these brilliant people and they consider me family now, which I am grateful for.

As this was the first conference I attended, it was inspiring, powerful, and encouraging. As a graduate student who is a California Indigenous (North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California) woman, I felt grateful to be able to attend the first conference CISSA presented. The conference brought up emotions of inspiration, impactful, and invoking my past. I felt inspired to have been able to sit in a room full of accomplished academics who were Indigenous, and to be honest, had faces that looked like my own. Who had minds that worked like mine. Who had shared the same experiences as I have. Who understood the importance of what I am working towards. It was this rush of knowing what representation looks like and being able to be part of it. I was able to meet academics who are leading the way when it comes to implementing the Native American Studies Model Curriculum. They are the ones who created this model, and they stand by it. I was able to meet academics who are writers as well, and there were a few attending the conference whose books I read; as a bonus I was able to learn about some of their histories. It was the equivalent of meeting your favorite rock star backstage at a concert. I was able to talk with these academic giants who are leaders in their fields and ask their opinions and gain knowledge from them. The conference was impactful on me as well. I was able to take notes and learn about new works that were going to be published soon. I created memories that I will cherish and made long lasting connections. It was impactful because this gathering of Indigenous academics knows what it is like to be Indigenous. They all brought their own stories and experiences to share with one another. They understand the hurdles faced by being Indigenous in

the State of California. They understand the trauma of California Indigenous People. The fact that all of us there were California Native People made it easier to talk about these difficult subjects but also to talk about the present and the future of Indigenous People. It was an open and encouraging space to discuss topics that many consider taboo or unimportant. It was truly a safe space, and a first for me as well. I enjoyed that feeling. As a newly proud member of CISSA, I look forward to working with such brilliant and passionate Indigenous People. I look forward to being a part of history and creating a brighter future and path for California Indigenous People. I have been an educator in various positions for a decade now, and I felt this conference spoke to that side of me. There is a lack of Indigenous studies curriculum in classrooms. If Native issues are addressed at all, the history is not correct, and the topic is presented narrowly. The truth of Indigenous history is lacking from primary to secondary schools and even at times in college. Though at times, if lucky, college is where students start to hear and learn about Indigenous history for the first time. This can encourage students to research more on their own and to find the truth about Indigenous People, especially in California. The fact that Indigenous People are creating their curriculum for their people and by their own hands is honorable. It is important and is needed and has been needed for quite some time now. Indigenous People deserve to have a platform so their voices can be heard. It is time for their stories and experiences to be voiced and shared with the world. While this has been a long time coming, there are many Native People in California who are laying the groundwork for such to happen.

As an inspiring future educator who wants to teach Indigenous history at a community college, I would be honored to be a change in this area of study. I would proudly teach these courses and let students know the truth of Indigenous history. I want students to know there is another side. I want to show students the Indigenous resistance to colonization. I want students to see how much Indigenous people have persevered. I want students to see how much Indigenous people have given to the

world in various ways such as literature, film, music, arts, sports, academia, and much more. Indigenous people are not ghosts and never have been. Native people are present and will always be vital and continue their journey to be seen and heard.

Lina: The conference was on one hand awe-inspiring, but also most of it was stuff that I think about regularly as a California Native woman. Some of the topics were better articulated by people with much more experience in academia. A topic that stood out to me the most was fostering cultural spaces for youth no matter what their enrollment status is and not denying anyone because of their blood quantum. I wholeheartedly agree that colonial standards of Native identity are harmful and a form of genocide; over time there will be less people who fit these standards, which I believe will eventually lead to the full erasure of our People if tribes continue on this path.

A second piece that really stood out to me was when Fuifulupe Niumeitolu gave thanks to California Indian people for helping to pave the way for other Indigenous people across the globe to decolonize and reclaim what was stolen from them when their lands were colonized. It was thought-provoking and made me think about how important the work that we are all doing in our spaces is for not only California Indians but other ethnic groups, whether it is in academia, higher education, K-12, or on the cultural knowledge side of Indigenous scholarship. I felt the impact we have on her and her methodologies and it made me so much more eager to continue on this path of reclaiming our own cultural traditions.

The work being done by all CISSA members and what other California Indians are doing in their own communities is vital to the reclamation of our cultural heritage. Each individual plays an important role in the big machine, that is that process. CISSA's mission statement was well represented in the conference's discussions. There was a diverse group of California Indian people who provided their perspectives on how they contribute to the future of California Indian Studies.

At the conference I got to meet many new California Indian scholars who share a common goal not only within the field of California Indian Studies, but also our common goals of reclamation and revitalization of our cultural heritage. One of my favorite things was seeing all the cool things California Indians are doing in academia and our communities as cultural practitioners. Many of us walk in both worlds, including myself. I am looking forward to seeing what CISSA does in the future, and I am hopeful that it will continue to be a safe place for California Indians to come together and share our work, our methodologies, and to lean on one another for guidance and community. If CISSA remains devoted to their mission statement, I am certain that there will always be a place for California Indians to come together for the betterment of California Indian Studies.

Bibliography

- Fletcher, Matthew L.M. "TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP AND INDIAN NATIONHOOD." *American Indian Law Review* 37, no. 1 (2012): 1–17.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41940639>.
- Lim, Nicole. "Kinship and Being in Relation." Lecture, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023.
- Napoli, Michelle. "Kinship and Being in Relation." Panel Discussion, California Indian Studies and Scholars Association, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023.
- Numeitolu, Fuifulupe. "Kinship and Being in Relation." Panel Discussion, California Indian Studies and Scholars Association, University of California, Santa Cruz. April 15, 2023.
- Proudfit, Joely. "Kinship and Being in Relation." Panel Discussion, California Indian Studies and Scholars Association, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15, 2023.
- Risling Baldy, Cutcha. "Kinship and Being in Relation," Panel Discussion, California Indian Studies and Scholars Association, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 15 2023.
- Tavare, Jay. "Longmire: Dogs, Horses, and Indians." *HuffPost Online*. Aug 8, 2012, Updated Dec 16, 2017. Accessed May 8, 2024.
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/longmire-dogs-horses-an_b_1730910.
- "Who We Are." California Indian Studies and Scholars Association. Accessed May 6, 2024,
<https://www.californiaindianstudies.org/>.

Author Bios

Gabrielle Velázquez (Chahta/Mvskoke Etlwv/Nium/Chaushila) will graduate in May 2024 from California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) with her master of arts in history, with an emphasis on Indigenous history. Her portfolio focused on the re-education of Indigenous history in California. Gabrielle earned her bachelor of arts in history from CSUSB in 2013 and her associate of arts in liberal studies from San Bernardino Valley Community College (SBVCC) in 2011. Currently, she is a Resident Guest Teacher/Intervention Specialist for the San Bernardino City Unified School District and has been employed in the field of education for the last decade. After graduation, she hopes to find a career that will allow her to work with and help Indigenous communities in California. She would like to thank Professor Emeritus Robert Blackey for his assistance and guidance with the editing process. Gabrielle would also like to dedicate this piece in memory of grandmother, Evelyn C. Hernandez, who made her journey over to the other side on March 21, 2023.



Lina Tejeda is half Pomo from her tribal homelands in Northern California and half Mexican. She is a graduate student in the master of art in history program at California State University San Bernardino. Her area of focus is California Indian studies and museum studies/ public history. Lina is passionate about working in institutions to advocate for the return of cultural sacred items to tribal nations from which they belong and telling the true histories of the California Indian people. In her spare time, Lina is a traditional Pomo dancer who has taken to learning about her cultural traditions including basket weaving, beading hats, regalia making, singing, gathering materials, and learning about the traditional ecological knowledge in California. While her passion lies in her own cultural heritage, she finds enjoyment in all areas of history including topics such British history, French history, and social histories of the United States. Lina would like to thank and give photo credit to Adriana Robles and AR NorCal Budget Photography.



History in the Making

In Memoriam

Sinead O'Connor: Authentic Punk Meets Mainstream Pop

By Devin Gillen and Jessie Zepeda



Figure 1: Sinéad O'Connor (1966-2023) with the Public Enemy logo on her head at the 1989 Grammy's Award Ceremony.¹

“The people who run the music industry aren’t punk at all. They’re a bunch of frightened people. But frightened of the wrong thing—namely, music. Hence in 1991 there was a rap category at the Grammys, but they didn’t televise the award.² So there was a boycott amongst the rap community. Hence I once had Public Enemy’s logo shaved

¹ “‘Nothing Compares’ Clip: Sinead O’Connor Reflects on Her Early ’90s Fame,” Yahoo Movies, September 27, 2022, <https://ca.movies.yahoo.com/movies/nothing-compares-clip-sinead-oconnor-145513153.html>.

² The particular ceremony O’Connor recalled was in 1989, not 1991.

In Memoriam

and dyed onto the side of my head so it would be seen on telly all around the world.”

-Sinéad O’Connor, on her decision to rep Public Enemy in protest of anti-black bias she believed informed the music industry and Grammys Award Ceremony.³

“It is the creative community that are driven by greed. That’s why none of them are saying anything, because they’re afraid their careers are going to be in jeopardy. It’s why nobody has said anything about the war.”

-Sinéad O’Connor, speaking on the First Gulf War (1990-1991) and her refusal to attend the 1991 Grammys Award Ceremony.⁴

Sinéad O’Connor was a woman with a powerful voice and an anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment streak who inspired many with her breakthrough to the mainstream, especially women held down by patriarchal norms in society at large, as well as those looking to make it in the male dominated music industry. In typical punk fashion, she quickly turned the publicity machine against the mainstream, religious, cultural, and political elites. Born Sinéad Marie Bernadette O’ Connor on December 8th, 1966, in Dublin, Ireland, she officially changed her name to Shuhada’ Sadaqat in 2018 with her conversion to Islam and passed away on July 26, 2023.⁵

³ Sinéad O’Connor, *Rememberings* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 2021), Chapter: The House of the Rising Sun, Part Three.; O’Connor mistakenly referred to the 1991 Grammys that she boycotted entirely, meaning the 1989

⁴ *Nothing Compares*, directed by Kathryn Ferguson (Paramount Pictures, 2022), 1:05:20, https://www.paramountplus.com/movies/video/oqfMqXtL_4ZuFnUTnWWImrRTL7oKZaTB/.

⁵ Jamel Smith, “Sinéad O’Connor Was a Blessed Soul, Says Imam,” *The Independent*, July 28, 2023, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/Sinéad-o->

O'Connor first rose to prominence in the late 1980s with her debut album, *The Lion and the Cobra*. She has been recognized for her activism on issues concerning war and peace, racism, child abuse, women's rights, and the sexual abuse of children within the Catholic Church. For this dissent from the status quo, as a bald woman who challenged gender norms of the era, centrist and right-wing conservative and institutional forces dragged her name through the mud with a harshly critical eye, contributing in part to her long, and often public battles with mental health issues. O'Connor dealt with horrific abuse from her childhood through her adult life, at the hands of the prying paparazzi, from music industry titans, from talking heads, from religious authorities, and from her loved ones, including her own mother. This, in large part, drove many aspects of her activism in the public eye.

In the process of coping, expressing herself, and fulfilling the human drive towards creation, O'Connor forged deeply moving songs that featured her powerful and expressive vocals as the centerpiece, often with powerful lyrics that touched on social issues or her own personal ones. For example, O'Connor's debut single off *The Lion and the Cobra*, "Troy," was the first song she wrote after her mother's death and references a period of time O'Connor's mother forced her to sleep outside through the night as an eight year old child.⁶ Additionally, the lyrics of "Black Boys on Mopeds" (reproduced in full at the conclusion of this paper) demonstrates O'Connor's incisive political commentary with a critical eye out for the hypocrisies of the freedom loving Western democracies - particularly the UK's Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) - a critical eye which the experience of the Irish living and suffering under English colonial rule certainly highlighted. O'Connor said of the songwriting experience, "You often hear artists say that they're channeling something. I think actually

connor-grammy-god-koran-bray-b2383838.html.; Sadaqat will be referred to by her recording name Sinéad O'Connor for sake of clarity, yet the authors find it important to acknowledge. Her relationship with religion will also be discussed.

⁶ *Nothing Compares*, 30:38.

you're channeling yourself. Your subconscious is talking to you. I just had these songs inside me that had to come out.”⁷

Childhood, Early Influences: The Catholic Church's Iron Fist in Ireland, Punk, and the Troubles

O'Connor is most well-known for a highly controversial career defining moment in 1992, when she tore up a picture of then-Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), condemning the Catholic Church's stranglehold on Irish society, as well as their physical and sexual abuse of children on a live broadcast performance on *Saturday Night Live* (SNL). Despite this, she spoke positively about early experiences with religion as a small child, even claiming she “loved” religion as a young girl.⁸ However, as she had to come to terms with her abuse at the hands of the Church as a child and grew more aware of the Church's historic stranglehold over Irish life, she began to evaluate religious texts with a critical eye.

O'Connor said:

“I started studying scriptures when I was very small, because I wanted to see what was in this book that they were using to oppress my people. Why were my grandparents so miserable that they couldn't have a kiss without feeling like they were going to burn in hell?”⁹

In the 2022 documentary on her life, *Nothing Compares* (composed with O'Connor herself as narrator), an Irish priest, Father Brian D'arcy describes the social control the Catholic Church historically had over Ireland that O'Connor was trying to reconcile with:

The church influenced everything. If it was a sin, then it was against the law of the state. So divorce,

⁷ *Nothing Compares*, 19:08.

⁸ *Nothing Compares*, 9:21.

⁹ *Nothing Compares*, 8:00.

contraception, and anything that didn't agree entirely with a very narrow view of the Catholic church, it was simply not allowed. It affected every level of society. It was a mortal sin, for example, to go to a dance in some diocese that didn't end at midnight. It was a mortal sin to eat meat on a Friday. You could go to hell for eating a sausage on a Friday. Everything was gathered around the power of the church over its people.¹⁰

In O'Connor's words:

"The cause of my own abuse was the church's effect on this country, which had produced my mother. I spent my entire childhood being beaten up because of the social conditions under which my mother grew up, and under which her mother grew up."¹¹

She goes on to compare Ireland to an "abused child."¹²

She continued, critiquing what she saw as greed driven corruption and deception of the Church and its institutions, such as Grianán, the Catholic women's boarding school she was sent to at age fourteen:

"These people convinced my father that they could help me with whatever behavioral issues I had as a result of what had happened to me growing up. But they didn't, they just shut the door in his face when he dropped me there, they took his money. The problems were compounded. We were all walking around thinking we were terrible people that didn't deserve to live."¹³

¹⁰ *Nothing Compares*, 8:10.

¹¹ *Nothing Compares*, 7:00.

¹² *Nothing Compares*, 7:45.

¹³ *Nothing Compares*, 14:45.

Institutions, such as Grianán, came into being in the early 1900s to take care of women that, for whatever reason, had been shut out of Irish society. One Jeannette Byrne described the terrible conditions that forced women into these institutions, where they were kept in separate facilities, or rooms, then the schoolchildren:

“These women, we’re now talking about the early 1980s, some of them had been there from the 1920s. These women who, at no fault of their own, had been put in by the courts and by men. Very often the cases were they had been raped by maybe the local priest, the doctor, the father, or some pillar of society. They had to pay the price and were locked away for their whole lives.”¹⁴

It was at Grianán that O’Connor was first urged by others to seriously pursue a career in music after hearing her exceptional singing voice, which she developed as a young child singing classic Irish folk music. One of the sisters that O’Connor grew close to be a younger music instructor who describes hearing her voice for the first time, “I won’t forget it as long as I live, because we were just stunned.”¹⁵ O’Connor, however, did not have an entirely positive experience in the institution, which she recounts as such:

“Grianán was full of wild kids. There wasn’t one square. I learned a lot about where I was living from them and what everyone thought of us residents. Spent more time in the toilets smoking and chatting with girls equally as punk as me (which wasn’t very much at all) than actually in class.”¹⁶

At the end of her stay at Grianán, one of the sisters took Sinéad to “No Romance, on George’s Street... a punk-clothes

¹⁴ *Nothing Compares*, 13:34.

¹⁵ *Nothing Compares*, 10:30.

¹⁶ O’Connor, *Rememberings*, Chapter: The House of the Rising Sun, Part Three.

shop” and bought her a red parka, which made O’Connor feel “so cool. I look like a proper punk girl now,” she remarked.¹⁷ However, unlike many who adorned themselves with the label and fashion, O’Connor deeply internalized and lived by a genuine punk ethos that went beyond her rebellious style and fashion choices. O’Connor advocated for real change, and took positions with conviction, while many American punks espoused a vaguely rebellious spirit based on a radical individualism coolly detached from any wider or articulated political position or organization intended to bring about political change.¹⁸ As Adam Curtis narrates in his 2016 BBC documentary, *HyperNormalisation*,

“rather than face up to the real complexities of the world [they] retreated... Even those who thought they were attacking the system, the radicals, the artists, the musicians, and our whole counterculture actually became part of the trickery. Because they too had retreated into the make-believe world. Which is why their opposition has no effect.”¹⁹

For people in the UK and Ireland during the late 1960s to the 1980s, O’Connor ‘s formative years, economic stagnation and decay, as well as conflict, led to a widespread loss of faith in authority figures and the hope of a prosperous future. According to Thomas Weston, writing for the UK House of Lords Library:

In 1960 and ‘61, the government’s debt-to-GDP ratio was 102.4%, but fell to 61.2% by 1969/70. Interest rates gradually ratcheted up over the decade, not least in the wake of devaluation when the Bank of England’s main interest rate was raised to 8% as part of the effort to shore

¹⁷ O’Connor, *Rememberings*, Chapter: The House of the Rising Sun, Part Three.

¹⁸ *HyperNormalisation*, directed by Adam Curtis (British Broadcasting Company, 2016), 1:10, <https://www.amazon.com/HyperNormalisation-Adam-Curtis/dp/B08L6KBTLB>.

¹⁹ *HyperNormalisation*, 1:10.

up the pound's new exchange rate, however, the falling overall debt burden ensured that debt-interest costs for the government remained stable as a share of GDP, even as interest rates rose.²⁰

Further economic woes developed as centuries long conflicts and anti-colonial sentiment sparked as Ireland and the UK entered a state of intense conflict.

Known as “The Troubles,” a bloody thirty year war consumed all of Ireland, from anti-British unionist Ireland, to anti-secessionist loyalist Northern Ireland, as well as parts of mainland Britain, with terrorist bombings in London and several other cities. The air of violence and incessant bombing of The Troubles left a lasting impact on O'Connor, writing in her 2021 memoir, *Rememberings*, “I’m really scared when I hear about bombs and fire and old people bleeding and everyone screaming and tanks and soldiers and people throwing things and even little kids watching in the streets.”²¹ This basic humanitarian sentiment is likely the very same conviction that drove her to later oppose The First Gulf War (1990-1991).

Economic woes and conflict resulted in macroeconomic stagnation during the 1970s, as a UK Parliament report wrote:

“In addition to coming under pressure from labour costs, profit margins were strained further as a result of a series of commodity price shocks. Between 1972 and 1974 oil prices

²⁰ Thomas Weston, “The UK Economy in the 1960s,” House of Lords Library, February 13, 2024, <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/the-uk-economy-in-the-1960s/>.

²¹ Sarah Henderson, “How Sinéad O’Connor Was Gripped With Troubles Fear and Thought Ian Paisley Was Satan,” *Belfast Telegraph*, July 30, 2023, <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/how-Sinéad-oconnor-was-gripped-with-troubles-fear-and-thought-ian-paisley-was-satan/a1985617019.html?registration=success®=true.https://daysofpunk.com/03/2021/fashion/blog/punk-rock-history-the-origins-of-punk>.

rose four-fold, while the cost of industrial materials and metals almost doubled.”²²

In response to the economic turmoil, Thatcher enacted neoliberal austerity measures that reversed the post-war consensus around Keynesian developmentalism for a laissez-faire approach, driven by the inexorable force of the free-market.²³ Neoliberal privatization and, as the US would later be forced to reconcile with to this day, the attendant deindustrialization of the domestic economy through many into unemployment or job insecurity while funding for social safety nets was slashed.

The social malaise and political disillusionment these conditions wrought is aptly described in the lyrics of the 1977 single, “God Save the Queen,” which was originally titled “No Future,” by the UK band the Sex Pistols: “The fascist regime, it made you a moron... There is no future in England’s dreaming. No future. No future. No future for you. No future. No future for me.”²⁴ The royal family and government of the UK represented the highest embodiment of the proverbial “Man,” or establishment authority figure, reinforced by the English aristocratic propensity towards extremely formal social and cultural etiquette.

Despite the Brit’s diminished position relative to the United States, and the relinquishment of most of its former colonial holdings, the threat of the “potential H-bomb” that Johnny Rotten (b. 1956; the stage name John Lyndon took as frontman of the Sex Pistols) sings of on the track, left the ruling political elite of a select few nations arguably more powerful than ever. Able to arbitrate life and death on an unprecedented scale, this looming threat of nuclear annihilation was kindling to the burgeoning punk scene’s embrace of nihilistic pessimism. For their opinions towards

²² Thomas Weston, “The UK Economy in the 1970s,” House of Lords Library, April 4, 2024, <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/the-uk-economy-in-the-1970s/>.

²³ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57.

²⁴ Sex Pistols, “God Save the Queen,” track 4 on *Never Mind the Bollocks Here’s the Sex Pistols*, Virgin Records, 1977, MP3.

this ruling class political elite, Lyndon sneers that “the Queen, She aint no human being.”²⁵

In a historical precedent to O’Connor’s later publicly broadcast acts of rebellion that drew controversy, calls for censorship, and praise for her anti-establishment streak, the release of “God Save the Queen” produced a reactionary backlash that succeeded in banning the song from radio play by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Despite efforts to censor the song, and the reactionary backlash the band generated before the single was even released by swearing live on *Today with Bill Grundy* on December 1, 1976, the Sex Pistols continued rise in popularity was exemplary of a musical, social, and political phenomena; a rebellious outgrowth of social discontent that questioned authority ordained higher than the individual.²⁶ This anti-authoritarian phenomena, ethos and philosophy to some, and radically inclusive musical genre came to be known as punk, the name adopted from an American do-it-yourself (DIY) magazine of the same name released by Legs McNeil, coauthor of *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, along with Gillian McCain.²⁷

Unlike the American punks’ relatively vapid forms of “rebellion,” which failed to situate themselves or their anti-authoritarian positions in relation to the socio-economic and political realms, O’Connor used her unexpected rise to the mainstream to not just identify a concrete target of her rage in music industry elites, political elites, and fundamentalist religious institutions, but to take actions and make statements many others in her position did not do, out of fear, ignorance and incompetence, or lame impotency.

²⁵ Sex Pistols, “God Save the Queen.”

²⁶ Arun Starkey, “45 Years on From the Notorious Sex Pistols Appearance on the ‘Today’ Show,” *Far Out Magazine*, December 1, 2021, <https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/45-years-on-from-the-notorious-sex-pistols-appearance-on-the-today-show/>.

²⁷ At the time however, punk was not universally accepted by all, some bands - particularly in America - preferred the term “New Wave.”

Before her time at Grianán was over and she adorned her red parka from No Romance, her first experiences working in a band and recording music came from a chance encounter with Paul Byrne.²⁸ Byrne, member of the band In Tua Nua, overheard O'Connor perform, singing at a church for the wedding of Byrne's sister, one of the Grianán sisters.²⁹ He describes the chance encounter, "We were out looking for a singer, so when I heard this voice, it stopped me in my tracks."³⁰ That night the band gave Sinéad a tape of their music for her to write lyrics and melodies to, which she finished her first song, "Take My Hand," by the next day. Byrne, impressed with her proficiency at songwriting, described the song and her voice as "spectacular."³¹ On the lyrical contents of the song, O'Connor said, "It was the result of the punishment the nun meted out to me one day, the nun, she could be terribly kind but she could also be terribly cruel as well."³²

After O'Connor left Grianán, she put out ads in the newspaper and auditioned for bands, eventually meeting Colm Farrelly of the band Ton Ton Macoute and joined as their singer. Her new bandmate, John Reynolds, described the first-time hearing O'Connor sing, "it's just unbelievable. It [O'Connor's voice] was jumping octaves and going from whisper to scream in half a second. I mean, it was just amazing. Young kid from Dublin."³³ Nigel Grainge and Chris Hill of Ensign Records, came to Dublin to see Ton Ton Macoute, shortly before O'Connor's mother died in a car crash in 1985, who then invited O'Connor to London to record demo tracks.³⁴

It was in London that O'Connor would further immerse herself in various subcultures and genres of music, finding great affinity with the Rasta community on Portobello Road under the

²⁸ *Nothing Compares*, 11:30.

²⁹ *Nothing Compares*, 11:30.

³⁰ *Nothing Compares*, 11:39.

³¹ *Nothing Compares*, 12:00.

³² *Nothing Compares*, 12:30.

³³ *Nothing Compares* 18:26.

³⁴ *Nothing Compares*, 16:14.

wing of her new manager, Fachtna O’Ceallaigh.³⁵ O’Ceallaigh was the former manager for Boomtown Rats and U2’s record label, Island Records. Sinéad recalls having “great” times with O’Ceallaigh and his friends who ran the Dread Broadcasting Company, which held open mic events on Saturdays.³⁶ This experience was radical and transformative for O’Connor, cementing her punk ethos with African influences sonically and socio-politically. Recounting the experience she noted:

“Bear in mind I’m Irish and I’ve come from the theocracy, and these guys were coming along roaring about the Pope is the devil, and fucking burn the Vatican and all this stuff. So that was like, “Oh my God, I’m Home!” I couldn’t believe it.”³⁷

History of The Troubles, Punk Rock, and Consumer-Based Political Nihilism in the United Kingdom versus the United States

Ireland and the UK were rife with revolutionary change in the 1960s, as previously colonized peoples across the globe strove for independence. In Ireland, many saw what was happening across the sea, with the Civil Rights movement (1954-1968) in the US, and were inspired to strive for their own political independence and civil rights. Detailing the discrimination the Irish experienced, James Smyth, a history professor at the University of Notre Dame and Belfast native, details the “systematic discrimination” the Catholic majority faced at the hands of the Protestant minority in cities such as Belfast and Derry.³⁸ As Smyth notes, the Belfast shipyard, the largest employer in the city, “had a 95 percent Protestant workforce,” and the Protestant minority maintained

³⁵ *Nothing Compares*, 20:00.

³⁶ *Nothing Compares*, 20:20.

³⁷ *Nothing Compares*, 20:34.

³⁸ Dave Roos, “How The Troubles Began in Northern Ireland,” HISTORY, August 2, 2023, <https://www.history.com/news/the-troubles-northern-ireland>.

control of the two-thirds majority Catholic population of Derry through “voting districts [that] had been gerrymandered so badly that it was controlled politically by [Protestant] loyalists for 50 years.”³⁹

Increased Irish unionist and nationalist sentiment, however, resulted in bloody violence, rather than the revolutionary change they saw occurring overseas. On October 5, 1968, a protest march along Duke Street in Derry led to beatings and chaos between the protesters and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), with much of the chaos captured by public broadcast tv cameras.⁴⁰ As Smyth argues, “October 5, 1968, was when the Troubles began...and those TV images are etched in the people’s memory.”⁴¹

Encompassing Northern Ireland, the rest of Ireland, and parts of the UK, The Troubles was a thirty-year war between the Catholic Irish to the South and the Protestant Irish and British forces in the North. However, it was not a war fought strictly over religious rights along sectarian divides, though it played a part. According to Richard Jenkins, professor emeritus in sociology at the University of Sheffield, “In the repertoire of conflict in Northern Ireland, the majority of participants see the situation as primarily concerned with matters of politics and nationalism, not religion. And there is no reason to disagree with them.”⁴² What it was, however, was a conflict on the status of Northern Ireland, as the Ulster Protestants wanted to keep the North within the UK, while the Irish nationalists (mostly Irish Catholic), wanted Northern Ireland to leave the UK and create a united Ireland.⁴³ In

³⁹ Dave Roos. “How the Troubles Began in Northern Ireland.”

⁴⁰ Rex Cathcart, *The Most Contrary Region: The BBC in Northern Ireland 1924-1984*, (Newtownards, United Kingdom: Blackstaff Press, 1984), 208.

⁴¹ Dave Roos. “How the Troubles Began in Northern Ireland.”

⁴² Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE, 1997), 120.

⁴³ Though it may seem simply a battle of control, much the Troubles had roots dating back as far as 1609 when Protestant farmers immigrated to Northern Ireland to parts of Ulster causing two bloody religious conflicts known as the Irish Confederate Wars (1641-1653) and the Williamite War (1689-1691). Further conflicts continued both in the 1700’s up until the early 1900’s.

the wake of the renewed conflict, paramilitary groups such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Irish National Liberty Army (INLA), grew in number and caused more than 3,500 deaths throughout the thirty years of conflict.

The UK also experienced change during the 1960s, though it was much more of a change in culture than revolution. Famous comedian and actor Charles Fleischer famously quoted, “If you remember the ‘60’s, you really weren’t there,” to which anyone living in the UK during that time would agree.⁴⁴ This first generation of teenagers free from conscription were allowed to live their lives without the fear of (total) war, the desire to be fashionable was at an all-time high with the introduction of psychedelic prints and import of American jeans, and technological advances in telecommunications revolutionized how people watched TV, listened to music, and what consumer products they desired.⁴⁵ As the concept of a “teenager” took hold for the first time, many families were relatively better off in a market of relative abundance compared to the previous generations cut down by both World Wars, while television and radio homogenized the English-speaking world under American culture, leading to an explosion in youth sales in the music and fashion industries- who quickly sought market share of this new population of consumer.⁴⁶

As the renowned late-historian Tony Judt, author of *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, puts it, “The association of ‘teenager’ and ‘pop music’ that became so automatic by the early Sixties had a commercial as well as cultural basis;” which the availability of a variety cheap clothing designed to emulate pop

⁴⁴ Lawrence Christon, “Shandling Takes the Low-Key Road,” *The Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1982, https://www.newspapers.com/image/389134673/?clipping_id=34952202&fcfToKen=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiJ4OTZzNDY3MywiaWF0IjoxNzE2MDcwNjc0LCJleHAiOiE3MTYxNTcwNzR9.J3Y8EVe81IjdBahn1u7ofYgfakUdDR1uyKF9knVWzt4.

⁴⁵ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (Penguin, 2006), 345.

⁴⁶ Judt, *Postwar*, 348.

culture icons of the 1950s, such as leather-clad Marlon Brando (1924-2004), laid the foundations of a type of consumer-based individualism.⁴⁷ As Judt explains, “in the past, young adults had little option but to wear the same clothes as their fathers and mothers.”⁴⁸ These new fashions functioned as a signifier of “independence and even revolt,” however, “the chief threat that these young people and their clothes posed was to their elders’ sense of propriety.”⁴⁹ This set up the foundational relationship between supposedly radical rebellion, consumer products, and identity that the later punks of the mid-to-late 1970s embraced.

As Dominic Sandbrook, a British historian and author of *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970-1974*, puts it, the 1970s were marked by

“a pervasive sense of crisis and discontent with few parallels in our modern history. [...] And within a few years, the image of the 1970s as a uniquely drab, depressing period in modern British history had become deeply embedded in the popular imagination.”⁵⁰

With rising inflation, unemployment at an all-time high, and bitter feelings toward the conservative government at the time, much of the traditional trust in government following the war was replaced with suspicion and mistrust.⁵¹

Groups, such as the IRA, took advantage of the economic turbulence and the discontented air of suspicion, using acts of terrorism to exacerbate all of these. Targeted political assassinations, as well as violence aimed directly at property and the ailing UK insurance industry, was intended to scare the

⁴⁷ Judt, *Postwar*, 348.

⁴⁸ Judt, *Postwar*, 348.

⁴⁹ Judt, *Postwar*, 348.

⁵⁰ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency. The Way We Were: Britain 1970-1974* (London, United Kingdom: Penguin UK, 2011), 9.

⁵¹ Kimberley Watson, “The 1960s, the Decade That Shook Britain,” Historic UK, November 26, 2023, <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-1960s-The-Decade-that-Shook-Britain/>.

politically apathetic population into submission while making the continued occupation of Ireland economically untenable.⁵²

In the midst of this conflict and economic troubles the UK and Ireland were drudging through, the fast, raw, and energetic frenzy of punk proved to be a fertile outlet for creative expression, cathartic release, and as a platform to air their grievances with the ruling classes of their societies. One such example is the band Sticky Little Fingers from Belfast, Ireland, whose 1979 debut album, *Inflammable Material* on Rough Trade Records, echoed the grim realities many of the people in Northern Ireland were undergoing at the height of the Troubles. “Suspect Device” references a bomb as a man who’s ready to explode if provoked, while “Alternative Ulster” references the identity issues and lack of options available to the people in Northern Ireland. The song “White Noise” is a satirical xenophobic screed written from the point of view of the British and loyalists, “If the victim ain’t a soldier why should we care? Irish bodies don’t count, life’s cheaper over there.”⁵³

Their track “Wasted Life” takes full advantage of the medium to produce insightful, politically charged messages draped in the chaotic sonic and aesthetic trappings of punk, starting off right on message, “I won’t be a soldier, I won’t take no orders from no one. Stuff their fucking armies, killing isn’t my idea of fun.”⁵⁴ The song continues, drawing a pointed connection to militant Nazi rhetoric and propaganda:

*I could be a hero
Live and die for their ‘important’ cause
A united nation*

⁵² Allison Morris, “Terror Plot Reminiscent of IRA Attacks,” *The Irish News*, December 7, 2017, <https://www.irishnews.com/news/2017/12/07/news/terror-plot-reminiscent-of-ira-attacks-1204792/>.

⁵³ Sticky Little Fingers, “White Noise,” track 7 on *Inflammable Material*, Rough Trade, 1979.

⁵⁴ Sticky Little Fingers, “Wasted Life,” track 4 on *Inflammable Material*, Rough Trade, 1979.

*Or an independent state with laws
And rules and regulations
That merely cause disturbances and wars
And that's what I've got now
All thanks to the freedom-seeking hordes...
Still they come up to me
With a different name but same old face
I can see the connection
With another time and another place
They ain't blonde-haired or blue-eyed
But they think that they're the master race
They're nothing but blind fascists
Brought up to hate and given lives to waste.⁵⁵*

However, unlike O'Connor and Stiff Little Fingers, amongst other politically charged UK and Irish punk acts, such as The Clash, many that embraced the new punk sound and look embraced little more than the rhetoric of rebellion, which proved to be of no threat to the systems of power and authority they thought they were opposing.

Prior to the Sex Pistols, their manager, Malcom McLaren (1946-2010), worked as the UK manager for the American proto-punk band The New York Dolls. Proto punk, the immediate progenitor of punk, was documented throughout its rise by photographers such as Michael Grecco, who writes that,

“During the late 60s and early 70s, these cities [Detroit and New York] birthed bands that would lay the groundwork for the future of punk rock. In Detroit, MC5 and The Stooges were forging a path with their raw lyrics and strong

⁵⁵ Stiff Little Fingers, “Wasted Life.”

political messages, while The Velvet Underground took on NYC with their bold, experimental sound.”⁵⁶

Like the Sex Pistols would later be defined by clothing McLaren sold at a shop he owned, The New York Dolls used striking fashion choices to define their image on and off the stage. From a very early-stage fashion and clothing choices that proved crucial to the punk image lent the supposedly anti-authoritarian, anti-system, pro-individual rhetoric a neoliberal capitalist friendly consumerist emptiness.

On the clear, sonic influences and cultural exchange between the US and UK, famous Rock n’ Roll photographer Bob Gruen (b. 1945) noted that The Stooges’ “I Wanna Be Your Dog,” was not just “the greatest punk song ever written to this day,” it was also, “The first song the Sex Pistols played.”⁵⁷ In the mid to late seventies, punk exploded onto the scene with many of the most iconic bands of the scene, such as the Ramones, the Talking Heads, and Blondie, amongst others, rapidly making a name for themselves, turning New York City into a punk mecca, most notably with former punk concert venue CBGB’s. Abbreviated for “Country, BlueGrass and Blues”, CBGB’s became New York’s premiere venue for all things punk, with many of punk’s soon-to-be icons playing there, such as the Ramones, the Dead Boys, Television, the Patti Smith Group, Blondie, Madonna, and the Talking Heads.⁵⁸

Rather than following the dominating Progressive Rock blueprint of the 1960s, this “New Wave” of music looked to return Rock back to its roots. “New Wave”, or “punk” as it came to be

⁵⁶ Michael Grecco, “Punk Rock History: The Origins of Punk,” *Days of Punk*, June 1, 2023, <https://daysofpunk.com/03/2021/fashion/blog/punk-rock-history-the-origins-of-punk>.

⁵⁷ Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (New York, New York: Grove Press, 2006), 359.

⁵⁸ Hilly Kristal, “History of CBGB & OMFUG,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20060808181332/http://www.cbgb.com/history1.htm>.

known, developed as a response to a separation from the counterculture movement of the 1960s to a more aggressive, but aimless, form of resistance against authority generally, than systems of power specifically.⁵⁹ According to McNeil,

“Punk was like, this is new, this is now, the apotheosis, powerful. But it wasn’t political. I mean, maybe that is political. I mean the great thing about punk was that it had no political agenda. It was about real freedom, personal freedom. It was also about doing anything that’s gonna offend a grown-up. Just being as offensive as possible.”⁶⁰

Shortly after the rise of the punk scene in the United States, arguably simultaneously with the influence of characters like McLaren, punk migrated across the sea to Europe, where it began taking roots amongst the turmoil of the Troubles in the UK and Ireland. The UK punk scene produced some of the most prolific and iconic bands associated with the genre, such as the Sex Pistols, The Clash, Siouxsie Sioux and the Banshees, Joy Division, and many others. It was this rise of music, its counterculture backing, and its anti-authority position that inspired so many people, including Sinéad O’ Connor.

The political instability, economic woes, and threats of violence the Irish and British experienced informed the main differences between UK and American punk music and culture. Unlike many American punks (still coasting off New York City’s, as of then, still cheap housing, Los Angeles’ relatively low population density, and jobs not yet destroyed by the Rust Belts’ deindustrialization), the English, and by extension the Irish, had

⁵⁹ The Counterculture movement of the 1960’s was a movement created as a response to moving away from the values of the 1950’s to a more alternative approach towards lifestyle, government and culture. Most notable features of the Counterculture movement include the rise of the “hippies” and their clothing style, changes in music and the growing use of psychedelics.

⁶⁰ McNeil and McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, 331.

little means and a decaying interpretation of their respective future prospects.

As one of the most influential forces on the NY punk scene's rise, Legs McNeil's commentary on the Sex Pistols' 1978 American tour provides insight into this divide, "After four years of doing *Punk* magazine, and basically getting laughed at, suddenly everything was 'PUNK!'"⁶¹ Feeling defensive about the Sex Pistols popularity, and the particular British image of punk overshadowing the original American NYC scene, due in part to the media circus that followed the Sex Pistols, McNeil commented that, "because the Pistols made their way across America, and the hysteria was broadcast on the news every night," American punks started to embrace the UK punk look adorned with safety pins; "go start your own youth movement, fine, but this one's already taken," he retorts.⁶²

Demonstrating American exceptionalist hubris, he doubles down in his ignorance of economic social realities of foreign nations and derides those who claimed punk ethos really started in England, stating, "You know, everyone is on the dole [welfare] there, they have something to complain about. Punk is really about class warfare and economic blah, blah, blah."⁶³ This blatant expression of disregard for the economic and political woes mixed with contempt and gatekeeping of the subculture, demonstrates the aforementioned divides in the American and UK punk scene.

It is also noteworthy that McNeil's defensive comments on the American embrace of the UK punk look, adorned with safety pins, demonstrates that this signature look, henceforth synonymous with punk, was a UK cultural transplant to the US (and a look that the entrepreneurial McLaren helped pioneer through the promotion of clothing he also just so happened to sell). In O'Connor's

⁶¹ McNeil and McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, 360.

⁶² McNeil and McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, 361.

⁶³ McNeil and McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, 361.

memoir, she also highlights this look as the distinctive trademark of the Irish punk scene when recounting her relationship with a boy, “There ultimately were a few good things about my time at Grianán. A sweet boy, David, and me fell in love. He was a proper punk. He had the hair and the safety pins and everything. My father said he’s not allowed to sit on our furniture.”⁶⁴

The cultural cross-pollination of punk across the Atlantic is interesting to examine as a testament to the complexity of culture in the globalized world. It is also worthwhile to examine with a critical eye analyzing what aspects of punk, as a genre, as fashion, and as a loosely defined anti-authoritarian ideology, ultimately transferred over as defining characteristics of the movement. McNeil’s defensive rejection of British punk’s fashion sense and political charge, juxtaposed with the universal adoption of the marketable commodity goods (fashion) in the punk scene, along with the rejection of actionable political agendas suggests that, for all the rhetoric of rebellion, punk was not fundamentally incongruent with the status quo and could be (and was) easily co-opted into capitalist consumer culture.

Through their embrace of nihilistic rebellion and an individualism based off consumer choices, the anti-*everything* punks posed little threat to (and neither offered a wider critique of) the economic or political systems that they were ostensibly lashing out against. Patti Smith’s (b. 1946) flippant commentary on the mid-1970s NYC’s social, political, and economic malaise describes this phenomenon: “I could not identify with the political movements any longer... All the manic activity in the streets, in trying to join them I felt overwhelmed by another form of bureaucracy.”⁶⁵ Instead, this generation of rebels’ and punks’ rejection of social organization towards political ends reverted their concerns inwards to radically change themselves and embrace radical individualism, rather than tackle daunting political goals to change the world.

⁶⁴ O’Connor, *Rememberings*, Chapter: The House of the Rising Sun, Part Three.

⁶⁵ *HyperNormalisation*, 7:00-9:00.

However, it is the existence of shops like McLaren's, No Romance, where O'Connor first got that red parka, that inspired her to take up songwriting with authentic conviction, which then served as further inspiration for future artists such as Kathleen Hanna. Hanna, frontwoman of feminist punk band Bikini Kill, details Sinéad's influence, "Because she was a punk who ended up making these pop records, or what could be considered pop records, they had such a far reach... I think it was validating for a lot of people to hear her on mainstream radio."⁶⁶ It was likely that early punk fashion influenced her iconic look - reminiscent of the female punks with short hair in mens or androgynous clothing that Siouxsie Sioux (b. 1957) can be seen sporting in December 1976 or the Sex Pistol's controversial appearance on *Today with Bill Grundy*.

Solo Recording Artist, Later Life & Controversies

O'Connor's career as a solo recording artist and flirtations with mainstream pop stardom began with the release of her debut album, *The Lion and the Cobra*, in 1987, on Ensign and Chrysalis Records. *The Lion and the Cobra* garnered critical acclaim, with Rolling Stone giving the album four stars, saying "With *The Lion and the Cobra*, Sinéad O'Connor joins the ranks of Kate Bush, Laurie Anderson and Jane Siberry — all women who are shattering the boundaries of pop music."⁶⁷ Music journalist Bill Coleman said of the album "*The Lion and the Cobra* was an amazing album just because there was no filler on it. So as a critic, you know, that was one of the first things that drew me to it. She has a very singular voice and perspective and very strong personality-wise. To me it was like the whole package."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Allyson McCabe, "Sinéad O'Connor Has a New Memoir ... And No Regrets," *NPR*, June 1, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/01/992501997/Sinéad-oconnor-has-a-new-memoir-and-no-regrets>.

⁶⁷ Anthony DeCurtis, "The Lion and the Cobra," *Rolling Stone*, January 28, 1988, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/the-lion-and-the-cobra-252050>.

⁶⁸ *Nothing Compares*, 37:05.

However, it was her groundbreaking cover of Prince's (1958-2016) "Nothing Compares 2 U," off her second album, *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*, released in March 1990 by Ensign and Chrysalis Records, that catapulted her to international fame, topping charts worldwide and earning her widespread recognition. Her music often explored themes of love, loss, and spirituality, reflecting her own experiences and convictions. O'Connor's distinctive voice, characterized by its emotional depth and haunting clarity, captivated audiences and earned her a devoted following. O'Connor wasted no time using her newfound fame and popularity to protest injustice everywhere she found it.

After Hip-Hop/Rap group Public Enemy was shafted by the 1989 Grammys' decision not to televise the award for Best Rap Performance, O'Connor performed with Public Enemy's logo shaved onto the side of her head, as seen in figure one.⁶⁹ Public Enemy's frontman, Chuck D, went on to say "I thought it was admirable when she put the Public Enemy logo on her head;" continuing with praise, "With Sinéad O'Connor you didn't get the sense that she was just being pretentious, that she was fake. It was like, "yeah, she seriously has issues with this." This is what's going to drive her artistry, she's committed to that."⁷⁰ Here, Chuck D's words give testimony to the fact that O'Connor was authentic and genuine in her beliefs.

In the following year, 1990, O'Connor again used her mainstream popularity as a massive platform to speak out in a move of public protest when she refused to play a New Jersey show if the US national anthem was played in protest of the First Gulf War (1990-1991).⁷¹ The next day, the US presses and radio jockeys ran rampant with the story gracing the headlines and harshly condemning O'Connor, an Irish woman, for her lack of patriotism and deference to the United States' campaign against Iraqi civilians and their infrastructure. Renowned musician Frank

⁶⁹ McCabe, "Sinéad O'Connor Has a New Memoir ... And No Regrets."

⁷⁰ *Nothing Compares*, 41:00.

⁷¹ *Nothing Compares*, 56:26.

Sinatra (1915-1998) said he would “like to kick her ass.”⁷² When a talking head personality began to question her along old played out lines, poking fun at her shaved head, she replied, “I can’t believe you’re talking about my hair with all the bloody starvation and the suffering in the world right now.”⁷³ In response, the television host begins mockingly miming as if he was playing a violin.

Steadfast in her moral commitments, O’Connor refused to attend the 1991 Grammys ceremony due to the silence from the industry and other artists on the horrors of war, despite the fact she was nominated in four categories that year. Her words on the matter can be found in the second hanging quote below her picture in the introduction.

As O’Connor was running the publicity circuit to promote her third album with Ensign and Chrysalis Records, *Am I Not Your Girl?*, released September 1992, she read an article about families who attempted to file complaints against the Catholic Church, who were being “silenced.”⁷⁴ She then took her mother’s framed picture of the Pope from her old bedroom wall, the picture she would rip on live TV a few weeks later.⁷⁵ She lamented,

“everything I had been raised to believe was a lie... everything about the Catholic Church was a lie... I could fucking cry right now saying it... He [the Pope] was so involved in covering up what happened... And I had a right to fight that evil because I loved the church.”⁷⁶

On October 3, 1992, O’Connor, who felt she “had fuck all to lose,” performed a rendition of Bob Marley’s (1945-1981) “War” on *Saturday Night Live*, with slightly modified lyrics that alluded to the abuses of the Catholic Church:

⁷² *Nothing Compares*, 58:04.

⁷³ *Nothing Compares*, 59:00.

⁷⁴ *Nothing Compares*, 1:09:40.

⁷⁵ *Nothing Compares*, 1:10:15.

⁷⁶ *Nothing Compares*, 1:10:34 - 1:11:00.

*Until the color of a man's skin
Is of no more significance
Than the color of his eyes
I've got to say war
War...
I say war
Until that day
The dream of lasting peace
World citizenship
And the rule of international morality
Will remain just a fleeting illusion
To be pursued
But never attained
And everywhere is war*

*Until the ignoble and unhappy regime
Which holds all of us through
Child abuse, yeah, child abuse, yeah,
Subhuman bondage has been toppled
Utterly destroyed
Everywhere is war
War in the East
War in the West
War up North
War down south
There's war, and the rumors of war
Until that day
There is no continent
Which will know peace
Children, Children fight
We find it necessary
We know we will win, we have confidence
In the victory, of good*

Over evil. ⁷⁷

As she finished her last drawn out word, “evil,” O’Connor held up her mother’s photo of the Pope, and with three tears, O’Connor ripped the image of the Pope and shouted “Fight the real enemy!” as she took off her stage equipment and walked off the set.⁷⁸ According to her publicist, Elaine Schock, who was immediately anxious about the coming public relations nightmare, recalls that O’Connor was “so happy” she had pulled off this latest act of protest.⁷⁹

For the next couple of weeks following the incident, O’Connor received near universal heavy criticism from the Catholic Church itself, the Anti-Defamation League, NBC, news media, radio personalities, and other celebrities including Madonna (b. 1958) and Joe Pesci (b.1943), who hosted SNL the following week. During his performance, Pesci stated “I’ll tell you one thing: She’s very lucky it wasn’t my show. ‘Cause if it was my show, I woulda gave her such a smack,” to which the crowd erupted in applause and cheers.⁸⁰ Following this, Pesci was quoted as saying ““I woulda grabbed her by her ... eyebrows,” while holding up the torn image of the pope now taped back together by Pesci, himself.⁸¹

Pesci was not alone in this brand of criticism, as can be seen in the documentary on O’Connor, *Nothing Compares*; news anchors and commentators, often men, felt comfortable to heavily criticize O’Connor and frequently invoked violent rhetoric while doing so. However, plenty of women jumped on the dog pile, with one female TV personality proclaiming, “In the case of Sinéad

⁷⁷ Cranjis McBasketball, “Sinéad O’Connor - War (SNL 1992),” July 26, 2023, YouTube, 0:50-3:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrkdWXmvl68>.

⁷⁸ Jon Caramanica, “The Night Sinéad O’Connor Took on the Pope on ‘S.N.L.’,” *The New York Times*, July 26, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/26/arts/music/Sinéad-oconnor-snl-pope.html>.

⁷⁹ *Nothing Compares*, 1:13:47.

⁸⁰ Caramanica, “The Night Sinéad O’Connor Took on the Pope on ‘S.N.L.’”

⁸¹ Caramanica, “The Night Sinéad O’Connor Took on the Pope on ‘S.N.L.’”

O'Connor, child abuse was justified."⁸² Hate mail and death threats to not just O'Connor, but her manager at the time, Claire Lewis, and bandmates quickly piled up according to Lewis.⁸³

O'Connor's message and bravery did not go entirely unappreciated by her spiritual cohort. Bikini Kill frontwoman and pioneer of feminist punk movement "Riot Grrrl," Kathleen Hanna said of the SNL performance, "I was watching it with some friends as it happened, and we were all applauding and cheering and were like, feminist performance art on TV!? When does that ever happen?"⁸⁴ For her powerful statement and advocacy, *Time* named her 1992's Most Influential Woman of the Year and adorned a black and white photograph of her iconic shaved head on their front cover.⁸⁵

A few weeks later, in an interview for *Time* magazine, when asked why she made such a "controversial" statement O'Connor replied,

"It's not the man, obviously – it's the office and the symbol of the organization that he represents. I consider them to be responsible for the destruction of entire races of people and the subsequent existence of domestic and child abuse in every country they went into."⁸⁶

With this single sentence, O'Connor flexed her humanitarian core, political attunement, and historical understanding of colonialism and religious institutions' role in maintaining that colonial rule, well beyond the extremely limited capacity of most of her intellectually diminished peers that litter the entertainment industry, then and now. Her intuitive

⁸² *Nothing Compares*, 1:16:32.

⁸³ *Nothing Compares*, 1:17:00.

⁸⁴ *Nothing Compares*, 1:17:10.

⁸⁵ Time Staff, "1992: Sinéad O'Connor," *TIME*, March 11, 2020, <https://time.com/5793721/Sinéad-o-connor-100-women-of-the-year/>.

⁸⁶ "People Need a Short, Sharp Shock: SINEAD O'CONNOR," interview by Janice C. Simpson, *TIME.com*, November 9, 1992, <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,976937,00.html>.

humanitarian and anti-authoritarian position was likely spurred on by her own experience as an Irish woman.

Considering the centuries of settler-colonial terrorism and genocidal policies the Irish faced at the hands of their British colonial masters, it is not surprising O'Connor's political compass was far more attuned to oppression and exploitation than (especially wealthy, and White) Americans, who were sheltered from the horror of war on the home front and insulated from the realities of colonialism. Using the words of Stiff Little Fingers, many Americans are simply one of two brands of "blind [liberal democratic] fascist[s]," that simply drape their preferred rhetoric over the US' global hegemonic position.⁸⁷

One of two of American's deeply superficial democratic choices included the neoconservative forces, with their propensity for moral warmongering crusades to spread democracy one bomb at a time to the uncouth savages of the world.⁸⁸ The other, supposedly progressive, liberal interventionists, still clearly viewed themselves as White-savior figures "saving" lives one bomb at time; whose seminal thinkers include Bill Clinton's (b.1946) Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright (1937-2022), who infamously justified on a live broadcast of *60 Minutes* that the preventable deaths of roughly half a million Iraqi children under the age of five years old.⁸⁹ Or, consider Albright's liberal interventionist compatriots that carried her humanitarian-war-mongering-torch into the 21st century, such as Samantha Power, author of *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, who's advocacy for a supposedly humanitarian military intervention in Libya in 2011 helped destroy the nation.

⁸⁷ Stiff Little Fingers, "Wasted Life."

⁸⁸ Perhaps most embodied by Paul Wolfowitz (b.), the namesake of The Wolfowitz Doctrine which commanded the US to eliminate any potential regional powers that may oppose it - for without the great power rival in the now fallen USSR, it was supposed that no force on Earth could oppose an even more liberal use of US military might.

⁸⁹ tclim988, "Is The Price Worth It," April 19, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iFYaeoE3n4>.

Perhaps these are the “freedom-seeking hordes” Stiff Little Fingers refers to:

“Still they come up to me, with a different name but same old face. I can see the connection, with another time and another place. They ain’t blonde-haired or blue-eyed, but they think that they’re the master race, They’re nothing but blind fascists.”⁹⁰

As alluded to in the song, and discussed above, these humanitarian interventionists and the neoconservatives operate from the *a priori* view that they are burdened to supposedly “civilize” the world, with massive doses of paramilitary and state violence. O’Connor, and the Irish, were born into centuries of ongoing horrors and humiliation wrought by settler-colonialism and genocide. These experiences and historical memory likely contextualize O’Connor’s deep investment in the liberatory struggles for equal rights and nondiscrimination for all.

Years later, on March 28, 2010, O’Connor revisited her fight against the church during an interview on CNN’s *Anderson Cooper 360*, where she spoke out against the Catholic sexual abuse scandals occurring in Ireland, something she herself had to bear witness to firsthand.⁹¹ In regards to a 1962 letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a congregation founded in 1542 by Pope Paul III (1468-1549) to protect the church against heresy, O’Connor says:

“We feel that it was an insult to our intelligence to suggest that the Irish hierarchy were somehow acting independently of the Vatican, when there are documents which show that there were very specific instructions in place which were

⁹⁰ Stiff Little Fingers, “Wasted Life.”

⁹¹ Matthew Balan, “CNN’s Cooper Brings on Anti-Catholic Sinéad O’Connor to Condemn the Pope,” NewsBusters, March 29, 2010, <https://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/matthew-balan/2010/03/29/cnns-cooper-brings-anti-catholic-Sinéad-oconnor-condemn-pope>.

issued by the Vatican to every bishop in the world and remained the rules until 2001.”⁹²

She goes on to say,

“I could totally understand why people were horrified by what I did and it was an abhorrent idea to suggest that priests could possibly be abusing children or that the Vatican could be covering it up, because it is abhorrent. It’s absolutely abhorrent. Unfortunately, it is true.”⁹³

This infamous SNL performance functionally transformed O’Connor’s musical career into a footnote in the public zeitgeist’s entry for: the woman who tore up a picture of the Pope. However, O’Connor continued to act in accordance with her character, and leaned into her controversial image in a cycle of reaction against the public’s undue and overwhelmingly negative perception of her, that then allowed her to concisely expound on her opinions in long form as she did in the *Time* interview above, even if it seemed no one was listening to her. “I’m an Irish artist,” Sinéad said, putting herself in the lineage of Irish artists known for their social commentary and provocation, “there’s a tradition among Irish artists of being agitators and activists... whether they’re playwrights or poets. An artist’s job is sometimes to create the difficult conversations that need to be had.”⁹⁴

Just a little under two weeks after the SNL performance, O’Connor’s next public performance was as an act for Bob Dylan’s (b.1941) thirtieth anniversary concert in Madison Square Garden, covering Dylan’s “I Believe In You.”⁹⁵ Kris Kristofferson (b.1936) introduced her as an “artist whose name’s become

⁹² Balan, “CNN’s Cooper Brings on Anti-Catholic Sinéad O’Connor to Condemn the Pope.”

⁹³ Balan, “CNN’s Cooper Brings on Anti-Catholic Sinéad O’Connor to Condemn the Pope.”

⁹⁴ *Nothing Compares*, 1:04:02.

⁹⁵ *Nothing Compares*, 1:19:10.

synonymous with courage, and integrity, ladies and gentlemen, Sinéad O'Connor," to a deluge of boos.⁹⁶ After taking a moment to compose herself, she stood her ground against the crowd and went into another rendition of "War," the song she performed on SNL, after which she walked off the stage teary-eyed.⁹⁷

After this, O'Connor withdrew from public life for the next ten years, while still writing, recording, and releasing music on her own terms. Between 1994 and 2014, O'Connor recorded and released seven more albums. Reflecting on her career trajectory, the framing that she threw her career away, O'Connor said she regrets that everyone was so mean to her, "They didn't like what they saw on the mirror, I understand that now, but when I was younger, I was just hurt."⁹⁸ However, she continued, "I never set out to be a pop star, it didn't suit me being a pop star. So I didn't throw away any fucking career that I wanted. Didn't change my attitude, I wasn't sorry, I didn't regret it, it was the proudest thing I've ever done as an artist."⁹⁹

Besides the harassment at the hands of the media and public, O'Connor's record label and executives also gave her significant grief as they wanted to turn her into a profitable female sex symbol.¹⁰⁰ She first embraced her iconic shaved head in protest to the record label, which insisted she grew her hair out long and change her style into something less confrontational.¹⁰¹ In another example, the cover of her debut album had to be changed in America, from the original cover of O'Connor screaming, to her looking down and calm, because the original was supposedly "too confrontational."¹⁰²

Furthermore, she attests that the record label pressured her to have an abortion; for after all the money they spent on her, she

⁹⁶ *Nothing Compares*, 1:18:32.

⁹⁷ *Nothing Compares*, 1:19:50.

⁹⁸ *Nothing Compares*, 1:24:20.

⁹⁹ *Nothing Compares*, 1:28:49.

¹⁰⁰ *Nothing Compares*, 23:00.

¹⁰¹ *Nothing Compares*, 24:00.

¹⁰² *Nothing Compares*, 26:10.

owed them to generate profit - which the demands of motherhood would complicate. "That was the last straw for me. I was sick of the fuckin' record anyway," O'Connor remarks on the pressure for her to abort her first-born son, Jake.¹⁰³ She said,

"I just knew that I didn't want any man telling me who I could be, or what I could be, or what to sound like. I came from a patriarchal country where I'm being told everything I can and can't do because I'm a girl. I figured, well, if I didn't take it from the system, and I didn't take it from my daddy, I ain't taking it from anybody else."¹⁰⁴

O'Connor's life was also marked by personal struggles, including battles with mental health issues, substance abuse, and tumultuous personal relationships. On top of the abuse she faced as a child at the hands of her mother and the Catholic Church, she experienced death early on in her life with her mother passing away at the age of 45 from a car accident, when O'Connor was 19, in 1985.¹⁰⁵ However, O'Connor continued to face other, continued, challenges in her family life, including multiple divorces and custody battles over her children. In 1995, an extended custody battle began between O'Connor and her ex-husband John Waters, an Irish journalist, over their first-born child Roisin.¹⁰⁶ As a result of heavy court battles and the accusation by Waters that O'Connor was an unfit parent, O'Connor attempted suicide on her thirty third

¹⁰³ *Nothing Compares*, 24:00.

¹⁰⁴ *Nothing Compares*, 24:30.

¹⁰⁵ Dave Quinn, "Sinéad O'Connor Says She Still Loves Her Mother Despite Years of Physical and Sexual Abuse," *People*, September 12, 2017, <https://people.com/music/Sinéad-oconnor-she-still-loves-mother-despite-abuse-dr-phil/>.

¹⁰⁶ Shauna Bannon Ward, "Sinead O'Connor's Romances: Fathers of Children, Custody Battle and Break-ups," *RSVP Live*, July 27, 2023, <https://www.rsvplive.ie/news/celebs/inside-sinead-oconnors-romances-fathers-30570331>.

birthday, December 8, 1999, leading to Water's receiving custody of Roisin.¹⁰⁷

She was candid about the difficulties she faced in her relationships, particularly in the custody battle and death of her third son, Shane. Shane, who had been lost to her following her custody battle in 2013, was reported missing on January 6, 2022, and was found dead the following day by suicide.¹⁰⁸ O'Connor has also been open about her struggles with mental health issues, including bipolar disorder, and fibromyalgia. During an interview on October 4th, 2007 with Oprah Winfrey (b. 1954), O'Connor openly spoke about her bipolar diagnosis, saying it had come as a result of the constant stress and mental anguish she had gone through over the years.¹⁰⁹ This constant stress and anguish she refers to is, in part, due to the harsh media criticism she had received over the years, as well as childhood abuse at the hands of her mother and the Catholic Church.

In her later years, O'Connor's focus shifted towards spirituality and healing, and she continued to explore new musical avenues while remaining true to her unique artistic vision. In 2018, O'Connor converted to Islam and changed her name to Shuhada' Davitt, later changing her surname to Sadaqat.¹¹⁰ Though her journey was marked by highs and lows, Sinéad O'Connor's impact on the world of music and culture remains enduring, her legacy as a trailblazer and truth-teller cemented in the annals of music history. Despite the challenges she faced, she created music that

¹⁰⁷ Biography.com Editors and Tyler Piccotti. "Sinéad O'Connor." *Biography*, January 11, 2024.

<https://www.biography.com/musicians/Sinéad-oconnor>.

¹⁰⁸ Clea Skopeliti, "Son of Sinéad O'Connor Dies at age of 17 after going missing," *The Guardian*, January 8, 2022,

https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/jan/08/son-of-Sinéad-oconnor-dies-at-age-of-17-after-going-missing?CMP=share_btn_url.

¹⁰⁹ "Sinéad O'Connor's Struggle With Bipolar Disorder," interview by Oprah Winfrey, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, October 4, 2007, <https://www.oprah.com/own-oprahshow/sinead-oconnors-struggle-with-bipolar-disorder>.

¹¹⁰ Jamel Smith, "Sinéad O'Connor Was a Blessed Soul, Says Imam."

resonated deeply with audiences, demonstrating resilience and courage in the face of adversity.

Upon her passing on June 26, 2023, in Herne Hill, South London, as a result of natural causes, many fans across the globe gave thanks to the artist. Notable regards include famous Canadian American musician Alanis Morissette (b.1974) noting “Her questioning of societal norms deeply influenced culture’s appreciation of female complexity. Her ability to vulnerably dwell on the small part of the bell-shaped curve was thought provoking, stirring and inspiring.”¹¹¹ Others include Leo Varadkar (b. 1979), the former Prime Minister of Ireland, who says “Her music was loved around the world and her talent was unmatched and beyond compare. Condolences to her family, her friends and all who loved her music.”¹¹² As journalist Roisin Ingle notes, remarking on O’Connor’s trailblazing legacy, “Wherever there’s that righteous anger of a woman now, who is making a difference, who’s changing things, who’s standing up and being courageous. That is where the little sparks of Sinéad are.”¹¹³

*Margaret Thatcher on TV
Shocked by the deaths that took place in Beijing
It seems strange that she should be offended
The same orders are given by her
I’ve said this before now
You said I was childish and you’ll say it now
Remember what I told you:
If they hated me they will hate you
England’s not the mythical land of Madame George and roses
It’s the home of police who kill black boys on mopeds*

¹¹¹ Katie Atkinson, “Sinéad O’Connor’s Death Mourned by Garbage, Alanis Morissette, Irish President & More: ‘Godspeed Dear Fragile Dove,’” *Billboard*, July 26, 2023, <https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/Sinéad-oconnor-dead-tributes-reactions-1235379463>.

¹¹² Atkinson, “Sinéad O’Connor’s Death Mourned by Garbage, Alanis Morissette, Irish President & More: ‘Godspeed Dear Fragile Dove.’”

¹¹³ *Nothing Compares*, 1:26:05.

*And I love my boy and that's why I'm leaving
I don't want him to be aware that there's
Any such thing as grieving*

- Sinéad O'Connor, "Black Boys on Mopeds"¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴Sinead O'Connor, "Black Boys on Mopeds," track 5 on *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*, Ensign and Chrysalis, 1990.

Bibliography

- Atkinson, Katie. "Sinead O'Connor's Death Mourned by Garbage, Alanis Morissette, Irish President & More: 'Godspeed Dear Fragile Dove.'" *Billboard*, July 27, 2023.
<https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/sinead-ocor-dead-tributes-reactions-1235379463/>.
- Balan, Matthew. "CNN's Cooper Brings on Anti-Catholic Sinead O'Connor to Condemn the Pope." *Newsbusters*, March 29, 2010. <https://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/matthew-balan/2010/03/29/cnns-cooper-brings-anti-catholic-sinead-oconnor-condemn-pope>.
- Biography.com Editors and Tyler Piccotti. "Sinéad O'Connor." *Biography*, January 11, 2024.
<https://www.biography.com/musicians/sinead-oconnor>.
- Caramanica, Jon. "The Night Sinead O'Connor Took on the Pope on S.N.L." *The New York Times*, July 26, 2023.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/26/arts/music/sinead-oconnor-snl-pope.html?>.
- Cathcart, Rex. *The Most Contrary Region: The Bbc in Northern Ireland 1924-1984*. Blackstaff Press, 1984.
- Christon, Lawrence. "SHANDLING TAKES THE LOW-KEY ROAD." *The Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1982.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/389134673/?clippingid=34952202&fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiM4OTEzNDY3YWiaWF0ljoXNzE2MDcwNjc0LCJleHAiOiE3MTYxNTcNzR9.J3Y8EVe81IjdBahn1u7ofYgfakUdDR1uyKF9knVzt4>.
- Cranjic McBasketball. "Sinead O'Connor - War (SNL 1992)," YouTube. July 26, 2023. 3:27.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrkdWXmvl68>.
- Curtis, Adam, director. *HyperNormalisation*. British Broadcasting Company, 2016. 2 hrs., 46 min.
<https://www.amazon.com/HyperNormalisation-Adam-Curtis/dp/B08L6KBTL>.

- DeCurtis, Anthony. "The Lion and the Cobra." *Rolling Stone*, June 25, 2018.
<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/the-lion-and-the-cobra-252050/>.
- Ferguson, Kathryn, director. *Nothing Compares*. Paramount Pictures, 2022. 1 hr., 35 min.
<https://www.paramountplus.com/movies/video/oqfMqXtL4ZuFnUTnWWImrRTL7oKZaTB/>.
- Grecco, Michael. "Punk Rock History: The Origins of Punk." *Days of Punk*, June 1, 2023.
<https://daysofpunk.com/03/2021/fashion/blog/punk-rock-history-the-origins-of-punk>.
- Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Henderson, Sarah. "How Sinéad O'Connor Was Gripped with Troubles Fear and Thought Ian Paisley Was Satan." *Belfast Telegraph*, July 30, 2023. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/how-sinead-oconnor-was-gripped-with-troubles-fear-and-thought-ian-paisley-was-satan/a1985617019.html?registration=success®=true>.
<https://daysofpunk.com/03/2021/fashion/blog/punk-rock-history-the-origins-of-punk>.
- Jenkins, Richard. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE, 1997.
- Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. Penguin, 2006.
- Kristal, Hilly. "History of CBGB & OMFUG,"
<https://web.archive.org/web/20060808181332/http://www.cbgb.com/history1.htm>.
- McCabe, Allyson. "Sinéad O'Connor Has a New Memoir ... and No Regrets." NPR, June 1, 2021.
<https://www.npr.org/2021/06/01/992501997/sinead-oconnor-has-a-new-memoir-and-no-regrets>.
- McNeil, Legs, and Gillian McCain. *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*. New York: Grove Press, 2016.

- Morris, Allison. "Terror Plot Reminiscent of IRA Attacks." *The Irish News*, December 7, 2017.
<https://www.irishnews.com/news/2017/12/07/news/terror-plot-reminiscent-of-ira-attacks-1204792/>.
- O'Connor, Sinéad. "Black Boys on Mopeds." Recorded 1988-1989. Track 5 on *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*. Ensign and Chrysalis, 1990.
- . *Rememberings*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 2021.
- . "People Need a Short, Sharp Shock: SINEAD O'CONNOR." Interview by Janice C. Simpson, *TIME.com*, November 9, 1992.
<https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,976937,00.html>.
- . "Sinéad O'Connor's Struggle With Bipolar Disorder." Interview by Oprah Winfrey. *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, October 4, 2007,
<https://www.oprah.com/own-oprahshow/sinead-oconnors-struggle-with-bipolar-disorder>.
- Quinn, Dave. "Sinéad O'Connor Says She Still Loves Her Mother despite Years of Physical and Sexual Abuse." *People*, September 13, 2017.
<https://people.com/music/sinead-oconnor-she-still-loves-mother-despite-abuse-dr-phil/>.
- Roos, Dave. "How The Troubles Began in Northern Ireland." *HISTORY*, August 2, 2023.
<https://www.history.com/news/the-troubles-northern-ireland>.
- Sandbrook, Dominic. *State of Emergency. The Way We Were: Britain 1970-1974*. London, United Kingdom: Penguin UK, 2011.
- Sex Pistols, "God Save the Queen." Recorded October 1976. Track 4 on *Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols*. Virgin Records, 1977, MP3.
- Skopeliti, Clea. "Son of Sinéad O'Connor Dies at Age of 17 after Going Missing." *The Guardian*, January 8, 2022.
<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/jan/08/son-of->

[sinead-oconnor-dies-at-age-of-17-after-going-missing?C
P=shar_btn_url.](#)

- Smith, Jamel. "Sinead O'Connor Was a Blessed Soul, Says Imam." *The Independent*, July 28, 2023.
[https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/sinead-o-connor-g
ammy-god-koran-bray-b2383838.html.](#)
- Starkey, Arun. "45 Years on from the Sex Pistols Appearance on 'Today.'" *Far Out Magazine*, December 1, 2021.
[https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/45-years-on-from-the-
notorious-sex-
pistols-appearance-on-the-today-show/.](#)
- Stiff Little Fingers. "Wasted Life." Recorded November 1978.
Track 4 on *Inflammable Material*. Rough Trade, 1979.
- . "White Noise." Recorded November 1978. Track 7 on
Inflammable Material. Rough Trade, 1979.
- tclim988. "Is The Price Worth It," April 19, 2013. 0:38.
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iFYaeoE3n4.](#)
- Time Staff. "1992: Sinead O'Connor." *TIME*, March 11, 2020.
[https://time.com/5793721/sinead-o-connor-100-women-of
he-year/.](#)
- Ward, Shauna Bannon. "Sinead O'Connor's Romances: Fathers of Children, Custody Battle and Break-ups." RSVP Live, July 27, 2023.
[https://www.rsvplive.ie/news/celebs/inside-sinead-
oconnors-romances-fathers-30570331.](#)
- Watson, Kimberley. "The 1960s, the Decade That Shook Britain." Historic UK, November 26, 2023.
[https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-1960s-The-
ecade-that-Shook-Britain/.](#)
- Weston, Thomas. "The UK Economy in the 1960s." House of Lords Library, February 13, 2024.
[https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/the-uk-economy-in-the-
1960s/.](#)
- . "The UK Economy in the 1970s." House of Lords Library, April 4, 2024.
[https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/the-uk-economy-in-the-
1970s/.](#)

In Memoriam

Yahoo Movies. “‘Nothing Compares’ Clip: Sinéad O’Connor Reflects on Her Early ‘90s Fame,” September 27, 2022.
<https://ca.movies.yahoo.com/movies/nothing-compares-clip-sinead-oconnor-145513153.html>.

Author Bios

After graduating from the California State University, San Bernardino history master's program in Spring 2024, Devin Gillen plans on pursuing a PhD in history or global studies before establishing himself in a career that bridges the worlds of academia, journalism, and activism. Devin's master's thesis focuses on NATO's 2011 Libyan intervention and identifies it as a major, but under-discussed, turning point in the context of the global world-system and shifting US hegemony from 1945 to 2024. This study employs an interdisciplinary approach bringing together U.S. foreign policy history, World-Systems Theory, and Global South scholarship to understand the dynamics of this pivotal event and its lasting consequences. Topics/issues that include theories of economic development, terrorism, and globalization continue to undergird Devin's scholarly interests while a desire to illuminate the hardships and injustices wrought on the world's oppressed [and exploited] peoples drives his work.



In Memoriam

Jessie Zepeda is a current graduate student at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). His research centers on counterculture in America between the 1970's-1980's, specifically on the punk scene and other cultural scenes growing during that time. Along with putting his nose into history books, Jessie likes to travel, go to concerts, and cooks occasionally. He is hoping that with enough work and perseverance, other people who listen and enjoy music would be interested in doing what he does and in keeping the spirit of music and freedom alive. "History was not my first love, but she will be my last."



Reviews

Book Review: *From Back Alley to the Border: Criminal Abortion in California, 1920-1969*

By Bshara Alsheikh

From Back Alley to the Border: Criminal Abortion in California, 1920-1969, written by Alicia Gutierrez-Romine, was originally published in 2020 and republished in 2023 by the University of Nebraska Press. The book examines the world of what Gutierrez-Romine refers to as “providers of illegal abortions” in California through the early to mid-nineteen hundreds. Gutierrez-Romine specifically chooses this term because it is inclusive and neutral in regards to the practitioner of the procedure’s level of professionalism and includes everyone, from doctors who conducted abortions for additional money to professionals in abortion who lack medical qualifications and to unlicensed and inexperienced abortionists.¹ Amongst these providers, Gutierrez-Romine details the Pacific Coast Abortion Ring (PCAR), a notorious illegal abortion operation founded by Reginald Rankin (1888-1949) that provided safe abortions outside of the law across the West Coast during the Great Depression (1929-1939). The PCAR was forced to close via the 1937 case of *People of the State of California v. Reginald L. Rankin et al.*; Gutierrez-Romine details how this case intensified the persecution of illegal abortion providers and recipients, such as Laura Miner, before abortion was

¹ Alicia Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border: Criminal Abortion in California, 1920-1969*, (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2023), 4-5.

first decriminalized in 1969 and eventually legalized with *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.²

The 1937 trial was sensationalized into a media circus, which brought attention to not just the case but to individual women who were forced to testify before the court, often about deeply intimate information before the glaring eyes of the media. However, through these testimonies, the women challenged the common narrative that abortion recipients were unduly promiscuous, unwedded young women and proved that, in reality, most of the women who historically sought abortions were married women who already struggled to provide for the children they had. Ironically, these women were only able to testify before the court due to the fact they had survived the safer procedures PCAR offered and had not died, as many women did, in botched “back-alley” abortions. The abortion expertise the PCAR cultivated and developed significantly decreased the number of deaths related to the procedure.³ Additionally, due to the court case, abortion recipients, who were previously anonymous abstract victims without physical form, now had the opportunity to express their own perspectives before the court - even if they were reluctant to do so. The media circus compelled these women to publicly testify about their abortions before a court, jury, and audience of strangers, instead of sharing information about their abortions with women in their personal social networks, as women historically had.

In a further ironic twist, due to the increased specialization and decreased fatalities, it became more common for women to face public scrutiny after having an abortion. Even though the PCAR demonstrated that abortions can be conducted in a safe manner in court proceedings, California’s state law enforcement intensified efforts against abortion providers in the aftermath of the case, which streamlined the procedure to prosecute abortion as a criminal offense. This shift in approach significantly impacted the

² Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 6.

³ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 6.

circumstances for both women seeking abortions and those involved in providing illegal abortions.⁴

One such abortion provider detailed in the book is Laura Miner, an abortion provider based in San Diego who found herself working for a doctor who exclusively performed abortions.⁵ Miner joined and became integrated into the Pacific Coast Abortion Ring (PCAR) as it expanded to San Diego around 1936. She prospered in the abortion profession, becoming financially independent and able to support her children. Miner was sympathetic to the plight of women who sought abortions due to her and her own mother's experiences receiving abortions.⁶ Initially, she started her role at the San Diego PCAR facility, which featured a total of nine rooms, as both the office receptionist and nurse.⁷ Miner was able to curate a network of women to help other women in need of an abortion and ultimately gained the trust to carry out all of the procedures in the San Diego facility herself. In short order, she employed her own nurse and receptionist. Miner would even be routinely requested by name from women seeking assistance in the San Diego PCAR facility and was quickly promoted to the managerial position of the San Diego branch.⁸

Miner's abortion business was an open secret in San Diego, a business that was thriving with a loyal set of customers who had no intentions of turning her in to the authorities.⁹ Despite Miner's efforts to alter her methods after PCAR was dismantled in the wake of 1937's *People of the State of California v. Reginald L. Rankin et al.*, by meeting potential patients elsewhere and sometimes asking them to come back to her office at different times, she did not escape legal repercussions. Prosecutors were still able to get convictions against abortionists, even in cases where there were no patient fatalities or problems, and they used evidence

⁴ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 6.

⁵ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 108.

⁶ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 108-09.

⁷ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 109.

⁸ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 109.

⁹ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 150.

obtained during raids, such as speculums, patient cards, and names.¹⁰ In 1948, Miner was convicted by a jury and thereafter served an imprisonment of about two years at the California Institution for Women in Tehachapi. Following her discharge, she abstained from performing abortions indefinitely.¹¹ Of note, in November 2022, California Governor Gavin Newsom (b.1967) posthumously pardoned Laura Miner in the days before California voters approved Proposition 1, which guarantees reproductive freedom for Californians. This pardon came after Gutierrez-Romine worked with Governor Newsom's parole and clemency team in the preceding months—further highlighting this history, its relevance to today, and how historians can use their work to enact change.¹²

Gutierrez-Romine does a stellar job showcasing the power and agency of women who were implicated in the *People of the State of California v. Reginald L. Rankin et al.* case. Her book challenges the previous commonly held notion that public discussions around abortion were scarce from 1880 to 1960.¹³ Further research conducted by Gutierrez-Romine indicates that women were not passive and that they did not solely communicate discreetly within their social circles. Conversely, women oftentimes found themselves engaging in candid discourse during trials and when being questioned by investigators. Undoubtedly, these women possessed constraints on their agency.¹⁴ The majority, if not all, were compelled to provide testimony in favor of the prosecution. Nevertheless, once they took the witness stand, these women articulated their own ideas and opinions, which

¹⁰ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 151.

¹¹ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 152.

¹² Maggie Angst, "Gavin Newsom Grants Posthumous Pardon to California Abortion Provider," *The Sacramento Bee*, November 4, 2022, <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article268295972.html>.

¹³ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 194.

¹⁴ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 194.

showed to the public how intimate and personal of a process it is to obtain an abortion.¹⁵

Gutierrez-Romine argues that this coerced testimony is what compelled many providers of illegal abortions to move their procedures further underground and eventually across the border into Mexico between the 1940s-1960s.¹⁶ After discussing therapeutic abortions—which she describes as those legal abortions that were able to take place within a hospital and which were primarily received by middle and upper-class heterosexual White women—Gutierrez-Romine takes us across the border and back to Reginald Rankin.¹⁷ This portion of her book explains how Californian racialization of Mexican border spaces influenced the California Supreme Court’s 1969 finding that the existing abortion statute was “void for vagueness.”¹⁸ Following Rankin, abortion providers, and California women across the border, the author situates abortion tourism within the existing vice tourism industry that has existed in these border spaces for American consumption since the pre-Prohibition era.¹⁹ In 1969, when the California Supreme Court took up a respected California physician, Dr. Leon Belous’ appeal against his conviction, the realities of abortion criminalization in the state, which forced women to seek potentially unsafe abortions across the border, became clear due to the publicity the case brought. Belous had earlier assisted a patient in acquiring an illegal abortion because he feared she would turn to “butchery” in Tijuana.²⁰ Due to Belous’s 1969 appeal, the courts realized the law that had initially been designed to try to protect women in the days of medical quackery of the 19th century was now making California women unsafe; abortion was then decriminalized in the state.²¹

¹⁵ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 194.

¹⁶ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 10.

¹⁷ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 10.

¹⁸ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 190.

¹⁹ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 170.

²⁰ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 183.

²¹ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 190.

Although *Back Alley To The Border*'s initial publication was in November 2020, prior to *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, (2021-2022) the case that reversed both *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* (1992), the book was reissued in November 2023, featuring an afterword that discusses *Roe*'s overturning in 2022.²² Gutierrez-Romine ends her preface with, "Perhaps if I tell this story, we can be motivated enough to prevent a reappearance of the pre-*Roe* days," not knowing her valiant efforts would be in vain.²³ She maintains that *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*, decided in 1992, had already eroded the *Roe* ruling and that repealing it would pave the way for a state to outlaw the procedure completely.²⁴ In the afterword, she mentions that *Dobbs* is "bureaucratizing health care," which is leading to delays and creating barriers that prevent many women from accessing the therapy they require.²⁵ Gutierrez-Romine continues to mention how the prioritization of birth, without simultaneously improving healthcare or welfare services, demonstrates a greater concern for the theoretical, simple existence of a prospective life rather than the well-being of actual children or pregnant individuals.²⁶

Gutierrez-Romine's work is an exceptional demonstration of how stricter abortion regulations, in California and presumably elsewhere in the country, prompted women to seek the procedure across the southern border. This research provides a valuable foundation for future historians to expand on the experiences of Mexican women who helped facilitate the journeys to and from the border. Future research on this topic could also integrate the voices and experiences of Mexican physicians in this ordeal of abortion across the southern border. It is important for historians to give due attention to the experiences of women of color, particularly in how

²² "Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization," Oyez, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2021/19-1392>.

²³ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, xiv.

²⁴ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 200.

²⁵ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 207.

²⁶ Gutierrez-Romine, *From Back Alley to the Border*, 20.

they were affected by the illegality of abortions. A compassionate approach toward understanding their struggles can help us gain a deeper appreciation of the challenges they faced in their lives.

Bibliography

- Angst, Maggie. "Gavin Newsom Grants Posthumous Pardon to California Abortion Provider." *The Sacramento Bee*, November 4, 2022. <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article268295972.html>.
- Gutierrez-Romine, Alicia. *From Back Alley to the Border: Criminal Abortion in California, 1920-1969*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2023.
- "Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization." Oyez. Accessed May 9, 2024. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2021/19-1392>.

Author Bio

Bshara is currently in the second year of his History MA program at California State University, San Bernardino. His academic interests include reproductive justice, with an emphasis on obstetric abuse and how it affects women of color. He enjoys gaming on a wide variety of consoles, including PC. He also enjoys musicals, with his favorites being *Mean Girls*, *Waitress*, and *Hairspray*. He plans on earning his M.A. in history from CSUSB in Spring 2025. He hopes to eventually earn a Ph.D. to teach in higher education institutions to spread awareness of reproductive justice to a wider audience and to reach as many students as possible. Bshara's first languages are Arabic and Armenian. He was born in the Middle East and immigrated to the United States in 2014.



Book Review: *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California*

By Gabrielle Velázquez

While many people regard California's history as golden, it is, in fact, full of atrocities against Native People, especially concerning the Gold Rush (1848-1855), the Green Rush (1980s-), and state-sponsored genocide. The book *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California* by Dr. Kaitlin Reed (Yurok/Hupa/Oneida), presents an important historical message.

The Indigenous perspective is by far not the popular voice when it comes to telling the history of California. However, that history cannot be told without including an Indigenous perspective. Reed argues that the Green Rush (a period when cannabis production spiked in the early 1980s) cannot be disentangled from similar behaviors during the Gold Rush (discovery of gold spiked between 1848 and 1855), which was fueled by state-sponsored genocide. These events were unsustainable, especially during an ecological crisis of global climate change.

Settler Cannabis contains eight chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1, "Gold, Greed, and Genocide: Settler Colonialism and Resource Extraction in the California Gold Rush," presents the historical background to the Gold Rush in California through various primary sources and other works by Indigenous writers on this famous historical event. These latter sources also speak about the state of California and its politics and how they were viewed by Native Peoples of the state. Reed also looks at the genocide of Native People by Euro-Americans during this period. Chapter 2, "Forests on Fire: Constructing Natural Resources and Imposing Ecological Regimes," focuses closely on the resources of timber,

fire, and its management, and on privatizing timberlands in contemporary times. Reed explains how the activities of the Gold Rush transitioned into a timber rush and finally into the Green Rush of today.

Chapter 3, “Salmon is Everything-Controlling Rivers and Commodifying Kin” discusses salmon and the river. The beginning of this chapter discusses the intimate relationship the Yurok nation has with the salmon in the river, and she shares the Yurok’s creation story to explain this important relationship. Reed says, “We typically use the word ‘genocide’ for people only, but within Indigenous epistemology Salmon are understood as relatives or ancestors. To us, the fish kill was genocide.”¹ This chapter also explains the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) among Indigenous People.

“TEK refers to the knowledge base acquired by indigenous and local peoples over many hundreds of years through direct contact with the environment. It includes an intimate and detailed knowledge of plants, animals, and natural phenomena, the development and use of appropriate technologies for hunting, fishing, trapping, agriculture, and forestry, and a holistic knowledge, or “world view” which parallels the scientific discipline of ecology.”²

Chapter 4, “Back to Whose Land? Hippies Environmentalism and Cannabis,” touches on the birth of the back-to-land movement of the 1960s and 1970s. This was a time when non-Native People were “moving back” to the lands of Northern California, and this was the period when hippies started to grow cannabis in the area. In the end, this would spark the Green Rush explosion. Chapter 5, “Weed Greed: Explosion of the California Green Rush,” explains how and why Operation Yurok, a

¹ Kaitlin Reed, *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2023), 76.

² Julian T. Inglis, *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Concepts and Cases* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1993), vi.

collaborative operation between tribal, federal and state law enforcement officers, was created in 2014 and what it was protecting. Also discussed is the larger era of cannabis and how tribes have been excluded from California's cannabis industry.

Chapter 6, "No Justice on Stolen Land: Cannabis Cultivation and Land Dispossession" discusses how land for the cannabis industry was acquired and the negative outcomes that have affected the Indigenous People of the area. Chapter 7, "Cannabis and Water: Us, Rights, and Infrastructure" explains the control of water in the area and the close relationship between cannabis and water. Chapter 8, "Toxic Environments: Cannabis, Chemicals, and Legacy Impacts," looks at toxicity and how cannabis has caused this in the area.

In the final chapter, "Conclusion: Ecological Crisis and Land Back," is where Reed says, "We have entered an ecological crisis. As fires engulf the western United States and water shortages impair habitats, we will be forced to reckon with the unsustainable nature of settler-colonial orientations to land."³ Reed says decolonization is needed; Indigenous People have a right to sit at the table, and justice requires land to be returned to the Indigenous People of California.

Throughout her book, Reed uses a variety of non-Native sources such as newspaper articles, the California Governor's address on January 6, 1851, legislative acts that were passed during the 1800s, writings by Native authors and scholars, early Native historians who paved the way for Indigenous history, and even a poem from Native Twitter published by Jesse Wenté (Ojibwe) on September 19, 2018. Reed also uses a strong Indigenous perspective, and this is the voice in which she wants her work to be understood. The value of these Native sources projects the Indigenous perspective on important issues and presents a platform for Native voices to be heard. These examples of Native

³ Kaitlin Reed, *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2023), 234.

perspectives collectively support the message Reed is conveying in her book.

Reed's work fits comfortably and prominently in the field of Indigenous studies. It gives a substantial platform for Native perspectives on issues that have been either forgotten, never heard before, or are not at the forefront as portrayed by the media. Dr. Michael Karp, History Professor at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB), who specializes in environmental history, says about Reed's book: "Reed's work stands out for providing an explicitly Indigenous perspective of the colonial settlement of northwestern California and how larger systems of exploitation have harmed both the Native People and the natural world."⁴ Colonial settlement exploitation by Euro-Americans significantly harmed Native People and the natural environment.

Reed also presents the views of many Indigenous People, sets the record straight regarding the history of California, and suggests a realistic future for Indigenous People in the state of California. The author is fair when presenting a strong Indigenous perspective and exposing the actions of settler colonialism. As an Indigenous woman and future Indigenous historian/scholar, my knowledge on this subject has been expanded by reading Dr. Reed's book. This book will give an intense yet truthful course on the state of California and how events bleed into one another because of settler colonialism. The book is a strong addition to the historiography of Indigenous history and will be a great source to use in both high school and college courses.

I was privileged to meet Dr. Kaitlin Reed at the first annual California Indian Studies and Scholars Association (CISSA) conference in Santa Cruz in 2023. At that time, her book was two months away from publication. In July of that same year, I received an email from Terria Smith, editor of *News From Native California*, informing me that Dr. Reed had recommended I write a review of her newly published book. I felt honored and inspired to have been chosen by a distinguished Indigenous historian and

⁴ Personal communication with Karp March 9, 2024.

scholar. Dr. Reed gave me a special gift of being able to add to the growing platform of Indigenous perspectives and truths. At the close of her book, Reed says:

“This is why I had to write this book. California Indians did not have a seat at the table during the gold rush. There was no public forum or open comment period where we could submit our knowledge and research perspectives. In fact, when we tried to sit at that table, we were jailed and auctioned off into slavery...this time around we insist on having our voices heard”.⁵

The information this book presents provides knowledge about Native issues that may seem ancient but are still contemporary in the minds of California Indigenous Peoples because they are still fighting against settler colonialism in 2024.

As an Indigenous woman (Chahta/Mvskoke Etlwv/Nium/Chaushila), I will say this book shows me why I keep pushing forward in my education in Indigenous history. As much as I enjoyed reading this book, I found myself to be overwhelmed with emotions as well. The emotions of grief, heartache, and rage given what happened in California during the Gold Rush (and even what continues to still happen in the twenty-first century). However, at the same time, this book also filled me with emotions of pride, inspiration, and hope. We, as Indigenous People have been fighting against colonialism for centuries. As Indigenous People, our battles have been great and small, public and private, community and solo. This book captures these battles well and paints a mural that encompasses the strong lineage of Indigenous Peoples of California. This is a book that can inspire others as well, and a book that can teach about Indigenous Peoples

⁵ Kaitlin Reed, *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2023), 239-240.

who lived/live in California. I am proud to say I read this book. I am proud to say I gained more knowledge from this book. I am proud to say this book sits on my bookshelf.

Bibliography

Reed, Kaitlin. *Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2023.

Inglis, Julian T. *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Concepts and Cases*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1993.

Author Bio

Gabrielle Velázquez (Chahta/Mvskoke Etlwv/Nium/Chaushila) will graduate in May 2024 from California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) with her master of arts in history, with an emphasis on Indigenous history. Her portfolio focused on the re-education of Indigenous history in California. Gabrielle earned her bachelor of arts in history from CSUSB in 2013 and her associate of arts in liberal studies from San Bernardino Valley Community College (SBVCC) in 2011. Currently, she is a Resident Guest Teacher/Intervention Specialist for the San Bernardino City Unified School District and has been employed in the field of education for the last decade. After graduation, she hopes to find a career that will allow her to work with and help Indigenous communities in California. She would like to thank Professor Emeritus Robert Blackey for his assistance and guidance with the editing process and Dr. Kaitlin Reed (Yurok/Hupa/Oneida) for her recommendation to write this review. Gabrielle would also like to dedicate this piece in memory of grandmother, Evelyn C. Hernandez, who made her journey over to the other side on March 21, 2023.



Book Review: *Judgment at Tokyo: World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia*

By Pamela Budinger

Gary J. Bass, professor of politics and international relations at Princeton University, has written a detailed history of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo trial or Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal) (1946-1948) and the Japanese military leaders tried as war criminals after World War II (1939-1945) in his book *Judgment at Tokyo: World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia*. This 892-page book, published by Alfred A. Knopf Publishing Company in 2023, is the subject of this review. As the title indicates, this book outlines the history and various historical contexts surrounding the trial of the selected Japanese officers charged for war crimes. Bass examines how the Tokyo trial shaped Asia from that time forward.

In *Judgment at Tokyo*, Bass documents how the Tokyo trial evolved. He discusses in detail many points of law and politics that contributed to the long shadow the trial created. To understand the Tokyo trial, Bass sets the trial in the broader contexts of Asian and global history including the anticolonial nationalism of India, the economic and political geography of Asian countries, the Chinese revolution (1927-1949), and the beginning of the Cold War (1947-1991).¹ Bass' thesis is that, whereas the Nuremberg trials (1945-1946) had been touted as having moral clarity and could be seen as a metaphor for ethical purity, the Tokyo trial was more interesting given its many controversies and the way World War II was

¹ Gary J. Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo: World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2023), 13.

viewed by the victors.² To illustrate his thesis Bass has divided his book into three themes: A Clash of Armies; Clash of Empires; and Clash of Ideals.

Part one, “Genesis,” includes chapters one through nine and examines the theme “A Clash of Armies.” In it, Bass explores the dynamics of the various military forces, and their strategies and tactics, especially when the armies collided. Bass illustrates brilliantly how clashes were seen in a broad historical context.

The Tokyo trial can be seen both as an act of war-making and peacemaking. “The proper starting point for understanding the Tokyo trials is not the elevated principles of international law but the bloody realities of the final months of World War II....it relied on the force of Allied arms to make good its promises of Justice.”³ The Cold War was just beginning as the Tokyo trials commenced. Unlike its European counterpart, the Nuremberg trials in Germany, which did not have any official Jewish representation and perspectives, the Tokyo trials did have Chinese representation.⁴ According to Bass, China was an important country because it was a victim of Japan’s crimes against humanity.⁵ With a judge from China on the Tokyo trial bench there was a chance that a verdict for international justice could be made, because the Chinese had suffered so much at the hands of the Japanese.⁶ The Chinese judge was appointed by Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), the leader and representative for a government that was about to be abolished by the communist party. Prosecuting Japanese war criminals was not seen as a high priority given the threat of a civil war in China. Even though Chiang Kai-shek was one of the victors of World War II, he soon would become a loser in the Chinese Civil War.⁷

“Catharsis,” part two of *Judgment at Tokyo*, examines the theme “Clash of Empires” by looking specifically at the Japanese

² Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 12.

³ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 14.

⁴ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 16.

⁵ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 16.

⁶ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 16.

⁷ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 16.

military leaders on trial for war crimes. “Clash of Empires” also gives reference to the Nuremberg trial in Germany and how it can be juxtaposed to its Asian counterpart, the Tokyo trials. Part two also examines: the courtroom battles, the larger contexts of World War II, and the sociopolitical and economic geography of the overall Asian-Pacific region. This is certainly the longest and most detailed part of *Judgment at Tokyo*. It starts with “The Anatomy of the Tokyo Trial” and continues through the final chapter of Catharsis, “Tojo Takes the Stand.” Regarding Nanjing Massacre (1937-1938), Bass writes:

To be sure, the Tokyo court could not get a complete and evidentiary accounting of every substantial instance of Japanese killing of Chinese civilians; that would have taken many years. Yet it did get a compelling sampling about the massacres, rapes, and plunder in Nanjing, which showed distinct patterns of military conduct that strongly suggested an underlying method and the culpability of commanders. New Zealand’s judge was persuaded that it was arguable that the abuse of prisoners and civilians in China was “the responsibility of General Masui Iwane (1878-1948) directly and of other defendants indirectly.”⁸

Part three of *Judgment at Tokyo* is titled “Nemesis.” It develops the theme “Clash of Ideals” as it emerged in the courtroom battles. The Allies wanted justice and accountability for war crimes. The military leaders of Japan argued that their actions were noble because they were fighting against Western imperialism.

Idealism at the end of World War II was brief and imperfect. After Nazi Germany surrendered, President Truman (1884-1972) stated: We must heal the wounds of a suffering world to build peace that is rooted in justice and law.⁹ These were legal aspirations that would usher in new forms of world organizations

⁸ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 256.

⁹ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 22.

and international cooperation. The Allies would now use criminal law to prosecute war crimes instead of using retaliation as punishment for war crimes. This was the practice of countries during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ The men behind the Tokyo trial wanted to use international law to show the Japanese people that a war of aggression was not a lawful act of war but a crime against humanity; the laws of war should not be violated. Because Japan had violated these laws, the crimes committed against China, the Philippines, and other countries needed to be vindicated. Under the precepts of international law, Japan's ministers and generals needed to be tried for war crimes as individuals, rather than as "officers of the state."¹¹

Historical Content

Eleven judges sat in judgment of Japan. The judges came from the countries that fought in the Pacific theater. These countries were Australia, Canada, China, France, India, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

An Australian chief judge wrote privately, "The Tokyo and Nuremberg Trials are undoubtedly the greatest in all history; that cannot be contested."¹² The judges at the Tokyo trial hoped to build on the accomplishments of the Nuremberg trial. The Tokyo trial lasted for more than twenty-four months spanning across 1946, 1947, and 1948; the Nuremberg trial was accomplished in eleven months, in 1945 and 1946. "As law, the Tokyo trial had grand ambitions to establish international principles for a safer postwar world – a revived international law that outlawed aggression and atrocity. It sought to reestablish the battered authority of the old international laws of armed combat, such as the illegality of killing innocent civilians or abusing prisoners of

¹⁰ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 22.

¹¹ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 23.

¹² Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 7.

war.”¹³ The Tokyo judges hoped to lay a wider foundation for international law. This did not happen. Bass points out that the Tokyo trial was a political event that measured Asia’s colonial past and was the precursor to its Cold War future.¹⁴ Prior to the publication of *Judgment at Tokyo*, the main thing people remembered from the Tokyo trial was that the East Indian judge, Radabinod Pal (1886-1967), had rejected the tribunal and most of the evidence. Pal was not the only judge who dissented. In the end, the final judgments and verdicts came from a slim majority of jurists composed of the Australian Judge William Webb (1816-1899) and in alliance with the British Commonwealth judges. As Gary Bass describes it, the prosecution in the trial was headed up by American Judge Joseph Keenan (1888-1954). “The top British diplomat in Japan privately called him “an ambitious but inefficient and vulgar man”, hectoring toward others, often visibly “very much the worse for drink.”¹⁵ The Japanese defendants were poorly represented by Japanese lawyers who were aided by American attorneys brought in to help with language difficulties. The judge from the Soviet Union treated the defense attorneys as though they themselves were defendants and chastised them as propagandists or capitalists of imperialism. In the end, the court sentenced seven of the twenty-eight defendants to death by hanging.

The War in the Pacific (1941-1945) ended very differently from the war with Nazi Germany. The Nazis were defeated through battle, while in the Pacific, Japan surrendered to a negotiated proposal after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945). The process left in place some of the basic constructs of Japanese society and governments. Importantly, the position and status of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito (1901-1989), was maintained. Still, the Allies wanted to punish selected Japanese officers as war criminals. General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) ordered the arrests of the selected officers and

¹³ Bass, *Judgment at Tokyo*, 8.

¹⁴ Bass, *Judgment at Tokyo*, 8.

¹⁵ Bass, *Judgment at Tokyo*, 138.

established the International Military Tribunal of the Far East. MacArthur also included liberal reforms on Japanese society including freedom of speech, freedom of organization, women's rights, and the abolition of the Shinto cult.

MacArthur originally wanted to have an American trial that would focus on the 1941 Pearl Harbor attack; the dead Navy service members would be considered murder victims. This plan was overruled by President Harry Truman (1884-1972) and the whole matter was widened into an international examination of Japan's crimes against humanity. President Truman's thinking was, "We have set out on a path of establishing *international* responsibility for the type of conspiracy which resulted in the attacks on Poland by Germany and on Pearl Harbor and the Malay by Japan. Joining with the allies, Truman believed in a global vision of outlawing war."¹⁶ The attorneys for the prosecution went back to 1931 the year of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, then the 14-year war with China (1937-1945; including the Nanjing massacre), and the entire Pacific War that exploded after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

John Dower, in his book *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, considers Japan's transition from wartime militarism to a democratic and peaceful society. Dower argues that Japan's political transformation was due to its defeat in World War II and its subsequent occupation by allied forces headed by the United States. Dower states:

defeat and occupation forced the Japanese, in every walk of life, to struggle, in exceptionally naked ways, with the most fundamental of life's issues—and that they responded in recognizably human, fallible, and often contradictory ways that can tell us a great deal about ourselves and our world in general.¹⁷

¹⁶ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 139.

¹⁷ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 29.

The occupation of Japan by the US military made the citizens of Japan take a hard look at themselves.

One of the questions that Dower asks is whether Emperor Hirohito should be held accountable for Japanese aggression and war crimes during World War II. If Hirohito were not held accountable for the role he played during the War in the Pacific, then what role would the emperor play in reforms to Japanese society? It was decided that the emperor's subordinates would be investigated, charged, tried, and some executed for their war crimes, while the emperor remained free.¹⁸ Because of this double standard, the Japanese people saw justice as being arbitrary. Dower states that "Serious engagement with the issue of war responsibility was deflected: if the nation's supreme secular and spiritual authority bore no responsibility for recent events, why should his ordinary subjects be expected to engage in self-reflection?"¹⁹ Bass states that if the emperor was to be indicted, there would be consequences.²⁰ "He is a symbol which unites all Japanese. Destroy him and the nation will disintegrate.' In prose that was purple even by MacArthur's standards, he direly warned that almost all Japanese venerated the emperor and believed that the Allies had committed to keep him on the throne.... Hirohito was spared, at least for now."²¹

When Dower looks at the Tokyo Trial, he argues that the trials were more about race, power, and powerlessness because of the judge's perspectives of the world at the time.²² "The trial was fundamentally a white man's tribunal."²³ It would be the Judge from India that would highlight the double standards of the Tokyo Trial. Justice Pal stated that, "It would be pertinent to our memory that the majority of the interests claimed by the Western

¹⁸ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 277-278.

¹⁹ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 278.

²⁰ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 163.

²¹ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 163.

²² Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 469.

²³ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 469.

Prosecuting Powers in the Eastern Hemisphere including China...were acquired by such aggressive methods.”²⁴

Bass states in *Judgment at Tokyo: World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia* that empire making, or “the history of empire,” is really about the “history of racism and that the imperialism of the Europeans and Americans needed to believe that the Asian people were inferior.”²⁵ Bass agrees with Dower that the Tokyo tribunal or trial was not only unjust, but racist. It was a White man’s court sitting in judgment of those that they found inferior.²⁶ The trial demonstrated White supremacy, rather than justice. The trial also demonstrated how race and racism stayed in the background of the day-to-day proceedings of the court; American reporters were able to mock the defendants, the justices knew that they could not say aloud what the American reporters were saying.²⁷

Effectiveness of Argument and Evidence

Judgment at Tokyo provides the reader with a comprehensive examination of the Tokyo Trials that took place after World War II. Bass questions the effectiveness of the Military Tribunal of the Far East. To answer this question, Bass looks at issues such as victors’ justice, the contextualizing of the trial, on points of law,

²⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 471. Pal would also comment “on the ways in which the positive rhetoric of imperialism and colonialism of the Europeans and Americans became transmogrified when associated with Japan: As a program of aggrandizement of a nation we do not like, we may deny to it the terms like ‘manifest destiny,’ ‘protection of vital interests,’ ‘national honour’ or a term coined on the footing of ‘the white man’s burden,’ and may give it the name of ‘aggressive aggrandizement’ pure and simple.”

²⁵ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 20.

²⁶ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 20.

²⁷ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 21. “By the end of the war, American hatreds were so intense that the U.S. secretary had to urge Truman to disavow the annihilation of the Japanese race. That is why the Potsdam Declaration, laying out the terms for Japan’s unconditional surrender just before the atomic bombs fell, menacingly states, ‘We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation.’”

politics, and the long shadows the trial subsequently generated.²⁸ To determine how the Tokyo Trials evolved, Bass demonstrates how the trial attempted to avoid victors' justice and used the Cold War as a backdrop for context.

Trying to avoid the bias of victors' justice during the Tokyo trials was hard to do because the victors set the mandate, populated the judge's bench, and exempted themselves from having their own conduct examined. First, there were no charges brought against the Americans for their conduct, such as the bombing, and fire-bombing of Japanese cities, or for the dropping of the atomic bombs. Secondly, there were no Japanese judges, the victors alone populated the judges' bench; and third, the courtroom proceedings showed the wartime resentments and bigotry of the victorious nations regarding Japan.²⁹ "Many of the deepest fissures on display in the courtroom were about empire...European imperialism did much to tarnish the legitimacy of the Tokyo tribunal."³⁰ However, if it were to be true victors' justice, the Emperor would have been put on trial but Hirohito's salvation was done for political reasons. By not putting the emperor on trial and having him remain on the throne with his conservative elites, forever muddled the postwar debates regarding Japan's responsibility as there was a sense that Japan might have fought a patriotic war, even a legitimate war.³¹

To properly contextualize the Tokyo Trial, it is necessary to remember that the postwar period was also the beginning of the Cold War with the Soviet Union:

While the Tokyo trial was wrapping up, the Truman administration was taking a hard look at its Japan policy. With tension escalating fast with the Soviet Union, officials in Washington realized how strategically useful an anti-

²⁸ Victors' justice refers to the distorted application of justice to the defeated party by the victors after an armed conflict.

²⁹ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 14.

³⁰ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 17-18.

³¹ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 15-16.

Communism Japan could be. Maybe Japan was the price after all, not China...the Cold War necessitated a new realpolitik-minded strategy there—what became known as the “reverse course.”³²

During the Cold War, Japan was important to the United States because of its geographical location. The United States would also gain an important ally in Japan. President Truman’s realpolitik strategy became the Cold War policy of the United States to contain the spread of Communism.³³

Bass proves that the Tokyo Trial was political and full of hypocrisy. Out of the eleven judges that sat on the bench during the trial, only three were from Asian countries: China, India, and the Philippines. South Korea and Taiwan were not represented. This was a glaring omission. The Tokyo trial looked at Japanese imperialism after Japan had acquired these countries.³⁴

The Americans dropped incendiaries and the atomic bombs on Japanese cities. They were not scrutinized for their crimes against humanity. The head of the Japanese biological weapons operation, General Ishii Shiro (1892-1959) was never prosecuted for crimes against humanity. Nor were the Soviets who were also guilty of aggression and crimes against humanity.³⁵ Furthermore, the victors of World War II made no effort to scrutinize their conduct during World War II, nor did they uphold themselves to the legal standard set forth at the Nuremberg trial.³⁶

In conclusion, *Judgement at Tokyo* is a must have book for historians and avocational historians of the United States, Asian, and Japanese histories.

³² Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 487.

³³ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 487.

³⁴ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 10.

³⁵ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 29.

³⁶ Bass, *Judgement at Tokyo*, 29.

Bibliography

Bass, Gary J. *Judgment at Tokyo: World War II and the Making of Modern Asia*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2023.

Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1999.

Author Bio

Pamela Budinger is a current graduate student at California State University, San Bernardino. After working in the departments of anthropology and paleontology at the San Bernardino County Museum, Pamela Budinger enrolled at Chaffey College to pursue a growing interest in photography. While working toward an A.A. degree, she came upon Daniel Loomis' history classes. A latent interest in history, especially American history, was rekindled by taking those classes. Her friendship with Loomis continues today. In 2019, Pamela enrolled at California State University, San Bernardino to pursue a bachelor of arts degree in history. She completed her bachelors' program in the Spring of 2022. That fall, she enrolled in the M.A. program for American history. She has enjoyed classes with Dr. Jeremy Murray and Dr. Ryan Keating. Her thesis concerns How Harper's Weekly Reported on Andersonville. Pamela is currently finishing her master of arts degree and will graduate in December 2024. Pamela is married to Archaeologist Fred E. Budinger, Jr. They live in San Bernardino with two wonderful dogs and two cats. She keeps busy.

Television Review: Marry My Husband

By Isai J. Martinez



Figure 1: Korean Poster for Marry My Husband.¹

South Korea's slow migration to streaming services has taken Korean media to new heights. "Marry My Husband" is a Korean drama based on a popular webtoon about a terminal cancer patient who is killed by her husband and best friend only to awake and find herself ten years in the past and with the ability to change her fate. With Korean media and dramas taking the world by storm, the Korean 2024 romcom drama entered Amazon Prime's Top 10 television series in the United States with its first episode and ended by staying in the Top 10; including being number one internationally for its finale week on the third week of February

¹ Eunice. "[UPDATED] K-Drama 'Marry My Husband' Ends as the 1st Most Popular TV Show on Amazon Prime Worldwide." Kpopmap - Kpop, Kdrama and Trend Stories Coverage. January 15, 2024.
<https://www.kpopmap.com/kdrama-marry-my-husband-ranked-3rd-most-popular-tv-show-on-amazon-prime-worldwide/>.

according to FlixPatrol.² With major services like Disney+, Netflix, and Amazon Prime offering its viewers Korean dramas, there has been an uptick in Korean media consumption around the world.

In the world of dramatic storytelling, the Korean entertainment industry has been able to bring forth a catalog of unique and interesting perspectives that are different when it comes to storytelling. Among all of the romance and fluttering moments, shows like “Marry My Husband” mixes the perspective of the inequality of gender and sexism in the workplace, emphasizing historical inequalities and exposing cultural and social injustice in a way that is easy to understand and appealing to a massive global audience. Even if it seems as if it is simply a trope, there is so much worth exploring as audiences navigate through what screenwriters are trying to convey with these stories. Korean dramas have graced screens with countless tropes such as forgotten first meetings, love triangles, and holding gazes for uncomfortable amounts of time. “Marry My Husband” does not shy away from those but goes even deeper.

Marry My Husband - The Story

Kang Jiwon, our protagonist, starts in episode one having the worst luck in the world, battling cancer almost on her own, with only her best friend, Jeong Sumin, who sticks by her side. That is until the viewers realize she has been sleeping with Jiwon’s husband, Park Minhwan. Her life has not been all smiles and rainbows as the audience realizes the trials and tribulations she has endured. Minhwan, as an only child, alongside his mother, had abused Jiwon physically, verbally, and emotionally causing her to be the only working member of the family, which took a toll on her

² tvN, [Marry My Husband Korean Official Poster], 2024, Photograph, HanCinema, https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1743960.html.

health and caused stress-induced cancer, subjecting her to the worst physical abuse.³



Figure 2: Minhwan (middle) grabs Jiwon forcefully.⁴

All in the first twenty-three minutes of the pilot episode, it feels like the end of a life, or is it? Her life seems to be crumbling around her as she overhears the cheating couple's plan for her to die soon and access her life insurance. After Minhwan pushes Jiwon to her death, the show gives us a semi-expected jump to the past, to the year 2013 where Jiwon awakes feeling confused, overstimulated, and grasping for answers.⁵ Granted a second chance, Jiwon can now finally change her relationships, outcomes, and life as a whole. Without hesitation, the audience is introduced to her work life and the different dynamics Jiwon has to go through. Jiwon works for U&K Food Company as part of the marketing team and is someone who in her past life allowed everyone to step on her.

³ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 1.

⁴ tvN, [Park Minhwan attacking Kang Jiwon], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*, https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1754239.html.

⁵ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 1, 0:38-30:28.

The series flashes back to her previous life mostly to give context to her original timeline and the actions that she took. A lot of the flashbacks were about her accepting misogynistic attacks from her boss, Kim Kyungwook, who was not competent in his position.⁶ Jiwon decides that she will not let herself be swayed or controlled anymore by these traditional patriarchal societal pressures, relationships, and external factors that seem to have controlled her in the past. With any great Korean drama, there is always an array of secondary characters who join the story and make it brighter and more exciting. This element is somewhat needed in this story as the narrative progresses. Jiwon decides to surround herself with a new set of friends, ones that she ignored in her past because of her unhealthy relationship with her then-boyfriend, Minhwan.

As the story unfolds, Jiwon starts to rely on new friends such as Yang Juran (a sheepish co-worker) and Yu Heeyeon (the secret stepsister of the boss) as well as reconnecting with her first love, Baek Eunho who in the end completes a love triangle that forms with her boss, Yu Jihyuk (who secretly is the heir of U&K Food Company). Slowly, Jiwon gets rid of her “best friend”—Sumin—and starts to push her to fall in love with Minhwan so Jiwon can be free from her future fate of dying at his hands. She figures out that to defy fate, changes to important events like her cancer, and death as well as minor events such as her life experiences need to be changed. One of the major sections in need of that change was her work life; in her previous life she was a very compliant employee, and this included having her work ideas and projects stolen. This leads to Jiwon’s restart of her life, taking ownership of her ideas and making sure her meal kits are under her name and not the team manager, Kim Kyungwook who embodies traditional patriarchal injustice.⁷

⁶ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 2.

⁷ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 2, 04:19-04:56.

Social Commentary of Marry My Husband

A very interesting aspect of this drama is that it reflects South Korean life in 2013. Although the show does not highlight the massive cyberattacks on three of the major banks and two of the largest broadcasting companies that occurred in the country that year, the show does engage in societal conversations of the time.⁸ “Marry My Husband” pushes through the societal issue of women in the workplace and looks at their treatment by using characters like Kim Kyungwook to showcase the sexism endured in the workplace, which in turn reflects long-standing social injustice based on traditional gender roles defined by Confucian orthodoxy. At the time, there was still an expectation of women being in charge of the familial life outside of the office which created a different type of stress seen in characters like Jiwon (in her original life) and Yang Juran, her coworker.⁹ Due to the traditional values imposed on women from Confucianism values which have long influenced the strict gendered roles in Korea, women are relegated to domesticity and therefore easier to dismiss in the workplace.¹⁰ During 2013, the Korean workforce consisted of 16,354,756 individuals with only 39.3 percent being women, however women’s economic activity of the time was at 66.0 percent far greater than the workforce.¹¹ The fact that this show is set in 2013 reflects the gender dynamics that were prominent in South Korea, and the creators’ critique of this injustice.

⁸ Laura Sciuto, “South Korea Hit Hard by Massive Cyber-Attack.” PBS Newshour Classroom. NewsHour Production LLC. April 4, 2013. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/posts/2013/04/south-korea-hit-hard-by-massive-cyber-attack>.

⁹ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 5, 23:30-24:42.

¹⁰ Yeonu Lee, “Women Workforce in the Korean Context,” *International Review of Management and Marketing* 7, no. 1 (January 13, 2017): 403-404, <https://econjournals.com/index.php/irmm/article/view/3855/pdf>.

¹¹ Lee, “Women Workforce in the Korean Context,” 403. Women’s economic activity refers to employed and unemployed populations, while the workforce represents all women engaged in work.

The first female president, Park Geun-hye (serving 2013-2017), was in office during this time and still fighting for her own right to lead in real-life South Korea.¹² It seems poetic to see a drama that tackles the gender imbalance that President Park was trying to change in her career although it was turbulent. President Park is the daughter of former president Park Jung-hee (1917-1979) who led the country for eighteen years. Her rise to power and the position of the presidency came because she was seen as the legitimate heir to office.¹³ According to Korean historian Soo-Hyun Mun, coming from the Conservative Party, President Park used her delicate femininity to help her win the seat but once she was elected president, she only embraced her gender when it suited her and never advocated for feminist policies. Much of her presidency was characterized as an opening for women to gain visibility, representation and become part of the conversation; however, her politics supported no policies for the advancement of women, preferring to maintain the status quo.¹⁴ Even though President Park's policies in regards to women's equality were limited, her success in winning the presidency paved the path for the introduction to more feminist policies by government officials.¹⁵ In 2013, women in executive positions were 85 out of 4,561 in 694 companies making up 1.8 percent in leadership positions, furthermore, 54 of the 85 women are daughters of board members, which is a stark contrast to now as 6 percent of women now hold executive positions; 439 of 7,345 executives were women.¹⁶ In government, leadership positions have increased since

¹² Jung-a Song, "South Korean Women Struggle in Workforce." CNBC. June 12, 2013. <https://www.cnbc.com/2013/06/11/south-korean-women-struggle-in-workforce.html>.

¹³ Soo-Hyun Mun, "'Femininity without Feminism': Korea's First Woman President and Her Political Leadership," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 43, 3 (2015): 253.

¹⁴ Mun, 260-261.

¹⁵ Mun, 262-263.

¹⁶ Lee, "Women Workforce in the Korean Context," 404. "Women Account for 6% of Executives at Korea's Top Firms, Data Shows," November 23, 2023, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2023-11->

2013, as a 2019-2022 report noted that 22.2 percent of South Korea's Cabinet ministers were women, indicating the steady growth in women are achieving but still noting there is still more room for growth.¹⁷

In the show, Jiwon's past timeline forces her to give up her career to become a stay-at-home wife, but in the new timeline, she changes her fate and is able to work full-time. Her mother-in-law in the original timeline was rude and required her to be the perfect wife to Minhwan, reflecting one of the ways in which women were incorporated into patriarchal oppression in the traditional Confucian extended family. This further reflects the gender roles at play, which required women to be submissive to their husbands, and to portray themselves as the perfect "trophy wife." Even then, there are times such as in the earlier episodes when characters like Kim Kyungwook belittled his women co-workers and made sexist comments towards them.¹⁸ Most of the time, when Kim Kyungwook comes onto the screen, there is a very fine line between discomfort and horror at his work ethic and priorities. He proves to be someone who does not know his own job, and it becomes clear that he was able to use his family ties to get his job, another critique of traditional Confucian family loyalties and biases in the workplace.¹⁹ With this knowledge, there is a sense of discomfort from most of the women working with him at the company because of his gender bias and the inequality confronted by the workers around him.

[23/business/economy/Women-account-for-6-of-executives-at-Koreas-top-firms-data-shows/1919780](https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?rid=BUSINESS-ECONOMY/2022/11/23/business/economy/Women-account-for-6-of-executives-at-Koreas-top-firms-data-shows/1919780).

¹⁷ Women Leaders Index, "Report 2019/20 - Women Leaders Index," November 1, 2022, <https://womenleadersindex.com/report-2019-20/>.

¹⁸ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 5, 30:31-31:15.

¹⁹ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 6, 31:30-32:15.



Figure 3: Kim Kyungwook yelling at Jiwon (middle), Yang Juran (green shirt), and Yu Heeyeon (far right)²⁰

In addition to the societal conversations that “Marry My Husband” has exhibited, there are cultural aspects to Korean workplaces, such as them being run on a hierarchy that is already detrimental to Korean women having to try harder against their male counterparts in wages, employment opportunities, and job retention.²¹ As a whole, Korean men and women are among the top workers and on average Korea is one of the countries with the longest work hours.²² As a result, there is an expected amount of workload and time that goes into both genders’ workplace commitments which can be time-consuming. Coming from a culture heavily influenced by Confucian tradition alongside collectivistic traditions which put male dominance and hierarchy in

²⁰ tvN, [Kim Kyungwook yelling at the female employees], 2024, Photograph, HanCinema, https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1761924.html.

²¹ Namhee Kim, Kyung Nam Kim, and Pyounggu Baek. “Understanding South Korean Women Workers’ Career Transition Experiences: Using the Career Decision Tree Model.” *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (April). 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1273241>.

²² OECD. “Employment - Hours Worked - OECD Data,” n.d. <https://data.oecd.org/emp/hours-worked.htm>.

a central role, women were and are expected to be the caregivers for their family, including husband, children, parents, and even their parents-in-law.²³ In South Korea, Confucianism has become a significant topic of defining the plight of women within their society as much of their traditions are rooted in this philosophy. Many Confucian scholars look at passages in the Confucian *Analects*, or collected teachings of the Chinese philosopher, Confucius (c. 551-c. 479 BCE), that are brought out to show how men are the only ones who should rule families and kingdoms.²⁴ Implied in these texts are that women should behave properly as daughters, daughters-in-law, wives, and mothers to be a part of society. Newer perspectives show that these ideologies were translated to fit the social norms of the time; however, many of the concepts need to be reviewed in the newer lens as both men and women are equals.²⁵ Jiwon is subjected to this male-dominant lifestyle which is why in her transformation from her previous timeline, she feels a sense of freedom when she can dress differently and cut her hair as a way to signify her change from the present hierarchy of her previous husband and in-laws, who were restricting her and causing her so much pain.²⁶

Looking more into the dynamics of Korean workplaces, as seen in “Marry My Husband,” there is truth to the portrayal of these women, specifically in terms of Jiwon, Juran, and Heeyeon trying to figure out what their roles are and pushing back against the sexist hierarchy, and eventually overcoming in it. Whether it was Jiwon’s failed project, Yuran having to manage her personal life and job torments or Hyeeyoon trying her best to stand out on her own without her family name, there is a sense of womanhood that shows that these characters push through the social norms that

²³ Kim, Kim, and Baek.

²⁴ Eunkang Koh, “Gender Issues and Confucian Scriptures: Is Confucianism Incompatible with Gender Equality in South Korea?” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 71, no. 2 (2008): 345–62.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X08000578>. 351.

²⁵ Koh, 360.

²⁶ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 9, 55:50-59:15.

plague them and try their best to work together instead of staying silent. Jiwon is forced to work on her project with her manager, Kim Kyungwook, who actually takes the project as his own in both timelines. There are scenes where Mr. Kim tries very hard to make Jiwon appear inferior, including Jiwon and Ms. Yang Juran writing the same proposal and Ms. Yang getting the “all-clear” but Jiwon being berated, which shows a very biased workplace even among women.²⁷

The series does subtly push a feminist perspective that rings true to the feminist movements occurring in present day South Korea. South Korea has always been divided on gender inequality. With the formation of the Ministry of Gender Equality in 2001 (now known as the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family as of 2010), there have been changes to the feminist movements in South Korea.²⁸ Gender equality has been rising since the 2000s to make wages and working conditions better. Starting in 2013, the rate of incoming first-year university-bound women surpassed that of men. This increase in professionally trained women also meant that the expectation of women getting married and leaving the workforce after having a child has started to decline as well.²⁹

Most of the movements have radical sides like the 4B movement, which focuses on how to disrupt the patriarchy by not marrying men and abstaining from sex, and not living with or dating men. This being said, some Korean men are hostile toward these movements and the government does not support these more radical feminist movements.³⁰ Critics of radical feminist blame these movements on the increases in challenges to traditional values, citing lower fertility rates and lower marriage rates. This is also reflected in the current South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, who won election in 2022, and began a campaign of blaming

²⁷ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 2, 42:23-43:17.

²⁸ Jen Izaakson and Tae Kyung Kim, “The South Korean Women’s Movement: ‘We Are Not Flowers, We Are a Fire,’” *Feminist Current*. June 15, 2020.

²⁹ Anna Louie Sussman, “A World without Men.” *The Cut*, March 8, 2023.

³⁰ Izaakson and Kim.

feminist movements for low birth rates. Furthermore, he has threatened to dismantle the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family which has been essential to bringing change for women and families in South Korea.³¹ Therefore, women are still fighting today to improve their rights and lifestyles whatever they are. Jiwon's navigation of work and home life and her standing up against discrimination is a subtle yet realistic version of feminism in the workplace, ongoing challenges to progress in gender relations, and how one fictional character may liberate herself from traditional social patriarchy.



Figure 4: Jiwon and her coworkers (Juran and Heeyeon) walking to the lobby responding to a disturbance.³²

The show keeps feeding the audience the choices that Jiwon, knowing her fate, can now officially change. She soon realizes that her history can be rewritten and makes herself leave Minhwan who is abusive and a manipulator, and not be friends with Sumin anymore who turns out to be obsessed with controlling her

³¹ Sussman, "A World without Men."

³² tvN, [Kang Jiwon and friends in U&K Group's lobby], 2024, Photograph, HanCinema, https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1767939.html.

everyday life after Jiwon cuts her off. This shows how Sumin herself is trying to succeed in the world of corporations like Jiwon and the other women, but she tries to flirt and ingratiate herself with the higher-ups like Mr. Kim.³³ Sumin's character is presented as the opposite attitude to Jiwon's character. Sumin is more of a "stereotypical" viewpoint of women trying to reach their goals by flirting her way to a full-time position at the company. Although it is highly dramatized, Sumin's push to get that job leads her to try to take over Jiwon's project and sabotage Jiwon. For Sumin, Jiwon has always been an excellent worker who has been able to push through sexism. In her previous timeline, Jiwon was very compliant and let people step all over her but still pushed through, and in her new timeline she is more demanding and opposes sexist treatment, which in the end, Sumin is jealous of in both instances.³⁴

The story revolves on the primal idea of personal history and rewriting one's rights, wrongs, and destiny. In doing this, the story progresses between flashbacks from the original timeline and the new story. In all of this, time turns out to be ruthless, as the events that happen in Jiwon's life are soon revealed to happen regardless of attempts to change. Destiny will always win no matter what and if she can escape, fate will befall someone else. Major life events like Jiwon's cancer eventually go to Juran, and Jiwon's husband's infidelity also occurs to Juran as well.³⁵ South Korea is based on many Confucian beliefs as seen in this drama with basic ideas of morality and strict gender norms. As discussed in "The Problem of Evil in Confucianism" by Ching-yuen Cheung, the basis of the Confucian beliefs are ethics, morality, and rectitude. Cheung points out that ultimately, without the Confucian concept of "humanity," sometimes translated as "benevolence,"

³³ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 2, 38:15-39:06.

³⁴ Hahna Yoon, "The Rise of the K-Drama Heroine." *CNN*, 14 Jan. 2023, www.cnn.com/style/article/korean-dramas-changing-representation-women/index.html.

³⁵ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 12, 27:20-29:15.

there is no way that someone can be a good person.³⁶ In the show, there are constant reminders that doing what is right will not automatically right all wrongs; however, embodying the right virtues and being moral and ethical can change and even shape your own destiny. As Guolei Wang says, “Confucius educated his disciples not to achieve the ethical goals that have been agreed upon but to show others the behaviors in life practices such as filial piety and benevolence.”³⁷ Destiny is meant to be something a person should manifest through the practices of everyday life. The simplicity of doing what a good person does is destiny.³⁸ With this, Jiwon’s second chance at life, allows her to change her destiny by trying to do good as well as transferring her ill fate to others who do not choose this path. In this way, while the series challenges gender norms, it also reflects Confucian ideals of morality, ethics, and human behavior. Although at times, Jiwon does stoop to Minhwan and Sumin’s level, she is rewarded well by the end of the series as she has a happy life with Jihyuk, with family and friends who love her as well.³⁹

³⁶ Ching-yuen Cheung, "The Problem of Evil in Confucianism". In *Probing the Depths of Evil and Good*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 89. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401204620_007.

³⁷ Guolei Wang, “Reviewing the Interpretation of Confucian Destiny Thought From the Perspective of Moral Luck Theory,” *Chinese Studies* 12, no. 01 (January 1, 2023): 91–101, <https://doi.org/10.4236/chnstd.2023.121009>.

³⁸ Cui Dahua and Huang Deyuan. “Rational Awareness of the Ultimate in Human Life—The Confucian Concept of ‘Destiny.’” *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 4, no. 3 (2009): 316. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40343928>.

³⁹ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 16, 1:01:36-1:05:16.



Figure 5: Jiwon, Juran, and the police confront Juran's husband regarding his adultery.⁴⁰

A major plot point is the adultery that, according to the story's logic, must happen to one of the characters. Mrs. Yang discovers that her husband might be cheating on her which turns out to be true later in the episodes. In episode 14, Jiwon remarks that in 2013 they had not abolished the law against adultery in Korea.⁴¹ The abolition of the adultery law in South Korea was only passed in 2015 which ended the criminalization of adultery with an estimated 53,000 South Koreans being prosecuted for this crime since the 1980s.⁴² Some authors and critics like Jae Joon Chung and Junxia Liu write in their article, "The Abolition of the Adultery Law in South Korea: A Critique," that although decriminalizing can improve society to a certain degree, these

⁴⁰ tvN, [Police and company at Yang Juran's Apartment] 2024, Photograph, HanCinema, https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1775174.html.

⁴¹ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 14, 14:13-15:30.

⁴² Sang-Hun Choe, "Adultery Is No Longer an Affair of the State in South Korea." *The New York Times*, February 26, 2015, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/world/asia/south-korea-strikes-down-adultery-law.html>.

responsibilities, in the end, fall upon women and damages the improvement and betterment of women's rights in South Korea. The strict Confucian norms embodied in the criminalization of adultery reflects complex social dynamics in Korean society.⁴³ In the end, Mrs. Yang wins her lawsuit against her husband and is divorced after exposing his affair, which shows a very clear picture of how the law should work in what some may consider an ideal if deeply traditional scenario.⁴⁴

Jiwon realizes that to be truly free from all of what destiny has in store for her, she will need to work together with her new relationships and community and embrace their help which in turn will help her give that destiny to Minhwan and Sumin. At the end, Jiwon and Jihyuk learn to trust each other to overcome destiny and learn that sometimes you can decide your own fate.



Figure 6: Jiwon and Jihyuk's happily ever after.⁴⁵

⁴³ Jae Joon Chung and Junxia Liu. 2018. "The Abolition of the Adultery Law in South Korea: A Critique." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 24 (2): 205–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2018.1464108>.

⁴⁴ *Marry My Husband*, Season 1, Episode 16, 37:30 -38:18.

⁴⁵ tvN, [Kang Jiwon and Yu Jihyuk at a gallery], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*, https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1778401.html.

A successful show does come with its controversies. Firstly, in Korea, this show was as successful as it was internationally with the finale reaching a 12 percent viewership average nationwide in South Korea alone. It did so well internationally that there are talks of a remake in Japan.⁴⁶ With its success, some of the controversies that did occur during the run came down to “historically accurate” and “too revealing” or “unprofessional” work attire in 2013. During the show, a lot of the clothing styles were somewhat in-line with 2024 fashion and not very reflective of someone working in 2013.⁴⁷



Figure 7: The cast of *Marry My Husband*. From left to right: Na Inwoo (Yu Jihyuk), Park Minyoung (Kang Jiwon), Lee Gikwang (Beak Eunho), Song Hayoon (Jeong Sumin), and Lee Yikyeong (Park Minhwan).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Lydia Koh, “‘Marry My Husband’ Breaks Record in Viewership Ratings as TvN Wraps up the Show - Singapore News.” *The Independent Singapore News*. February 21, 2024. <https://theindependent.sg/marry-my-husband-breaks-record-in-viewership-ratings-as-tvn-wraps-up-the-show/>.

⁴⁷ krishkim. “Park Min Young’s Fashion Choices in ‘Marry My Husband’ Spark Debate Over TPO.” *MyMusicTaste*. February 2024. <https://www.mymusictaste.com/news/park-min-youngs-fashion-choices-in-marry-my-husband-spark-debate-over-tpo>.

⁴⁸ tvN, [The cast of *Marry My Husband*], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*, https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1764195.html.

A lot of the fashion seems to reflect more of a glamorous, rich woman and not so much of an office worker. Although it is a drama, some viewers seemed to be put off by these details. Still, the show trended highly during its run time and spent eight weeks in the top spot of the most buzzworthy dramas and celebrities in Korea.⁴⁹ In the mode of a popular drama, this show was able to express a mild but clear critique of gender inequalities, Confucian hierarchies, and a potential backlash to progressive gains for women in the workforce and at home over the past decade.

⁴⁹E. Cha, “‘Marry My Husband’ Sweeps Top Spots on Buzzworthy Drama and Actor Rankings in Final Week on Air.” *Soompi*. March 3, 2024. <https://www.soompi.com/article/1646073wpp/marry-my-husband-sweeps-top-spots-on-buzzworthy-drama-and-actor-rankings-in-final-week-on-air>.

Bibliography

- Cha, E. “‘Marry My Husband’ Sweeps Top Spots on Buzzworthy Drama and Actor Rankings in Final Week on Air.” *Soompi*. March 3, 2024. <https://www.soompi.com/article/1646073wpp/marry-my-husband-sweeps-top-spots-on-buzzworthy-drama-and-actor-rankings-in-final-week-on-air>.
- Cheung, Ching-yuen. “The Problem of Evil in Confucianism”. In *Probing the Depths of Evil and Good*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007) doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401204620_007.
- Choe, Sang-Hun. “Adultery Is No Longer an Affair of the State in South Korea.” *The New York Times*, February 26, 2015, section: World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/world/asia/south-korea-strikes-down-adultery-law.html>.
- Chung, Jae Joon, and Junxia Liu. “The Abolition of the Adultery Law in South Korea: A Critique.” *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies* 24 (2): 205–23. 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2018.1464108>.
- Chung, Ye Ram. “BTS & ARMY: A South Korean Music Group and Their Fandom Create a New Grassroots Movement for Social Change.” Social Innovation (M.A.) Thesis, Scholar Works @ GVSU. <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2045&context=theses>.
- Dahua, Cui, and Huang Deyuan. “Rational Awareness of the Ultimate in Human Life—The Confucian Concept of ‘Destiny.’” *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 4, no. 3 (2009): 309–21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40343928>.
- Eunice. “[UPDATED] K-Drama ‘Marry My Husband’ Ends as the 1st Most Popular TV Show on Amazon Prime Worldwide.” Kpopmap - Kpop, Kdrama and Trend Stories Coverage. January 15, 2024. <https://www.kpopmap.com/kdrama->

- [marry-my-husband-ranked-3rd-most-popular-tv-show-on-amazon-prime-worldwide/](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09K7K7K7K).
- Izaakson, Jen, and Tae Kyung Kim. "The South Korean Women's Movement: 'We Are Not Flowers, We Are a Fire.'" *Feminist Current*. June 15, 2020. <https://www.feministcurrent.com/2020/06/15/the-south-korean-womens-movement-we-are-not-flowers-we-are-a-fire/>.
- Kim, Namhee, Kyung Nam Kim, and Pyounggu Baek. "Understanding South Korean Women Workers' Career Transition Experiences: Using the Career Decision Tree Model." *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (April). 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1273241>.
- Koh, Lydia. "'Marry My Husband' Breaks Record in Viewership Ratings as TvN Wraps up the Show - Singapore News." *The Independent Singapore News*. February 21, 2024. <https://theindependent.sg/marry-my-husband-breaks-record-in-viewership-ratings-as-tvn-wraps-up-the-show/>.
- Krishkim. "Park Min Young's Fashion Choices in 'Marry My Husband' Spark Debate Over TPO." *MyMusicTaste*. February 2024. <https://www.mymusictaste.com/news/park-min-youngs-fashion-choices-in-marry-my-husband-spark-debate-over-tpo>.
- Lee, Yeonu. "Women Workforce in the Korean Context." *International Review of Management and Marketing* 7, no. 1 (January 13, 2017): 403–12. <https://econjournals.com/index.php/irmm/article/view/385/pdf>.
- OECD. "Employment - Hours Worked - OECD Data," n.d. <https://data.oecd.org/emp/hours-worked.htm>.
- Mun, Soo-Hyun. "'Femininity without Feminism': Korea's First Woman President and Her Political Leadership", *Asian Journal of Social Science* 43, 3 (2015): 249-272, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04303003>.
- Park, Won Kook, *Marry My Husband*, written by Shin Yoo dam, featuring Park Minyoung, Na Inwoo, Lee Yikyung, Song Hayoon, Lee Gikwang. Aired December 31, 2023, on

- Amazon Prime, 2023-2024. Season 1.
<https://www.amazon.com/Marry-My-Husband-Season-1/dp/B0CPYQKXW5>.
- Sciuto, Laura. "South Korea Hit Hard by Massive Cyber-Attack." PBS Newshour Classroom. NewsHour Production LLC. April 4, 2013.
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/posts/2013/04/south-korea-hit-hard-by-massive-cyber-attack>.
- Song, Jung-a. "South Korean Women Struggle in Workforce." CNBC. June 12, 2013.
<https://www.cnbc.com/2013/06/11/south-korean-women-struggle-in-workforce.html>.
- Sussman, Anna Louie. 2023. "A World Without Men." *The Cut*, March 8, 2023. <https://www.thecut.com/2023/03/4b-movement-feminism-south-korea.html>.
- tvN. [Kang Jiwon and friends in U&K Group's lobby], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*,
https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1767939.html.
- . [Kang Jiwon and Yu Jihyuk at a gallery], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*,
https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1778401.html.
- . [Kim Kyungwook yelling at the female employees], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*,
https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1761924.html.
- . [Marry My Husband Korean Official Poster], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*,
https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1743960.html.
- . [Park Minhwan attacking Kang Jiwon], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*,
https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1754239.html.
- . [Police and company at Yang Juran's Apartment] 2024,

- Photograph, *HanCinema*,
https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1775174.html.
- . [The cast of Marry My Husband], 2024, Photograph, *HanCinema*,
https://www.hancinema.net/korean_Marry_My_Husband-picture_1764195.html.
- Wang, Guolei. “Reviewing the Interpretation of Confucian Destiny Thought From the Perspective of Moral Luck Theory.” *Chinese Studies* 12, no. 01 (January 1, 2023): 91–101.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/chnstd.2023.121009>.
- Yoon, Hahna. “The Rise of the K-Drama Heroine.” *CNN*, 14 Jan. 2023, www.cnn.com/style/article/korean-dramas-changing-representation-women/index.html.
- “Women Account for 6% of Executives at Korea’s Top Firms, Data Shows,” November 23, 2023.
<https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2023-11-23/business/economy/Women-account-for-6-of-executives-at-Ko-eas-top-firms-data-shows/1919780>.
- Women Leaders Index. “Report 2019/20 - Women Leaders Index,” November 1, 2022.
<https://womenleadersindex.com/report-2019-20/>.

Author Bio

Isai J. Martinez is a first-year student in the history master's program in California State University, San Bernardino. He graduated from Pacific Union College in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in history and an associate degree in film with an emphasis in writing. His academic interests include East Asian history, film and media studies, imperialism around the world, and East Asian diaspora in Latin America. He hopes to earn his PhD and be able to teach at the university level and inspire new students to fall in love with history, cinema, and the world of learning. He is an avid Korean and Chinese drama watcher, writes scripts, loves playing Dungeons and Dragons, and listens to a rotation of K-pop, musicals, Pop from the 2010s, and indie pop. Isai would like to thank Dr. Murray and the CSUSB History Department for providing a space for students to share their passions. Also, a special thanks to his parents, Victor and Ruth Martinez, Anais, his sister, and Tita for always supporting my educational endeavors. He also would like to thank Kayla, Bella, George, and the server for giving him a safe space to relax after writing.



Film Review: Napoleon

By Martin Emmanuel Perez

Introduction

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), born Napoleone di Buonaparte, on Corsica, is considered to be one of the greatest generals in world history. His life has become legendary, from being talked about in history books to becoming part of mainstream media. Bonaparte single-handedly brought the majority of Europe under his growing French empire through the use of his great military knowledge, by using the battlefield to his advantage and learning from past military leaders such as Alexander the Great (356 BCE - 323 BCE) and Julius Caesar (100 BCE- 44 BCE). People around the world have learned of Napoleon Bonaparte in history classes. Students have learned how the French Revolution (1789-1799) inspired future revolutions and how the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) gave rise to nationalism in countries across Europe.¹ The two wars were a series of conflicts that ranged France against the shifting alliances of European powers; efforts by Napoleon to affirm his supremacy were made to balance European power.² Napoleon had many campaign victories throughout his military career, yet one campaign that can be considered a complete failure was his 1812 invasion of Russia and his subsequent march back to France. His greatest failure, however, came when he was defeated

¹ "Napoleonic Wars Summary," Encyclopædia Britannica, Accessed April 16, 2024. [https://www.britannica.com/summary/Napoleonic-Wars#:~:text=Napoleonic%20Wars%2C%20\(1799%E2%80%931815,the%20balance%20of%20European%20power.](https://www.britannica.com/summary/Napoleonic-Wars#:~:text=Napoleonic%20Wars%2C%20(1799%E2%80%931815,the%20balance%20of%20European%20power.)

² "Napoleonic Wars Summary."

at the Battle of Waterloo against British and Prussian forces on June 18, 1815; consequently, he would be sent into his final exile on the island of St. Helena, in the South Atlantic Ocean, where he would pass away in 1821. With his victories and failures, Napoleon is still discussed in books, television shows, and movies, such as Ridley Scott's *Napoleon*, released in November 2023. It is my intention to give a full review of the film based on its historical accuracy but also show how the cinematics played out for some parts of the film. I would like to express my apologies if my review offends individuals.

Napoleon During the French Revolution

The film opens with a prologue on the screen, informing the audience that they are traveling back to the year 1789, when France was in turmoil due to the skyrocketing prices of bread and the unrest in the streets. The scene then changes to a woman, who can be considered of noble birth, being escorted by royal guards, along with two children. As the camera zooms slowly in on the frightened woman with her two children, the French Revolution song, "Ça Ira," slowly increases in volume in the background.³ The song is well known amongst the French since it describes how they were tired of having to suffer under the monarchy and aristocracy:

French:

*Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira
les aristocrates à la lanterne!
Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira
les aristocrates on les pendra!
Si on n' les pend pas
On les rompra
Si on n' les rompt pas
On les brûlera.
Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira
les aristocrates à la lanterne!*

³ This version of Ça Ira is sung by Édith Piaf (1915-1963), a famous French singer.

*Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira
les aristocrates on les pendra!*

English Translation:

*Ah! It'll be fine, It'll be fine, It'll be fine
aristocrats to the lamp-post*

*Ah! It'll be fine, It'll be fine, It'll be fine
the aristocrats, we'll hang them!*

If we don't hang them

We'll break them

If we don't break them

We'll burn them

*Ah! It'll be fine, It'll be fine, It'll be fine
aristocrats to the lamp-post*

*Ah! It'll be fine, It'll be fine, It'll be fine
the aristocrats, we'll hang them!*

It is revealed to the audience that the woman with the two children is Marie Antoinette (1755-1793), Queen of France, born Archduchess Maria Antonia Josepha Johanna of Austria, played by Catherine Walker (b. 1975). The Queen, wearing a blue dress and powdered wig, along with her two children are being protected by royal guards. The following scene, however, shows her being transported to the guillotine by cart, still wearing the blue dress.

How is it that Ridley Scott allowed Marie Antoinette to continue wearing the dress? What makes it more embarrassing is that it depicts her willingly going up to the guillotine, as if Marie Antoinette was saying, "I willingly give myself up for the people of France so I can get my head chopped off in the guillotine. Oh, I shall do so willingly." That is not the case though. In the French Revolution, the sad end of Marie Antoinette is one that is filled with great tragedy. During her imprisonment, her natural hair turned white; dressed in all white on the day of her execution, the executioner then cut off her hair where she then wore a white

bonnet.⁴ The part of the film that depicts her execution is the part where she was being escorted into an open cart to the guillotine, with Marie Antoinette acting calm while the people were shouting insults at her. As records show, she was still bound even while going up the steps of the guillotine.⁵ The film then shows the executioners pushing her down on her knees, while she puts her head on the block. That in itself is not the case here. The guillotine has a board where the person is strapped on, first by standing up, then being lowered on their stomachs, and pushed on the chopping block. Then, the executioner releases the blade, and the head is cut off.

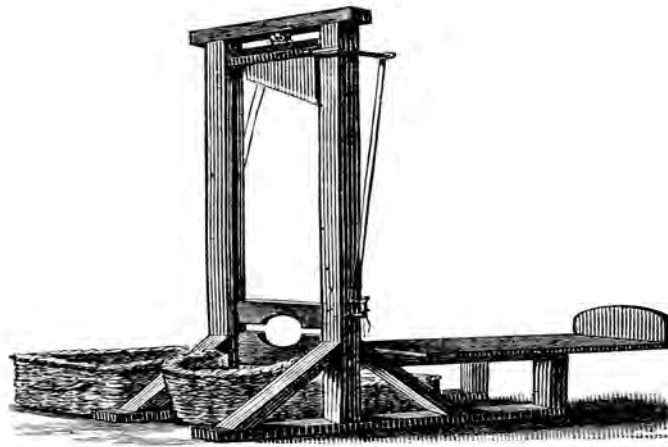


Figure 1: A print of the guillotine. A machine that became the primary symbol of the Reign of Terror (1793-94).⁶

⁴ Harrison W. Mark, "Trial and Execution of Marie Antoinette," *World History Encyclopedia*, Last modified November 07, 2022, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2099/trial-and-execution-of-marie-antoinette/>.

⁵ Harrison W. Mark, "Trial and Execution of Marie Antoinette."

⁶ "Guillotine," *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/guillotine>.

After the blade falls on Marie Antoinette's head in the film, the executioner holds her head up high, and Napoleon Bonaparte, played by Joaquin Phoenix, is spotted in the crowd. Harry Howard, History Correspondent at MailOnline, argues about Napoleon's whereabouts during the execution, saying that Napoleon was busy with a siege in Toulon that was happening at the time of her execution.⁷ Napoleon, in antiquity, was still a young man when the French Revolution started, as well as an artillery officer within the new revolutionary army (*Armée Révolutionnaire Française*). It is completely out of context to have someone like Joaquin Phoenix, who is close to being in his fifties, be allowed to portray a younger version of Napoleon, who would have been twenty years old at the start of the French Revolution.



Figure 2: Marie Antoinette portrayed by actress Catherine Walker.⁸

⁷ Harry Howard, "How Accurate Is Ridley Scott's Napoleon? From Marie Antoinette's Hair to Shooting the Pyramids with a Cannon - Experts Reveal Film's Made-up Scenes after It Riled French Critics," *Daily Mail Online*, November 17, 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12757077/How-accurate-Ridley-Scotts-Napoleon-Marie-Antoinette-pyramids.html>.

⁸ Howard, "How Accurate IS Ridley Scott's Napoleon? From Marie Antoinette's Hair to Shooting the Pyramids With..."



Figure 3: Painting of a more accurate depiction of the day Marie Antoinette was executed.⁹

One of the most important events that the movie did depict, the Battle of Toulon, was the battle that made him into the youngest general in France. Toulon was a major port city in the south of France, where many rebels who were against the new republic were being helped out with the aid of the allied forces.¹⁰ It also was one of the major naval bases in France, where rebels ended up welcoming British ships, giving control of the port to the British commanders.¹¹ The film depicts Napoleon doing reconnaissance of La Tour Royale, the fort at Toulon, and the

⁹ Harrison W. Mark, "Trial and Execution of Marie Antoinette," *World History Encyclopedia*, Last modified November 07, 2022, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2099/trial-and-execution-of-marie-antoinette/>.

¹⁰ Harrison W. Mark, "Siege of Toulon," *World History Encyclopedia*, February 15, 2023, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2171/siege-of-toulon/>.

¹¹ Robert Wilde, "Napoleon and the Siege of Toulon 1793," ThoughtCo, Last modified March 4, 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/napoleon-and-the-siege-of-toulon-1221693#:~:text=The%20siege%20of%20Toulon%20in,the%20greatest%20generals%20in%20history.>

harbor, with the British army and their navy patrolling the area. He is seen walking and monitoring, as a voice-over is heard of Napoleon reading a letter he wrote to his brother, where he explains to his brother how this battle would make the French leadership not look down on them based on their Corsican background.

The film only shows the British as being the main party in the fort; in reality, the Spanish and the Dutch also took part in the battle, which is what Scott leaves out.¹² The cinematic battle scene was impressive, though, with the cinematography being very well done. In it, during the dead of night, the Revolutionary forces are stealthily approaching the fort that the British are occupying, while the British are seen drinking and having a good time, not knowing what is coming. Then, a fuse is lit and the gate explodes, followed by mortars being fired, catching the British by complete surprise. The Revolutionary forces are then seen charging the fort, climbing up ladders. At the end of the Battle of Toulon, when daylight comes, Napoleon's brother, Lucien, is shown, promoting him to the rank of Brigadier General. Scott does a good job showing that moment, although the lighting of the fuse is historically inaccurate. The film shows a line fuse, like one that would be used in modernity and not during the French Revolution, causing a misconception of military technology. In reality, they would have used a barrel of gunpowder and left a trail of it, not a line that is easy to set up.

Another scene in the film is the portrayal of Maximilien Robespierre's (1758-1794) demise. The film shows Paul Barras (1755-1829), a French politician, played by actor Tahar Rahim (b. 1981), accusing Robespierre, a French lawyer and statesman, played by Sam Troughton (b. 1977), of being a tyrant due to his actions during the Reign of Terror (1793-1794), in which Barras accuses him of declaring himself as judge, jury, and executioner. The film then depicts Robespierre trying to run away by going up to the second floor of the National Convention, which is where he

¹²Mark, "Siege of Toulon."

shoots himself but fails. In fact, it did not happen like that. On July 26, 1793, Robespierre went to the National Convention, claiming to have a new list of suspected persons within the National Convention and in the Committee of Public Safety.¹³ When he refused to give names, the whole room went into an uproar. Robespierre was able to get away from the National Convention and fled to the Hotel de Ville. It was at that moment when the National Convention declared him an outlaw and tyrant. At 2 a.m. Robespierre tried to fire the pistol on the side of his head, but he missed and shot his jaw instead. He would be sentenced to death the next day.¹⁴

The Directory Period

A portion of the film that was well orchestrated was where a Survivor's Ball, or *bal des victimes*, is portrayed. The balls, which take place near the end of the Reign of Terror, portrays survivors, mainly from elite backgrounds, who are watching an act, as a musical piece is being sung, with the crowd laughing and having a good time. The song, "La Guillotine Permanente," is a well-known French Revolution song. Many of the women have had their hair cut short and they are wearing red necklaces/bands around their necks, representing their loved ones who were guillotined. What is historically inaccurate about this scene, however, is the meeting of Napoleon and Josephine (1763-1814), born Marie Josèphe Rose Tascher de La Pagerie, historically known as Josephine de Beauharnais, future Empress of France, played by British actress Vanessa Kirby (b. 1988). Scott shows them meeting at the Survivor's Ball; in reality, they were introduced to each other by a mutual friend of Napoleon.¹⁵ Of course the two end up marrying each other after the encounter, both in the movie and in history.

¹³ Harrison W. Mark, "Maximilien Robespierre," *World History Encyclopedia*, January 11, 2023. https://www.worldhistory.org/Maximilien_Robespierre/.

¹⁴ Mark, "Maximilien Robespierre."

¹⁵ Nathan Smith, "The Real History Behind Empress Joséphine in Ridley Scott's 'Napoleon'," *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 21, 2023,



Figure 4: Actor Joaquin Phoenix as Emperor Napoleon I and British actress, Vanessa Kirby, as Empress Josephine.¹⁶

The film then depicts Napoleon's campaign in Egypt. In a letter to Josephine, he writes how he walks in the same footsteps of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, as he leads his forces in Egypt. The film shows Napoleon looking up at the Great Sphinx, and Mamluk forces standing in front of the Great Pyramids. Scott then shows Napoleon firing cannons at the pyramids, which is arguably the biggest inaccuracy of the entire movie. Napoleon did not shoot his cannons at the Great Pyramids¹⁷ because there would be archeological evidence of this event and it would be in every

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-real-history-behind-empress-josephine-in-ridley-scotts-napoleon-180983290/>.

¹⁶ Rachel Ulatowski, "Why Ridley Scott's Napoleon Is More Interested in Joséphine than 'Battlefields' or 'Sex Scenes,'" *ScreenRant*, November 24, 2023, <https://screenrant.com/napoleon-movie-josephine-story-why-ridley-scott-response/>.

¹⁷ Zack Sharf, "Ridley Scott Tells off French Critics Who Dislike 'Napoleon': 'The French Don't Even like Themselves,'" *Variety*, November 20, 2023, <https://variety.com/2023/film/news/ridley-scott-slams-french-napoleon-reviews-1235801660/>.

history textbook today. The real Battle of the Pyramids (July 21, 1798), where Napoleon fought Mamluk forces in the French Invasion of Egypt (1798-1801), occurred nine miles away from the pyramids.



Figure 5: Scott portrays the Great Pyramids being hit by French artillery while Napoleon was facing the Mamluks during the Battle of the Pyramids (July 21, 1798), which is a misinterpretation of the actual events that took place.¹⁸

The Depiction of Napoleon and Josephine's Relationship: Hollywood vs Facts

For most of the middle part of the film, Scott revolves the movie around the relationship that Napoleon had with Josephine, in regard to them meeting one another, to their divorce, and until her death in 1814. Scott makes it seem like Napoleon is older than Josephine, due to the age gap between Phoenix and Kirby, when in reality, Josephine was older than Napoleon by just a few years. Josephine, born into an aristocratic family, had a bad relationship with her first husband, Viscount Alexandre de Beauharnais (1760-

¹⁸ Oli Welsh, "Did Napoleon Really Shoot a Pyramid? Ridley Scott Says Sure, Why Not," *Polygon*, July 10, 2023, <https://www.polygon.com/23789626/napoleon-trailer-ridley-scott-joaquin-phoenix-pyramids>.

1794), because of his unfaithfulness and multiple affairs. They, however, had two children, a son, Eugène (1781-1824), and daughter, Hortense (1783-1837). Beauharnais would eventually be arrested and became a victim of the Reign of Terror, being sentenced to be killed by guillotine, while Josephine was imprisoned. After being released, she had many affairs with political leaders, including a young Napoleon Bonaparte. Despite her being several years older than him, the two hit it off, eventually getting married.¹⁹ In Scott's movie, after the Reign of Terror is over, there is a scene where people who were imprisoned, cheer as they free themselves from a giant single cell, with a woman dressed in green cloak among them, walking out; it then transitions to the woman walking all alone on the empty streets, looking around at the mess. This is supposed to be Josephine, as she looks around, flabbergasted with what she is seeing, wondering what to do next.

When Napoleon and Josephine finally start dating each other, Napoleon visits her home to give her son his father's sword, which is just a random sword Napoleon picks up from the armory that looks like a sword held by an officer. They are then seen at a café, enjoying the view of the streets and each other's company, with Josephine giggling towards Napoleon, while he gives her a smile. The film makes it seem like they are in love, but in reality, it was far from that.

After getting married, both Napoleon and Josephine had their share of affairs in real life, especially while Napoleon was fighting in Egypt. In the film, Napoleon is informed by one of his men that Josephine has been sleeping with Hippolyte Charles (1773-1837), played by Jannis Niewöhner. Napoleon, himself, had also taken in a lover, who was the wife of a junior army officer in actual events.²⁰ The officer reveals that he came across the

¹⁹ Rachel Ulatowski, "Why Ridley Scott's Napoleon Is More Interested in Joséphine..."

²⁰ Nathan Smith, "The Real History Behind Empress Joséphine in Ridley Scott's 'Napoleon'," *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 21, 2023,

information by letters written to him by Josephine's lady in waiting, Lucille, portrayed by Riana Duce. When Napoleon returns to his home after abandoning his men in Egypt, he demands to know where Josephine is, to which a servant responds that she is in Lyon. The next scene shows Josephine returning home, her belongings packed up and outside in the rain, while whimpering out of shock. The next scene moves to her sitting in a chair, in the parlor, while Napoleon is belittling her, asking her how she could hurt him like this. He goes on to say that without him, she is nothing.

The pivotal moment of their marriage comes when Josephine fails to provide Napoleon with an heir to his throne, to take his place as Emperor of the French. The film shows them trying to conceive, yet Josephine cannot bear a single child. At dinner, Napoleon threatens Josephine, saying that if she does not bear him a child that night, then he will divorce her. Josephine then belittles him by asking if all the intercourse they did was not enough and they throw food at each other, until she gets up and goes to her room. Napoleon then enters the room and the two of them start to have intercourse. According to Nathan Smith, culture writer for *Smithsonian Magazine*, Napoleon holds Josephine responsible for the couple's infertility.²¹ In the film, Napoleon's mother, Letizia (c.1750-1836), played by Sinéad Cusack (b. 1948), is shown telling Napoleon to sleep with a younger woman in order to see who was at fault of why Josephine was not able to bear any children; when the girl is pregnant, Napoleon looks disbelieving towards Josephine, as if he still cared and loved her. Napoleon then decides to get a divorce.

The annulment ceremony is different between the film and historical reality. In the film, the annulment takes place inside a church, with Josephine and Napoleon surrounded by their family and officials of the court, such as ambassadors and military

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-real-history-behind-empress-josephine-in-ridley-scotts-napoleon-180983290/>.

²¹ Nathan Smith, "The Real History behind Empress Joséphine in Ridley Scott's 'Napoleon.'"

officials. Napoleon is shown reading his portion of the divorce with ease, while Josephine hesitates after the first couple of sentences. Napoleon then grabs her by her shoulders, telling her that this is for her country and her people, and slaps her, as if to tell her to get it together. When she starts over, she does not hesitate. According to Smith, the actual annulment took place in the throne room of Tuileries Palace, Le Palais des Tuileries, in Paris.²² As Josephine read her part, it was said that she began to falter and sob, in which she asked if someone could finish reading the statement for her.²³ This is completely different from how it was depicted in the film, with Josephine being able to read it fully without asking for anyone's help.



Figure 6: The painting of the divorce of Emperor Napoleon and Empress Josephine, titled, "The Divorce of the Empress Josephine," by Henri Frederic Schopin, 1846.²⁴

Even though they are divorced, Scott depicts the two of them as being on good terms. While the Russian Campaign was

²² Smith, "The Real History."

²³ Smith, "The Real History."

²⁴ Nathan Smith, "The Real History behind Empress Joséphine in Ridley Scott's 'Napoleon.'"

going on, there are overlapping voiceovers of Napoleon reciting letters that he had written to Josephine throughout his campaign, even though she is living in her château, living the rest of her days. After marrying Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria (1791-1847), played by Anna Mawn (b. 1997), and giving birth to a son, Napoleon François Joseph Charles Bonaparte (1811-1832), Napoleon visits Josephine and allows her to carry the child, where she is shown speaking softly to him, telling him how he will accomplish great things.

When Napoleon was first exiled to the island of Elba, off the coast of Italy, Josephine became ill. Napoleon is shown arriving in France, after escaping from Elba, and goes to Josephine, who is sitting in her room, being examined by a doctor, looking very weak. She is advised to go to bed, to get plenty of rest. Hortense, her daughter, comforts her, while Josephine says that Napoleon is on his way. It then shows her lying in bed still weak and not really being able to speak. Upon returning home and finding himself too late, as Josephine has passed away, a distraught Napoleon questions Hortense about Josephine's last moments; Hortense mentions that Josephine kept all of his letters written to her. Historically, it is argued that when Napoleon went into exile, he did not forget about her, with his last words being her name when he died in 1821.²⁵

Cinematography of the Battles Portrayed

From Toulon to Waterloo, Scott shows his artistic skills when depicting battle scenes, especially with how a battle during the Napoleonic War would have looked like. Napoleon's genius is shown at the Battle of Austerlitz (1805), where he lets the Austro-Russian forces attack his camp. Napoleon then sends a wave of infantrymen, jumping out of trenches, to rush the Austro-Russian forces, before sending a flank of cavalry towards them. The Austro-Russians retreat to a frozen lake, where Napoleon

²⁵ Nathan Smith, "The Real History behind Empress Joséphine in Ridley Scott's 'Napoleon.'"

unleashes his final blow by firing cannons onto the frozen lake. Many Austro-Russians drown in the cold, freezing water. The Battle of Borodino (1812) is silent, with only the soundtrack playing over Napoleon's forces, who are facing off with the Russians in an open field with infantry, cannons, and charging calvary, with Napoleon leading the cavalry charge. The Battle of Waterloo (1815) depicts open fields, with trenches made, with cannons mounted on a little hill, and with the command post in the middle on top of the hill. The most accurate portrayal of the battle comes from the Brits' famous square formation when they battled the French cavalry. The Duke of Wellington was very complex in making sure that the French cavalry would not take the advantage as they had been doing throughout the wars.²⁶ Scott does a good job with this, showing the way how the British were able to quickly get in formation and ward off the French cavalry.

Criticism of the Movie and Scott's Response

There were concerns and controversies over the accuracy of the movie. Zack Sharf, digital news director for Variety.com argues that Scott shrugged off negative reviews of the film, citing French critics calling it "Barbie and Ken Under the Empire," harkening to the film, *Barbie*, being released a few months prior.²⁷ The French critics probably viewed *Napoleon* as a way of erasing the facts about Napoleon and Josephine. Patrice Gueniffey, a French historian, makes the claim that Scott made the film to be "very anti-French and very pro-British," in his rewrite of history.²⁸ In Scott's response to a BBC interview, he states, "The French don't even like themselves. The audience that I showed it to in Paris,

²⁶ "History of the British Infantry Square." Stuart Briggs. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://www.stuartbriggs.co.uk/history-of-the-british-infantry-square/>.

²⁷ Zack Sharf, "Ridley Scott Tells off French Critics Who Dislike 'Napoleon': 'The French Don't Even like Themselves,'" *Variety*, November 20, 2023, <https://variety.com/2023/film/news/ridley-scott-slams-french-napoleon-reviews-1235801660/>.

²⁸ Zack Sharf, "Ridley Scott Tells off French Critics Who Dislike 'Napoleon'."

they loved it.”²⁹ There are probably people in France who think that Scott did not do an accurate portrayal of Napoleon, since this is their history; they also probably believe Scott was just pushing his British perspectives into it. In an interview with *Total Film*, Scott states how he had made many historical films and how he had asked himself questions such as the accuracy of things.³⁰ In regard to his film, *Kingdom of Heaven*, he responds “‘Were you there? That’s the f*cking answer.’”³¹ It’s quite fascinating that Scott would give such an answer to an actual historian, who isn’t named in the article, who knows a thing or two about what happened in Jerusalem having studied it. Was Ridley Scott there when Napoleon is believed to have fired his cannons at the Great Pyramids of Giza? Was he there at Marie Antoinette’s execution and did you see Napoleon there? Was he there during Robespierre’s downfall, where he apparently only went up to the second floor of the National Convention, and shot himself? In the end, though, *Napoleon* was made purely for entertainment, and it completely gets rid of the historical significance of Napoleon.

²⁹ Zack Sharf, “Ridley Scott Tells off French Critics Who Dislike ‘Napoleon’.”

³⁰ Zack Sharf, “Ridley Scott Tells off French Critics Who Dislike ‘Napoleon’.”

³¹ Zack Sharf, “Ridley Scott Tells off French Critics Who Dislike ‘Napoleon’.”

Bibliography

- “Guillotine.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed May 24, 2024.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/guillotine>.
- “History of the British Infantry Square.” Stuart Briggs. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://www.stuartbriggs.co.uk/history-of-the-british-infantry-square/>.
- Howard, Harry. “How Accurate Is Ridley Scott’s Napoleon? From Marie Antoinette’s Hair to Shooting the Pyramids with a Cannon - Experts Reveal Film’s Made-up Scenes after It Riled French Critics.” Daily Mail Online, November 17, 2023. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12757077/How-accurate-Ridley-Scotts-Napoleon-Marie-Antoinette-pyramids.html>.
- Mark, Harrison W. “Maximilien Robespierre,” *World History Encyclopedia*, January 11, 2023.
https://www.worldhistory.org/Maximilien_Robespierre/.
- Mark, Harrison W. “Siege of Toulon.” World History Encyclopedia, February 23, 2023.
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2171/siege-of-toulon/>.
- Mark, Harrison W. “Trial and Execution of Marie Antoinette.” World History Encyclopedia, March 13, 2024.
https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2099/trial-and-execution-of-marie-antoinette/#google_vignette.
- “Napoleonic Wars Summary.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed April 16, 2024.
[https://www.britannica.com/summary/Napoleonic-Wars#:~:text=Napoleonic%20Wars%C%20\(1799%E2%80%931815,the%20balance%20of%20European%20power](https://www.britannica.com/summary/Napoleonic-Wars#:~:text=Napoleonic%20Wars%C%20(1799%E2%80%931815,the%20balance%20of%20European%20power).
- Sharf, Zack. “Ridley Scott Tells off French Critics Who Dislike ‘Napoleon’: ‘The French Don’t Even like Themselves.’” Variety, November 20, 2023.
<https://variety.com/2023/film/news/ridley-scott-slams-french-napoleon-reviews-123580660/>.
- Smith, Nathan. “The Real History behind Empress Joséphine in

- Ridley Scott's 'Napoleon.'" Smithsonian.com, November 21, 2023. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-real-history-behind-empress-josephine-in-ridley-scotts-napoleon-180983290/>.
- "The Napoleonic Era." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe/The-Napoleonic-era>.
- Ulatowski, Rachel. "Why Ridley Scott's Napoleon Is More Interested in Joséphine than 'Battlefields' or 'Sex Scenes.'" ScreenRant, November 24, 2023. <https://screenrant.com/napoleon-movie-josephine-story-w-ry-ridley-scott-response/>.
- Welsh, Oli. "Did Napoleon Really Shoot a Pyramid? Ridley Scott Says Sure, Why Not." Polygon, July 10, 2023. <https://www.polygon.com/23789626/napoleon-trailer-ridley-scott-joaquin-phoenix-pyramids>.
- Wilde, Robert. "How the Siege of Toulon Gave Napoleon His Start." ThoughtCo, March 4, 2019. <https://www.thoughtco.com/napoleon-and-the-siege-of-toulon-1221693#:~:text=The%20siege%20of%20Toulon%20in,the%20greatest%20generals%20in%20history>.

Author Bio

Martin Emmanuel Perez is currently finishing up his first year in the history M.A. program at California State University, San Bernardino. Obtaining his bachelor of arts in history in 2020 and teaching credentials in social science at the end of Fall 2021 from the same institution, Martin has developed his love for history even more. Although he has a love of world history, his academic interests mainly focus on East Asian history, mainly Korean history. He developed a love for East Asia when he arrived at CSUSB for his undergraduate years. Having traveled to East Asia twice, South Korea twice and most recently Japan in the Summer 2023, Martin's knowledge of Asian history has grown and made him interested in learning more of the region. He hopes to continue on to earn a PhD and teach East Asian history to students who find interest in the region, specifically Korea. Martin is currently working as a resident substitute teacher at his alma mater, San Jacinto High School, located in his hometown of San Jacinto, CA.



Film Review: The Zone of Interest

By Rhian Reyes and Devin Gillen

The 2024 Oscar-winning, German-language film, *The Zone of Interest*, written and directed by Jonathan Glazer, and distributed by A24 in the United States, is a subtly striking, yet deeply unsettling arthouse film that invokes tragedy and horror of the highest magnitude via an hour-and-a-half slow burn slice-of-life period piece. The film realistically portrays a Nazi *Schutzstaffel* (SS) official's domestic life at the height of the Second World War (1939-1945) from a coolly detached point of view, which Glazer referred to as, "Big Brother in the Nazi House."¹ He has explained that the subject of the film is not simply the Nazi Holocaust (1941-1945) but, as award-winning journalist Naomi Klein, *The New York Times* bestselling author of *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007), and professor at the University of British Columbia, puts it, the point of the film is, "something more enduring and pervasive: the human capacity to live with holocausts and other atrocities, to make peace with them, draw benefit from them."² To demonstrate this, *The Zone of Interest* dreadfully juxtaposes idyllic visuals of family life and natural beauty with the horrific sounds of suffering emanating from the Nazi death camp in the family's backyard, only separated by a small concrete wall

¹ Naomi Klein, "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza," *The Gaurdian*, accessed Mar. 14, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/14/the-zone-of-interest-auschwitz-gaza-genocide>; Big Brother as in the American reality TV show of the same name, which is itself an implicit reference to the Orwelian surveillance state.

² Klein, "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza."

they attempt to camouflage with vines to gaslight themselves into accepting that this society, and their role in it, is natural. Rather than depict executions, slave labor, and malnourished bodies that are synonymous with the Holocaust, the audience is only rarely offered small direct glimpses into the horror on the periphery of the screen, which the camera cares to recognize as little as the main characters do. On his decision to visually omit the most emblematic images associated with the genocide, Glazer says “We’ve become desensitized to them... It’s impossible to show what happened inside those walls. And in my opinion, one shouldn’t try.”³

The film originally premiered at the *Cannes* Film Festival on the 19th of May, 2023, releasing globally in late 2023 through early 2024, and is a poignant reminder of how science, entrepreneurialism, bureaucracy, ideology, tribalism and xenophobic instincts, and the brain-dead-caliper-wielding race pseudoscientists have justified a multitude of atrocities, including the Holocaust; some of which political scientist, and former professor, David Michael Smith, detailed in his 2023 book, *Endless Holocausts: Mass Death in the History of the United States Empire*. Many of these grim realities are, unfortunately, all too relevant due to the timing of the wider release of the film as Klein noted:

Everyone I know who has seen the film can think of little but Gaza. To say this is not to claim a one-to-one equation or comparison with Auschwitz. No two genocides are identical: Gaza is not a factory deliberately designed for mass murder, nor are we close to the scale of the Nazi death toll. But the whole reason the postwar edifice of international humanitarian law was erected was so that we would have the tools to collectively identify patterns before

³ David Fear, “It’s not a history lesson, it’s a warning’: Inside the Making of ‘The Zone of Interest,’” *Rolling Stone*, December 26, 2023. <https://www.rollingstone.com/tv-movies/tv-movie-features/the-zone-of-interest-jonathan-glazer-interview-holocaust-nazis-1234907233/>.

history repeats at scale. And some of the patterns – the wall, the ghetto, the mass killing, the repeatedly stated eliminationist intent, the mass starvation, the pillaging, the joyful dehumanization, and the deliberate humiliation – are repeating.⁴

On the inspiration of the film, Glazer said:

“I had a feeling I had to do something about our similarities to the perpetrators rather than the victims. When you say, ‘They were monsters,’ you’re also saying: ‘That could never be us.’ Which is a very dangerous mindset.”⁵

The film showcases the depths of the human psyche, and how everyday individuals, fathers, mothers, and children reconcile, cope, and contextualize their place within atrocities such as the Holocaust. However, rather than portray the Nazis as outright thuggish villains, Glazer has said these characters are to be seen as, “non-thinking, bourgeois, aspirational-careerist horrors.”⁶

Co-produced in Poland, The United Kingdom, and The United States, and filmed between 2021 and 2022, the film was inspired by English author Martin Amis’s 2014 novel of the same name. The film is a dramatization of the domestic life of Rudolf Höss (1901-1947), the real-life Nazi SS commandant (ranking official in charge of a particular concentration camp) of Auschwitz, portrayed by Christian Friedel, his wife Hedwig Höss, portrayed by Sandra Hüller, and their five young children.⁷ From 1940 to 1944 the Höss’ lived next door to Auschwitz, sharing a wall with

⁴ Klein, “The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza.”

⁵ Fear, “It’s not a history lesson, it’s a warning’: Inside the Making of ‘The Zone of Interest.’”

⁶ Klein, “The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza.”

⁷ Fear, “It’s not a history lesson, it’s a warning’: Inside the Making of ‘The Zone of Interest.’”

death on an industrial scale.⁸ The Höss family residence was within Interessengebiet Auschwitz, or the Auschwitz Interest Zone; a 40 square kilometer region surrounding Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau camps, which included around fifty labor subcamps.⁹

Due to the film's focus on the commandant's family life, the direct violence of Auschwitz is never explicitly shown to the audience but can almost always be heard as the "Genocide becomes ambient to their lives," according to Glazer.¹⁰ This sensory experience morphs the film into a continuous juxtaposition between the visual portrayal of banal domesticity and the auditory blend of industrial-scale violence. The composer, Mica Levi's anxiety-inducing score, paired with near ever-present gunshots and screams, allows the audience to conjure horrific images of the Holocaust, and perhaps other atrocities, without the filmmakers having to display it.

These near-constant auditory reminders of imminent suffering, which the Höss' are largely indifferent to, also shows that the family is not ignorant, oblivious, or in denial. It is only when the airborne human ash irritates their lungs, rather than serve as the fertilizer for their gorgeously shot flowers, that the family begins to take issue with industrial slaughter; promptly averting the issue by going inside and shutting the blinds. As Klein notes, "They know what is happening on the other side of the wall... The concentration camp and the family home are not separate entities."¹¹ As is shown throughout the film, the family's lives are

⁸ Thomas Harding, "'Mum knew what was going on': Brigitte Höss on living at Auschwitz, in the Zone of Interest family," *The Guardian*, March 24, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/24/brigitte-Höss-auschwitz-zone-of-interest-rudolf-oscar-winning-thomas-harding>.

⁹ "The Exhibition," *Auschwitz.camp*, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://auschwitz.camp/en/exhibition/>.

¹⁰ Klein, "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza."

¹¹ Klein, "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza."

entirely supplemented by the Holocaust: through ill-gotten gains stolen from victims, the fact their position only exists to supervise their government's mass-murder campaign, and that, as one Nazi vouches for Höss, "He is a model settler farmer and an exemplary German Pioneer of the East. [and] His particular strength is turning theory into practice."¹² In this case, the theory is that of Aryan supremacy and the practice of genocide, his strength, and the number of bodies he can turn to ash.

In the second scene of the film, the commandant's family celebrates his birthday while gunshots ring out from the other side of the wall, which the Höss' do not even seem to register as occurring. This comes as a shock to the viewer, as the scene of the family sharing an intimate day by the river does not hint at the horrors taking place a short distance away, and the unphased reactions of the family demonstrate the way these "non-thinking, bourgeois, aspirational-careerist horrors," can individually justify to themselves the atrocity their collective actions have wrought.¹³ This opening is significant as it establishes the family's complicity with atrocity as relatable to the audience, the Höss' were indistinct stand-ins that could represent anyone at that moment. However, the celebration of the commandant's birthday sets the stage for the rest of the film, as the superficially idyllic shots of family life consistently ignore the seemingly unignorable horror of the Nazi Holocaust, which eventually even comes to corrupt the natural world. The very river the family enjoys playing in turns from crystal clear to a polluted gray as human ashes and bone fragments wash downstream and cover the family in the necrotic fruits of their labor.

In another subtly disturbing scene, Höss' young son's playtime in his room is interrupted when he overhears SS soldiers breaking up a fight between two captive Jews over an apple. As the

¹² *The Zone of Interest* (Film 4, 2023), 31:30.

https://www.max.com/movies/zone-of-interest/6a82c24c-5638-463c-8fa3-529610cf3537?utm_source=universal_search.

¹³ Klein, "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza."

boy peers out the window, he sees the man sentenced to death and he quietly says to himself, “Don’t do that again,” and returns to his toys.¹⁴ In another scene, Höss’ older son keeps his brother up at night with his light while looking at the golden teeth extracted from, the living and dead, prisoners of Auschwitz. These are each upsetting displays of the children’s proximity to violence and their complete desensitization to the horrors that surround them.

The film first introduces Rudolf’s wife, Hedwig Höss, as a loving mother and attentive wife.¹⁵ However, the viewer quickly learns of her own complicity in and personal gain from the genocidal operation at Auschwitz. Hedwig receives a delivery of clothing from a concentration camp slave and gives some of these clothes to her local Polish housemaids, keeping a fur coat for herself. While trying on the coat, she pulls a used lipstick from the pocket. The clothes are clearly from the victims of Auschwitz, whose belongings she now gets to take her choice from. As Klein writes,

“I have no idea how anyone can watch that scene and not think of the Israeli soldiers who have filmed themselves rifling through the lingerie of Palestinians whose homes they are occupying in Gaza or boasting of stealing shoes and jewelry for their fiances and girlfriends.”¹⁶

According to Andrzej Strzelecki, historian of Auschwitz:

Prisoners who processed the stolen goods associated the enormous amounts of property with Canada, which symbolized for them wealth and an abundance of resources... ‘Kanada’ referred to both the property of the victims, as well as to work details that labored at the

¹⁴ *The Zone of Interest*, 1:16:45.

¹⁵ Fear, “It’s not a history lesson, it’s a warning’: Inside the Making of ‘The Zone of Interest.’”

¹⁶ Klein, “The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza.”

warehouses. Over time, even some members of the camp staff and administration began using the term in informal conversations.¹⁷

This is illustrated within the film by Hedwig and her friends, who make jokes about these clothes being from “Canada.”¹⁸

Hedwig exemplifies the “banality of evil” proposed by Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) in her report on the trial of Nazi official Adolf Eichmann (1906-1962).¹⁹ Arendt’s prime thesis was that the Nazis were not exceptionally evil aberrations in humankind’s lineage, but instead, shockingly average and typical humans informed by the mainstream currents of European colonialism of their time. This is how the Höss family is portrayed in the film, none of their revolting comments so much as raise an eyebrow in their social bubble of inhumanity. In her 1951 work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt argued Nazis simply synthesized and expounded on existing strands of European colonialism to their natural conclusion.²⁰ As German Marxist philosopher Karl Korsch wrote earlier in 1942 on the reason Nazi atrocities shocked the world so thoroughly, “The novelty of totalitarian politics in this respect is simply that the Nazis have extended to ‘civilized’ European peoples the methods hitherto reserved for the ‘natives’ or ‘savages’ living outside so-called civilization.”²¹

Arendt called this synthesis the “administrative massacres” developed by European colonizers in Africa, of which the Nazi

¹⁷ Andrzej Strzelecki, “Plundering of Jewish Property in Auschwitz,” in *Auschwitz: History, Place and People. An Academic Guide to the Camp Complex*, ed. Bożena Karwowska, Jacek Lachendro and Piotr Setkiewicz (Poland: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2021), 172.

¹⁸ *The Zone of Interest*, 17:00.

¹⁹ Hannah Arendt, “Eichmann in Jerusalem - I,” *The New Yorker.com*, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963/02/16/eichmann-in-jerusalem-i>.

²⁰ Enzo Traverso, *Origins of Nazi Violence*, (New York: The New Press, 2003), 50.

²¹ Traverso, *Nazi Violence*, 50.

death camps were the highest manifestation of: bringing together “Modern racism (justified in the name of science) and bureaucracy (the most perfect embodiment of Western rationality),” which opened the door for the “unprecedented” level of violence of the Nazi death camps.²² Describing how the White-supremacist racism that justified European colonialism across the globe ultimately enabled the Nazi’s detached, “banal,” murderous nature, Arednt wrote, “When the European mob discovered what a “lovely virtue” a white skin could be in Africa, when the English conqueror in India no longer believed in the universal validity of law, but was convinced of his own innate capacity to rule and dominate... the stage seemed to be set for all possible horrors.”²³ While the British felt free to “administratively massacre” millions of Indians, and the Belgians likewise in the Congo, why shouldn’t Hedwig feel comfortable to do the same to their undesirables?

Hedwig is plain and domestic, leading a banal life. Yet she embodies evil through her complicity and profit from the abuse of others. When the real-life Rudolf Höss was questioned at the Nuremberg trials in 1946, he admitted to his wife’s knowledge of the operation at Auschwitz by stating, “At the end of 1942... She asked me whether this was the truth and I admitted that it was.”²⁴ Hedwig was fully aware of her husband’s role in the Holocaust and advocated to keep her family adjacent to Auschwitz for four years. Her complicity is made explicit in the film when she protests Rudolf’s reassignment, begging to remain in the Auschwitz house, she pleads to him to, “go to Hitler... You’re the one who carries out his orders once you peel away the layers.”²⁵

The film likely opens in 1943 before Höss was promoted and moved to Berlin in 1944.²⁶ In the film, Friedel’s Höss informs

²² Traverso, *Nazi Violence*, 50.

²³ Traverso, *Nazi Violence*, 51.

²⁴ “Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 11,” *Avalon.Law.Yale.edu*, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/04-15-46.asp>.

²⁵ *The Zone of Interest*, 51:02.

²⁶ Harding, “‘Mum knew what was going on’: Brigitte Höss on living at Auschwitz, in the Zone of Interest family.”

Hedwig of his redeployment move to Oranienburg to which his wife is distraught. She tells Höss how she loves the home they've built and states, "They'd have to drag me out of here."²⁷ This is a striking statement as their house has a constant view of pillars of smoke from the crematoriums, demonstrating the disturbing adaptability of humankind to adjust and normalize the highest forms of evil to mundanity. Hedwig's mother, Linna Hensel, played by Imogen Kogge, visits the family to Hedwig's delight. Hedwig gives her mother a tour of their house, pool, and garden and the grandmother congratulates her daughter and tells Hedwig how nice of a life she has made for herself while gunshots ring out across the wall. They briefly discuss a Jewish woman from Hensel's community and ponder if she might be in Auschwitz now. Hedwig laughs at her mother, "Rudi calls me Queen of Auschwitz," jokingly exposing her complicity in the operation at Auschwitz.²⁸

While Hensel is also complicit and fully aware of the happenings at concentration camps, she is uncomfortable with the proximity of Hedwig's home to Auschwitz. While napping outside by the pool, she wakes up in a coughing fit as human ashes fill her lungs and sees the billowing smoke from the crematoriums. At night, she is kept awake by the light of fires emanating from the gas chambers and the hum of the incinerators. Hensel ultimately leaves without saying any goodbyes to her relatives, leaving only a note, the contents of which angered Hedwig who promptly throws it into the incinerator. She then sits for breakfast and passively terrorizes a housemaid stating, "If I wanted, my husband would spread your ashes across the fields of Babice," before taking her next bite. Hedwig is fully immersed in the violence of Auschwitz and takes part calmly by threatening to use Rudolf's position to spread the girl's ashes throughout her homeland.²⁹

Before her death in 2023, Thomas Harding, award-winning journalist and author of *Hanns and Rudolf* (2013), conducted a

²⁷ *The Zone of Interest*, 51:34.

²⁸ *The Zone of Interest*, 43:21.

²⁹ *The Zone of Interest*, 1:13:02.

series of interviews with Brigitte Höss (1933-2023), the daughter of Rudolf and Hedwig Höss. In a 2021 interview, Brigitte shared that her first memories were of her family's life at Auschwitz.³⁰ When Harding asked what her father was like, Brigitte said, "He was a wonderful, absolute wonderful person. I couldn't have wished for a better father." In the same interview, Brigitte also explained, "My mom was just a nice person. Period."³¹ This perspective from Brigitte highlights Glazer's intention to contrast the Höss family life with their intimate role in supporting and benefiting from the Holocaust.

At the 96th Oscar Academy Awards on March 10th, 2024, *The Zone of Interest* won Best International Film. Glazer dedicated the film to the Polish woman Aleksandra Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk (1927-2016), a member of the Polish underground resistance that smuggled food to prisoners in Auschwitz in his acceptance speech.³² Two cut-away scenes in the film showcase Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk through night vision as she leaves fruit for camp prisoners, depicting her as glowing in the darkness for her acts of resistance are a bright light compared to the atrocities.

However, Glazer's speech is now most well-known for the controversy it generated. Glazer's speech pierced the Oscars' traditional "bubble of glamour and self-congratulation" with, what Klein calls a "time-stopping speech" that will be "analyzed for many years to come."³³ Glazer took to the stage and explicitly drew parallels between the Holocaust and the characters of the film to the Western audience and the Israeli slaughter in Gaza. He began by thanking A24, and various production partners, as well as The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, and continues:

³⁰ Harding, "'Mum knew what was going on': Brigitte Höss on living at Auschwitz, in the Zone of Interest family."

³¹ Harding, "'Mum knew what was going on': Brigitte Höss on living at Auschwitz, in the Zone of Interest family."

³² Klein, "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza."

³³ Klein, "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza."

All our choices were made to reflect and confront us in the present, not to say “look what they did then,” rather, “look what we do now.” Our film shows where dehumanization leads at its worst. It shapes all of our past and present. Right now, we [Glazer and the two men who took stage with him] stand here as men who refute their Jewishness, and the Holocaust, being hijacked by an occupation, which has led to conflict for so many innocent people. Whether the victims of October the seventh in Israel, or the ongoing attack on Gaza, all the victims of this dehumanization, how do we resist? ³⁴

Glazer’s speech produced a “flood of smears and distortions that misrepresented his words to wrongly claim that he had repudiated his Jewishness” in a disingenuous manner, which, as Klein noted, “only served to underline Glazer’s point about those who turn victimhood into a weapon.”³⁵ Neither Klein, nor Glazer, are taking a particularly fringe position here, though it may be labeled controversial (and antisemitic by the usual bad-faith actors); multiple highly-respected academics have convincingly demonstrated a multitude of ways the legacy of the Holocaust has been manipulated to serve a variety of ends. Of these include: the political scientist and son of two Holocaust survivors, author of *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (2000), amongst many other books including 2018’s *Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom*, Norman Finkelstein, previous Professor of History at the University of Chicago, Peter Novick and author of 1999’s *The Holocaust in American Life*, as well as 2008’s *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, coauthored by renowned political scientist and Professor of International Relations at the University of Chicago, John J.

³⁴ “‘The Zone of Interest’ (United Kingdom) Wins Best International Feature Film,” *Youtube.com*, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uuumx5Ja8Ns>.

³⁵ Klein, “The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza.”

Mearshiemer and Professor of International Relations at Harvard, Stephen M. Walt.

In a recent April 2024, interview, Finkelstein bolstered Glazer and Klein's argument clearly as he summarized the thesis of his book, *The Holocaust Industry*, which examined the Holocaust, "Not as a historical event.... But as an ideological event. Namely, how the Nazi Holocaust had been instrumentalized in order to both shield Israel from criticism, and [how] at that point it was being used as a blackmail weapon."³⁶ The most apparent use of this political weaponization of the Holocaust, and Jewish suffering (the victims of which are rightfully remembered, as should be the distinctly Christian-European history of antisemitism), is the accusation of antisemitism levied against critics of the policies of the Zionist nation-state of Israel; with perhaps the most notable example being the smear campaign that effectively ended (or at least severely derailed) UK Labour politician Jeremy Corbyn's (b.1949) career.³⁷

The Jewish scholar Finkelstein has compared the atrocities of October seventh to the African American Nat Turner's (1800-1831) slave rebellion and invokes the words of Nat Turner's White abolitionist contemporaries, such as William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879), who called the violence regrettable, but questioned what should be reasonably expected from masses of humans arbitrarily held in abominable conditions. To respect Finklestein's self-proclaimed deep importance he places on the precision of his language, his nuanced argument informed by what he calls, "forensic" scholarship and historical analysis is as follows:

I tried to figure out what was the closest situation [to the October seventh attacks], analogous enough, that I can see

³⁶ "Palestine Talks | Norman Finkelstein," *Youtube.com* (23:55), accessed May 26, 2024,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOdRk7Wptjg&ab_channel=TRTWorld.

³⁷ Michael S. Smith, "How Jeremy Corbyn was Toppled by the Israel Lobby," *Mondoweiss.net*, accessed May 26, 2024, <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/07/how-jeremy-corbyn-was-toppled-by-the-israel-lobby/>.

how it's been reasoned in the past. And the closest I could get was the slave uprisings, the slave revolts in American history... My next step was to see how the abolitionists, those who fought against slavery, how did they react to the slave revolts?... One of the best known, William Lloyd Garrison, he was the editor of a newspaper called *The Liberator*, and it was very clear from his commentary after Nat Turner's rebellion that although he recognized atrocities had occurred, and horrors had unfolded... they beheaded babies, and they smashed skulls, and there were disembowelings. It was a very ugly turn of events... basically William Lloyd Garrison's position was, "we told you so." He directed his ire, not at the perpetrators of the rebellion, but at those who passively or actively participate in the system that dehumanized an entire group of people, and Garrison said, "we told you so. If you treat people this way you will reap what you have sown." And he never once, although he acknowledged the atrocities had occurred, if you read carefully his statement, he never once actually and directly condemned Nat Turner.³⁸

It is reasonable to force those in the high-income countries of the West to reconcile with their current administration's complicity in Israel's potential genocide, or most generously, their systematic and grievous violations of international humanitarian law, as Glazer seemed to intend. Despite findings, such as *The Economist's* January 2024 reporting that 49% of polled Democrats believed Israel was engaged in genocide, and that 62% of Joe Biden (b.1942) voters opposed continued arms sales to Israel, the Biden Administration has sent over one hundred arms shipments to Israel since October 7th, 2023, with the United States having given

³⁸ "Norman Finkelstein: What was October 7: Crime or Revolt?," *Youtube.com* (11:05-14:20), accessed May 26, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNQ1ppHygEE&ab_channel=India%26GlobalLeft.

hundreds of billions of dollars to Israel in military aid since 1946.³⁹ Furthermore, since Israel's (by most accounts) drastically over-proportional use of force against the entire Gazan population, the United States has voted against four UN Security Council resolutions calling for peace in Gaza, unilaterally vetoing the resolution on three of the four occasions.⁴⁰

And despite the UN's International Court of Justice's conclusion that South Africa's formal charge of genocide against Israel contained enough evidence to warrant an investigation, and "ordered Israel to stop killing Palestinians and to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza," Amnesty International warned that "Israel has failed to take even the bare minimum steps to comply... Israel has continued to disregard its obligation as the occupying power to ensure the basic needs of Palestinians in Gaza are met."⁴¹ The Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi (b.1953), described the situation as "a tragedy for humankind and a disgrace for civilization," which, as the Malaysian Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim (b.1947), noted, "Unfortunately... has laid bare the self-serving nature of the much valued, the much vaunted [US imposed] rules-based order."⁴² This should be especially troubling for those who wish to hold China accountable for the alleged genocide, or human rights abuses, they have carried out against the Muslim Uyghur population in Xinjiang. If international humanitarian law cannot stop or constrain Israel's more thoroughly documented abuses of the Gazan population, culminating in the contemporary slaughter, live streamed in real-time (accessible to

³⁹ Jonathan Masters and Will Mellow, "U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts," *Council on Foreign Relations.org*, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts>.

⁴⁰ Ben Norton, "US Sends Israel 100+ Weapons Shipments. Most Americans Oppose It- but Biden Ignores Them," *GeoPolitical Economy*, March 08, 2024, <https://geopoliticeconomy.com/2024/03/08/us-israel-100-arms-sales-oppose-biden/>.

⁴¹ Norton, "US Sends Israel 100+ Weapons Shipments. Most Americans Oppose It- but Biden Ignores Them."

⁴² Norton, "US Sends Israel 100+ Weapons Shipments. Most Americans Oppose It- but Biden Ignores Them."

all reading these words on a multitude of media platforms), what kind of precedent is set?

Klein closes her scathing article, noting Glazer was the single voice out of the “parade of wealthy and powerful speakers across the podium to so much as mention Gaza,” two weeks to the day that twenty-five-year-old member of the US Air Force Aaron Bushnell self-immolated in an act of protest outside the Israeli embassy in Washington.⁴³ She notes that everyone should contemplate Bushnell’s last words, which she describes as, “a haunting coda to Glazer’s film:

“Many of us like to ask ourselves, ‘What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide?’ The answer is, you’re doing it. Right now.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Klein, “The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza.”

⁴⁴ Klein, “The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza.”

Bibliography

- Arendt, Hannah. "Eichmann in Jerusalem - I," *The New Yorker*, February 08, 1963.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963/02/16/eichmann-in-jerusalem-i>.
- Fear, David. "It's not a history lesson, it's a warning': Inside the Making of 'The Zone of Interest,'" *Rolling Stone*, December 26, 2024. <https://www.rollingstone.com/tv-movies/tv-movie-features/the-zone-of-interest-jonathan-glazer-interview-holocaust-nazis-1234907233/>.
- Harding, Thomas. "Mum knew what was going on': Brigitte Höss on living at Auschwitz, in the Zone of Interest family." *The Guardian*, March 24, 2024.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/24/brigitte-höss-auschwitz-zone-of-interest-rudolf-oscar-winning-thomas-harding>.
- Klein, Naomi. "The Zone of Interest is About the Dangers of Ignoring Atrocities - Including in Gaza," *The Guardian*, March 14, 2024.
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/14/the-zone-of-interest-auschwitz-gaza-genocide>.
- Masters, Jonathan and Will Merrow. "U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts," *Council on Foreign Relations.org*, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts>.
- Norton, Ben. "US Sends Israel 100+ Weapons Shipments. Most Americans Oppose It- but Biden Ignores Them." *GeoPolitical Economy*, March 08, 2024.
<https://geopoliticeconomy.com/2024/03/08/us-israel-100-arms-sales-oppose-biden/>.
- Setkiewicz, Piotr and Jacek Lachendro, "The Complexity of the Category Bystander the City of Oświęcim and Beyond." In *Auschwitz: History, Place and People. An Academic Guide to the Camp Complex*, edited by Bożena Karwowska, Jacek

- Lachendro and Piotr Setkiewicz Poland: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2021.
- Smith, Michael S. "How Jeremy Corbyn was Toppled by the Israel Lobby." *Mondoweiss.net*, accessed May 26, 2024, <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/07/how-jeremy-corbyn-was-toppled-by-the-israel-lobby/>.
- Strzelecki, Andrzej, "Plundering of Jewish Property in Auschwitz." In *Auschwitz: History, Place and People. An Academic Guide to the Camp Complex*. Poland: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2021.
- Traverso, Enzo. *The Origins of Nazi Violence*. New York: The New Press, 2003.
- The Zone of Interest*. Film 4, 2023.
https://www.max.com/movies/zone-of-interest/6a82c24c-5638-463c-8fa3-529610cf3537?utm_source=universal_search.

Author Bios

Rhian Autumn Reyes is a recent graduate from California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus (PDC) with a bachelor of arts in history. During her time at the university, Rhian was the secretary of the PDC History Club while studying twentieth-century world history. Rhian is now working on the Chuckwalla National Monument Proposal as a campaign organizer with Audubon California. This experience has been eye-opening for her as she considers paths in higher education. From her experiences as a campaign organizer, such as going on a DC fly-in trip to advocate for the establishment of the monument with various legislators, Rhian has decided to pursue law school. She loves working in conservation and advocating for the protection of the desert that surrounds her home in the Coachella Valley. A fun fact about Rhian is that her favorite pastime is hiking with her pug, Ida Pickles Reyes.



After graduating from the California State University, San Bernardino history master's program in Spring 2024, Devin Gillen plans on pursuing a PhD in history or global studies before establishing himself in a career that bridges the worlds of academia, journalism, and activism. Devin's master's thesis focuses on NATO's 2011 Libyan intervention and identifies it as a major, but under-discussed, turning point in the context of the global world-system and shifting US hegemony from 1945 to 2024. This study employs an interdisciplinary approach bringing together U.S. foreign policy history, World-Systems Theory, and Global South scholarship to understand the dynamics of this pivotal event and its lasting consequences. Topics/issues that include theories of economic development, terrorism, and globalization continue to undergird Devin's scholarly interests while a desire to illuminate the hardships and injustices wrought on the world's oppressed [and exploited] peoples drives his work.



Film Review: Killers of the Flower Moon

By Lina Tejeda

Killers of the Flower Moon, directed by Martin Scorsese, premiered in theaters across the nation on October 20, 2023. The release was heavily anticipated by many, from film aficionados excited to see Scorsese's latest film, but especially those in the Native American community due to its large Native American cast including: Lily Gladstone as Mollie Burkhart (1886-1937), Tantoo Cardinal as Lizzie Q (1848-1921), Mollie's mother, Cara Jade Myers as Anna, Janae Collins as Reta, Jillian Dion as Minnie, William Belleau as Henry Roan (1881-1923), Tatanka Means as John Wren, Yancey Red Corn as Chief Bonnicastle (1877-1923), and Talee Redcorn as Non-Hon-Zhin-Ga.

I never intended this film review of Killers of the Flower Moon to be solely just that. It is also important to note that some of the things I state in this review do not have sources because they come from my lived experiences as a Native community member who grew up on an Indian Reservation. A question I continuously asked was: who is this film for? Is this for the Osage People or for the greater Native American community? Although the film received the thumb of approval from the Osage Nation, I do not feel like it was *for* the Osage People, but for non-Native audiences.

Non-Natives have often not been taught the *real* histories of Native Peoples in the United States. Natives know about the violence; it was told to us in stories passed down from one generation to the next from our ancestors who lived it. It is helpful that non-Native audiences keep in mind that the time when this happened was not long ago: in the 1920s. Many of our grandparents were alive during this time. Considering my argument that this film is for a non-Native audience, I believe this

film is effective in teaching about the greed and violence committed against the Osage People.

In the film, Ernest Burkhart (1892-1986; played by DiCaprio) returned from war to Oklahoma and settled with his uncle William Hale (1874-1962; played by De Niro) who lived on the Osage reservation near Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the 1920s. Hale is presented as a friend and ally to the impressively wealthy Osage people, due to the discovery of oil on their land. In the first hour of the film, many non-Native settlers are seen living in Osage territory, exploiting the Osage people for their own monetary and material gain. The Osage people were not allowed to control their own money by law; thus, they needed a White sponsor to handle their oil headrights. According to the [osagenation-nsn.gov](https://www.osagenation-nsn.gov), “A ‘headright’ is the right to receive a quarterly distribution of funds derived from the Osage Mineral Estate.”¹

Ernest met Mollie Kyle, one of four Osage sisters who have oil headrights, married her, and together they had three children. It is discovered throughout the film that Di Niro’s character, William, is in fact not a friend, but a money-hungry capitalist who will go to any lengths to get money into the hands of his White counterparts by way of strategically arranged marriages. William is responsible for orchestrating the killings of many Osage people so that their non-Osage sponsors and spouses could inherit their oil headrights.

After all the deaths in her community, Gladstone’s character, Mollie travels to Washington District of Columbia (DC) to involve the Bureau of Investigation (BoI). During this time, Mollie became sick with “wasting illness,” and began receiving injections of insulin from local doctors. DiCaprio’s character, Ernest, from the direction of his uncle William, begins to administer Mollie’s injections. William provided Ernest with a, to the viewer, unknown substance, that he was instructed Ernest to add to her insulin injections, “to keep her down”. Mollie became

¹ “Frequently Asked Questions,” Osage Nation, August 24, 2021, <https://www.osagenation-nsn.gov/who-we-are/minerals-council/frequently-asked-questions>.

increasingly suspicious of these injections, and when the BoI paid a visit to Mollie, they too became suspicious and took her to a hospital where she recovered. Meanwhile, as Mollie recovers in the hospital the BoI unravels the truth about Ernest and his uncle William. Ernest confesses to his crimes and testifies against his uncle with the hopes of salvaging any relationship with his wife and children. After the trial is complete, Ernest is allowed to meet with Mollie, where she confronts him and asks what he has been injecting her with, giving him one final chance to come clean. Ernest denies any foul play and Mollie leaves, later divorcing him.

The final scene is a radio show on stage telling of the story, which featured Scorsese reading the newspaper obituary of Mollie who died at fifty years old in 1937 from diabetes. After a brief silence, the screen cut to a powwow drum being played and the song “Wahzhazhe (A Song for My People)” composed by Osage Composer Scott George, Kenny Bighorse, and Vanny Bighorse, being sung by Osage tribal singers, according to Osage Nation’s Principal Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear (1829-1908).²

Lily Gladstone played Mollie’s character excellently throughout the film. Mollie’s character could have been more dimensional and not just stereotyped as one-dimensional. Mollie came off as being passive, compliant, and displaying a lack of emotion. Even in the end when she was questioning Ernest about poisoning her, she did not show any emotion. Perhaps this was the intention of Scorsese, however, as a Native woman myself, I was rooting for Mollie to be more assertive. However, there are moments where Mollie displayed a lot of strength such as when she traveled to Washington D.C. to get BoI involved. I have a great

² Jennifer Maupin, “‘Killers of the Flower Moon’ Nominated for 10 Oscars,” 2 News Oklahoma KJRH Tulsa, January 24, 2024, <https://www.kjrh.com/news/local-news/killers-of-the-flower-moon-nominated-for-10-oscars>.; *Killers of the Flower Moon* (Apple Studios, 2023), <https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/killers-of-the-flower-moon/umc.cmc.5x1fg9vferlfeutzpq6rralzf>.; This is the author’s summary of the film.

appreciation for the spirituality she practiced throughout the film by praying at the river every sunrise.

Cara Jade Myers played Anna very well. Her role highlighted the issues of alcoholism within the Native community and her death called attention to the epidemic of (and movement to bring awareness to) Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) plaguing North American Indigenous communities. These communities face high numbers of violence being committed against them. According to statistics gathered by the Red Road Institute, “The murder rate of Indigenous women is three times higher than non-Native women. It is the third leading cause of death in Indigenous women.”³ Throughout the movie, these statistics were all I could think about.

William Belleau, who played Henry Roan, was very convincing. Henry was a man who suffered from what the film called melancholy, or what we now call depression. His passion in scenes was palpable, and one could feel his pain. He suffered from alcoholism and became desperate to end his life after finding out his wife was having an affair with another man. However, William Hale did not want Henry to die yet because his insurance had not reached full maturity and prevented his suicide. Nonetheless, once this insurance policy took hold, he was later taken out to a field where a hit man provided him with alcohol and shot him in the back of the head.

John Wren, played by comedian Tantanka Means, a Native American member of the BoI, flexed his acting muscles by stretching out of the stand-up comedy specials I have seen him do previously and it was refreshing to see him play a serious role, albeit a small role as a side character with limited lines and screen time. Yancey Redcorn’s role as Chief Bonnicastle was beautifully played, as well as Talee Redcorn’s role as the traditional leader Non-Hon-Zhin-Ga. The other Native cast members who appeared as extras with few to no lines did an amazing job of representing

³Red Road Institute, “Protect Indigenous Women,” *Red Road Institute Online*, October 4, 2022, <https://redroadinstitute.org/protect-mmip/>.

their community and their culture as it was in the time period depicted. For me, a Native American woman, it was beautiful to see the blankets worn by the Osage women and the regalia that was worn during Mollie and Ernest's wedding. The two leading actors playing non-Osage characters were De Niro and DiCaprio. De Niro's casting as William Hale and DiCaprio's casting as Ernest Burkhart were notable. Both actors were able to distinctly capture the essence of the people they played.

The first time watching the film, it made me uneasy, and many parts were hard to watch such as the murders that happened so quickly, most notably was the scene when Anna's body was recovered from the riverbed and an autopsy was performed. I was saddened to learn about this piece of American history, and part of my own Native American history. This portion of Osage history was brand new to me.

An overall critique that can be made of the film is that all the female characters were either sick, dying, or dead. The issue of murder found its way into the lives of Mollie and her three sisters. While it was never explicitly stated that they were murdered by their husbands and their White counterparts, it can be assumed that Ernest's underhanded abuse of Mollie also happened to Minnie, Rita, and Lizzie Q. They were labeled to have died from a "wasting illness" which characters in the film refer to undiagnosed diabetes as. In one of the most shocking scenes in the movie, Mollie's sister Anna was found shot dead in a riverbed. The scene was graphic, showing gunshot wounds on her bruised and bloodied body.

Another laudatory aspect of the film is its use of the Osage language. For the Native American community, it is always gratifying to see a Native language on a screen, and this is more exciting in a film of this magnitude, helmed by the legendary Scorsese, reaching a large audience that is predominantly non-Native. The use of Native language in this 2023 Oscar nominated film, for which Lilly Gladstone was nominated for best female actor, an effective statement that Native people survived European colonization and genocide. The use of it in this film is a testament

that people like William Hale and his White counterparts' attempts to murder and steal from the Osage People ultimately failed at a complete takeover of Osage land and wealth.

According to the film's IMDB webpage, by March of 2024, which is considered to be the end of the awards season for films from 2023, *Killers of the Flower Moon* earned over four hundred and one nominations and one hundred and twenty-five wins at various film associations from the United States and abroad.⁴ The film won at least fifteen awards for Best Film or Best Foreign Film.⁵ Director Martin Scorsese won at least eight awards for directing the film.⁶ Actress Lily Gladstone won at least forty-five awards for Best Actress, Actress of the Year, or for her break-out role.⁷ Other notable awards were for Best Original Score and Best Cinematography.⁸

Of the seven nominations for the Golden Globes, Lily Gladstone took home the award for Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama. Most memorable was the speech she gave when she accepted the award. She began to address the audience in the Blackfeet language, which is customary in Native communities when you greet people. It may seem to non-Native audiences that she simply spoke her language, but this was much more than that. It was a powerful statement to show that she is here, Natives are still here, *we* are still here. She thanked her mother, cast members, and film team. In a most electrifying dedication that brought many tears throughout the Native community, she said:

And this is for every little rez kid, every little urban kid, every little Native kid out there who has a dream, who is seeing themselves represented and our stories

⁴ "Killers of the Flower Moon (2023): Awards," *IMDB*, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5537002/awards/?ref=tt_awd.

⁵ "Killers of the Flower Moon (2023): Awards."

⁶ "Killers of the Flower Moon (2023): Awards."

⁷ "Killers of the Flower Moon (2023): Awards."

⁸ "Killers of the Flower Moon (2023): Awards."

told by ourselves, in our own words with tremendous allies and tremendous trust with and from each other.⁹

There was a lot of anticipation and excitement within the Native American community for the Academy Awards, hoping Lily Gladstone would walk away with an Oscar. While *Killers of the Flower Moon* did not win any of the ten nominations from the Academy Awards, Gladstone made a place in all our Native hearts. She represented the Native American community with grace, beauty, and humility. The entire Native cast has left a lasting imprint on us all. It was surreal to get to see actors who represented the Native American community on red carpets. They wore beaded jewelry from Native beaders and designer dresses that they collaborated with Native artisans to create culturally significant pieces.

I sought to highlight the impact the film and its Native American cast has had on the visibility of Natives in the media. We are beginning to not only see Native actors and actresses being put on the big screen, but our stories and histories are beginning to be brought to mainstream media. Our voices are being lifted and centered in the telling of those stories. While there is still a lot of work to be done, we are slowly, but surely, taking back our stories from non-Native narratives. The film itself, the film's team, and the actors are working towards the right direction to bring attention to our Native Communities.

⁹ Lily Gladstone, "Lily Gladstone Wins Best Performance By A Female Actor In a Motion Picture-Drama". January 7, 2024, Golden Globe Awards. Beverly Hills, CA. CBS and Paramount+, 5p.m. Pacific Time.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSapi-Og004>.

Bibliography

- “Frequently Asked Questions.” Osage Nation, August 24, 2021.
<https://www.osagenation-nsn.gov/who-we-are/minerals-council/frequently-asked-questions>.
- Gladstone, Lily. “Lily Gladstone Wins Best Performance By A Female Actor In a Motion Picture-Drama”. January 7, 2024. Golden Globe Awards. Beverly Hills, CA. CBS and Paramount+, 5p.m. Pacific Time.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSapi-Og004>.
- Killers of the Flower Moon*. Apple Studios, 2023.
<https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/killers-of-the-flower-moon/umc.cmc.5x1fg9vferlfeutzpq6rra1zf>.
- “Killers of the Flower Moon (2023): Awards,” *iMDB*.
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5537002/awards/?ref_=tt_a_d.
- Maupin, Jennifer. “‘Killers of the Flower Moon’ Nominated for 10 Oscars.” 2 News Oklahoma KJRH Tulsa, January 24, 2024.
<https://www.kjrh.com/news/local-news/killers-of-the-flower-moon-nominated-for-10-oscars>.
- Red Road Institute. “Protect Indigenous Women,” *Red Road Institute Online*. October 4, 2022.
<https://redroadinstitute.org/protect-mmiw/>.

Author Bio

Lina Tejeda is half Pomo from her tribal homelands in Northern California and half Mexican. She is a graduate student in the master of art in history program at California State University San Bernardino. Her area of focus is California Indian studies and museum studies/ public history. Lina is passionate about working in institutions to advocate for the return of cultural sacred items to tribal nations from which they belong and telling the true histories of the California Indian people. In her spare time, Lina is a traditional Pomo dancer who has taken to learning about her cultural traditions including basket weaving, beading hats, regalia making, singing, gathering materials, and learning about the traditional ecological knowledge in California. While her passion lies in her own cultural heritage, she finds enjoyment in all areas of history including topics such British history, French history, and social histories of the United States. Lina would like to thank and give photo credit to Adriana Robles and AR NorCal Budget Photography.



Museum Review: Planes of Fame Air Museum

By Henry Sigman



Figure 1: B-17 Display with Planes of Fame Museum Entrance in background.¹

The Planes of Fame Air Museum (PFAM), a Southern Californian aviation museum based out of the Chino Airport; stores and refurbishes hundreds of antique planes, with a focus on military craft. Part of the museum's goal is to preserve, and restore airplanes and aviation history, once a plane is relegated to a grounded state for safekeeping and display in the museum.² Not only does the museum restore planes to their original condition, but they work hard to keep them "flight ready" for airshows throughout the United States. To facilitate this, a small on-site restoration garage is used, where they make old, usually forgotten,

¹ Igor K., "Planes of Fame Air Museum," AirMuseumGuide.com, August 7, 2023, <https://airmuseumguide.com/aviation-museums/usa/california/planes-of-fame-air-museum/>.

² "History & Mission," Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed May 22, 2024, <https://planesoffame.org/about/history-mission>.

planes function properly and look their best. When larger projects are undertaken, they travel to an off-site restoration facility in Valle, Arizona. Here is where the museum conducts the major restoration of planes that cannot be completed at their on-site facility. PFAM's mission is to: preserve the planes' history, inspire future generations to form an interest in aviation, educate visitors on the history of these great birds, and to honor the memories of those who sacrificed so much to the pursuit of the sky.³

Not only does the museum have their growing plane collection, but they also contain an aviation discovery center, model room, archive and research library; something to meet the needs of every visitor.

Air Museum to Planes of Fame

The Planes of Fame Air Museum first opened in 1957 under the much simpler name of "The Air Museum", first located in a lumber yard in Claremont, CA it was the only such facility to exist on this side of the Mississippi.⁴ Initially, the museum served as a place to show off the founder, Ed Maloney's, private collection of ten aircrafts, but as his collection started to grow, so did the museum.⁵ By 1962, the museum began its preservation efforts to restore donated planes. Due to the expansion of their collection the museum moved to Ontario, California, however, that would not last. As the goals and mission of the museum expanded to include preservation of larger scale aircraft, the museum moved to its final location and present location at Chino Airport.

In 1970, the then called Air Museum was given an opportunity to partner with a production museum called Movie World: Cars of the Stars and Planes of Fame Museum, this partnership would last for a couple of years. When Movie World closed in 1973, the Planes of Fame name was adopted by the Air Museum, and its name was changed to the one it still uses today,

³"History & Mission."

⁴"History & Mission."

⁵"History & Mission."

Planes of Fame Air Museum. In 1995, the museum began its first major expansion, introducing its Valle, Arizona location, which operated until 2020, only closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now the Arizona location only serves as an airplane restoration facility, closed to the public.⁶

The museum's main facility in Chino, CA consists of seven hangars, including a Korean War (1950-1953) memorial hangar and replica hangar bay of the USS Enterprise, a naval carrier from World War II (1939-1945). In addition to their display hangars, the museum houses a B-17 Bomber which is fully explorable by guests, providing visitors with an opportunity to enter and see how confined pilots were when flying missions in World War II.⁷



Figure 2: B-17 Bomber display.⁸

The planes shown off in the museum are quite impressive machines, with long histories of their own. The B-17 and Mustang are some of the most recognizable planes to have ever flown, being

⁶“History & Mission.”

⁷“Museum Map,” Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed May 22, 2024, <https://planesoffame.org/visit/museum-maps>.

⁸ “Boeing B-17G ‘Flying Fortress’,” Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed June 5, 2024, <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-B-17G>.

the backbone of the American Airforce in WWII.⁹ The name of the museum hints at the famous past many of the planes had, with some examples like the B-50A, the first aircraft to fly nonstop around the globe back in 1949.¹⁰

Having been able to experience the museum in two different contexts, has been eye opening, as each trip provided unique insight. During the first trip, there was a specific purpose for traveling to the museum, a school assignment in which observing a tour guide was required; however, this also turned into a family trip. A second trip was more for leisure to enjoy all that the museum had to offer. This second trip was taken with a student cohort of historians from California State University, San Bernardino's History Club. During the first trip our tour guide or docent was Richard Malvino, one of several volunteers who contextualize, narrate and interpret the aircraft displays for visitors. For the second trip in December of 2023 with the History Club, our docent was Donald Sokol, who was identified as Dr. Sokol on his name tag. Dr. Sokol's tour offered new information about the museum and aircraft as he tailored his tour to a group of college boys. As a result, the varied experiences enabled for a well-rounded understanding of everything the museum had to offer. Despite having attended a guided tour previously it was surprising to discover how immense the collection was, as there was much more to see.

Left Hangars

The Planes of Fame Museum's layout is similar to that of an air base, consisting of a large runway sized corridor in the center, spilling down from the *P-58 Lightning 475th Fighter Group Hangar* down to the Hot Ramp, which is an active runway used by

⁹ "Boeing B-17G 'Flying Fortress'"; "North American P-51D 'Mustang'," Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed May 22, 2024, <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-P-51D-Dolly>.

¹⁰ "Boeing B-50A 'Superfortress'." Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed May 22, 2024, <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-B-50A>.

the museum to fly their planes. The hangars act as rooms with the main hangar doors always leading into the corridor which acts as a hallway for visitors to travel to the next hangar.



Figure 3: Map layout of the Planes of Fame Museum.¹¹

The entrance to the museum is halfway down the concourse, located to the right of the Maloney Hangar, which could be better named as the “beginnings hangar,” as it is not only the beginning of the tour, but also features the oldest planes on site, and a replica of the Wright brothers 1903 Kitty Hawk Flyer. It is here where the tone of individual tours are set, as the assigned docent will tailor their tour to the interests of the groups. Mr. Malvino, the first tour guide, began his tour by jumping over and grabbing a guide hook of one of the early carrier planes held within. By doing this he demonstrated how hard it was for these speeding planes to land on a small carrier ship’s runway. However, on the second tour, Dr. Sokol also reached out, grabbing a different plane’s indicator light, a small pole sticking out of the wing to help the pilot deal with wingspan in low visibility. The Docents incorporation and interactions with the historical aircraft that they

¹¹“Museum Map.”

are surrounded by on a daily basis is part of the unique experiences that PFAM has to offer.

Planes of Fame, while offering interaction with its collections, is not entirely an interactive museum, like the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, where everything is considered to be kid safe. However, it is also not a static museum like the British Museum, full of glass displays and barriers, dealing with fragile materials such as ancient cloths or human remains. Planes of Fame could be considered somewhere in the middle, offering explorable aircraft and displayed aircraft that need to be touched carefully. The first hangar, the Maloney Hangar, houses the museum's temporary collections, i.e. traveling planes which are set to be displayed. In April of 2023, the personal plane of famous actor Tom Cruise, a P-51 Mustang, was stored in the museum's hangars due to the fact that he has an established and well documented relationship with the museum, which has displayed his private planes before.¹²

The adjoining hangar to the left, the *Pond Hangar*, is similar to the *Maloney Hangar*. However, the *Pond Hangar* offers its own unique story in aviation history. The story of Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan's Curtiss Robin J-1 (1907-1995) flight across the Atlantic Ocean or more commonly known as "the pond." Corrigan desired to fly solo across the Atlantic from New York to Dublin, Ireland after seeing Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) fly across the Atlantic several times. His 1933 application for a solo trip was denied after the Bureau of Air Commerce determined his Robin J-1, built from scrap materials, was unfit for the journey. He did not let this deter him, on July 19, 1938, during his return trip to California from New York, he mistakenly took a "wrong way" turn and twenty-eight hours later landed in Dublin. Corrigan became a pop-hero within the United States due to his push back on bureaucracy, being given parades in New York and

¹² Richard Mallory Allnutt, "'Top Gun: Maverick' Movie Mustang on Display at Planes of Fame Air Museum," Vintage Aviation News, May 27, 2024, <https://vintageaviationnews.com/aviation-museum-news/top-gun-maverick-movie-mustang-on-display-at-planes-of-fame-air-museum.html>.

Chicago after returning home. Despite facing some consequences for circumventing orders, he became known as “Wrong Way Corrigan” by the press. Now, the original plane rests in the Pond Hangar, restored to its original glory at the Plane of Fame Museum.¹³

The last of the adjoining hangars is the smaller USS Enterprise CV-5 Hangar, a hangar dedicated to the aircraft carrier naval vessels of the Korean and Vietnamese Wars (1955-1975), like the ship the USS Enterprise hangar is named for. What sets it apart from the other hangars is that the *Enterprise Hangar* is designed to look like the inside of the carrier, with an elevated platform that allows visitors to view the aircraft on display from a different angle.

Behind the *Pond* and *Enterprise* hangars across from the parking lot is the *B-17 Bomber Display*. What makes this display unique are several factors, the first is that it is one of the only restored aircraft outside and susceptible to the elements, and the second is that it is fully explorable. During the second trip, the aircraft was only viewable from the outside as the display was not available to explore. However, during the first trip, Mr. Malvino was able to open up the B-17 aircraft for exploration, giving opportunities to sit in the tiny stations for the ten airmen under his close watch. The reason mandatory guides are issued when exploring the B-17 display is due to how small the catwalk that runs along the plane is, being only wide enough to support one foot at a time, there is a probability that someone may injure themselves. Even with its limitations, it is one of the highlights of the museum, if it is possible to experience it. Anyone with an interest in war planes, military history, or aviation history will surely enjoy the experience of being in a B-17 Bomber.

Another standout experience that will not occur on every trip is seeing a restored plane in flight. Back in the main corridor next to the hot ramp, provides the ideal location for viewing, if one

¹³ “Curtiss Robin J-1,” Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed May 22, 2024, <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/J-1>.

is lucky enough for it to happen on their trip. During my first trip, we were one of the lucky ones, as a family rented out a Mustang aircraft to be flown around the city in. Being able to see the aircraft take off makes for an exciting show for everyone involved, both those on the plane and on the ground. Spectators gathered around as the plane would take off for the museum's runway, complete a loop of the region, and return. Upon its return, another Mustang would be sent up since the Mustang requires it to be prepared and a full safety check before every flight. An extensive safety examination of the plane is needed, since any minor issue in the plane, such as: a fuel leak, loose bolt, or a dead indicator light, could cause a malfunction and subsequent crash. For visitors who wish to see a plane takeoff, it is recommended to schedule museum trips during an airshow event, since there are some days when planes are guaranteed to fly.

Across the way from the *Pond* is the *Friedkin Hangar*, or as it is known on-site, the restoration hangar. This space provides visitors with a unique glimpse into the process of preservation and restoration. The majority of museums do not display damaged objects from their collections, which these planes in need of restoration can be considered as. In typical museum settings, the less interesting objects are listed in online catalogs or collections for public access, many of which are never displayed for visitors. However, Planes of Fame wants its visitors to see how and why preservation is so important, for keeping historical objects intact, but also for the next generations to have functional examples to look to, making it easier for innovation and discovery. Museum staff routinely open the hangar where preservationists are actively repairing these airships, this is so guests can see the process and efforts made in restoring them to their original conditions. It also provides a different perspective to what the military and war hangar displays does not provide; that the museum restores all forms of planes, not just the most important military vehicles. Around this point, Mr. Malvino ended the first tour, so allow me to thank him personally for the informative and entertaining romp he led.

Right Hangars

It was not until the second tour with CSUSB's History Club, that the full extent of the museum and its display was discovered. Returning back to the main entrance to its right, the first hangar encountered is the Foreign Hangar. Here is where many foreign planes are displayed, the majority being of British, Japanese, and Soviet origins. A highlight in this hangar is the Mitsubishi A6M5, otherwise known by the popular name, the "Zero." The Zero was the backbone of the Japanese Airforce in World War II, as it was one of the planes flown against American forces at Pearl Harbor and in the Philippines.¹⁴ It is still one of the most commonly remembered Japanese planes in pop culture.



*Figure 4: Mitsubishi A6M5.*¹⁵

The Zero displayed at Planes of Fame still contains its original Nakajima engine and is the only authentic A6M flying.¹⁶ A fun fact that Dr. Sokol claimed is that this particular Zero is one of the

¹⁴ "Mitsubishi A6M5 Reisen (Zero Fighter) Model 52 ZEKE," Smithsonian, Smithsonian Institution, Accessed June 5, 2024, https://www.si.edu/object/mitsubishi-a6m5-reisen-zero-fighter-model-52-zeke%3Anasm_A19600335000.

¹⁵ "Mitsubishi A6M5 'Zeke'," Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed May 22, 2024,, <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-A6M5>.

¹⁶ "Mitsubishi A6M5 'Zeke'."

most filmed planes in the world and has appeared in the film *Pearl Harbor*.¹⁷

Moving on to the penultimate hangar is the *Jet & Air Racers* Hangar which features not only some of the fastest planes at the museum but is dedicated to women of aviation; where visitors will learn about their contributions to making flight possible and how they pushed the limits of aviation to what it is today. One of the speedster planes located in the hangar is the Douglas D-558-II, also known as the “Skyrocket.” An early experiment into jet propulsion, which in its 1948-1956 lifespan reached twice the speed of sound (1,327 mph), the fastest speed noted to that point.¹⁸ One of the greatest aviation racers was also one of the fastest women in the world, Florence “Pancho” Barnes (1901-1975). A Southern California native, she raced throughout America in the 1930’s, setting speed records and achieving the title of “America’s Fastest Woman Flyer” by then Californian Governor James Rolph (1869-1934).¹⁹

The last hangar has adjoining memorial gardens and is dedicated to the Korean War. The hangar itself is designed to be the *P-38 Lightning 475th Fighter Group Hangar*. Inside on full display are artifacts the group would have used, not limited to planes, but ammunition, uniforms, and more are showcased. Old fighter wing documentaries are playing in a constant loop on screens throughout the hangar for visitors to listen to as they explore. The attached memorial garden features plaques telling the stories of several airmen involved in the Korean War. One of the plaques details the story of a San Bernardino native, Private First Class Joseph Rodriguez (1928-2005), who went above and beyond, receiving the Medal of Honor for his valor in single handedly

¹⁷ “Mitsubishi A6M5 ‘Zeke’.”; Henry Sigman and Donald Sokol, interview by Henry Sigman, December 2023.

¹⁸ “Douglas D-558-II ‘Skyrocket’,” “Planes of Fame Air Museum, Accessed May 22, 2024, <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-D-558-II>.

¹⁹ “Women in Transportation History: Pancho Barnes, Aviator,” Transportation History, March 27, 2019, <https://transportationhistory.org/2019/03/27/women-in-transportation-history-pancho-barnes-aviator/>.

defeating enemy foxholes during an ambush of his squadron.²⁰ As the History Club were from San Bernardino, it was here that the Club spent the most time exploring and learning of the heroic stories of soldiers from the Korean War. I would like to extend a thank you to Dr. Sokol for his efforts in making our Club's experience well worth the drive.

Conclusion

The Planes of Fame Air Museum is very much worth a visit if you are in the Chino or Southern California area. While the museum might not be as exciting or as interactive for young children as a science museum, it is well worth the trip out for those who share an appreciation for aviation, or military history. The museum offers various activities for everyone. On-site there is a center for learning, which is the nexus of the museum's educational initiatives, inclusive of events, tours and film screenings; an aviation discovery center that provides hands-on activities to promote aviation awareness through S.T.E.A.M curriculum; a research library with over 10,000 materials in all aspects of the aviation field; finally, the museum has an archive that is available to museum members and public visitors. The planes on display have rich histories that may contain living memories for some, which helps connect the museum in a way that a traditional museum will not. The B-17 guests can enter, providing an opportunity to glimpse into the past, and experience how pilots in WWII conducted missions. When an airshow rolls around, the planes flying overhead can make for quite an exciting event for families. Even on normal operating days, the exhibits are still worth walking around, particularly if you are being guided around by one of the great interpreters. I know that I plan to visit again one day.

²⁰ "Joseph Charles Rodriguez | Korean War | U.S. Army | Medal of Honor Recipient," Congressional Medal of Honor Society, Accessed May 22, 2024, <https://www.cmohs.org/recipients/joseph-c-rodriguez>.

Bibliography

- “Boeing B-17G ‘Flying Fortress’.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-B-17G>.
- “Boeing B-50A ‘Superfortress’.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-B-50A>.
- “Curtiss Robin J-1.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/J-1>.
- “Douglas D-558-II ‘Skyrocket’.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-D-558-II>.
- “History & Mission.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/about/history-mission>.
- “Mitsubishi A6M5 Reisen (Zero Fighter) Model 52 ZEKE | Smithsonian.” Smithsonian Institution, Accessed June 5, 2024. https://www.si.edu/object/mitsubishi-a6m5-reisen-zero-fighter-model-52-zeke%3Anasm_A19600335000.
- “Joseph Charles Rodriguez | Korean War | U.S. Army | Medal of Honor Recipient.” Congressional Medal of Honor Society. Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://www.cmohs.org/recipients/joseph-c-rodriguez>.
- K, Igor. “Planes of Fame Air Museum.” AirMuseumGuide.com, August 7, 2023. <https://airmuseumguide.com/aviation-museums/usa/california/planes-of-fame-air-museum/>.
- “Mitsubishi A6M5 ‘Zeke’.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-A6M5>.
- “Museum Map.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/visit/museum-maps>.
- “North American P-51D ‘Mustang’.” Planes of Fame Air Museum,” Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://planesoffame.org/aircraft/plane-P-51D-Dolly>.
- Richard Mallory Allnutt. “‘Top Gun: Maverick’ Movie Mustang

on Display at Planes of Fame Air Museum.” Vintage Aviation News, May 27, 2024.

<https://vintageaviationnews.com/aviation-museum-news/top-gun-maverick-movie-mustang-on-display-at-planes-of-fame-air-museum.html>.

“Women in Transportation History: Pancho Barnes, Aviator,” March 27, 2019.

<https://transportationhistory.org/2019/03/27/women-in-transportation-history-pancho-barnes-aviator/>.

Author Bio

Henry Sigman graduated from California State University, San Bernardino in May of 2024 with a bachelor of arts in history, as well as with a certificate in Egyptology. He transferred from Crafton Hills College with an associate's degree in history. He hopes to continue into a PhD program for history, where he will be able to become a professor some day and educate the next generation of historians; using techniques gathered from his long line of educator family, as well as own extensive experiences. He would like to thank his mentors along the way, people such as Beth Elliot, Andrew Christopherson, Dr. Kate Liska, Dr. Jeremy Murray, Dr. Georgia Barker, Dr. Paul Reed, Dr. Lee Lyons, Ed Lucas, and many more. He would also like to give special thanks to Evy Zermeno and Randi Stoner, without whose help editing, this review would have never been completed. He would also like to give special honors to his lovely fiancé whose love and support meant the world, Sofia Morgan. This author wishes you all well and wants you to know that it's been a real swell pleasure to meet ya!



Exhibit Review: *Continuity: Cahuilla Basketweavers and Their Legacies*

By Lina Tejeda

On February 14, 2024, the exhibition titled *Continuity: Cahuilla Basket Weavers and Their Legacies* opened at the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College. In her curatorial statement in the accompanying exhibition catalog used to help shape this review, Guest Curator Dr. Meranda Roberts (Paiute and Chicana) said, “This exhibition honors the decades of work undertaken by Cahuilla women to gain access to ancestral pieces in museums, ensuring that their histories, stories, and lessons are reclaimed for the community’s continuity.”¹ As Dr. Roberts describes, this exhibition shows beyond doubt that Cahuilla basket weavers’ legacies are still influential to present-day Cahuilla community members and artists as signified in the title *Continuity*. According to Google Dictionary by Oxford Languages, continuity means “the unbroken and consistent existence or operation of something over a period of time.”² After viewing the exhibition, it is clear that Dr. Roberts was successful in her goals with this project which she emphasizes was due to the engagement she had with Cahuilla women and artists to help shape and share this legacy.

On February 10, 2024, the Benton Museum of Art hosted an exhibition opening and community blessing that was for

¹ Meranda Roberts, Wendy Cheng, Emily Clarke, and Rose Ann Hamilton, Pomona: Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College, 2024, Published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, organized and presented at the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College, February 14, 2024 – June 23, 2024, p 15.

² “Continuity,” in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, May 20, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuity>.

Cahuilla community members and showcased artists. The unconventional portion of this exhibition is that members of the Cahuilla community were invited to touch and hold the baskets displayed without a glass case or protective screen, this alone made *Continuity* the first of its kind by presenting and acknowledging the need for a different approach in museums and institutions alike.

Continuity features pieces by contemporary Native American artists such as: Cahuilla artist Gerald Clarke, and Tongvan and Scottish artist Weshoyot Alvitre, a poem by Cahuilla Poet Emily Clarke, and photography by Chemehuevi photographer Cara Romero. The centerpiece of *Continuity* features various historic Cahuilla baskets by some known and some unknown basket weavers.

This exhibition honors Donna Largo (Cahuilla) who created an exhibition in 1994 titled, *Ways of Seeing/Exhibiting American Indian Art: The Pomona College Collection*. “Continuity pays homage to Donna’s generational commitment to keeping Cahuilla cultural traditions alive by restaging and installation of original baskets that she first selected and exhibited during *Ways of Seeing/Exhibiting American Indian Art: The Pomona College Collection*. ”³ When entering the first portion of the exhibit, the entire back wall is a photograph by Cara Romero of the Cahuilla landscape titled “First Light at Joshua Tree”. Under the photo there is a patch of soil with displays of basket weaving materials dated 1910, historic baskets and a historic basket hat that were featured in Largo’s 1994 exhibit.⁴ This display choice with the Cahuilla landscape and placement of basketry materials was a replica of Largo’s display. In this room was also Tongva/Scottish Artist Weshoyot Alvitre’s piece titled, *The Original Instructions*, a “mixed media, wool, stitching topographic map overlaid with petroglyph to speak of Creation stories, landscapes, and tribal connections.”⁵ The petroglyph she used is the Hemet Maze Stone, found in Hemet, California, which is a large stone with a maze-like

³ Roberts, *Continuity: Cahuilla Basket Weavers and their Legacies*, p 88.

⁴ Roberts, *Continuity: Cahuilla Basket Weavers and their Legacies*, p 100.

⁵ Roberts, *Continuity: Cahuilla Basket Weavers and their Legacies*, 8.

square shape carved into it. According to California State Parks, it “is an outstanding example of the work of prehistoric peoples.”⁶



Figure 1: Basket display, *Continuity: Cahuilla Basket Weavers and Their Legacies*.⁷

The second room or portion had three tables in the center forming the shape of a circle that displayed more than 30 historic Cahuilla baskets from the Benton Museum’s collection (Fig. 1). As stated before, the most notable aspect of *Continuity* is that curator Dr. Roberts chose to display the historic items without a glass or plastic protector. While at the community welcome and blessing event Cahuilla community members and descendants of the weavers were allowed to openly touch and hold the baskets, it was asked that *only* these descendants could touch them and to let staff know so that museum security were informed that they are permitted to touch the baskets.

On the far back wall was another wall-length photograph of the Cahuilla landscape near Palm Springs, California, featuring a

⁶ “Hemet Maze Stone- Historical Landmark,” Accessed April 23, 2024, California State Parks Online.
<https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/Detail/557>.

⁷ This image contains the photograph titled “Indian Canyon” by Cara Romero on the back left wall, “Continuum Basket: Origins” by Gerald Clarke on the far-right wall, and various historic Cahuilla baskets from the Benton Museum of Art collection.

young boy as a “spirit” by photographer Romero titled *Indian Canyon*.⁸ On a second wall was an installation of a basket pattern made out of crushed aluminum soda cans by Cahuilla artist Gerald Clarke titled *Continuum Basket: Origins*. He used silver-based cans as a background and colored cans (blues, greens, and yellows) to create the design for his large installation. On a third wall, the poem *From Beneath the Oak Trees* by Cahuilla poet Emily Clarke was written on the wall. Her poem artistically illustrates how weaving baskets can still be seen by the Cahuilla people in their walk of life even though the tradition has been forgotten due to the forced assimilation of Native people in California. She even makes reference to the pop cans in her father Gerald Clarke Jr.’s *Continuum Basket*.

The exhibition included three artist talks: the first featured Gerald and Emily Clarke, the second featured Weshoyot Alvitre, and the third and final talk featured Cara Romero. Each artist got to talk about what *Continuity* meant to them and how they were able to translate that in the pieces they created and shared for the exhibit and discussed their process of creating their contributing pieces. All four artists were kind and remained after their talk to connect with attendees. It was a great opportunity to get to know the artists’ process and thoughts.

Curator Dr. Meranda Roberts succeeded in her goals for the exhibition. She was able to collaborate with contemporary Cahuilla basket weavers and community members and was able to look back to previous people such as Donna Largo to be successful in her goals. *Continuity: Cahuilla Basket Weavers and Their Legacies* is an important contribution to the field of public history for its unique approach to museum collection display. It is important for curators to be able to look at the design and make changes to future exhibitions, especially ones that wish to display baskets and other items that culturally should not be locked behind display cases

⁸ Cara Romero, “Artist Talk: Cara Romero,” April 18, 2024, Benton Museum of Art Pomona College, Pomona College Claremont, CA.

Bibliography

- “Continuity.” In *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, May 20, 2024.
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuity>.
- California State Parks Online. “Hemet Maze Stone- Historical Landmark.” Accessed April 23, 2024.
<https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/Detail/557>.
- Roberts, Meranda, Cheng, Wendy, Clarke, Emily and Hamilton, Rose Ann. Pomona: Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College, 2024. Published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, organized and presented at the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College. February 14, 2024 – June 23, 2024.
- Romero, Cara. “Artist Talk: Cara Romero,” April 18, 2024. Benton Museum of Art Pomona College. Claremont, CA: Pomona College.

Author Bio

Lina Tejeda is half Pomo from her tribal homelands in Northern California and half Mexican. She is a graduate student in the master of art in history program at California State University San Bernardino. Her area of focus is California Indian studies and museum studies/ public history. Lina is passionate about working in institutions to advocate for the return of cultural sacred items to tribal nations from which they belong and telling the true histories of the California Indian people. In her spare time, Lina is a traditional Pomo dancer who has taken to learning about her cultural traditions including basket weaving, beading hats, regalia making, singing, gathering materials, and learning about the traditional ecological knowledge in California. While her passion lies in her own cultural heritage, she finds enjoyment in all areas of history including topics such British history, French history, and social histories of the United States. Lina would like to thank and give photo credit to Adriana Robles and AR NorCal Budget Photography.



Museum Review: *Afróntalo*: Confronting the Erasure of Afrodescendants in Mexico and California

By Morgan Hast, Fatima Vazquez, and Evy Zermeno

Located on the third floor of the Social and Behavioral Sciences building at California State University, San Bernardino's (CSUSB) main campus, sits the Anthropology Museum, whose gallery space provides views of the surrounding foothills of the San Bernardino County mountains. Founded in 2000, the museum has been preparing and hosting exhibitions that both illustrate and interrogate the cultural contexts and meanings of community histories, events, identities, and behavior throughout the Inland Empire and afar.¹ The Anthropology Museum has been a continual advocate in showcasing topics aimed to provoke critical awareness in students of all age groups, leading to difficult conversations on a wide range of issues. This can be seen through the museum's previous exhibitions such as [INTO LIGHT](https://www.csusb.edu/anthropology-museum/exhibitions/previous-exhibitions/light) (September 2022 - June 2023), which was a national project highlighting and documenting the loss of human life to drug addiction.² Recently, the museum undertook its biggest project to date, with its newest exhibition entitled, *Afróntalo*, which opened on September 21, 2023, and will close on June 19, 2024. *Afróntalo* was co-curated by Afrolatine communities and CSUSB students; the exhibit introduces its visitors to four communities in Mexico and twenty-one Californians, "all in their own words, to explore the depth and

¹ "Anthropology Museum," CSUSB, Accessed March 21, 2024, <https://www.csusb.edu/anthropology-museum>.

² "INTO LIGHT | Anthropology Museum," CSUSB, Accessed March 21, 2024, <https://www.csusb.edu/anthropology-museum/exhibitions/previous-exhibitions/light>.

breadth of Afrolatine histories, cultures and identities.”³ The four communities from Mexico curated their own sections within the exhibit, highlighting significant historical events, cultural and social movements, and traditions. Twenty-one Californians, whose portraits hang along the museum walls, share their experiences and struggles as they navigated societal pressures in regard to their dual identities and agency.

Afróntalo was inspired by the 2021 Fulbright Hays Seminar Abroad Program, “*The Third Root: Exploring African Heritage in Mexico*,” hosted by Comisión México-Estados Unidos para el Intercambio Educativo y Cultural (COMEXUS or United States-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange); this seminar was an opportunity for academic participants to see and explore African contributions to Mexican society and culture, providing a better understanding and appreciation of Mexican diversity.⁴ It was here, where discussions on the lack of knowledge regarding Afrodescendants’ history and contributions in Mexico have long been forgotten and erased in public institutions, in both Mexico and the United States. Based on the information gained during the program, and lack of general public knowledge regarding Afrodescendants in the Americas, a two-year process began to bring the exhibit to life. Interested community scholars

³ “Current Exhibition | Anthropology Museum,” CSUSB, Accessed March 21, 2024, <https://www.csusb.edu/anthropology-museum/exhibitions/current-exhibition>; For this exhibition the anthropology museum uses the term Afrolatine as a non-cisgendered term rooted in Spanish vocabulary rather than the gendered terminology of Afrolatino, Afrolatina, and the non-cisgendered term of Afrolatinx which is a trend in United States hispanic culture. Afrolatine is used in the introductory sections curated by museum staff, while each Afro Mexican community had curatorial authority over their own section. This gave them the freedom to refer to themselves using identifying terms of their preference. As a result, there are different terms used throughout the museum and review, but all have the same meaning.

⁴ U.S Department of Education [Office of Postsecondary Education], “Fiscal Year 2021 APPLICATION FOR GRANTS UNDER FULBRIGHT-HAYS SEMINARS ABROAD PROGRAM” (United States Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2020), <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpssap/fy2021seminarsabroadappv3.docx>.

who were a part of the program began talks with Anthropology Director at CSUSB, Arianna Huhn, after which communities and curators were chosen; the four communities chosen were from Tamiahua, Veracruz; Coyolillio, Veracruz; Negros Mascogos, Coahuilla; and the Costa Chica Region of Veracruz and Guerrero. Each curator and their team(s) were trained by Maria Fernanda Yáñez Uribe, from the Museo de Arte Popular (Museum of Folk Art) located in Mexico City. Yáñez Uribe trained the community curators in curation and exhibition development techniques, inclusive of exhibition themes, label structure, color schemes, object curation, collections, and labeling. Taking what they were taught, each community chose their own thematic focus and designed their section to reflect their chosen narrative and regions, highlighting and displaying what they wanted. Once training was completed, each community began to delve into creating their respective sections, a process that would take them over a year.

Making an Exhibition

Community curators, Doris Careaga-Coleman, Daniela López Carreto, Karla Consuelo Rivera Téllez, and Sergio Navarrete Pellicer began their work independent of the Anthropology Museum; for any issues or further guidance, their primary contacts were Maria Fernanda Yáñez Uribe and Dr. Arianna Huhn. Therefore, in regard to the beginning stages of the development of their exhibitions, there is not much information provided to the authors. It was not until the final stages of development that curators had direct contact with CSUSB student assistants. Making an exhibition will focus on the student assistants' experiences during the following stages of education, research, collections and fabrication.

At the end of 2022, Director Huhn began looking for interested students who would join the exhibition, putting out a call for students from different disciplines to fill different roles within the project. A total of five student assistants were then hired to aid in completing the exhibition, consisting of Alessandro Corsaro

(B.A in Art), Holland Snipes (B.A in Studio Art), Morgan Hast (B.A in Public History, B.A in History, Certificate in Museum Studies), Fatima Vazquez (B.A in Public History, B.A in History, Certificate in Museum Studies), and Evy Zermeno (B.A in Public History, B.A in History, Certificate in Museum Studies). They were then separated into teams to undertake the various assigned roles consisting of collections management, design and fabrication, and curatorial and educational roles. The majority of the team members had previous experience in the museum field, as they were part of CSUSB's public history and museum studies programs. Each team held weekly meetings with the Director (and community members if needed), to update them on the status of their progress throughout the development of *Afróntalo*.

Education and Curation

Before research, collection, or fabrication teams started, education was the primary focus of *Afróntalo*. Attached to the exhibit were related programs and initiatives that focused on Afrolatine culture, history and traditions. Hoping to negate the erasure of their contributions, the museum partnered with a community advisor to begin a k-12 lesson planning initiative, entitled *Afrolatinizamos*, under the direction of Íxkári Noé Estelle, who was the *Afrolatinizamos* project director and museum consultant. "Afrolatinizamos is a lesson planning project by, for, and about Afrolatines, with a team of passionate and dedicated educators to develop unique lesson plans that infuse Afro-Latine and Afro-Latinx content into learning across all grade levels."⁵ Educators across the nation applied to be part of the teacher cohort, with around fifteen being selected for this pilot program, who began working with educational professionals to develop lesson plans on different subject matters, all with the Afrolatine component, with the ultimate goal of being available for free to all educators. One

⁵ Afrolatinizamos, (@Afrolatinizamos), CSUSB's Anthropology Museum is excited to announce its K-12 Lesson Planning Project - Afrolatinizamos!, February 20, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/Co5cd08SyER/>.

student assistant, and co-author of this review, Evy Zermeno joined the Afrolatinizamos project to aid in meetings, bridging the gap for the museum and related programming, such as the initiative. Part of her duties included controlling social media and sitting in on discussions to gain a better understanding of how race, identity, and gender intersect with history, education, and museums. She was able to question teachers on their teaching styles and the materials that impact their students the most. Her experience within the Afrolatinizamos project paved the way for the development of the museum's educational material for visiting children during the exhibit's run.

The curatorial team consisted of the same student assistant from the education team, Evy Zermeno. In this instance, she was tasked with the research and curation of the introductory sections for the exhibit. These sections were independent of the community curators, providing background information, context to the exhibit, and the significance of the community sections. The ability to curate sections within a museum allowed Zermeno to take the practical and theoretical aspects of her coursework in museum studies and gain hands-on experience working and developing exhibitions within a functional museum.

Topics and themes were discussed beforehand and, once student assistants joined the project, they got straight to work. The curatorial team was given various topics that would need to be researched and compiled into briefs. Upon beginning to research, it was quickly understood how monumental the task would be. Some subject matters contained a wealth of information such, as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (1526-1867) and the Spanish colonization of present-day Mexico (1519-1521). However, other subjects, like Afrolatine history in California and prominent figures of Afro-Mexican descent were harder to find. But, as the field of study for Afrolatine history, culture, and traditions is gaining interest among academics, secondary literature for these topics are new or upcoming. The curatorial team spent over ten months researching, verifying, and curating the introductory sections for *Afróntalo*.

The next step in the process included the development of the exhibit, in which student assistants Allyza Roxas and Bailly Pickett joined the team as developers. Pickett used Zermeno's notes and research to build text labels for objects and topics. Pickett and Zermeno collaborated in the composition and narratives of introductory text labels, paying special attention to the words that were used and how that might affect narratives. Roxas began to transcribe interviews of Californians who were interviewed in the summer of 2022 and using their own words; created narratives that emphasized their stories. These stories were composed of their own words, and mottos for each California were extrapolated and placed on pins which were distributed for free during the exhibition's run. All stories, narratives, portraits, and mottos were verified and given the okay by the interviewees, as they had the final authority over the stories that would be placed on the wall of the museum.

Collections

The collections management team consisted of two student assistants, Fatima Vazquez and Morgan Hast. Their main responsibilities included the documentation and management of the temporary *Afróntalo* collection. Vazquez and Hast were trained in collection handling and proper procedures for the documentation of objects by Dr. Huhn. This training served to provide the students with a basic skill necessary to working with most types of collections, instilling discourse surrounding the accessibility of objects and their sociological contexts for both scholarly and personal endeavors.

The *Afróntalo* collection consisted of 241 objects that included but were not limited to: Minga dresses and wigs worn in festivities, cookware used in everyday life, postage stamps, CDs and vinyl records, and a donkey jaw. During the documentation process of this collection, the student assistants were to aid the incoming loan descriptions by producing informational shots (in which rulers and color bars were used) and measurements of the

objects, as part of a larger project to create a catalog of the collections currently stewarded by CSUSB's Anthropology Museum.

Once all the objects for *Afróntalo* were inventoried into the museum's collection database, student assistants moved on to the documentation of the museum's permanent collections. Here, they were able to expand on the skills they learned from the previous months to create object labels with the contextual information they gathered. Although there was existing documentation for the museum's permanent holdings: the Ellins, Webb, and Salenger Collections, the main challenge for the student assistants was to provide updated versions that were more conscious of both the contemporary period and Indigenous interdisciplinary cultural frameworks. In the process of research gathering for these objects, topics such as origin and/or background and religious and/or spiritual significance were taken into consideration. While the students were able to extensively provide detailed condition reports on the physicality of the objects, being able to bridge gaps of pre-existing cultural and religious and/or spiritual backgrounds between ethnic groups of Indigenous communities and their perceived objects proved difficult. Existing documents provided little to no information about ethnic backgrounds or fabricators, with published works also proving to have limited information that can no longer be built upon.

Fabrication

The *Afróntalo* exhibit is a whirlwind of color, texture, sound, and sight. The remarkable outcome is the result of months of dedication and attention to minute details at every level of installation. The design and fabrications team consisted of CSUSB student assistants Alessandro Corsaro, Gabriela "Gibby" Diaz (who joined the project), Morgan Hast, and Holland Snipes (who left the project early), who nurtured a relationship between the Anthropology Museum and CSUSB's Art and Design departments

to complete exhibit fabrications consisting of impressive textiles and fully realized sculptures, patiently crafted by hand.

Oftentimes, unique and unorthodox methods were used to achieve the desired effect, fresh from the mind of Dr. Huhn, including many hours spent shucking individual reeds of Otate (Mexican bamboo reeds) and futile attempts by Hast at splitting wood. Amongst the uncommon methods used during the fabrication process, an equally interesting grocery list of materials include impressive amounts of Otate, uncut firewood, resin, plaster of Paris, a sewing machine, a hand ax, a pickax, and one notable machete.

This personal touch, the obvious evidence of human hands found amongst the fabricated objects littered across the exhibit, such as the 10-foot introductory tapestry, hand-cut papel picado, and sculpted examples of traditional meals and ingredients commonly found in an AfroTamiagua kitchen, effectively mimic objects of cultural significance to the Afrodescendant communities located across California and Mexico.

Opening Day

Embroidered on the museum entrance and the first thing visitors see upon entering the exhibition is the *Afróntalo* 10-foot introductory tapestry, which was crafted by Corsaro (design and fabrication student assistant) which states “One in four Latin Americans has African ancestry. And yet, there is a general deficit of knowledge regarding the presence and prevalence of blackness throughout the Americas. This is more than a simple matter of obscurity. It is a problem of erasure, invisibility and dislocation.”⁶

⁶ *Afróntalo* introductory label on *Stitched Together*, *Afróntalo* label by Arianna Huhn, In exhibition “*Afróntalo*” at the California State University San Bernardino Anthropology Museum, San Bernardino, CA, seen on March 1, 2024.



Figure 1: *Stitched Together* tapestry with exhibit's name hanging on the entryway of the museum. Tapestry made by CSUSB student Alessandro Corsaro.⁷

Thursday, September 21, 2023, marked the opening reception for *Afróntalo*. More than one hundred students, staff, faculty, and community members gathered at the museum entrance to join the museum in unveiling the exhibition. Everyone who arrived was checked in to receive a raffle ticket for their chance to win an object from the exhibition; while awaiting the festivities to begin, visitors were encouraged to explore the museum and read its contents before moving downstairs to the opening ceremony. At the ceremony, opening remarks and speeches were given by Director Huhn, CSUSB President Tomás Morales, all four community curators, COMEXUS executive director Hazel Blackwell, representatives from the United States Department of

⁷ Evy Zermeno, *Afróntalo Introductory Tapestry*, Digital Photograph, September 2023; *Afróntalo* introductory label on *Stitched together*, *Afróntalo* label by Arianna Huhn, in exhibition “*Afróntalo*” at the California State University San Bernardino Anthropology Museum, San Bernardino, CA, seen on March 1, 2024; Alessandro Corsaro, *Stitched Together*, 2023, Tapestry, California State University, San Bernardino Anthropology Museum., California.

Education, and the Mexican Consulate in San Bernardino. President Morales in his welcome speech stated:

“I was born in Puerto Rico. I’m proud to claim my Afrodescendant background. Hispanic Heritage Month is definitely one such occasion where we celebrate diversity here at Cal State San Bernardino in all of its manifestations. The exhibit is part of our programming for this year’s celebration. It provides access to diversity which exists within the U.S. Hispanic heritage as well as in the global Hispanic community because AfroLatino culture, history and experience are a vibrant part of the Hispanic world, in part which is frequently overlooked. I am committed to having as many school children come from San Bernardino, Riverside County, to learn about their roots, particularly those from Mexico and Latin America.”⁸

Morales was not the only one to speak about the exhibit’s mission and importance. Blackwell states in her speech

“Today we gather to celebrate a remarkable journey into rich histories, heritage and identities of Afrodescendant communities in Mexico. This exhibition is a culmination of tireless efforts, collaboration and dedication, and I am honored to stand before you as we embark on this enlightening exploration.”⁹

A representative from the Mexican Consulate presented certificates to Dr. Huhn and lead curators in recognition of their collaborative work on the exhibit.¹⁰ Along with the remarks, speeches, and

⁸ Breanna Reeves et al., “CSUSB Anthropology Museum Showcases *Afróntalo* Exhibition,” *VOICE*, October 3, 2023, <https://theievoice.com/afrolatino-exhibit-csusb/>.

⁹ Reeves et al., “CSUSB Anthropology Museum Showcases *Afróntalo* Exhibition.”

¹⁰ Reeves et al., “CSUSB Anthropology Museum Showcases *Afróntalo* Exhibition.”

recognition, there were performances by Danza Afrobalele and rappers La Cruda Mora, who were collaborators in the Coyolillo section.



Figure 2: Dancers from Danza Afrobalele on Afróntalo opening night.¹¹



Figure 3: Afróntalo student assistants on opening night. Left to right: Evy Zermeno (Curatorial/Education), Morgan Hast (Collections/Fabrication), Baily Pickett (Developer), Alessandro Corsaro (Designer/Fabrication). Not pictured:

¹¹ Aryana Noroozi, *Dancers from Casa Coyolillo, a cultural center in the Coyolillo region of Veracruz, Mexico, perform traditional dances during the opening reception*, Photograph, October 2023, *Black Voice News*, <https://i0.wp.com/blackvoicenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CSUSB6.png?ssl=1>.

*Fatima Vazquez (Collections), Holland Snipes (Design/Fabrication), Gabriela “Gibby” Diaz (Design/Fabrication) and Allyza Roxas (Developer).*¹²

AfroMexico and Afro-Mexican Communities

Upon entering the exhibit, visitors are met with a choice of where they would like to begin, either AfroMexico or Afrolatine California. Many begin in AfroMexico, as that is where the history of afrodescendants in the Americas is thought to begin. The introductory section provides an abbreviated history of how Afrodescendants arrived in New Spain, present-day Mexico. Many afrodescendants living in Mexico have ancestors who arrived on the continent through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, while there are outliers who arrived of their own volition during this time. Migration is a big part of this section, as Africans continue to migrate to Mexico today.¹³ The introductory section discusses life for enslaved peoples and their efforts to obtain freedom and mobility, through any means. It also showcases how Afrodescendants have fought and continue to fight for representation and visibility in a nation that has continuously dismissed their history, culture, traditions, and contributions to forming the nation, while facing discrimination and racism in all aspects of life. There is a common saying in Mexico, “no hay negros aquí,” “There are no Blacks here.” This is a common theme that is seen throughout the exhibition as these regions and people describe how they continuously combated the narrative of Mexico having no Black people.

The first community after the introduction is Tamiahua, where lead curator Doris Careaga-Coleman, a visiting professor in the Chicana/Chicano studies department at the University of New

¹² Evy Zermeno, *Afróntalo Student Assistants on Opening Day*, Digital Photograph, September 2023.

¹³ “Mexico Saw a Huge Increase in Migrants From Africa and Venezuela in 2023, Authorities Say,” *AP News*, February 17, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/mexico-migrants-africa-venezuela-us-border-3747c0e701fc2ddfb41b3da64371ec7c>.

Mexico, chose to focus her section on gastronomy, foods, cooking, and cooking techniques, which has roots in African ancestry. She showcases how the Columbian Exchange (1492-1800) moved not only enslaved Africans, but resulted in the globalization of trade, which include many of the ingredients featured within her exhibition.



Figure 4: Tamiahua Curator Doris Careaga-Coleman (in orange) interacting with visitors inside her exhibition at California State University, San Bernardino.¹⁴

Careaga-Coleman states in her introductory label “While these traditions make our community unique, they also link us to others in the African Diaspora — those who also managed to adapt in other places in the Americas, developing their communities within the context of Indigenous, African, and European influences.”¹⁵ Tamiahua has one of the highest percentages of inhabitants who self-identify as Afrodescendants, or Afromexican, then any other communities in Veracruz. She goes on to explain in her section how culinary traditions differ by region due to the

¹⁴ Precinct Reporter News, “Tamiahua Curator Doris Careaga-Coleman with Visitors,” Digital Photograph, September 28, 2023, <https://www.precinctreporter.com/vibrant-culture-of-mexico-afro-descendent-communities/>.

¹⁵ Tamiahua introductory label, Tamiahua by Doris Careaga-Coleman, in exhibition “Afróntalo” at the California State University San Bernardino Anthropology Museum, San Bernardino, CA, seen on March 1, 2024.

Reviews

diasporic communities located within the region. She highlights that even though each region contains their own uniqueness, the similarities of AfroMexican communities and Afrolatine diaspora reveal a common ancestral cultural heritage which traces back to Africa.

After visiting Tamiagua, Veracruz, visitors enter a new region, Coyolillo, within the same state of Veracruz. The Coyolillo section was led by curator and AfroMexican activist, Daniela López Carreto, who employed a team to help her bring this vision to life. Her team of eleven consisted of curators, editors, audiovisual producers, artists, artisans, and translators. The Coyolillo team focused on community joy and embracing their Blackness through art, relationships, music, and dance. To truly showcase their community, the curators created a series of documentaries which accompany topics in their section. However, the focal point of Coyolillo can be seen upon entering the museum, as the community brought in a muralist, Julio Cesar López Antuna, who free handed a vibrant and colorful mural spanning two stories.



Figure 5: Mural de Fiestas Coyoleñas (Coyoleño Festivities Mural). Three festivities are depicted: Day of the Cross (bottom), Carnival (middle), and Feast of Saint Isidore the Laborer, patron saint (top).¹⁶

Established in 2011, the Casa Coyolillo Community Cultural Center is a nexus for community building and reclamation within the region. Here, community members have a space to build autonomy and solidarity. Since its inception, Casa Coyolillo has built up pride in its AfroMexican identity and strengthened the communal bounds of the region allowing individual, group, and community mobility. This can be seen when visitors walk through and read how the center has helped the community through art, fashion, dance, and sports.

Next, Negros Mascogos, in Coahuilla, is curated by social anthropologist, Karla Consuelo Rivera Téllez, who chooses to focus on the history of enslaved afrodescendants who fled the United States using the Underground Railroad, eventually settling in Mexico. Rivera Téllez states “The Negros Mascogos Tribe is geographically located very far away from the area that is considered Afromexican, so they have had to face racism and discrimination while living in the north part of country.”¹⁷ She breaks her section into three themes, consisting of the tribe’s origin in Africa and the slave trade that brought them to the Americas, their presence in the United States and relationship with the Seminoles in Florida, and their final settlement in Coahuilla, Mexico. Their story begins the same as many, with the forced removal of people from their homes in Africa and transported to the Americas to work the Southern fields of what would later

¹⁶ Evy Zermeno, *Afróntalo Mural*, Digital Photograph, September 2023; Julio Cesar López Antuna, *Mural de Fiestas Coyoleñas*, September 2023, Acrylic painting on wall, approx. 4 m x 2m, California State University, San Bernardino Anthropology Museum, San Bernardino, California.

¹⁷ Tribu Negros Mascogos introductory label, Negros Mascogos by Karla Consuelo Rivera Téllez, in exhibition “*Afróntalo*” at the California State University San Bernardino Anthropology Museum, San Bernardino, CA, seen on April 1, 2024.

become the United States. After severe mistreatment, many enslaved people fled to Florida, where they found refuge with a Seminole Indian settlement; it was here a Negro Mascogos (Black Seminole) population began. Rivera Téllez shows how after they crossed into Mexico, to settle in the country, they were ordered to chase and exterminate the Comanche and Lipan Apache Indians. She then goes on to tell how after the Negro Mascogos partially completed their task, they settled in Coahuila, Mexico, where discrimination is an ongoing problem for the community. Despite the racism and discrimination, they face, they are working towards preserving their heritage and to raise their voices and representation, showing pride in their roots in both the United States and Mexico.

The final community is Costa Chica, which spans the regions of Oaxaca and Guerrero, which was led by curator and social anthropologist Sergio Javier Navarrete Pellicer of Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology), who assembled a team of three to help him bring his vision to life, which consisted of two craftsmen, two preparators, and an editor. Along with his team, Navarrete Pellicer partnered with Raíz de la Ceiba, a non-profit civil society organization in Costa Chica. For this exhibition, they chose to highlight AfroMexican culture, in particular, ritual dances, arts, and music. Curator Sergio Navarrete states that “The exhibit is set up as a walk through the streets of the village in search of these dancers, and for you to learn about their costumes, their music, and their games. Tag along with them and enjoy the antics of their performance.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Costa Chica introductory label, Costa Chica by Sergio Javier Navarrete Pellicer, in exhibition “*Afróntalo*” at the California State University San Bernardino Anthropology Museum, San Bernardino, CA, seen on March 1, 2024.



Figure 6: Figure in ritual costume for Dance of the Devils (far left); altar of the dead (left); costume for ritual cattle herder dance (right).¹⁹

The three ritual dances that this section is centered on are *Danza de la Tortuga* (Dance of the Turtle), *Danza de Vaqueros* (Dance of the Cattle Herders), and *Danza de los Diablos* (Dance of the Devils). Each dance has an accompanying costume created by craftsman Esteban Zúñiga Ruiz, during an October 2023 AfroOaxacan event, sponsored by the Anthropology Museum and the Garcia Center for the Arts in San Bernardino. In addition to the costumes, heard throughout the exhibition was produced in the Costa Chica region, displaying the infusion of African and Latino sounds. One part of the section that many visitors are drawn to is the [Raíz de la Ceiba](#) artwork hanging from the windows of the museum.²⁰ Raíz de la Ceiba is an organization that allows children

¹⁹ Evy Zermeno, *Afróntalo's Costa Chica*, Digital Photograph, September 2023.

²⁰ To see the impact that Raíz de la Ceiba has on its community head over to their Instagram page <https://www.instagram.com/raizdelaceiba/>; Visitors are encouraged to respond to the children's artwork hanging on the walls by painting their own culture or offering words of encouragement. The museum provides a space and materials for visitors to produce their own response. All work collected during the exhibition's run will be sent to the organization as part of a cultural/educational exchange.

to express themselves using creative means and artistic expression, as an alternative response to the raw violence in the area. Here the organization has them “paint to be free,” to take pride in their Black communities, coming together to form what they call a “Black Rainbow,” and to increase their visibility and representation in places where their history was erased.

Each AfroMexican community offered their own traditions and culture, which showcased the diversity of afrodescendants and Afromexican communities across the nation, providing insights and educating visitors on regions of Mexico that are often not thought about. They challenge the narrative of “no hay negros aquí” and show that there are Blacks in Mexico, who are proud of their roots and ancestry. Putting them all together they exemplify Raíz de la Ceiba’s definition of a “Black Rainbow,” as they show the many shades of Black across the states of Veracruz, Coahuilla, Guerrero, and Oaxaca.

Afrolatine California

The other main section of the exhibition, as a whole, is Afrolatine California, which provides a look into Afrodescendants in California. Here, visitors are introduced to the twenty-one Californians who were interviewed, whose stories are on display. As you walk into the section, an abbreviated history of Afrodescendants in California is on display, beginning with the push from the Spaniards to settle onto new lands. Many afrodescendants were instrumental in the Spanish and Mexican expeditions, like the Los Pobladores, the forty-four original founders of Los Angeles that developed the land into what it is today.²¹ Visitors are informed of the contributions of Afrolatines in the formation of many prominent cities such as: Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, and Rancho Cucamonga.

²¹ Tom Fassbender, “Los Pobladores: The 44 Founders of Los Angeles,” *Los Angeles Explorers Guild*, February 9, 2024, <https://losangelesexplorersguild.com/2021/09/04/los-pobladores-the-44-founders-of-los-angeles/>.



Figure 7: An abbreviated history of Afrolatine California on display at the Anthropology Museum.²²

This section shows how, once Americans from the east came into California in search of wealth, they brought racism and discrimination against the Black and Latino communities with them. Interpreting that racism and discrimination led to a point where their contributions and history were erased; this can be seen in the gap in the historic time frame. The introductory section demonstrates how societal pressures forced many Afrolatines to choose an identity based on their skin color, be it Black or Latin. The history section ends with information on the Afrolatine diaspora in California, showing how Afrolatine Californians are moving towards visibility and recognition, as well as embracing their dual identities.

Along the museum walls of Afrolatine California, hang twenty-one portraits of Afrolatine Californians who were interviewed and wanted to share their stories growing up with their diverse ancestry. The similarities between the stories is tangible, as

²² Evy Zermeno, *Afrolatine California Introduction*, Digital Photograph, September 2023.

many share the same experiences with discrimination and racism within their families, communities, and schools. Some spoke on how they grew up in families who suppressed their Black identity in favor of their Latino one; as explained in some stories, this suppression of identity was more prominent with individuals who were of a lighter skin tone, as those with darker skin tones shared their experiences of being bullied for being Black and speaking Spanish because, once again, the narrative of “no hay negros en Mexico” (there are no Blacks in Mexico) is prevalent.

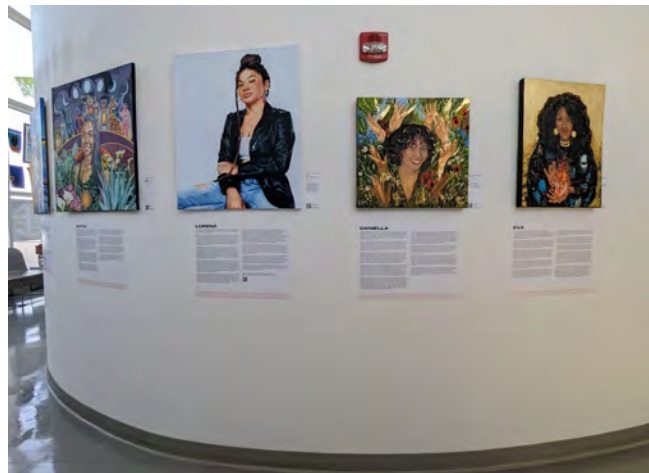


Figure 8: Four Afrolatine Californian portraits hanging on the Anthropology Museum wall.²³

This section highlights the many experiences of individuals, which can be seen in many individuals, not just in Afrolatine communities, who are struggling to find their own identity or are being pressured into choosing an identity based on their environments.

Afróntalo highlights and showcases Afrodescendants and Afrolatines, serving as a reminder that Blackness is woven throughout the history and culture of Mexico, California, and Latin

²³ Evy Zermeno, *Afrolatine Portraits*, Digital Photograph, September 2023.

America. Having been forcibly removed through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, they helped build communities, cities, states, and nations with no recognition for their contributions. The push towards visibility and representation is an ongoing process for Afrolatines and is one that will not stop. Mexico has taken steps in the right direction regarding the visibility and official recognition of AfroMexicans such as Vicente Guerrero (1782-1831), a revolutionary leader during the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821) and Mexico's first AfroMexican President, and Gaspar Yanga (c.1545-1618) leader of successful slave revolts and would become known as the "first liberator of the Americas."²⁴ In 2020, for the first time, Mexico's Afrodescendant population was counted. More than two million people across the country paid homage to their African roots and self-identified as Afrodescendant, reminding everyone that Mexico contains a third root in their formation and that mestizaje (Indigenous and Spanish) is not their only identity.

Further Projects

Virtual Exhibition

During the opening reception of *Afróntalo*, President Morales made a commitment to amplifying the museum's goal of highlighting the history, contributions, and traditions of Afrolatines in Mexico and California. Morales stated that "This exhibit brings awareness, and provides access to those who view the exhibit, either in person or virtually," going on to announce that by the end of the academic year, *Afróntalo* will have a permanent space online with a virtual exhibit developed by Director Huhn and CSUSB's Office of Academic Technologies & Innovation.²⁵

²⁴ Luis Escamilla, "Gaspar Yanga (C.1545-?),” *BLACKPAST*, March 29, 2009, <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/yanga-gaspar-c-1545/#:~:text=Known%20as%20the%20Primer%20Libertador,Americas%20earliest%20free%20black%20settlements>.

²⁵ Precinct Reporter News, "Vibrant Culture of Mexico Afro-Descendent Communities,” *Precinct Reporter Group*, September 28, 2023,

Living up to the President's announcement the Anthropology Museum team was able to work, and in a couple months, a [virtual 360° tour](#) was published on the museum's website.²⁶ The *Afróntalo* 360 Tour has provided access to those who wish to see the impact Afrodescendants have within communities. The virtual exhibit will have a permanent place on the Anthropology Museum website and can be used as a guide or reference when researching into topics within the African, Latin, and Afrolatine diaspora.



Figure 9: Map of *Afróntalo* Exhibition used in the virtual exhibition.²⁷

Lotería

After the official opening, two student assistants, Zermeno and Corsaro, began to work on another special project for the museum to accompany the exhibit and for future educational events associated with the museum and *Afróntalo*. During the research and planning phases of the exhibition, a concept for an upcoming project began to develop based on one object in the exhibit's temporary collection. The curatorial team learned during the research phase how anti-blackness was deeply entrenched in

<https://www.precinctreporter.com/vibrant-culture-of-mexico-afro-descendent-communities/>.

²⁶ "Afróntalo 360 Tour - H5P.com," <https://csusb-ati.h5p.com/content/1292109153055246508>.

²⁷ "Afróntalo 360 Tour - H5P.com," <https://csusb-ati.h5p.com/content/1292109153055246508>.

Mexican culture, with many people being unaware that Black people existed in Mexico. An example of this anti-Blackness is the beloved *lotería* game, a staple in Mexican households during the holidays. The widely recognizable Don Clemente version of the game uses the diminutive term of ‘El Negrito’ to describe the only Black character, with similar terms used to describe characters within the game.



Figure 10: Don Clemente *lotería* game in printed box format.²⁸

Many different versions of the game have come out since then, such as the popular Millennial *Lotería*. As a result, the museum student assistants worked on creating a *lotería* game designed to uplift and bring awareness of Afrolatine individuals who represent, advocate, and epitomize their communities. Zermeno conducted community outreach for a preliminary list of individuals who could be featured. From there, a survey was set up and sent out to Afrolatine communities, who voted for their preferred icons; after which a shorter list was produced. Based on

²⁸ Lotería® Don Clemente, (@autentica.loteria), LOTERÍA® es el juego más mexicano., December, 29, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CmwsJZUOrHk/>.

this shorter list, an advisory committee of Afrolatine community members was established to provide insight on the preliminary short list of individuals. Based on their input, advocacy, and suggestions, a final list of fifty-four icons were selected, with the committee having the final authoritative say. Once the list was finalized, Zermeno began researching and compiling short biographies for each individual, to be featured in the rule book pamphlet, while Corsaro began designing the game and artwork for each icon. The final product is a CSUSB student-made product, on behalf of the Anthropology Museum.



Figure 11: Boxed set of Lotería Afrolatina.²⁹

Each boxed set includes a 54-card deck, depicting the fifty-four different Afrolatine icons, thirty-two game boards, and a rule book with short biographies for each game icon. Also included are

²⁹ CSUSB Anthropology Museum, (@csusb anthmuseum), Hot off the presses! Loteria Afrolatina is now in print., March 27, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C5CaQXBvyUJ/>.

twenty miniature pins with a different icon.³⁰ The response that the game has garnered has been remarkable with over eight hundred domestic and international requests for printed and digital copies. The game is available for non-profits and educators through the museum website, all for free.

Conclusion

The development of the actual exhibition might have only been an eleven-month project, but its roots can be traced back to two years prior, to the 2021 Fulbright Hays Seminar Abroad Program, along with the need to raise the awareness and visibility of Afro Mexican communities within Mexico and abroad. But it will have a lasting impact that will live on through its related programming in Afrolatinizamos, Afróntalo 360 Virtual Tour, and Loteria Afrolatina. Afróntalo has touched on a topic that has been historically underrepresented or erased, especially in public institutions. *Afróntalo* will continue to educate others on the topic of Afrolatinas bringing educators together to teach students about diverse cultures. The museum's biggest project has been a joy to work on and the experience that we, as student assistants, gained throughout this project is tremendous.

³⁰ Icon pins are available while supplies last. Icon pins were sent out with the first 100 requests for the official boxed printed version and remaining pins are available during Museum events only. All remaining game requests are subject to the Anthropology Museum's digital (print from home) version. Non-profit organizations and educators can request a free electronic version here: https://csusb.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zqhCuFpHe8TymO.

Bibliography

- Afrolatinimamos (@Afrolatinizamos). "CSUSB's Anthropology Museum is excited to announce its K-12 Lesson Planning Project - Afrolatinizamos!." *Instagram photo*. February 20, 2023. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Co5cd08SyER/>.
- "Afróntalo 360 Tour - H5P.com." <https://csusb-ati.h5p.com/content/1292109153055246508>.
- "Anthropology Museum." CSUSB. Accessed March 21, 2024. <https://www.csusb.edu/anthropology-museum>.
- AP News. "Mexico Saw a Huge Increase in Migrants From Africa and Venezuela in 2023, Authorities Say," February 17, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/mexico-migrants-africa-venezuela-us-border3747c0e701fc2ddfb41b3da64371ec7c>.
- Corsaro, Alessandro. *Stitched Together*. 2023. Tapestry. California State University, San Bernardino Anthropology Museum. San Bernardino, California, United States of America.
- CSUSB Anthropology Museum (@csusb_anthmuseum). "Hot off the presses! Loteria Afrolatina is now in print." *Instagram photo*, March 27, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C5CaQXBvyUJ/>.
- "Current Exhibition | Anthropology Museum." CSUSB. Accessed March 21, 2024. <https://www.csusb.edu/anthropology-museum/exhibitions/current-exhibition>.
- Escamilla, Luis. "Gaspar Yanga (C.1545-?)." *BLACKPAST*, March 29, 2009. <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/yanga-gaspar-c-1545/#:~:text=Known%20as%20the%20Primer%20Libertador,Americas%20earliest%20free%20black%20settlement>.
- Fassbender, Tom. "Los Pobladores: The 44 Founders of Los Angeles." *Los Angeles Explorers Guild*, February 9, 2024. <https://losangelesexplorersguild.com/2021/09/04/los-pobladores-the-44-founders-of-los-angeles/>.
- "INTO LIGHT | Anthropology Museum." CSUSB. Accessed

- March 21, 2024. <https://www.csusb.edu/anthropology-museum/exhibitions/previous-exhibitions/light>.
- López Antuna, Julio Cesar. *Mural de Fiestas Coyoleñas*. 2023. Acrylic painting on wall. California State University San Bernardino Anthropology Museum. San Bernardino, California, United States of America.
- Lotería® Don Clemente. (@autentica.loteria). “LOTERÍA® es el juego más mexicano..” *Instagram photo*. December, 29, 2022. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CmwsJZUOrHk/>.
- Noroozi, Aryana. *Dancers from Casa Coyolillo, a cultural center in the Coyolillo region of Veracruz, Mexico, perform traditional dances during the opening reception*. October 3, 2023. *Black Voice News*. <https://i0.wp.com/blackvoicenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CSUSB6.png?ssl=1>.
- Precinct Reporter News. *Tamiahua Curator Doris Careaga-Coleman with Visitors*. September 28, 2023. *Precinct Reporter News*. <https://www.precinctreporter.com/vibrant-culture-of-mexico-afro-descendent-communities/>.
- . “Vibrant Culture of Mexico Afro-Descendent Communities.” *Precinct Reporter Group News*, September 28, 2023. <https://www.precinctreporter.com/vibrant-culture-of-mexico-afro-descendent-communities/>.
- Reeves, Breanna, and Aryana Noroozi. “CSUSB Anthropology Museum Showcases Afróntalo Exhibition.” *VOICE*, October 3, 2023. <https://theievoice.com/afrolatino-exhibit-csusb/>.
- U.S Department of Education [Office of Postsecondary Education]. “Fiscal Year 2021 APPLICATION FOR GRANTS UNDER FULBRIGHT-HAYS SEMINARS ABROAD PROGRAM.” United States Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2020. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpssap/fy2021seminarsabroadappv3.docx>

Author Bios

Morgan Hast graduated in May 2023 from California State University, San Bernardino. A distinguished scholar, she graduated summa cum laude with departmental honors, earning dual degrees in history and public history and she holds a certificate in museum studies, showcasing her dedication to the preservation and conservation of historical material. Since graduating, Morgan has been pursuing a master's in library science and information studies (MLIS) at UCLA, specializing in archives studies. Morgan is currently working to digitally protect and preserve endangered water culture in a California desert community. She recognizes, with immense gratitude, the professors, colleagues, friends, and the family she found at CSUSB, that have helped propel her to where she is through their love and guidance. She would like to thank her mother, Kristina, for encouraging her to spread her wings, and supplying her with the life that made it possible for her to pursue her dreams and ambitions. Her grandmother, Sandra, radiates love and kindness, and has always been her safe harbor, her father, Christopher, who is always her first call to whom she shares good news, and her grandfather, Dennis, for their enthusiastic support; they are her constant cheerleaders. To her sisters, Madison, and Megan, she expresses deep appreciation, acknowledging through joy and strife, she would not be who she is without their influence.



Fatima Vazquez will be graduating in the Spring of 2025 with a master's degree in museum studies with a concentration in exhibition and visitor experience from The George Washington University. She recently graduated from California State University, San Bernardino in May of 2023 and earned respective bachelor's degrees in public history and history along with a certificate in museum studies. Although she has solidified her academic and professional interests around inclusivity and diversity in exhibition and curatorial processes, she still managed to incorporate her interest in objects by working at The George Washington University Museum and Textile Museum in textile rehousing for the Avenir Foundation Conservation and Collections Resource Center. Her goal moving forward is to incorporate cross-cultural dialogue and participation theory and methods to further heighten visitor experiences in community centered museums. She would like to thank her family for their continued support in her journey across the country, Dr. Long for being a person of wisdom and quirk, and finally Dr. Huhn for giving her the push she needed to kickstart her passion.



Reviews

Evy Zermeno is a current graduate student at California State University, San Bernardino working towards completing her master of arts in history in Spring 2025, she holds dual degrees in public history and history as well as a certificate in museum studies. Evy is a second-generation Mexican American, with roots in diverse communities, her academic and curatorial work seeks to emphasize that diversity. Her curatorial work aims to highlight and bring visibility to the underrepresented communities within public institutional spaces such as museums. Her academic research focuses on settler colonialism, California Indigenous history, public history, and museum studies. Evy aims to work in the museum field and as an educator at the college level, while continuing her education in a PhD program. She hopes to inspire others to learn about history, outside of standard academic textbooks. She would like to thank her mother, Sharon, who was by her side and continuously pushed her to never give up and to keep looking toward the light at the end of the tunnel. Evy would also like to thank her faculty advisors Dr. Thomas Long for his never-ending guidance, support, and mentorship whom without, none of this would be possible. And Dr. Arianna Huhn, who gave her an opportunity in the museum field, mentored and guided her as she co-curated her first exhibit.



Museum Review: Cape Town's Slave Lodge Recognition

By Joanna Gonzalez

Slavery is a historical subject that has affected many parts of the world, with some regions still feeling its effects today. South Africa was one of the regions greatly impacted by slave trade. Located at the southernmost tip of Africa, Cape Town, South Africa was colonized as a European trade post by the Dutch East India Company for merchants who were traveling from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. The acquisition of the cape was vital for travelers on their way from Asia to Europe and vice versa, as it provided a much-needed stop for resupply.¹ This route would become even more vital as the years progressed as it would encourage slave trade with various other countries, including the French and the Portuguese becoming part of the infamous Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (1501-1867). Cape Town was not developed by the hands of its European colonizers, instead the use of slave labor was implemented, instilling and preserving a superiority ideology that Europeans had over Black populations. A large portion of the slaves used in the development of Cape Town came from the regions of southeast Asia and West Africa. Slaves were separated by two categories: company owned and privately owned; private slaves were those who worked for individuals outside of the Dutch East India Trading company. Housing for slaves in South Africa consisted of a one-story building with multiple rooms that were used to separate officers and slaves, this building would come to be known as a slave lodge. The windowless rooms housing slaves were tightly packed, the floors were known to be layered with vast amounts of human waste, and the stagnant air

¹ A cape is land of high elevation that connects to the sea.

was thick, reminiscent of the widely known illustrations of the Middle Passage.

From the time of Dutch colonization in the fifteenth century, to the period of apartheid (1948 to 1994) by the Afrikaners, racial segregation had been incorporated and ingrained in the community. Apartheid was implemented post World War Two (1939-1945) in South Africa by the Nationalist party who aimed to keep full governmental power in the country's minority White population. It emphasized complete racial segregation and divided the South African communities into four categorizations of racial groups: Black, Indian, coloured (non-Whites) and White. The coloured population consisted of individuals who were of mixed race; they were treated better than the Black population but worse than the White population due to their mixed heritage. Once racial categorization began, so did the development of extreme oppression and the elimination and one-sided interpretation of history, to ensure that what historical content remained and was told, favored the distinguished White groups within South Africa. Thirty years after the end of apartheid many institutions are striving towards retelling history and re-educating the community, to inform them on events that may have been erased from their collective memories. Located in Cape Town, South Africa, the Iziko Slave Lodge is one of the institutions that has continuously progressed and evolved to ensure their deliberate change towards embracing slave culture and history in Cape Town. When driving on Adderley St and Wale St in downtown Cape Town, the Lodge poses as simply another colonial-esque building as viewed in the image below. With the Lodge located next to the Company Gardens and integrated as part of the downtown area of Cape Town, it is inevitable that one who passes through the streets often will begin to question what is contained inside the building. The convenient location for visiting the Lodge and exposing oneself to a changed history is more than likely. This essay will examine the Iziko Slave Lodge ancestral exhibits in 2023 compared to their previous exhibits, and how apartheid had affected the telling of history within the lodge.



Figure 1: Facade of the Slave Lodge Building, now a museum.²

Background

Apartheid was a strict government policy that preserved White supremacy at the expense of separating and oppressing the majority non-White population, Africans and “Coloureds,” i.e. a makeshift group of individuals deemed not quite “black” or “white.” Nigel Worden, an esteemed South African historian specializing in South African slavery, was the keynote speaker in 2009, during a series of conferences discussing slavery and the slave trade in Africa. He pointed out that “under apartheid, school history textbooks, museums, tourist sites and heritage memorializations focused on settler history and completely neglected the slave past.”³ Known as the “Cape of Good Hope,” Cape Town had been developed and constructed by slaves who were owned by the Dutch East India Trade Company, a part of

² Joanna Gonzalez, *Slave Lodge Cape Town, South Africa*, May 2023, Digital Photograph.

³ Nigel Worden, “The Changing Politics of Slave Heritage in the Western Cape Africa,” *Journal of African History* 50, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 23–40, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021853709004204>.

history that was not acknowledged until later. Slavery in Cape Town was similar to slavery happening all over the world, in South Africa,

Company owned slaves, who were held in the dank conditions of the Slave Lodge...who performed the hard work loading and unloading ships, as well as, menial tasks in the company's workshops...slaves belonging to the burghers and company officials in their private capacity. Most of these slaves worked as domestic labourers...fetching water and firewood, as well as cooking, washing, and so forth. Others were artisans, fishermen or sellers of cooked food on the streets of the city.⁴

Apartheid implemented European colonial history in textbooks erasing slave history, which consisted of the ancestral history of many South Africans today. For many, the untold labor and experiences of their ancestors affected their identity with the region. This disconnect started in the education system at a young age; education was one of the prominent ways that misinterpreted history was spread and a place where colonial history was reiterated and celebrated.

An apartheid policy mandated that students attend different schools based on race and the district they were located in. In 1950, the apartheid government began passing a series of laws, among them was the Group Areas Act. The Group Areas Act became the foundation for policies as it aimed to eliminate mixed neighborhoods and establish racially segregated ones. This Act went beyond the removal and relocation of South Africans to different neighborhoods, districts. Instead, the act heavily affected the education system for all South African students.⁵

⁴ Robert Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 26.

⁵ Patricia Johnson-Castle, "The Group Areas Act of 1950," South African History Online," <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/group-areas-act-1950>.

Historically, education was used as a tool of oppression in South Africa. Denial of quality and racism free education to the majority of the population was one of the principle strategies of colonialism and apartheid to guarantee the underdevelopment of, and deny Black persons access to knowledge. It is the subjection of the Black majority to inferior...The legacy of this inferior system continues to haunt our country.⁶

What they learned was different; Black students followed Bantu education which provided vocational training to ensure that students would remain as laborers for White South Africans. Their jobs would consist of heavy labor, farmwork, or helpers for White families. Oftentimes males who had gone through the Bantu education system would work miles away from their families, and inside buildings meant to hold ten men, but would house thirty or more men. For Black and Coloured men to work, especially outside of their province, they would have to carry around passbooks with their identifying information as part of the internal passport system policy. These passbooks allowed employers to directly enter evaluations of each employee, affecting any future job opportunities.

The Black population made up and continues to make up the majority of the South African population, by limiting the exposure of their own history it limits the understanding of themselves, their identity, culture and traditions which have long been forgotten or erased. The colonial authorities knew that an uneducated population would not be able to raise questions about the leadership and mistreatment they experienced from their own government, and they would not think to rise up against segregation. It came as an advantage for the apartheid government

⁶ South African Government, "National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance," report, *Republic of South Africa*, 25, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201903/national-action-plan.pdf.

to educate populations on colonial history rather than slave history, thereby ensuring that the communities directly impacted by slavery and government policies would remain under their rule.

One of the ways in which the South African government ensured separate lives and furthered the racial divide was through creating a culture of shame based on skin color. For individuals with darker skin tones, that meant knowing the color of their skin was directly linked to slave ancestry and was looked down upon. While by contrast, lighter skin tone individuals were able to conceal their slave ancestry. Nigel Worden echoes these views as he states that “By the early 1900s, slavery was no longer a desirable heritage in a society where increasingly pervasive social and political segregation had made whiteness the most desirable social attribute.”⁷ Due to these Apartheid policies, ideology of White superiority over Blacks and other non-White populations the history of slaves and inevitably the history of Africans was diminished in not only the country but across the world.

In 1994 political leader Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) was elected President of South Africa, officially ending the period of apartheid and racial segregation in the country. Mandela had been a powerful voice for the anti-apartheid groups. He had been in prison the majority of his life for preaching all that is wrong with apartheid and dedicated his life to the reformation of South Africa. Under the leadership of former President Mandela, it was safe for the Iziko Slave Lodge to re-introduce South African history and slave history to the country using the perspectives and narratives from their enslaved ancestors.

Iziko Museums and the Slave Lodge

Since the end of apartheid, the Iziko Museums of South Africa, operating eleven of South Africa’s national museums, has been working to undo generations of misinterpreted history and withheld knowledge that persisted during their various colonial

⁷ Worden, “The Changing Politics of Slave Heritage in the Western Cape Africa,” 6.

eras (1652-1961). Out of the eleven museums within Iziko, the Slave Lodge is determined to ensure that slave history is represented operating under a theme of “From human wrongs to human rights.”⁸ In 1998 when the South African Cultural History Museum was renamed the Slave Lodge, was when the reversal of apartheid education began for the historical site. Sustaining the culture of locals whose ancestry is connected with slaves in the Cape is now being projected inside the Slave Lodge. As the museum website states:

Thus despite significant transformation since 1999, the bias of a ‘pre-democracy’ worldview continues to be reflected in both the buildings and the archival presentation of our collections. Iziko museums is therefore developing a plan to strategically re-imagine and decolonise its museums and galleries and is also working towards deepening its focus on intangible heritage and indigenous knowledge systems...to render visible what has been previously marginalized and excluded.⁹

Furthermore, they aim to distinguish South African slavery from American and West African slavery. Preserving slave history is as important as preserving the Slave Lodge building itself as it holds historical significance to the nation. The Slave Lodge was the original housing unit during the Dutch and British colonial periods that housed the enslaved people by the Dutch East India Trading

⁸ “Slave Lodge - Iziko Museums,” Iziko museums of South Africa, October 13, 2023, <https://www.iziko.org.za/museums/slave-lodge/>; The Slave Lodge building since its construction has been reused and adapted to fit the needs of government officials and South Africa. The building has been used as Government Offices, an Old Supreme Court, and the South African Cultural History Museum.

⁹ “Iziko Museums of South Africa: Annual Report 2021-2022,” *Iziko Museums of South Africa* (Iziko Museums of South Africa an agency of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture), https://www.iziko.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/AR-2021_2022.pdf.

Company. The exhibits that have impacted the community are described within this essay.

Iziko museums developed after the end of apartheid and as funds were made available, gathered and distributed, their exhibits were updated or retired over the years. The change to decolonize the Iziko Slave Lodge has been continuous as historians gather primary sources on Cape Town slavery and began to employ people who are representative of the previously disenfranchised South Africans. This change has escalated greatly during the coronavirus pandemic (2020-2023) as new exhibits were designed and plans for further slave representative exhibits were established. During the pandemic, Iziko museums was able to obtain more funding for the Slave Lodge, these funds included money for new research and exhibitions as well as educational material. Funds are scarce following the end of the pandemic, there is an inclination and proposal for more inclusive and representative exhibits to be developed by educators, archivists, curators, and community members who understand and promote the importance of slave perspectives in their community.

Iziko museums are the learning centers for the many provinces in and around Cape Town. The name Iziko is Xhosa for “hearth”, indicating that it is a fireplace, a place for people to gather around and tell stories of their ancestors and various other histories.¹⁰ Thus it is humanizing and recognizing that there are people in Cape Town whose slave ancestors need to be represented in a fair and just manner and not in a way that is simply another tourist attraction.

The Cape Town Slave Lodge was first developed in 1679 during the Dutch colonization of Cape Town. It was a small building with no windows built by the Dutch East India Trade Company to stow the slaves that the company used as labor during the development of Cape Town.

¹⁰ Joanna Gonzalez and Najumoeniesa Damon, Interview with Najumoeniesa, Personal, June 5, 2023.

The Slave Lodge housed the slaves who belonged to the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie). These Slaves worked for the VOC and were never sold. Very little is known of the people who lived in the Lodge. We know what type of work they did and we know some of the conditions in which they lived. We have managed to find at least half of their names, but know little more than where they came from and the date of their death.¹¹

While the overall documentation of the slaves is poor, who they were is exemplified through the buildings, agriculture, and within the Cape Town population many of whom have direct lineage from a slave during the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. Surrounding the now bustling city of Cape Town are farms, wineries, and monuments that remind South Africans who they are and who their ancestors were. The lack of documentation of the enslaved peoples was of value in the racial hierarchy of previous times as slaves and their descendants were unable to retrace their heritage and families. Due to this poor documentation, there is a limit to how much ancestral history can be known. However, little has been discovered by historians and curators about the slave lodge from their archives and is currently being exhibited on the first floor of the Iziko Slave Lodge.

The original composition of the Slave Lodge was a one-story building, but throughout the centuries an additional level has been added. Located on the first floor, to the left of the museum's main entrance, a map of the lodge's original design is on display as the first exhibit of the museum.¹² The floor map is a welcomed edition as it exemplifies the original design, giving visitors a chance to see the intended use of the space, despite its various transformations. The second level originally housed officers and other government officials, but it is currently used to display an

¹¹ "Iziko Slave Lodge – Slavery in South Africa," Iziko Museums of South Africa, accessed July 5, 2023, <https://slavery.iziko.org.za/slavelodge>.

¹² Image of the Floor Map see Figure 2

Egyptology room, a colonial silverware case, weaponry cases, and a large exhibit about apartheid.¹³ The current formation of the Lodge is based on exhibition spaces that promote and contribute to the humanization of the slaves and how they are related to the development of Cape Town and its population.

The Slave Lodge houses a total of eight exhibitions, five on the first floor and the three remaining ones on the second floor. The first floor's exhibitions consist of the newly updated standards of representation, while the second-floor houses more colonial era exhibitions. On the first floor upon entry is the “*Remembering Slavery*” exhibit. In the left wing is the blueprint of the original floor plan of the Slave Lodge, “*Identities Rooted in Slavery*” memorial column, and a map of the Indian Ocean slave trade. In the right wing of the lodge is “*Labour at the Cape: What work did the enslaved do and what is their legacy*” and “*Who Were the Enslaved*” exhibits.¹⁴ The three second floor exhibitions are: “*Slave Origins: Cultural Echoes*” consisting of artifacts connected to the Slave Lodge, “*From African Earth: Celebrating our African Vessel Heritage*”, “*Singing Freedom: Music and the struggle against apartheid*”, and the Egypt room exhibits.¹⁵



Figure 2: The floor map for the original Slave Lodge.¹⁶

¹³ “Iziko Slave Lodge – Slavery in South Africa.”

¹⁴ “Current Exhibition Archives - Iziko Museums,” Iziko Museums of South Africa, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://www.iziko.org.za/category/current-exhibition/>.

¹⁵ “Current Exhibition Archives - Iziko Museums.”

¹⁶ Joanna Gonzalez, *Floor Map*, May 2023, Cape Town, Digital Photograph.

Education at the Museum

When students go on field trips to the Slave Lodge they are greeted with a very brief description of the Slave Lodge and posters describing who the slaves were, including images about runaway slaves, all located at the main entrance of the building.¹⁷ As students walk through the second floor, they are exposed to the history of the Slaves through the collections on display which are used to illustrate the inequality and discrimination that slaves endured. This gives them the opportunity to compare what is in the museum to their own textbooks and determine if there are still forms of racial discrimination in interpretation. Since the adoption of democracy there has been an urgent need to progress away from racism for the betterment of the country.



*Figure 3: “Remembering Slavery” exhibit.*¹⁸

Education is extended into the Slave Lodge programs as students and tourists are given an insight into slavery and the conditions in which they lived. Tour guides and curators are available to provide in-depth details and answer questions on the

¹⁷ See Figure 3.

¹⁸ Joanna Gonzalez, *Remembering Slavery*, May 2023, Digital Photograph.

conditions of the rooms inside the lodge. South Africans and tourists are subtly encouraged to question the development of Cape Town as they move through the exhibitions reading descriptions about the jobs slaves had, where they worked, and even question their own ancestry as they view the Memorial Column and map of the far-reaching slave trade.¹⁹ The Memorial Column contains many of the Slaves' last names and explains the significance of their names in slavery. The South African government is vigilantly trying to dispose of colonial education inequality in a post-apartheid time, "Reverse the legacy of apartheid education...Ensuring the development and infusion of anti-racism and equality promotion lessons in the early childhood development and school curriculum."²⁰

Najumoeniesa Damon, the Social History Educator at Iziko Museum studied both history and social sciences as an undergraduate at the University of the Western Cape during apartheid. Her career at the Slave Lodge began during the apartheid period while it was still known as the South African Cultural History Museum. She was the first Black female to work in customer services under an all-White male board. Her research as an educator of the museum varies as funding for new exhibits are developed and researched by archivists and curators. Part of her duties includes ensuring that all exhibits have been fully researched and contain verifiable, credible information, she does this by studying primary sources herself and creating an interpretation that humanizes individuals. As an educator and long-term employee of the Iziko Slave Lodge, Najumoeniesa has been an advocate for the representation of the Black and Coloured populations of Cape Town and their ancestral connection to slavery and enhancement at the Slave Lodge. "*Who were the Enslaved*" and "*Labour at the Cape: What work did the enslaved*

¹⁹Introduction images and labels to the "*Remembering Slavery*" exhibition are displayed in figure 3.

²⁰South African Government, "National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance," 59.

do and what is their legacy,” were key exhibits that she had promoted.²¹

“It’s not explained fully in our collections, and it’s not explained fully in our exhibitions, so if law students come here you can not just speak to them about slavery. It has to be something that interests them as well, so if you speak to lawyers from a law perspective and still teach them about slavery, you must know what you are talking about and I must do my own research.”²²

Regardless of the background of the visitor, stories of the enslaved are told in ways that are accessible and understandable, allowing the visitor to fully comprehend the subject and brutalization of the enslaved. Tour guides further state how there has been a lack of their own representation as South Africans. Iziko museums are working to ensure that there is full documentation of slave culture and representation on the walls of their public museum. As Najumoeniesa stated in our conversation, “repairing our history and rectifying the past, making sure that the generations that come, hear a different narrative that wasn’t described by Europeans and Western lines.”²³ It is the goal of the Iziko board and Iziko historians to re-evaluate historical narratives and ensure that the voices being represented are solely that of South Africa and from the perspectives of the people in their exhibits. Iziko is developing a greater understanding of the slave institution that contributed to the establishment of Cape Town. Most importantly the exhibits currently on display aim to humanize the slaves, so that they are more than just a character on paper, they are part of the culture of Cape Town.

²¹ To see images of Najumoeniesa’s promoted exhibitions currently on display see figures 4 and 5.

²² Gonzalez and Damon, interview.

²³ Gonzalez and Damon, interview.



Figure 4: Image of “Who were the Enslaved” exhibit.²⁴



Figure 5: Image of “Labour at the Cape” exhibit.²⁵

²⁴ Joanna Gonzalez, *Who were the Enslaved*, May 2023, Digital Photograph.

²⁵ Joanna Gonzalez, *Labour at the Cape*, May 2023, Digital Photograph.

The Road to Representation

In 2004 Iziko museums released their annual report for their nine museums (at the time), the report highlighted key exhibits for the Slave Lodge in 2003, nine years after the end of apartheid. During this time there were racial changes happening across the nation, and within the Iziko board. “*Echoes from the Lodge: Domestic life under the VOC*” opened on 15 December 2003. This exhibition allows the viewer to compare social life at the Cape and in Batavia in the eighteenth century by focusing on furniture made.²⁶ It is notable that during this time the curators had not fully focused on Cape Town slavery or encapsulated the Slave Lodge in its entirety. This was due to the fact that the lodge, being the South African Cultural History Museum at the time, was representative of colonial history and immersed in generating tourist attraction. The overall change in representation from 2003 to 2023 is astonishing, there is institutional pride in the humanization of slave history at the Slave Lodge. Considering the development of the museum, there are exhibits that remain out of place in the second level, “*Singing Freedom: Music and the struggle against apartheid*,” cases of silverware from “*Slave Origins: Cultural Echoes*” and the Egyptology room. The community is in need of spaces to re-house the exhibits that are not fully related to slavery, such as having them in a different location. This can provide more space for representative exhibitions for the students who need visuals for their history lessons. The Egyptology room is only an exhibit in the lodge that has remained, due to a lack of funding, despite a willingness to change it. This is the same reason as to why older exhibits that are not related to slavery are still on display in the museum. It is a necessity for the locals to have a space in which they can learn about relatable subjects and not glorified colonial history. “*Slave Origins: Cultural Echoes*,” is representative of

²⁶ “Iziko Museums of South Africa: Annual Report 2003-2004,” *Iziko Museums of South Africa* (Iziko Museums of South Africa an agency of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture), 15, accessed April 18, 2024, https://www.iziko.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/AR-2003_2004_0.pdf.

items used during the slave lodge's original operations. In 1776 Meermin was a cargo ship sailing from Madagascar to Cape Town, on board the cargo ship were enslaved people who were making the journey as laborers for the development of Cape Town during the Dutch colonial period.²⁷ With an increase in funding in 2003 Iziko was able to do excavations. "A major lottery award was received to locate and recover the wreck of the slave ship Meermin."²⁸ The majority of the Slave Lodge inhabitants were slaves from Madagascar who were consistently being brought in by the French.²⁹ As the museum board pointed out,

Transformation funding from the department of arts and culture was received for the development of an orientation auditorium at the Iziko Slave Lodge, and an orientation center exhibition at Iziko Groot Constantia that will include the history of slavery on the estate. Collectively these projects, together with the Memory Centre at the Iziko Slave Lodge, will make Iziko an important centre for increasing public awareness of slavery.³⁰

Since the curation of new representative exhibitions, public awareness of slavery has increased dramatically, especially over the last twenty years. Furthermore, what was displayed in 2003-2004 demonstrates a collective awareness for the need of progression away from colonial history and Western histories in a Cape Town historical site that caters to many of the locals.

²⁷ *Secrets of the dead*, episode 4, "Slave Ship Mutiny," directed by Joe Kennedy and Nic Young, aired November 8, 2010 on PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/video/secrets-of-the-dead-slave-ship-mutiny/>.

²⁸ Iziko Museums of Cape Town. "Iziko Museums of Cape Town: Annual Report 2003-2004," 15.

²⁹ See Figure 6.

³⁰ "Iziko Museums of South Africa: Annual Report 2003-2004," 15.



Figure 6: Map of the Indian and Atlantic Slave trade at the Slave Lodge. Photo courtesy of the author.³¹

The exhibitions curated at the Slave Lodge were representative of the enslaved peoples, whilst not solely exhibiting the slaves within South Africa, the exposure of worldwide slavery was beneficial to the Cape Town locals. In comparison to today Iziko Slave Lodge is rectifying exhibits to humanize slave history and show a direct lineage of slave ancestry for the Cape Town population. Such an exhibit would come to be known as the Memorial Column, which lists the last names of all the slaves that were kept in the museum's archives. "The memorial column is probably the only thing in the whole space that humanized enslavement because it held the names of all those human beings and it reminded us that the stories we were telling at the Slave lodge was not just about somebody or work it was actual people...they were mothers, fathers, our grandparents."³² An image of the Memorial Column is shown below, where the names of the documented slaves taken by the Dutch are imprinted for visitors to see and for locals to recognize their ancestry. Due to the lack of documentation surrounding the arrival of slaves and identification processes, many of the names logged on the column

³¹ Joanna Gonzalez, *Map of Indian and Atlantic Slave Trade*, May 2023, Digital Photograph.

³² Gonzalez and Damon, interview.

were of European pronunciation and named after the month the slave arrived in. In addition, the newest exhibit of “*Who were the slaves*” contains personal stories from former slaves around the Cape and their experiences and perspective of how the Slave Lodge has changed over the centuries.



Figure 7: Image of Memorial Column at Iziko Slave Lodge in Cape Town, South Africa.³³

On November nineteenth to the twenty-second in 2009, Iziko Slave Lodge hosted “*Bridging Two Oceans: Slavery in Indian and Atlantic Worlds*” an international conference on slavery that was organized and hosted by the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE) from the University of Hull. The significance of the conference was to discuss the various historical topics on South African slavery, African slavery, modern slavery, and apartheid.³⁴ The four-day agenda contained guest speakers from South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United

³³ Joanna Gonzalez, *Memorial Column*, May 2023, Digital Photograph.

³⁴ Manuel A. Bautista-González, “Bridging Two Oceans: Slavery in Indian and Atlantic Worlds (Cape Town, 19-22 November 2009),” WordPress.com, October 15, 2009, <https://blogdelaamhe.wordpress.com/2009/10/15/bridging-two-oceans-slavery-in-indian-and-atlantic-worlds-cape-town-19-22-november-2009/>.

States of America, to highlight and discuss the impact of South African slavery around the world. Some of the speeches presented include, “Slavery in the Cape Province,” “Changing Networks of Slave Resistance at the Cape: Bridging the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Worlds,” “Repairing historical wrongs in Africa: Whose history?,” and various other lectures that detailed Atlantic slave trading including a lecture by Nigel Worden.³⁵ In having the Slave Lodge host the conference, it re-established itself with historical significance on an international scale as the site that housed slaves and reminded scholars and the academic world of the enslaved lives in Cape Town under Dutch rule. During the Lodge’s time as a Cultural Center, it was catering to tourists about the worldwide Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which resulted in a lack of representation of South Africa’s own culture. However, after its transformation it began to make broad changes towards exposure of South African slavery. Today the Slave Lodge further reinstates the narratives and interpretations of slave history around the area, embracing the history of the Cape Town historical site. By having many South African and international scholars sharing their studies around slavery, they are ultimately embracing the experiences of the slaves as humans and strengthening the scholarly field of slavery in South Africa.

Moving Towards Decolonization

The Slave Lodge has progressed greatly towards decolonization by displaying slave history with palpable primary sources detailing the lives of the housed slaves and the labor they were forced to do. In 2018 Cyril Ramaphosa (b. 1952) was elected president of South Africa, raised during Apartheid he was familiar with racial discrimination and vowed to combat it. In 2019, South Africa published its National Action Plan to combat racism and discrimination. “South Africa still faces enormous challenges of racism and inequality at schools and institutions of higher learning.

³⁵Bautista-González, “Bridging Two Oceans: Slavery in Indian and Atlantic Worlds (Cape Town, 19-22 November 2009).”

Despite a number of advances and the enactment of the progressive legislation to hasten integration...many of our institutions of learning continue to grapple with racial integration.”³⁶ The Iziko Museums represent the move towards racial integration as they currently employ a diverse board and employment across their museums but specifically within the Slave Lodge in comparison to the twentieth century when museums were operated by White South Africans. Furthermore, the integration of the various new exhibits inside the Slave Lodge highlights the progression towards reinstating who the South African slaves were and their contributions to the development of South Africa, in particular Cape Town.

The Slave Lodge’s development in slave perspective history, through the findings and descriptions of the archivists and curators has assisted in the development of cultural understanding for slave descendants.

“Promote social cohesion...Mobilise communities through community conversations and dialogues to sensitise people around the divisive nature of our history and effects thereof...developing and using arts and culture to engender a greater appreciation of cultural diversity as a critical aspect of a unifying national identity. Popularising and encouraging visits to national heritage sites”.³⁷

National identity is imposed in the exhibits and the stories of the slaves, as well as the preservation of the Lodge after years of change in ownership. The preservation of the Lodge and the consistent findings in research preserves the cultural welfare of the slaves’ identity in Dutch ownership and British ownership prior to them receiving their freedom. Following the National Action Plan, the Slave Lodge continued to attest to the plan, fully integrating

³⁶ South African Government, “National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,” 25.

³⁷ South African Government, “National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,” 60.

diversity and appreciation of culture even prior to the election of Ramaphosa. "Affirm victims of colonialism and apartheid. Teaching learners about our history of colonialism...Popularizing our national symbols and struggle icons."³⁸ Both apartheid and colonialism succeeded through discrimination of non-White individuals.

The interpretation of colonialism through only the perspectives of the Whites, caused a generation of South Africans to be disconnected to their own history and knowledge. Before apartheid there had been recognition of the slaves when approximately two generations had passed since the end of slavery and apartheid's Bantu education had yet to be implemented.

The freed slaves and their descendants celebrated Emancipation day (December 1) in Cape Town throughout the nineteenth century, with special church services, street parades and picnic parties, dancing and the singing of ghoemaliedijes (drum songs) that satirized their former masters. But by the early 20th century such events had disappeared.³⁹

Cape Town slavery is remarkable because it incorporated the natives of the area such as the Zulu, Khoisan, or Xhosa, who became workers or laborers, as described by Robert Ross.⁴⁰ With the guilt and shame that passed down through generations of slavery it was understandable as to why the celebrations had diminished.

"The ending of the slave trade had led to the slow and equalisation of the sex ratio of the slaves...men had sharply outnumbered women...On 1 December 1834 all slaves in

³⁸ South African Government, "National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance," 62.

³⁹ Worden, "THE CHANGING POLITICS OF SLAVE HERITAGE IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA," 4.

⁴⁰ Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa*, 26.

the Cape were liberated, although the ex-slaves still had to endure four years of bondage as so-called apprentices before they could enjoy their freedom.”⁴¹

The encouragement of studying slave history for the newer generations of the Cape Town population is vital, so that there is a connection to heritage and further preservation of slaves within the city. Najumoeniesa Damon and various other historians strive to ensure that never again will their history be told in the language of colonizers but rather in the language and words of those who truly built their community.

The Slave Lodge has made progress in their interpretation of Cape Town slave history. Once merely a tourist attraction catering to the likes of White history both local and international, following the eradication of apartheid the slave lodge moved towards the retelling of Cape Town slave history, and decolonial practices. In the interview with Najumoeniesa, she states the anticipated progress in the coming years for the museum to completely renovate the exhibits to ensure that the stories of the slaves are told and represented accurately. This shows the continual progress despite being thirty years after the end of apartheid in South Africa where the non-White communities were developing a cultural crisis due to the lack of knowledge of their own ancestry. Through the effective use of the National Action Plans, it gives Iziko guidelines to follow, ensuring that education in the schools and what is visually shown and taught in the museums align together to repair the history that had at one point in South Africa, been eliminated. As funds have been scarce for the Slave Lodge, the progress in their exhibits have been fascinating and their goal to include community engagement in the creation of new exhibits defines the new embracing of slave heritage within the community.

⁴¹ Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa*, 40.

Bibliography

- Bautista-González, Manuel A. “Bridging Two Oceans: Slavery in Indian and Atlantic Worlds (Cape Town, 19-22 November 2009).” WordPress.com, October 15, 2009.
<https://blogdelaamhe.wordpress.com/2009/10/15/bridging-two-oceans-slavery-in-indian-and-atlantic-worlds-cape-town-19-22-november-2009/>.
- Gonzalez Joanna, and Najumoeniesa Damon. Interview. June 5, 2023.
- Iziko Museums of South Africa. “Current Exhibition Archives Iziko Museums.” Accessed May 6, 2024.
<https://www.iziko.org.za/category/current-exhibition/>.
- “Iziko Museums of South Africa: Annual Report 2003-2004.” *Iziko Museums of South Africa*. Iziko Museums of South Africa, An agency of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. Accessed April 18, 2024.
https://www.iziko.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/AR-2003_2004_0.pdf.
- “Iziko Museums of South Africa: Annual Report 2021-2022.” *Iziko Museums of South Africa*. Iziko Museums of South Africa, An agency of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, Accessed March 6, 2024.
https://www.iziko.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/AR-2021_2022.pdf.
- Iziko Museums of South Africa. “Iziko Slave Lodge – Slavery in South Africa.” Accessed July 5, 2023.
<https://slavery.iziko.org.za/slavelodge>.
- Johnson-Castle, Patricia. “The Group Areas Act of 1950 | South African History Online.” Accessed December 19, 2023.
<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/group-areas-act-1950>.
- Kennedy, Joe, Nic Young, dir. *Secrets of the dead*. Season 10, episode 4, “Slave Ship Mutiny.” Aired November 10, 2010 on PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/video/secrets-of-the-dead-slave-ship-mutiny/>.
- Ross, Robert. *A Concise History of South Africa*. Cambridge

Reviews

University Press, 2008.

South African Government. "National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance." Report. *Republic of South Africa*, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201903/national-action-plan.pdf.

Worden, Nigel. "THE CHANGING POLITICS OF SLAVE HERITAGE IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA." *Journal of African History* 50, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 23–40. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021853709004204>.

Author Bio

Joanna Gonzalez is a first-generation Latina born in California who graduated from California State University, San Bernardino in the summer of 2023 with a bachelor of arts in history - pre-credential concentration. She will be returning to CSUSB in Fall 2024 and joining the upcoming masters of arts in history cohort. Her area of interest is exploitative history in the United States during the nineteenth century. In the summer of 2023 Joanna was able to attend CSUSB's study abroad program in which she traveled to South Africa under the leadership of Dr. Tiffany Jones. During this trip she conducted her research for "Cape Town's Slave Lodge Recognition" in the heart of Cape Town, South Africa. She would like to thank Dr. Tiffany Jones for her overwhelming support and advice throughout this experience.



History in the Making

Travel

South Africa: Global Perspective of a Study Abroad Journey

By Gustavo Alonso Chamu

The Journey

During the summer of 2023, as a part of California State University, San Bernardino, I embarked on a study abroad program in South Africa. It is a country of raw nature and beauty, of towering mountains and cold heavens. It is a place of color and valuable culture, not only for Africa, but the globe. This study abroad trip made me realize that programs such as these are important for students' educational upbringing and personal growth. For this travel essay, I want to highlight the importance of venturing into places where history took place, through its museums and historical sites that are dedicated to the enduring legacy of Apartheid (1948-1994) that is still visible to this day, while writing about personal experiences within the program, and about the people we encountered as a part of the journey. Additionally, I will share my impressions of South Africa and what I learned from its cities, diverse people, nature, and culture. I want to understand the struggles and its triumphs in order to truly understand South Africa and its place in a transnational world. As someone who is non-native to the country, I seek to cement my own cultural, educational, and personal understanding of the nation of South Africa. And so, my journey began.

I was dropped off at LAX Airport on May 27, 2023, at Terminal B, for international flights. Leaving home, in California,

to venture farther than I have ever traveled, over 9,000 miles away, across an enormous ocean, to a continent I had never been to. As we left the Californian Coast, the plane flew into the Pacific and promptly made a U-turn. We flew over Canada, the North Atlantic Ocean, and over the British Isles to the Netherlands. The towering and extensive mountain ranges that divide humanity looked so small from the vicinity of space. Due to the rise of globalization, particular divides and borders appear to become non-existent. As we flew over Amsterdam for a layover flight to Cape Town, I had mixed emotions of euphoria and fear. However, as soon as I arrived in South Africa, Arlene, our hostess, offered a hospitable and friendly environment.

Cape Town

Cape Town is appealing to the eye. Partly due to the presence of Dutch colonial architecture mixed with more modern tourist buildings, it is indicative of the city's extensive history dating back to the fifteenth century. We stayed near an area called Seapoint at the Hyde Hotel, which is within walking distance of the beach. Downtown Cape Town truly is stunning; it is as if you are in the center of the world. The metropolitan city's coastline, with its shade offering trees and ocean breeze, and the city's downtown resembled Californian coastal cities, like San Diego and Los Angeles. Within Cape Town, you can also find Bo Kaap, a neighborhood where there is a significant Muslim community, which stands out for the vivid pastel colors of its buildings. The Native communities in South Africa consist of three ethnic people known as the Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi. The White populations consist of the descendants of English settlers who arrived in the 19th century as well as the Afrikaans, Dutch descendants who have been part of South Africa for multiple generations. Furthermore, Cape Town is a place with a lot of social activity and economic movement because of its busy port known as Table Bay. In front of this bay, the Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront district

stands.¹ In addition, the imposing natural landmarks that make the city even more emblematic are Table Mountain and Lion's Head. Overall, Cape Town truly is an attractive city in the South of Africa with a lot of history, a vibrant city life, and stunning views.

One of the most important museums we visited was the Slave Lodge Museum. In its antiquity, it was used to house slaves in Cape Town during the 17th and 18th centuries for the Dutch East India Company, or *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC). The Slave Lodge, which resembles an antique fortress, is located in downtown Cape Town near the Parliament Buildings and Company's Garden.² The building is said to look different from how it did in its slave economy era, since it has been remodeled various times and given a roof. It is hard to imagine that many Africans were held in the location before the gruesome transatlantic voyage to the Americas and other regions of the globe. For many, it would be the last place they were before they left the continent of Africa, which makes it more haunting to think about. We learned that many of the slaves that had been imported to South Africa came from the east coast of Africa, but also India, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. Many slaves were violently removed from the center of Africa to the various beach coasts in Eastern, Western, and Southern African coasts. Different cultures from South Asia and other parts of the African continent constitute an integral and important part of South African society and its history, which is fascinating!

As we walked through the museum, the specific dehumanization of slaves in South Africa was visible in some of the exhibits.³ In one exhibit room, we learned that some used to name their slaves according to the months they arrived at the station, giving them last names such as Julius, Augustus, or December, simply because slaves were seen as commodities who

¹ Victoria & Alfred Waterfront," Cape Town Heritage, <https://www.cape-town-heritage.co.za/heritage-site/victoria-alfred-waterfront.html>.

² "Slave Lodge," Iziko: Museums of South Africa, October 13, 2023, <https://www.iziko.org.za/museums/slave-lodge/>.

³ "Slave Lodge."

did not need real names. This shows the lack of care for an individual's identity. These names continue to endure in some South African families and serve as reminders to people that they have slave ancestry. To some, it helps to heal the traumas of the past because it comforts knowing about one's origin. Similarly to African Americans in the US, South Africans have endured the hardships and cruelty of slavery brought upon by colonial forces.

Another museum important in the history of Cape Town is the District 6 Museum that is dedicated to the people who were forcibly displaced from their communities in the 1960s.⁴ These were people of color who had to give up their homes, simply because these were next to the beach and private investors wanted to build tourist hotels in the prized location. Our guide, who lived in the district before he was displaced with his family, mentioned that their homes were destroyed to make room for a parking lot. I realize that this is similar to what Native Americans went through, with displacement affecting many tribes in California. In South Africa and California, native communities were affected by settler colonial displacement, losing their ancestral homelands to formidable forces of change. Today, you can still see remnants of the destroyed homes with only the foundations remaining behind the museum.⁵ The area has homeless people living in the destroyed foundations which demonstrates the lasting legacy of displacing communities. The result is a cycle of endless poverty.

In our spare time, we went to observe the latest art in the continent of Africa and across the globe. Since 2017, the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), an imposing gray concrete structure, has stood within the harbor of Cape Town, South Africa. MOCAA has a true commitment to contemporary artworks, both in African art, and global art. Modern and contemporary art experts have stated that problems with prepositions such as "from" and "in" have caused "intellectual

⁴ "About the District Six Museum," District Six Museum, <https://www.districtsix.co.za/about-the-district-six-museum/>.

⁵ "About the District Six Museum."

problems.”⁶ For instance, the MOCAA is conscious of this issue and addresses it by removing such prepositions from its name. The artwork displayed in the exhibit, *When We See Us: A Century of Black Configuration in Painting* (Nov. 2022-Sep. 2023), was made by various artists of the global Black diaspora.⁷ The artwork displayed here celebrates the differences among the African diaspora, which coalesces in this museum at the tip of the continent. With more than 200 works, featuring 150 artists from 26 countries, MOCAA displays an array of global art with some of the best talents that identify with Africa.

In addition to going to museums and art exhibitions, Arlene also took us to other memorable sites, such as Athlone, which is a small community, twenty to thirty minutes away by car from the center of Cape Town. In the 1990s, this community witnessed one of the most brutal repressions in Apartheid South Africa. The police opened fire on protesting students on October 15, 1985. Known as the “Trojan Horse Massacre,” police officers, disguised as merchants, arrived and opened fire on students in a delivery truck with automatic weapons.⁸ Intense fighting and impunity, on the part of the police, took place in South Africa during this era.

Besides learning about the past atrocities of Apartheid, we had the opportunity to see the modern challenges the country faces. South Africa is a developed country that has massive wealth disparities. The township of Lwandle is a reminder of the extensive poverty that exists in the nation, with pronounced wealth gaps.

⁶ Jonathan Harris, *The Global Contemporary Art World* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 9.

⁷ Vibe Nielsen, “Ambivalent Art in the Tip of the Continent: The Zeitz MOCAA and Its Quest for Global Recognition.” in *Global Art in Local Art Worlds*, ed. Oscar Salemink, Amélia Siegel Corrêa, Jens Sejrup, et al., (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2023), 77–79.; Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, “When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting - Zeitz MOCAA,” Zeitz MOCAA, January 2, 2024, <https://zeitzmocaa.museum/exhibition/exhibitions/when-we-see-us-a-century-of-black-figuration-in-painting/>.

⁸ University of Cape Town South Africa, “Trojan Horse Massacre: 35 Years On,” October 20, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBF7-NJO42E>.

Nevertheless, it is a vibrant community, where everyone cares for one another, with kids walking on their own, and local people navigating through their daily lives. The Lwandle Labor Museum, located inside this township, tells many stories of the discrimination and political violence the town has had to endure. An example of this discrimination during Apartheid was that South Africans were made to carry work passports in order to move between cities for work. We got to hold some of these worn-out green passports. Other stories in this place relate to police brutality and the forced removal of people from their communities, with some removals happening as recently as 2014. This museum is proof that South Africans have a desire to move forward. In showing the stories of their people, they help preserve history for future South Africans who need to remember the past if they wish to move forward.

The person in South Africa who fought to see a better future and suffered for it most was Nelson Mandela (1918-2013), or Madiba, as Arlene and others called him dearly. Mandela served as president of the African National Congress (ANC) Party, a revolutionary anti-Apartheid force. For his efforts, Mandela was imprisoned in 1962 and would remain so for the next twenty-seven years.⁹ The Groot Drakenstein Correctional Center, which is still in use today, jailed him during the last years of his imprisonment.¹⁰ We drove to the countryside, deep in Cape Town, to the correctional center where Manfred Jacobs spoke to us. Manfred, who encountered Mandela on two occasions, gave us an emotional and beautiful talk outside of the prison about the meaning of change in South Africa, as well as the challenges that persist. Manfred is important because he was the correctional officer of the prison, but his experience with Mandela had a profound effect on

⁹ Matthew McRae, "The Story of Nelson Mandela," The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, <https://humanrights.ca/story/story-nelson-mandela#:~:text=Nelson%20Mandela%20spent%2027%20years,achieve%20equality%20for%20all%20people>.

¹⁰ "Victor Verster Prison," South African History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/victor-verster-prison>.

him.¹¹ Manfred spoke a lot of reflecting thoughts, saying things like a nation can be judged by the way it treats its criminals and by the conditions of its prisons. He also gave personal advice about resentment and hate. He said that people must allow oneself to close the doors behind oneself in order to open the new doors ahead because if one's heart is filled with rage and bitterness and hate, then you will remain a prisoner.¹² Manfred's words are reminders that true and sincere desires in people to see positive change take place in their homelands, the desire to put racial discrimination in the past; to judge ourselves on the basis of who we are as people and not the color of our skin; the human desire to see love and comprehension for one another triumph. I am reminded that no matter how much we want love and positive change to prevail in the world, it will never happen by itself. We must listen and see carefully. We must look for the answers even if we cannot see them at first. We must feel these issues in our hearts and help create the change we want to observe in the world. It is a very humanitarian message that I hope to learn to live by.

Robben Island is where Mandela spent most of his years in prison. Travel to the island is only accessible by boat, with the boat ride feeling similar to the boat rides going to Catalina Island, off the Southern Californian coast. The view of Cape Town lingered behind us as we got closer to the island was mesmerizing. The breezy cold air and the waves made the boat shaky and unsteady, especially as a lot of commercial boats passed by us. I assume that during Apartheid, Robben Island must have resembled Alcatraz, in San Francisco, more than Catalina Island. It is hard to believe that Mandela spent so many years of his life in this prison, so far and

¹¹ Cathy Cockrell, "In South Africa, the 'Hard Work of Reconciliation' Remains a Work in Progress," *Berkeley News*, April 29, 2014, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2014/04/29/in-south-africa-the-hard-work-of-reconciliation-remains-a-work-in-progress#:~:text=Manfred%20Jacobs%2C%20a,during%20Mandela%E2%80%99s%20imprisonment>.

¹² Manfred Jacobs, speaker presentation outside the Groot Drakenstein Correctional Centre, Paarl, South Africa, June, 2023.

yet so close to the fight against systemic racism. The museum guide mentioned that Mandela would often look to Table Mountain as a symbol of hope. I think I can see why he would think of it as a place of hope. Perhaps it was his way to keep his sanity in a place of chaos, madness, and great injustice.

It was a humbling experience to walk where Mandela walked, which must have been agonizing and painful for him. While on Robben Island, we also learned about other figures who fought against Apartheid that were just as important as Mandela. Robert Sobukwe (1924-1978), a teacher who fought against Apartheid, was severely punished by the government for his actions. He gathered protestors to meet, burning their work passports in front of the government officials' office. He went to prison and suffered the consequences of solitary confinement. Forbidden to speak with others, he also lost his voice. The Apartheid police tortured him mentally by forcing him to listen to the news through the radio. He unfortunately lived his final days knowing he couldn't do anything to help his people. Sobukwe died under house arrest in 1978 and his story is a dark reminder that many who fought to see a better South Africa never got to see the sacrifice of their works. Another important leader is Steve Biko (1946-1977), student founder of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, who died at the hands of police during the 1970s turbulence. These people are heroes, not just of South Africa, but of the globe.

The prisoners on Robben Island were forced to work under inhumane conditions. They, along with Mandela, had to work under the intense heat without any kind of protection from the elements; it is argued that it affected Mandela's vision in the long run. The prison was said to have had torture facilities as well. As we walked around the prison, we saw the cells; each cell had its own tragic story to tell about inmates who had been there. We were told that many of the guides of the prison museum were ex-prisoners (our guide had been a prisoner there, who walked with a crutch). Some of them have post-traumatic stress from their time in prison, making it hard for them to go back. This served to remind

our group that the wounds of Apartheid have not truly healed; they remain in those that lived these horrible experiences.

Mr. Brand, Mandela's warden, took the time to speak with us, giving us his perspective on Nelson Mandela. He spoke about his close relation with Mandela and how they bonded in prison. He told a story about the mental torture they imposed on Mandela when prison authorities forbade him from seeing his baby son. Brand stated that Mandela begged him to be able to carry his baby, but he denied him that paternal privilege. However, instead of being resentful, Mandela kept friendly relations with him, giving him a job in his government once he assumed presidential office in 1994. The South African leader sought to create a symbolic relationship with Brand in order to relieve social tensions between White Afrikaans, descendants of the settler Dutch, and the Native Africans. Mandela told Brand to write a book about their experiences in prison, which Brand promptly did.

People who knew Mandela always had something unique to say about him. Brand stated that he would converse with Mandela a lot, mainly about education. Mandela wanted every South African to be educated, but the government wanted to keep blacks uneducated because it was considered a waste of time and money. Mandela impacted all kinds of people, with everyone seeing a different aspect of him. Mandela represented hope for everyone he encountered and the aspiration to see a better nation.



Figure 1: View of Cape Town taken within the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront (V&A Waterfront) on Table Bay.¹³



Figure 2: View of Lion's Head Mountain as seen from the Hyde Hotel.

¹³ All images were taken by the author unless stated in the short description.



*Figure 3 (left): Statue of Nelson Mandela in City Hall.
Figure 4 (right): Cape Town City Centre near Greenmarket Square.*



Figure 5: Bo Kaap- a colorful neighborhood with a predominant Muslim community.



Figure 6: Delville Wood South African National Memorial within Company's Garden.



Figure 7 (left): Outside of the Slave Lodge- South African History Museum.

Figure 8 (right): Entrance Hall inside the Slave Lodge.



Figure 9: African Trading Port near Swing Bridge in V&A Waterfront.



Figure 10: Stationed ships near V&A Waterfront.

Travel



Figures 11 (top) and 12 (bottom): Port of Cape Town at Table Bay

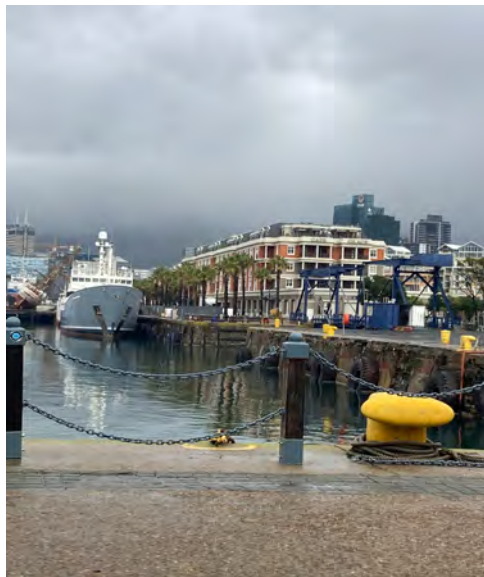




Figure 13 (top): District 6 Museum.

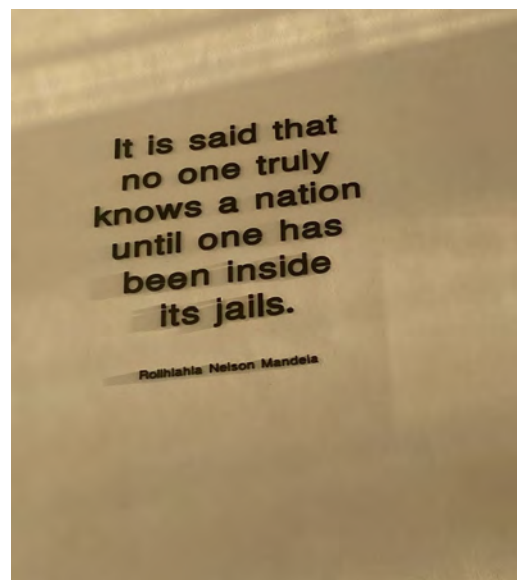
Figure 14 (bottom): Suitcase with a description that states over 60,000 people were evicted in District 6.





Figure 15 (top): Arlene remembers the “Trojan Massacre” (image provided by Dr. Jones).

Figure 16 (bottom): A famous phrase by Nelson Mandela.





Figures 17(upper left), 18 (upper right), 19 (lower left), 20 (lower right):
Images from the Zeitz MOCAA, *When We See Us: A Century of Black
Figuration in Painting*.



Travel



Figures 21 (above left), and 22 (above right): Images from the Zeitz MOCAA, When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting.

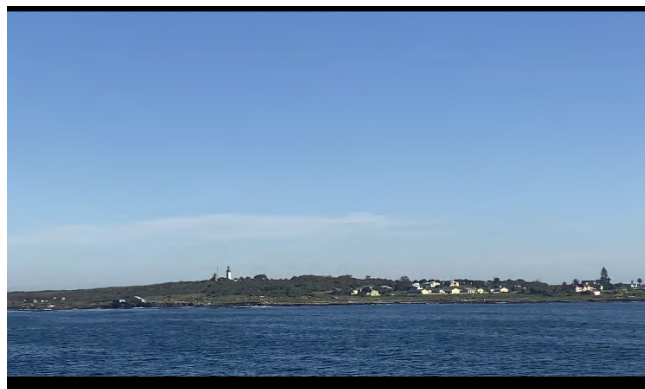


Figure 23: Robben Island from a distance.



Figure 24: Outside of the prison complex.



Figure 25: Robert Sobukwe's isolated jail cell.



Figure 26: Jail cell at Robben Island.



Figure 27: View of Table Mountain from inside Kirstenbosch.



Figure 28: Cycad Tree, which are worth millions and have suffered extensive poaching



Figures 29 (left), 30 (right): Floral diversity displayed throughout the garden.

Travel



Figures 31(left), and 32 (right): Floral diversity displayed throughout the garden.



Figures 33 (left), 34 (right): Inside Kirstenbosch.



Figures 35: Inside Kirstenbosch.



Figure 36: Cheetah roaming in the sanctuary.



Figure 37: A Cape Town ostrich farm.



Figure 38: African penguins marching uphill.



Figure 39: At the Cape of Good Hope, the most southwestern tip of the continent (image provided by Dr. Jones).

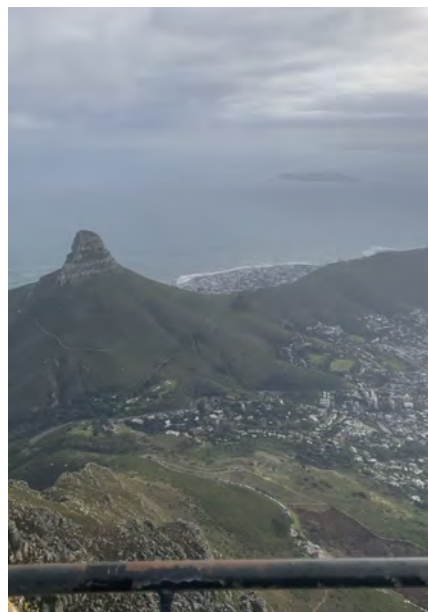


Figure 40: Lion's Head as seen from the top of Table Mountain.

Travel



Figure 41: Blyde River Canyon, Mpumalanga, South Africa.

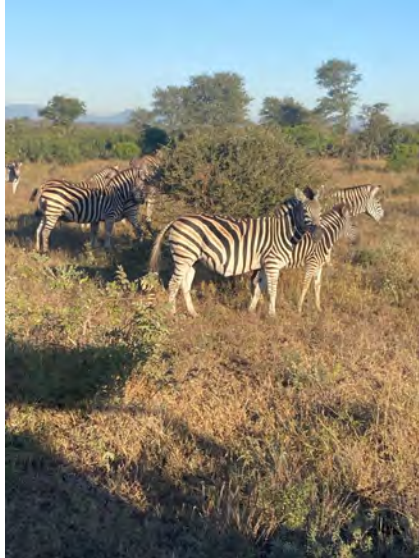


Figure 42: Mountain landscape in Bushbuckridge.



Figures 43 (top) and 44 (bottom): Dry plains, grasses, and trees in Kruger National Park.





*Figure 45 (top): Zebras mesmerized by our presence.
Figure 46 (bottom): A male white waterbuck antelope.*





Figure 47: African elephant staring us down.

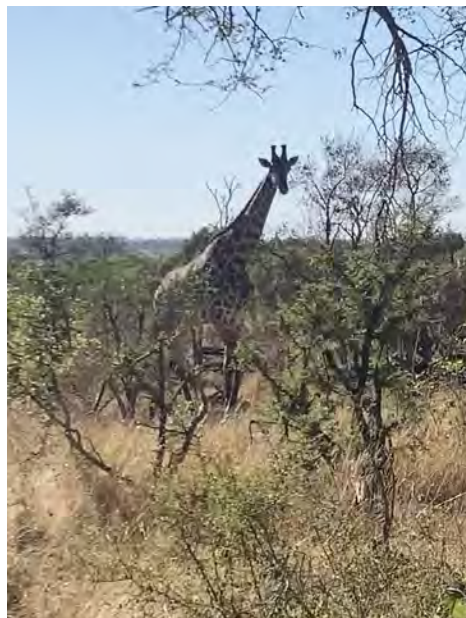


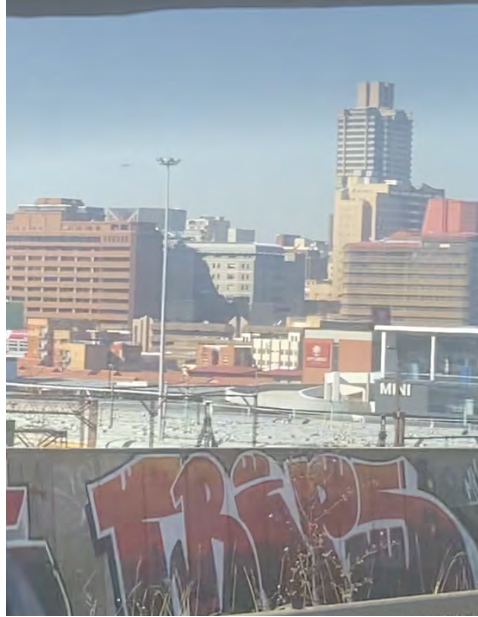
Figure 48: Giraffe walking with grace and style.



Figure 49: Female ostrich within the dry grassland.



Figure 50: Young lion hunting for their meal.



Figures 51 (top) and 52 (bottom): Johannesburg's city landscape.

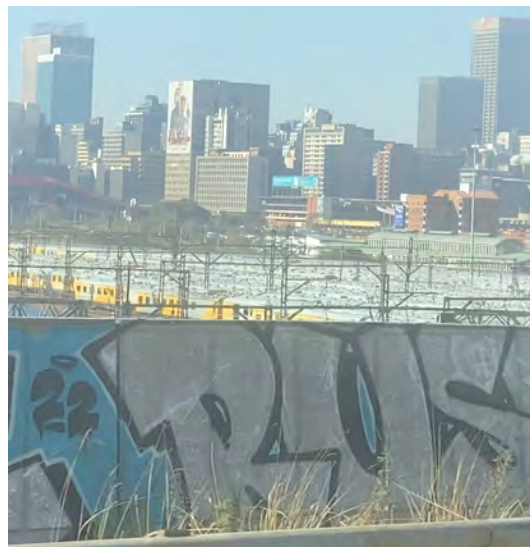




Figure 53: View from Rivonia Lodge.



Figure 54: The Soweto Towers, used as a platform for bungee jumping.



Figure 55: Driving through Soweto Township.



Figure 56: Photo featuring Antoinette Sithole outside the Hector Pieterse Museum. (Image provided by Dr. Jones).



Figure 57 (top): Sculpture in Constitution Hill.

Figure 58 (bottom): Mandela-Gandhi Museum in the ex-prison and military fort.





Figure 59: Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi, two iconic pacifist activists.



Figure 60: Silhouette of a zebra in the sunrise.



Figure 61: South African flag within Constitution Hill.

Flora and Fauna

The constant contact with wildlife and nature truly make South Africa a unique place in the world. Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, a botanical preserve, has a wide variety of unique flowers and vegetation that are native to Table Mountain and the surrounding areas of Cape Town. These parks are important because they “champion the exploration, conservation, sustainable use, appreciation and enjoyment of South Africa’s exceptionally rich biodiversity for all.”¹⁴ We walked along a path, on a bridge known as the Canopy, suspended above the ground by about thirty to forty feet that has the appearance of a snake. The bridge is made from wood from the trees in the garden itself, situated over a good portion of the park. The purpose of the Canopy is so people do not walk on the park itself and harm the floral life.

¹⁴ SANBI, “History,” SANBI - Biodiversity of Life, September 1, 2022, <https://www.sanbi.org/gardens/kirstenboch/history/history/>.

The freshwater river that runs through the garden recollected itself and runs as a river from Table Mountain and to the Atlantic Ocean. The pigmentation of the leaves were vivid as they fell into the water running down, becoming a sort of wild tea. The water that pours out of the mountain is one of the many signature features of Cape Town, which made it one of the reasons it was chosen as a refreshment zone for Dutch colonial ships going to the Indies. It is astonishing that one can drink water from this river and see how it has remained intact after so many centuries, despite rising globalization and urbanization.

Our group learned about the cycad trees in the gardens and the history of their exploitation. As we walked around the garden, a visitor in the park gave us a small lecture on the significance of these trees, explaining that the cycads are worth millions, informing us that the trees were close to extinction because of illegal importation and poaching. This conversation reveals the various ways that plant life in Africa has suffered from the theft of resources by people who seek profit without regard for nature.

The Cheetah Outreach is something that cannot be replicated in the United States.¹⁵ The cheetahs living here have been in the outreach since they were cubs. The importance of these outreaches cannot be comprehended, as they are tasked with taking care of these amazing and majestic animals. These cheetahs might not make it in the wild by themselves, since they are accustomed to being given their food and not used to hunting. That, however, does not negate how dangerous they are.

Wild animals are part of South Africa's natural environment and are treated with huge respect, as they are a major part of this continent. South Africa is a place where they respect wildlife because it is part of what South Africans are. Animals like the elephant, lion, and leopard are in the design of South Africa's currency, the rand. At the cheetah outreach, we were given the opportunity to get up close and personal with one. As I touched the cheetah, he felt bony and calm, calmer than me, at least. Being able

¹⁵ "Cheetah Outreach," <https://cheetah.co.za/>.

to touch the cheetah reminds me just how dangerous nature can be. While here, we also saw Turkish dogs that looked more menacing than the cheetahs. These dogs have a white coat with large, massive, darker heads, with substantial size. With their imposing size, it is no wonder they were brought to the country by local farmers to fend off cheetahs from attacking their livestock.

One stop on our trip was to the Cape of Good Hope, also known as the Cape of Storms, which is the most southwestern point on the African continent. On the way there, we stopped by a small animal sanctuary where we had the opportunity to feed some ostriches. We also saw a baboon family pass by, as well as some kudus and penguins, who appeared to have a lot of spirit and character simply by the way they walk and run. Driving along the coast, with its reputation of being one of the most beautiful drives in the world, through the winding roads, and innumerable homes and small towns, we made our way to the most southwestern point in South Africa.¹⁶ Arlene and Lucas told us that it used to be recognized as being the most southern point of the African continent before Cape Agulhas took this prestige.¹⁷ We also drove through Chapman's Peak, which was heavily overcast, gray, and misty. Peculiarly, sharp rock formations ran along the coast which was another significant characteristic of Southern Africa. The Cape of Storms lived up to its nickname, with violent winds making our drive a unique journey. Going down the road and seeing the Atlantic Ocean, it is not hard to imagine that prominent sailors, such as Vasco da Gama (c. 1460s-1524) in 1497 and Bartolomeu Dias (c.1450-1500) in 1488, crossed these very chaotic waters. They were the first Europeans to venture as far as the southern tip of Africa.

¹⁶ Denby Weller, "A Drive Along 'The World's Most Beautiful Road,'" *BBC*, November 7, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20171106-a-drive-along-the-worlds-most-beautiful-road>.

¹⁷ Atlas Obscura, "The Most Southwestern Point of Africa," <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/cape-of-good-hope>.

Under the cold heavens, we drove towards the towering mountain, Table Mountain to begin our hike.¹⁸ Our guide, Luke, commented that the mountain is one of the seven natural wonders of the world. Luke explained that throughout history, the mountain attracted many individuals who had hidden within to escape persecution, with many ex-slaves and fugitives using Table Mountain as a place to escape the encroachment of Europeans upon their land. He told us stories about the mountain, some of which included people going missing within the mountain, with the possibility of dying. Due to the possibility of rain, we unfortunately were not able to hike up; instead, we went up by cable car. Being at the top of the mountain with dense fog, it is easy to see how people can get lost on the mountaintop. We walked around the crown of the mountain where we saw many pools of fresh water. The guide told us that the water in the pools would run out in a few days if they were to be used. This is the reason that Cape Town is nourished by many water sources from other nearby mountains.

On our safari, we got to witness the wildlife unique to South Africa and the African continent. In the regions of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, over five hours away from Johannesburg, in the northeast region, close to the tropic of Capricorn, lies Kruger National Park. The park borders the countries of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. On the way there, we passed by Bushbuckridge, a region with enormous mountain landscapes. It is said to be similar to the Grand Canyon in Arizona, but this place was much greener. However, Kruger is a bit drier, very similar to the desert region in Southern California. You can find lions, leopards, rhinoceros,

¹⁸ Rosie Lesso, "What Are the Seven Wonders of the Natural World?," *The Collector*, November 9, 2022, <https://www.thecollector.com/what-are-the-seven-wonders-of-the-natural-world/>; "Table Mountain Officially Named One of the Seven Wonders," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 3, 2012, <https://www.smh.com.au/traveller/inspiration/table-mountain-officially-named-one-of-the-seven-wonders-20121203-2apws.html>; "Table Mountain," *New 7 Wonders of Nature*, May 5, 2017, <https://nature.new7wonders.com/wonders/table-mountain-south-africa/>.

elephants, and African buffalos, the “big five” animals, in these parks.

Despite the long drive to get to Kruger Park, once we got to our lodges, which appeared to be in the middle of the wilderness, we went on a night safari and had a great time. It was the first time that I had ever seen many of these animals in person. We saw some blue-colored birds with long extended tails, many impalas, and numerous buffalos. We had lunch at sunset, with the sky lighting up with the most vivid yellows and oranges, next to a pond, where hippopotamus stayed. The best part, however, was seeing elephants. These animals looked like giant blocks of stone because of their really dried skin. Females and males would hang in different packs with the former taking care of the young. Other animals we saw included a pregnant hyena, a lonesome waterbuck antelope, some wild ostriches, tons of zebras, gazelles, and giraffes, which walked gracefully with one side of their body moving first and then the other. On our last day on safari, we went a bit off road into the dry grassland. Driving among tree trunks and the rough terrain, we finally got to see some lions. Next to these dozing lions lay a zebra’s carcass, which they had apparently finished eating; they appeared to be satisfied. Nevertheless, we were glad to have seen some lions in such close proximity. In this way, our trip to Kruger Park had come to a close.

Johannesburg

Johannesburg, which resembles Los Angeles, is the largest city in South Africa. The city has an extensive history of mining exploitation with its effects visually apparent in the area today. The area has a brown color to it; Luke, our guide, said it was because of the digging that took place for centuries. Johannesburg’s industrial aspect is notable, as seen with the coal factories along the outskirts of the city. The city, at one point, imported the most gold in the world. It has grown to become one of the richest cities in the entirety of Africa, with one of the wealthiest areas in Africa lying

in its interior. It is a city with influence over the country and continent.

In Johannesburg, we stayed at the Rivonia Premier Lodge, which was in a heavily gated community. Like a small labyrinth, the place was filled with trees and greens. We went for dinner at Cindy's home for a gathering called a "braai," which is a type of barbeque, a get-together event between family members. Cindy, who is Dr. Jones' lifelong friend, is a White South African woman of Portuguese origin, who cooked and cared for Nelson Mandela. We sat around a fire that would change colors, depending on the type of wood it was burning, which created a peaceful atmosphere. The people of South Africa are politically aware individuals who have diverse socio-political views. However, I noticed that racial tensions still prevailed in the city like the flames of the fire that gave us warmth during the braai.

We drove through Soweto township, which has been one of the epicenters of South African history. The city is also distinguished for its clay-colored homes and for being one of the largest concentration centers of poverty. Soweto is where the fight against Apartheid started on June 16, 1976, where Hector Pieterse (1964-1976), a 12-year-old student, perished at the hands of local police forces.¹⁹ His sister, Antoniette Sithole, spoke to us about her experience. Her story was powerful; her brother died as a result of protests against Apartheid. She spoke of how the events unfolded and how her brother was suddenly shot during the commotion. An image was captured of her running alongside a man, running with her brother in his arms, with clear distress on their faces. The iconic picture stands in the middle of the memorial outside of the Hector Pieterse Museum. The monument of the water fountain outside the museum resembles rain pouring down, but it can also signify the blood of the young people who lost their lives in 1976. Even though we stood less than a couple feet away from the place he died, Sithole told us how she was able to forgive those who

¹⁹ "Hector Pieterse," South African History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/hector-pieterse>.

killed her brother, echoing what Manfred stated, how people must sincerely forgive those who have hurt us. She forgave her brother's killers and, maybe as people, we can learn to forgive as well.²⁰ One must continue despite the horrible moments. We have to continue the good fight, for those who gave their life willingly and unwillingly to the cause of equality.

Many young South Africans were violently killed on June 16, 1976, due to the massive protest in Soweto and the entire country.²¹ The police implemented brutality that day to put down the masses. It pains me to know that at times, no matter how hard you fight or how hard you want it, some aspirations will never take place. Poverty, community resiliency, and resistance go hand in hand throughout the globe. Youth resiliency is part of the power that creates future changes. It has to be the youth who is capable of creating the biggest change for future generations.

Mandela's home, in the center of Johannesburg, is where he spent his last days. The area is considered one of the richest in the city and it is beautiful. Moreover, in the center of Johannesburg, Constitution Hill, an old prison fortress, stands.²² The prison where this national institution stands is now a Museum dedicated to two political giants, Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), who were influenced by South Africa's own anti colonial movements.²³ Many atrocities took place in these facilities, with many prisoners being tortured in "innovative" ways.²⁴ A completely random man, who explained he was a jailer

²⁰ Aryn Baker/Soweto and Time Staff, "This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid. Here's the Story Behind It," *TIME*, June 15, 2016, <https://time.com/4365138/soweto-anniversary-photograph/>.

²¹ "The June 16 Soweto Youth Uprising," South African History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/june-16-soweto-youth-uprising>.

²² "Featured Exhibition: Mandela Gandhi," Constitution Hill, n.d., <https://www.constitutionhill.org.za/exhibitions/featured-exhibition>.

²³ "Revisiting Gandhian Values in the Legacy of Mandela," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/revisiting-gandhian-values-legacy-mandela>.

²⁴ "Constitution Hill Museum, Johannesburg," South African History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/constitution-hill-museum-johannesburg>.

in the United States, exclaimed how this form of imprisonment was the worst one he has ever seen. The Supreme Court of South Africa is right next to the museum. We went in and they gave us a copy of the constitution as a gift. Many may criticize the government for their lack of action and injustice in South Africa. The museum, however, demonstrates the link between social movements in South Africa and India, two distinct countries on two different continents. South Africa is where Gandhi's ideology came to influence Mandela's ideology.²⁵

Final Remarks

South Africa is a country filled with people who face a lot of challenges. Nevertheless, like in any other nation, the strength of South Africa is its people. Regardless of poverty, it should be noted that poverty will continue to exist for it is an endless cycle. However, if people help one another then a lot can be done. This study abroad trip validates the importance of going to the places where global historical events occurred; therefore, the importance of traveling. The experience of going abroad amplifies one's own view of Africa. The uniqueness of Cape Town, Kruger Park, and Johannesburg cannot be told in words or pictures; they have to be seen with human eyes. The world is divided by oceans and mountains but, regardless of the place we inhabit in the world, our emotions, our dreams, our aspirations, those truly make us all humans. There is a need to come to Africa to truly understand the historical and social significance of the place. Other marginalized societies and communities can see themselves in South African history to comprehend how the world operates. The modern architecture and buildings in South Africa should serve as a reminder that this country is a very developed and wealthy country, despite its past with Apartheid. The people of South

²⁵ Rob Koenig, "Gandhi Inspired Mandela on South Africa's 'Long Road to Freedom,'" *St. Louis Public Radio*, December 6, 2013, <https://www.stlpr.org/government-politics-issues/2013-12-06/gandhi-inspired-mandela-on-south-africas-long-road-to-freedom>.

Travel

Africa are a very diverse people, with a long legacy of exploitation by colonial powers. It is a diverse nation that was able to coexist despite the challenges of racism and Apartheid. Like other nations, South Africa continues to move forwards for a better future. I hope to come back sooner than later to continue learning about the African continent, South Africa, and its people.

Bibliography

- Atlas Obscura. "The Most Southwestern Point of Africa." <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/cape-of-good-hope>.
- Baker/Soweto, Aryn, and Time Staff. "This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid. Here's the Story Behind It." *TIME*, June 15, 2016. <https://time.com/4365138/soweto-anniversary-photograph/>.
- "Cheetah Outreach," <https://cheetah.co.za/>.
- Cockrell, Cathy. "In South Africa, the 'Hard Work of Reconciliation' Remains a Work in Progress." *Berkeley News*, April 29, 2014. <https://news.berkeley.edu/2014/04/29/in-south-africa-the-hard-work-of-reconciliation-remains-a-work-in-progress#:~:text=Manfred%20Jacobs%2C%20a,during%20Mandela%E2%80%99s%20imprisonment>.
- "Constitution Hill Museum, Johannesburg." South African History Online. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/constitution-hill-museum-johannesburg>.
- District Six Museum. "About the District Six Museum." <https://www.districtsix.co.za/about-the-district-six-museum>.
- "Featured Exhibition: Mandela Gandhi." Constitution Hill. <https://www.constitutionhill.org.za/exhibitions/featured-exhibition>.
- Harris, Jonathan. *The Global Contemporary Art World*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2017.
- "Hector Pieterse." South African History Online. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/hector-pieterse>.
- Iziko: Museums of South Africa. "Slave Lodge," October 13, 2023. <https://www.iziko.org.za/museums/slave-lodge/>.
- Jacobs, Manfred. Speaker presentation outside the Groot Drakenstein Correctional Centre. Paarl, South Africa, June, 2023.
- "The June 16 Soweto Youth Uprising." South African History Online. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/june-16-soweto-youth-uprising>.

- Koenig, Rob. "Gandhi Inspired Mandela on South Africa's 'Long Road to Freedom.'" *St. Louis Public Radio*, December 6, 2013. <https://www.stlpr.org/government-politics-issues/2013-12-06/gandhi-inspired-mandela-on-south-africas-long-road-to-freedom>.
- Lesso, Rosie. "What Are the Seven Wonders of the Natural World?" *The Collector*, November 9, 2022. <https://www.thecollector.com/what-are-the-seven-wonders-of-the-natural-world/>.
- McRae, Matthew. "The Story of Nelson Mandela." The Canadian Museum for Human Rights. <https://humanrights.ca/story/story-nelson-mandela#:~:text=Nelson%20Mandela%20spent%2027%20years,achieve%20equality%20for%20all%20p>.
- Nielsen, Vibe. "Ambivalent Art at the Tip of a Continent: The Zeitz MOCAA and Its Quest for Global Recognition." In *Global Art in Local Art Worlds*, edited by Oscar Salemink, Amélia Siegel Corrêa, Jens Sejrup, et al., 77–99. New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2023.
- "Revisiting Gandhian Values in the Legacy of Mandela." United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/revisiting-gandhian-values-legacy-mandela>.
- SANBI. "History." SANBI - Biodiversity of Life, September 1, 2022. <https://www.sanbi.org/gardens/kirstenboch/history/history/>.
- "Table Mountain." New 7 Wonders of Nature. May 5, 2017. <https://nature.new7wonders.com/wonders/table-mountain-south-africa/>.
- "Table Mountain Officially Named One of the Seven Wonders." *The Sydney Morning Herald*. December 3, 2012. <https://www.smh.com.au/traveller/inspiration/table-mountain-officially-named-one-of-the-seven-wonders-20121203-2apws.html>.
- University of Cape Town, South Africa. "Trojan Horse Massacre: 35 Years On," October 20, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBF7-NJO42E>.

- “Victoria & Alfred Waterfront.” Cape Town Heritage.
<https://www.cape-town-heritage.co.za/heritage-site/victoria-alfred-waterfront.html>.
- “Victor Verster Prison.” South African History Online.
<https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/victor-verster-prison>.
- Weller, Denby. “A Drive Along ‘The World’s Most Beautiful Road.’” *BBC*, November 7, 2017.
<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20171106-a-drive-along-the-worlds-most-beautiful-road>.
- Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa. “When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting - Zeitz MOCAA.” Zeitz MOCAA, January 2, 2024.
<https://zeitzmocaa.museum/exhibition/exhibitions/when-we-see-us-a-century-of-black-figuration-in-painting/>.

Author Bio

Gustavo Alonso Chamu is in his final semester at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) where he will graduate at the end of Spring 2024 with a bachelor of arts in history, pre-credential concentration with departmental honors. He serves as a California College Corp Fellow, Treasurer for the SB History Club, and section editor for the history journal. Gustavo earned his associate of arts degree in history from Riverside City College (RCC). Upon graduation Gustavo will continue in his educational journey as he begins the CSUSB master of arts in history program, where he plans to gain more research experience in his field. His research interest is in Latin American history, with an emphasis in American intervention in Latin America and the Cold War period. His ultimate goal is to become an educator and be of service to the Riverside-San Bernardino communities from which he is a part of. Gustavo would like to give special thanks to Dr. Pedro Santoni, Dr. Jeremy Murray, Dr. Tiffany Jones, Dr. Kate Liszka, Dr. Daisy Ocampo-Diaz, Dr. Joy Barta and the entire history faculty and staff for their tremendous guidance and outstanding mentorship. He would also like to thank his editor Christina Monson who reviewed his works extensively during this arduous writing process. Lastly, he would like to thank his entire family. Thanks everyone!



Kanazawa: Off the Hidden Path and Into the Land of the Samurai, Ninja and Geisha

By Martin Emmanuel Perez

The Journey Begins

Japan is a mysterious, yet pleasant country that lies on the other side of the Pacific Ocean. It consists of one large island and smaller individual islands and is a place that is worth taking the trip to. It can be assumed that Japan was the first East Asian country to fully adapt to Western ideas and technology. Japan was once ruled by different lords, with one person that was the head of state, known as the Shogun, who also was the lords' master. The structure of the caste system was as so, with the Shogun at the top, followed by the emperor, a figurehead for ceremonial purposes, then the Daimyo (lords), the Samurai, and everyone else from artisans, merchants, and peasants. Japan keeps a strict moral code when it comes to etiquette and honoring your elders. Kanazawa is no different. The name Kanazawa itself means "gold marsh," which makes it the city it is today, because it is the only place in Japan that still produces gold leaves that tourists can see.¹ Located on the western side of the Japanese archipelago, next to the Sea of Japan, Kanazawa, a city within the Ishikawa Prefecture, is a city where the old is connected with the new. During the Edo Period (1603-1868), Kanazawa was one of many centers of political, economic, and cultural influence and it prospered for 300 years. The Maeda family, who resided in Kanazawa, were one of the ruling families during the Edo Period and were the second most powerful family after the Tokugawa family. In order to prove that

¹ "How Kanazawa Became the Seat of Refined Culture in Japan." Visit Kanazawa, Japan - official travel guide. Accessed April 10, 2024. <https://visitkanazawa.jp/en/history>.

the family was loyal to the Tokugawa family, they invested heavily in academics and culture. During the Meiji Period (1868-1912), the Maeda family lost all power, as the power was transferred to the central government in Tokyo. Everything that the Maeda family held on to, both traditional crafts and culture, would fall into decline. However, the people from ordinary citizens to the artisans of the city preserved their traditions for the future generation that is still continuing to this day.²



Figure 1: The Sacred Gate, built to look like a torii gate, is a sight to marvel at when visitors arrive in Kanazawa.³

Kanazawa Castle

Kanazawa is a city that held a lot of importance for the Japanese people, mainly during the Edo Period, as it was a stopping point for envoys who were to make special deliveries to either Edo (the old name for Tokyo), where the Shogun resided, or to Kyoto (the capital of Japan at the time). It is a castle town, where the daimyo had control over the domain where they resided and had a castle to show their power and authority, which also showed their loyalty to

² “How Kanazawa Became the Seat of Refined Culture in Japan.”

³ Martin Perez, *Sacred Gate*, June 2023, Photograph.

the Shogun. Kanazawa was part of the Kaga domain (1583-1871), and it was the seat of power for the Maeda family, one of the richest and most powerful families in all of Japan.

The castle was unlike any of the other castles throughout Japan during the Edo Period. The main building in Japanese castles was known as a keep, which had layers of floors, with each floor having a different purpose. Unlike the other castles with a tall keep, Kanazawa's keep was spread out. The keep is not that tall, making the entirety of the castle one long building with many gates. Despite the layout of the keep, it does share commonalities with other castles in the country due to its inclusion of walls and gardens. Stepping inside the castle grounds, a set of stairs leads its visitors straight to the old garden, called the Gyokusen-inmaru Garden. The second lord of the castle, Maeda Toshinaga (1562-1614), had his wife's name, Gyokusen-in, as inspiration for the name of the garden.⁴ The garden was once private, for family members only, until the Meiji Restoration. In 2015, it was restored based on drawings in the Maeda compound to match its historical architecture at the end of the Edo Period.⁵

⁴ "History | Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture | Gyokusen-en, the Garden of the Nishida Family," 新緑がおすすめの観光スポット | 石川県金沢市|西田家庭園玉泉園., <https://gyokusen-en.net/en/history/>.

⁵ "Kanazawa Castle Park." Gyokusen'inmaru Garden | Kanazawa Castle Park. Accessed April 10, 2024. <https://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kanazawajou/e/gyokusen-in/>.



Figure 2: Gyokusen-inmaru Garden as it looks in its current state.⁶

A teahouse now sits right next to the garden where guests can go and enjoy a traditional tea ceremony, while enjoying the view of the garden. Up the next flight of stairs is an old western style, one story building. It is the old headquarters of the former 6th Brigade of the Imperial Japanese Army. This is of importance because, after the Meiji government was set up after the Boshin Wars (1868-1869), the newly formed Imperial Army began to occupy the castle grounds; mainly those that were still standing of course which hadn't been completely destroyed during the war. Past another set of stairs to the top, the castle grounds are in full view for all to admire. The keep is a sight to truly behold and view with awe and amazement. Ceramic tiles adorn the entirety of the roof and the side is painted in a white color with stones on the bottom.

The keep, now a museum, is a magnificent one, to say the least. As visitors enter inside the reconstructed keep, they begin to feel as if they are inside the home of the Maeda Clan, a feeling that is unmatched. The museum does a good job with displaying

⁶ Martin Perez, *Gyokusen-inmaru Garden*. June 2023, Photograph.

artifacts that were in the castle, but also of artifacts that were dug up during the restoration of the castle. Its stunning architecture, such as the frame of the castle in jigsaw pieces, gives visitors a taste and appreciation of Japanese architecture. The Japanese were able to create architectural marvels that required both great skills and ingenuity. The museum displays examples of blocks that are carved out and shows visitors how the pieces were put together to build the castle. The beams are carved out, reminiscent of a jigsaw puzzle, and wood beams are placed on them showing the ingenuity that Japanese workers used in a simple task of construction. For example, the base pillars are crossed with each other in a way to withstand earthquakes and earthquake damage.



Figure 3: Scale model of the interior of Kanazawa Castle.⁷

The other features of the castle on display were rusted *katanas* (a type of Japanese sword) and painted screen frames filled with Japanese scenery, such as cherry blossom trees and tigers. These scenes are what the Japanese pride themselves on because it shows not only the way they respect their surroundings, but it also shows where a person was within the social ladder of

⁷ Martin Perez, *Kanazawa Castle Scale*, June 2023, Photograph.

Edo Japan. Owning one of these immediately showed visitors the family's wealth and economic standing, as they were seen as a display of immense wealth. Japanese culture and history was highlighted by the displayed artifacts which portrays the power and authority that the Maeda family had.



Figure 4: The outside of Kanazawa Castle's keep, surrounded by a moat.⁸

In almost every castle in Japan, there are multiple gates, with each having a specific purpose. In Kanazawa Castle, there are three gates which hold significant importance to the defense of the castle from enemies. Arguably, one of the most important gates are the main gates of the castle complex, called the *Kahokumon Gate*. According to the information sheet, *Kahokumon Gate* comprises two gates. The first one, *Ichino Mon* (the first gate) is the first obstacle that attackers would have to go through to reach the castle. The side walls are covered with square tiles that are plastered, in which crenels would be covered. During a battle, these crenels would be broken, allowing defenders to aim their

⁸ Martin Perez, *Keep of Kanazawa*. June 2023, Photograph.

guns onto incoming attack troops. The second gate, called *Ni-no Mon* (the second gate), is two stories high and faces the *Masugata* (concealed earthen stone walls), which is the small area that is between Ichi-no Mon and Ni-no Mon. Ni-no Mon was the last line of defense; once through this gate, attackers would be on the castle grounds. The upper floor, which was used for firing arrows and guns, also served as a drop for stones, as well as a watchtower to spot the enemy. It once housed brave and ferocious samurais, fighting for the honor of their daimyos on both sides of the walls. The grounds could tell many stories, such as the horror and suffering of these brave warriors as they pushed through or defended the gates with all their might. Ni-no Mon was once the place for the defenders of the castle to take up defensive positions as they fired their weapons trying to prevent the enemy from entering the gate underneath their feet, which is now a beautifully preserved relic of Edo history in Kanazawa.



Figure 5: *Ichi-no Mon (The First Gate) of Kahokumon Gate, where attackers would have to go through first before getting to the compound.*⁹

⁹ Martin Perez, *Ichi-no Mon*. June 2023, Photograph.



Figure 6: Ni-no Mon (The Second Gate) is the last line of defense for the castle grounds. This compound is two stories high.¹⁰

Exploring the Place of the Ninjas

The place where ninjas had once operated is another exciting experience that visitors can take in from Kanazawa. In Western society, people have always assumed that ninjas were always sneaky, shadowy, and mysterious individuals who dressed in a black outfit, with only their eyes showing. That was not always the case. Ninjas were indigenous individuals, and they came from all walks of life; artisans, merchants, travelers, and even samurais could all turn ninja. One of the spaces where ninja activity took place within the city was a temple. Myoryu-ji Temple, or the “Ninja Temple” as it is called, is located across the river a few miles from the castle, is a Buddhist Temple, whose secrets are well hidden within the walls of this sacred place. One of the important things about the temple was that it was built by the Maeda family,

¹⁰ Martin Perez, *Ni-no Mon*, June 2023, Photograph.

not just as a religious place, but as a watchtower to spot for those who dare do them harm.¹¹

Upon arriving at the temple, visitors are instructed to go to the side and use an intercom to make an appointment for a tour. Visitors are recommended to come early so that they may admire the garden of the temple as they wait for their tour to begin. As the appointment time arrives, the employee calls for the people who hold a reservation to head to the temple. There is a locker outside where visitors can put their shoes in as they enter the temple because no shoes are allowed inside. The entire tour is in Japanese, however, the guides speak English, to accommodate visitors. Photography is absolutely forbidden inside the temple. Even though the temple is considered a sacred place which housed the activities of ninjas, the secrets of the ninja must be kept how they were for centuries, a secret! As visitors gaze around the old wooden structure, which holds a golden Buddha statue in the middle of the room, the presence of a religious point of view is apparent, but a mysterious one looms as well. The tour guide gave her introduction and began the tour of the temple. Throughout the tour, which lasts from half an hour to an hour, an English guide is used by visitors to allow them to follow along and to know what is happening.

Throughout the temple, there are secret rooms and doors that slide in different directions. There is even an upper room where someone who is standing behind the paper door frame is unable to see in front of them. Next, there was a room that was much lower, in which someone who was wielding a katana would not have been able to use it properly due to the small space. Additionally, many visitors were surprised to learn of the upstairs floor, as it was not visible from outside. The temple contains floors that are removable and a window that leads down to a well, which is believed to be a secret passageway that leads to the castle. It's

¹¹ "Myoryuji Temple (Ninjadera Temple)." Visit Kanazawa, Japan - official travel guide. Accessed April 10, 2024.
https://visitkanazawa.jp/en/attractions/detail_50022.html.

presumed the members of the Maeda family, or their samurais would use the underground passageway to get in and out of the temple when danger was lurking about. All of this was fascinating to see.



Figure 7: The outside of Myoryu-ji Temple (Ninjadera Temple).¹²

The local Ninja Museum, located in one of the tea districts a few miles away from the temple, is another site of interest for tourists. Once inside the museum, visitors are on the first floor, which contains the gift shop and its many souvenirs, such as unique samurai swords. However, the most exciting part of the museum lies on the second floor, where there is samurai weaponry and armor, as well as the clothing of ninjas, are exhibited. One room displays a replica of what a samurai room looked like, consisting of armor, katanas, and a bow displayed alongside authentic Japanese art hung on the wall. The next exhibit featured a wide range of weapons that were in use during the Warring States period (1467-1567) when Oda Nobunaga, one of the many lords of Japan and the leader of the Oda Clan, (1534-1582) tried to unite all of Japan, leading up to the establishment of the Tokugawa

¹² Martin Perez, *Myoryu-ji Temple*, June 2023, Photograph.

Shogunate (1603-1868) in the early 17th century. A showcase of ninja clothing displays how they wore chainmail underneath their clothes, which was typically only worn by knights in Europe; this, however, shows the Japanese had them as well. The museum features exhibits of how ninjas, the masters of secrecy, were able to conceal their weapons, such as making them look like ordinary objects. Fans, flutes, rings, medicine, acupuncture needles, or anything that people would use on a regular basis, were all turned into weapons, showing the ingenuity of these assassins. When the intended target was near them, or if they were alone, they struck them with these weapons; no one would suspect it was them who carried out the deed. Visitors also have the honor of holding an actual ninja weapon, a chained spiked ball, which was used to disarm attackers.



Figure 8 (right): A displayed chain mail outfit for a ninja in the Ninja Museum.¹³

Figure 9 (left): Two lamps which were used as an early form of Morse Code and, above them, a water board. Historians are still figuring out how it was really used.¹⁴

¹³ Martin Perez, *Chain Mail*, June 2023, Photograph.

¹⁴ Martin Perez, *Morse Code Lamps*, June 2023, Photograph.



Figure 10: Display of small weapons that were used by ninjas and other assassins. Notice how they make them seem like everyday items.¹⁵

The Place of the Geisha

Another area tourists are recommended to go to is an old tea district that was originally known as *Higashi Chayagai* (*Eastern Teahouse District*). There are three well-preserved teahouse districts in Kanazawa: *Higashi Chayagai*, *Nishi Chayagai* (*Western Teahouse District*), and *Kazuemachi*. It is amazing how *Higashi Chayagai* is preserved to maintain the aesthetic and authenticity it had during the Edo Period. The tea houses around this location do performances by geishas, but only during specific times and on certain days. One thing that visitors must understand in regard to the geisha is that they were not prostitutes. These women, through years of training and following a strict code, are the preservers of the arts such as music and traditional dance so that they may entertain their guests. Today these teahouses where the geishas perform are still used as a way for customers to relax and let off steam while enjoying the beauty of the artistic forms of the geisha. When it comes to wanting a drink of Japanese alcohol,

¹⁵ Martin Perez, *Weapons Display*, June 2023, Photograph.

visitors can look no further while at the teahouse districts. To experience traditional Japanese alcohol, visitors can visit the old sake brewery that has been in operation since the Edo Period. Once inside the brewery, visitors are welcome to experience a sake tasting and enjoy the company of others, or while reading an informational guide of how sake is made and how long the sake was fermented. Complimentary snacks are also provided for the guests who are participating in the sake tasting. Also to enjoy over at the tea districts is a treat that can't be beat, mochi covered fruit. Once inside the establishment of this place, visitors can enjoy the sweet sensation of the fruit covered with powdered mochi and enjoy refreshments ranging from iced green tea, matcha to even orange juice. It is easy to see how historically, ordinary people would fill the streets, going about their business, and how noblemen would head inside the tea house to enjoy the comforts of geishas performing for them while enjoying a nice glass of sake.



Figure 11: The main street of Higashi Chayagai.¹⁶

¹⁶ Martin Perez, *Higashi Chaya District*, June 2023, Photograph.

The Life of a Samurai Family

Remarkably, samurai homes, which were better than those of an ordinary person, are still preserved in Kanazawa. Walking through *Nagamachi (Samurai District)*, there are rows of houses and walls with big wooden doors ornamented with iron designs on them. One of the main attractions of this place is Nomura-ke.



Figure 12: A street of Nagamachi (Samurai District) lined up with the walls of the shops and residences of the area.¹⁷

Nomura-ke is a restored samurai home of the Nomura family, who were a well-respected samurai family in the area. However, like many other samurai when the Tokugawa rule came to an end and the Meiji Restoration began, the family lost their wealth and prestige. The house, though, still serves as a reminder of how a samurai once lived. Once entering the residence, visitors

¹⁷ Martin Perez, *Nagamachi*, June 2023, Photograph.

are met with the armor of a samurai, possibly belonging to the family. The residence contains a beautiful, lavish garden, that historically displayed the wealth of a samurai, which is fit for a respected samurai. The many bushes that surround the tree in the middle of the pond were meant as a way to find peace and harmony with the body, mind, and soul. Within the residence, there is a room that was converted to a shrine to honor the family. Shrines like these were meant as a place for a samurai to ask their ancestors to protect them, and their household, from harm. The living space is the largest in the residence; on each side, there are screen doors that are adorned with scenery of nature, such as mountains and cherry blossoms. For generations, the Nomura family walked through these same rooms doing their daily routines. To access the upstairs, visitors must exit through the side of the house to stone steps that escort them to the top floor. The top floor houses two rooms, one on each side of the floor. The room to the left is cozy and spacious. One can imagine a member of the Nomura family sitting on the floor next to an open window, gazing out into the garden, either drinking tea, reading poetry, or talking with a visitor. Nomura-ke shows just how close-knit the Japanese family dynamic was, as well as how they respected and honored each other.

On the first level of the house is a room that is now a museum for the residence, featuring many artifacts that belong to the family. The displays featured weapons, the process of the making of the weapons, coins, pottery, and even personal letters to the Nomura samurai from the mid-16th and early 17th centuries. Many of them were thank-you letters from allies that fought alongside them in great battles. There is even a letter thanking Nomura Shichirogoro for presenting the head of a high-ranking soldier after a major battle from Yoshikage Asakura (1533-1573) who was a neighboring daimyo to the Kaga domain and participated in fighting against Oda Nobunaga during the Warring States period. Overall, one would never have expected a samurai house to be homely and beautiful.



Figure 13: The main area inside Nomura-ke where the Nomura family and their guests would gather.¹⁸



Figure 14: The main garden of Nomura-ke. This garden is a perfect example of how well off and well-respected samurai families were during the Edo Period.¹⁹

Kenrokuen Garden

The *Kenrokuen* “Garden of the six sublimities” *Garden*, which is the outer garden of Kanazawa Castle, is dubbed as one of Japan’s

¹⁸ Martin Perez, *Nomura-ke*. June 2023, Photograph.

¹⁹ Martin Perez, *Nomura-ke Garden*, June 2023, Photograph.

“three most beautiful landscape gardens.”²⁰ It was kept as a private garden for the Maeda family until 1871, when it was officially opened to the public. Today, it is one of the most attractive gardens to visit in Japan. The first thing that catches the eye of the visitor is the fountain, which is surrounded by a pond where the water shoots straight up. An inscription notes that the fountain is actually the oldest fountain in Japan.²¹ Some distance away there is a pond called Kasumiga-ike Pond. At the edge of the pond sits a lamp that looks a bit different from the rest of Japanese stone lamps. The reason is because of the uniqueness of this lamp which contains two stands to create a sort of an archlike structure. The scenery of this garden is beyond belief and allows visitors a glimpse into the daily life of the Maeda family, as they would have strolled through the same garden years before, admiring its beauty.



*Figure 15: The fountain pictured here is the oldest fountain in Japan located in Kenrokuen Garden.*²²

²⁰ “Kenrokuen Garden.” Kanazawa Travel. Accessed April 10, 2024.
<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e4200.html>.

²¹ “Kenrokuen Garden.”

²² Martin Perez, *Fountain of Kenrokuen*, June 2023, Photograph, Kanazawa, Japan.



Figure 16: The author in his kimono standing on a bridge with Kasumigaike Pond in the background.²³

Conclusion

With its rich history and culture, Kanazawa is truly a place that resembles what Japan was like during the Edo Period and how it began to slowly enter into the modern era. It is safe to say that the residents of this medieval city have done all they could to preserve the traditions and pieces of this beloved city in order for future generations to enjoy. Without Kanazawa, another piece of history would be gone, and it would be difficult to know how samurai families lived and how secret assassins who crept through the night did their duties to serve their lords.

²³ Martin Perez, *Author in Kasumigaike Pond*, June 2023, Photograph, Kanazawa, Japan.

Bibliography

- 新緑がおすすめの観光スポット | 石川県金沢市|西田家庭
玉泉園. “History | Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture |
Gyokusen-en, the Garden of the Nishida Family,” n.d.
<https://gyokusen-en.net/en/history/>.
- “How Kanazawa Became the Seat of Refined Culture in Japan.”
Visit Kanazawa, Japan - official travel guide. Accessed
April 10, 2024. <https://visitkanazawa.jp/en/history>.
- “Kanazawa Castle Park.” Gyokusen’inmaru Garden | Kanazawa
Castle Park. Accessed April 10, 2024.
[https://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-
niwa/kanazawajou/e/gyokusen-in/](https://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kanazawajou/e/gyokusen-in/).
- “Kenrokuen Garden.” Kanazawa Travel. Accessed April 10, 2024.
<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e4200.html>.
- “Myoryuji Temple (Ninjadera Temple).” Visit Kanazawa, Japan
official travel guide. Accessed April 10, 2024.
https://visitkanazawa.jp/en/attractions/detail_50022.html.

Author Bio

Martin Emmanuel Perez is currently finishing up his first year in the history M.A. program at California State University, San Bernardino. Obtaining his bachelor of arts in history in 2020 and teaching credentials in social science at the end of Fall 2021 from the same institution, Martin has developed his love for history even more. Although he has a love of world history, his academic interests mainly focus on East Asian history, mainly Korean history. He developed a love for East Asia when he arrived at CSUSB for his undergraduate years. Having traveled to East Asia twice, South Korea twice and most recently Japan in the Summer 2023, Martin's knowledge of Asian history has grown and made him interested in learning more of the region. He hopes to continue on to earn a PhD and teach East Asian history to students who find interest in the region, specifically Korea. Martin is currently working as a resident substitute teacher at his alma mater, San Jacinto High School, located in his hometown of San Jacinto, CA.



Spicy, Sour, Bitter, Salty, Sweet: An Ancestral Trip to Vietnam

By Christina Monson

Cảnh thu
Thánh thót tàu tiêu mấy hạt mưa,
Khen ai khéo vẽ cảnh tiêu sơ.
Xanh om cổ thụ tròn xoe tán,
Trắng xoá tràng giang phẳng lặng tờ.
Bầu dục giang sơn say chấp rượu,
Túi lưng phong nguyệt nặng vì thơ.
Ơ hay, cảnh cũng ưa người nhĩ,
Ai thấy, ai mà chẳng ngẩn ngơ.¹

Autumn Landscape
Drop by drop rain slaps the banana leaves.
Praise whoever sketched this desolate scene:
the lush, dark canopies of the gnarled trees,
the long river, sliding smooth and white.
I lift my wine flask, drunk with rivers and hills.
My backpack, breathing moonlight, sags with poems.
Look, and love everyone.
Whoever sees this landscape is stunned.²

Việt Nam, as it is known today, has only existed since July 2, 1976. As a country entering its forty-eighth year in existence, many have negative connotations about the infant country, mostly surrounding the Việt Nam War (1955-1975). Việt Nam has been subjected to wars and various forms of colonization by the United

¹ Xuân Hương Hồ, "Autumn Landscape," in *Spring Essence: The Poetry of Hồ Xuân Hương*, trans. John Balaban (Port Townsend, Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 2000), 18–19.

² Hồ, "Autumn Landscape."

States, France, Japan, and China. Việt Nam has not only been a victim but also an aggressor; starting in the châu thổ sông Hồng (Red River Delta) region, the người Việt (Viet people) sought to expand their land south and, to do so, meant conquering and absorbing neighboring peoples and land, such as the Champa and various parts of the Khmer territories. Similarly to how the người Việt moved from the north to the south, my mother's family embarked on a similar journey, before immigrating as political refugees to the United States on April 4, 1975, through the United States' mass evacuation of children from Việt Nam known as Operation Babylift.³

The armed conflict in Việt Nam took the lives of many and tore apart numerous families, both in Việt Nam and abroad. Negative sentiments regarding the US and their allies' presence in Việt Nam emerged, which led to rampant protests around the globe. Many of which started off peaceful, but soon became violent, triggering massive backlash for the anti-war protesters. The fallout of the conflict endures as Việt Nam begins normalizing relations with the US and other countries as it grows exponentially in various sectors, such as tourism; can be seen in the diaspora, especially those that fled during the war and in the years following it. Many of the diaspora are apprehensive to return to their homeland, simultaneously fearing that things have not changed or changed too much. This sentiment is something that my mother, Thanh (or Lisa, her adoptive name), felt, as she was only twenty-four years old when she left. At the urging of my brother, who was only eight months old when they left, and therefore, does not remember anything that happened, she relented and finally agreed to returning to her ancestral homelands.

³ Kim Knight, "Survivors of Operation Babylift Reflect on Horror and Healing from the 1975 C-5A Crash in South Vietnam," *Mobility Forum* 28, no. 1 (2019), 16–18. My grandparents and their children were fortunate enough to have connections that allowed them all to come over on the planes, which is a documented controversy. My mom vividly remembers the crash that happened before her plane took off, which is documented in the article.

Despite its infancy, Việt Nam has a long and storied history. It is a unique melting pot, taking elements of both colonizer and colonized, and merging them to create Vietnamese culture. Many of the cultural traditions vital to Vietnamese identity come from other countries, such as bread and coffee introduced by the French, various holidays and customs from China, curries and religions from the Thais and the Indian subcontinent, which are just a few of the cultural meldings that exist.⁴ As with any other place, culture, identity, and history form a crucial basis of who we are and how we navigate life. These elements of cultural traditions are a force to be reckoned with because they are essential to Vietnamese identity. As a twenty-four-year-old going to visit her mother's homeland for the first time, I did not yet appreciate the significance of what returning meant but looking back, I have an appreciation and understanding that I wish my younger self could have seen and not take for granted.

Hà Nội

Hà Nội, or Hanoi, Việt Nam's capital, is situated in the Red River Delta, and is the second most populous city in the country. It is also my mother's birthplace, her home for the first four years of her life, and the first stop on our trip back to the motherland. The flight from LAX to Nội Bài International Airport seemed endless, roughly seventeen hours in the air, with a brief respite in Taipei, Taiwan. Once arriving in Việt Nam, stepping off the plane, going through the airport, collecting our bags, getting into an air-conditioned cab, and finally falling onto my mattress at the Hanoi La Siesta Hotel and Spa was a whirlwind. Despite it being late November, the air was sticky with condensation, yet thousands of people roamed the streets walking or driving cars, cyclos, or motorcycles; we soon joined the fray.

⁴ Christopher M. Annear and Jack Dash Harris, "Contemporary Vietnamese Cuisine," in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Vietnam*, 1st ed., 2022, 475–485.



Figure 1 (top): The bustling streets of Hà Nội.⁵
Figure 2 (bottom): Louie (brother) on a cyclo.⁶



Venturing into the streets was its own experience, as we began taking in the sights, going on cyclo rides, and learning that pedestrians can fearlessly cross the bustling road without being hit. Once out an aunt called my mom and let her know that she had a cousin in Hà Nội, one my mom had never met before. Going out

⁵ Rick Monson, *The bustling streets of Hà Nội*, photograph.

⁶ Christina Monson, *Louie on a cyclo*, photograph.

on a limb, we, as a family, made the decision to meet with them, which turned out to be a rewarding experience. Kim, my mom's patrilineal cousin, and Tinh, her husband, are both successful business owners, with Tinh owning Polite & Co., a bar, and Kim owning a tailoring business not too far away. Kim and Tinh were gracious enough to show us around and introduce us to places significant to our family and family history. The first place they took us was to a house above the bar, which happened to be the house my grandparents lived in. We were surprised it stayed in the family, as my grandparents and their children abruptly left it in 1954 because of the division of Việt Nam at the 17th parallel, while my uncle, who was born in the house, was only a few days old. While we were there, Tinh took my brother, Louie, and showed him the family tree that they had been compiling over the years. It was a patrilineal tree, but Tinh proudly inked Louie's name on it, as well as other male family members they were not aware existed because they had been born in the United States, before giving Louie his own copy.

The next day, Tinh and Kim took us to a few sites with historical and sentimental value to my family. Our first stop was to a Buddhist monastery, where my great aunt had been a head monk. Despite having passed away some years ago, the acolytes carried fond memories of her, which they shared with us. They served us lunch, some of the best vegetarian Vietnamese food I've ever had in my life. After the monastery, our next stop was on the outskirts of Hà Nội. They took us to the Bui family cemetery, where generations of our family had been buried.



Figure 3 (top): A giant Buddha statue outside of Hà Nội.⁷
Figure 4 (bottom): The house my mom was born in.⁸



Our last stop, and what I considered the best stop for this day, was to a village with a mixture of grand, mansion-like homes, next to tiny homes barely bigger than my American living room and kitchen combined. One of the luxurious homes had three equally sized, one-room buildings next to it. A man came running

⁷ Rick Monson, *Buddha statue*, photograph.

⁸ Rick Monson, *Bui house*, photograph.

out of the grand home and greeted Tinh and Kim before they introduced him, Son, to us. They explained that his family had been tasked with taking care of the three humble houses, each one given to my great-grandfather's three sons. Son and his family stayed, built their own home, and continued to watch over the houses, despite them being empty. Tinh looked pointedly at Louie and said, "It's in case one of the Bui boys wants to come back and claim their home," to which Louie could not shake his head fast or hard enough. We all laughed because the three homes were ridiculously tiny, yet my mother had been born in the middle one, which had been given to my grandfather.

That night, we went out for a ten-course food tour after which we walked around the city with our tour guide, visiting the Old Quarter and sampling traditional Vietnamese foods, such as bánh mì (sandwiches), bún riêu (noodle soup with tomato broth and ground crab and shrimp), and bún chả (vermicelli noodles with grilled pork and fresh herbs). After our ninth stop, the tour guide asked us if we were feeling adventurous, to which we did not hesitate before saying "Absolutely not". He smiled deviously and took us to a stall a few blocks away, where we were served another bún chả, their specialty, as well as Hà Nội's specialty. Our food guide explained to us, after we had tried a particular meat patty, that there were indigenous bugs ground up in it, to make the pork stretch. My mother was absolutely horrified but Louie, my dad, and I knew what we were getting into. To quote Andrew Zimmern, "If it looks good, eat it!"

One of our last stops in Hà Nội was to Café Giảng, the birthplace of cà phê trứng, or Vietnamese egg coffee. Created during a milk shortage in the 1940s, which traditional cà phê (coffee), relies on, cà phê trứng by contrast uses a raw egg yolk that is whisked, sometimes with sugar and/or vanilla, creating a frothy foam to replace milk.⁹ The coffee, which is traditionally brewed with aphin filter, is poured over the foam and sinks to the

⁹ Teresa Farney, "Hanoi's Signature Egg Coffee a Unique Taste Experience on Foodie Tour in Vietnam," *TCA Regional News*, Chicago: Tribune Content Agency LLC, 2019.

bottom, while the egg foam floats to the top. Despite how off-putting it sounds; it is delightfully creamy and incredibly strong. It is truly something to try at least once and to be enjoyed with Việt Nam's robust coffee culture, which has existed since the 19th century.¹⁰ With Vietnamese people enjoying a cup of coffee well into the night, it has the potential to become a coffee tourist destination in the near future.¹¹

Before traveling south, Louie arranged a trip to Vịnh Hạ Long, or Ha Long Bay, meaning descending dragon. Hạ Long is situated to the east of Hà Nội, featuring over 1,500 islets (small islands), it is picturesque and is a staple on many postcards from Việt Nam. Despite the overcast weather, onboard our own small boat that we rented for the day, we saw many floating villages as we cruised through the bay. At one point, we stopped, got off and explored a (well lit) cave, full of stalagmites and stalactites. Pictures of Vịnh Hạ Long do not do it justice, as its breathtaking views and panoramas are impossible to capture on phone cameras. It was a peaceful day on the water with just us, my mom, my dad, and Louie (and the boat crew), taking in the views and reconnecting with Việt Nam's environment, away from the fast-paced streets of Hà Nội.

¹⁰ James Hookway, "Starbucks Brings Its Coffee Culture to Vietnam," *Dow Jones Institutional News*, New York: Dow Jones & Company Inc, 2013.

¹¹ Oanh Thi Kim Vu, Abel Duarte Alonso, Wil Martens, Lan Do Thi Ha, Thanh Duc Tran, and Trung Thanh Nguyen, "Hospitality and Tourism Development through Coffee Shop Experiences in a Leading Coffee-Producing Nation," *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 106 (2022), 103300-.



Figure 5 (top): An overcast day in Vịnh Hạ Long.¹²
Figure 6 (bottom): A floating village in Vịnh Hạ Long.¹³



¹² Rick Monson, *Vịnh Hạ Long*, photograph.

¹³ Rick Monson, *Floating village in Vịnh Hạ Long*, photograph.



Figure 7 (top): Cave on an islet in Vịnh Hạ Long.¹⁴

Figure 8 (bottom): Family photo in Vịnh Hạ Long. Left to right: Louie Bui (brother), Christina Monson (author), Lisa Monson (mom), and Rick Monson (dad).¹⁵



Nha Trang

Nha Trang, a resort beach city next to Cam Ranh Bay, Việt Nam's only deep-sea port that was wildly instrumental and highly

¹⁴ Christina Monson, *Cave system in Vịnh Hạ Long*, photograph.

¹⁵ Rick Monson, *Family photo*, photograph.

contested after the war (and still highly contested into the 21st century), was our next on our itinerary.¹⁶ Considered one of the best natural deep water bays in the entirety of Asia, Cam Ranh Bay was used as a military base and port by the United States during the Việt Nam War and, later, by the Soviet Union during the Cold War.¹⁷ In Nha Trang, we stayed at the Sheraton, just steps away from the beach. Every morning here, I enjoyed thanh long (dragonfruit), chanh dây (passionfruit), and cà phê sữa đá (Vietnamese iced coffee with condensed milk), while taking in the breathtaking view. Nha Trang felt like a vacation while on vacation.

It was here that we got to experience more of Việt Nam in its natural beauty. The days all blurred together, as we went island hopping in the quest to find the perfect beach, or as we went inland to have lunch by a waterfall. My mom reconnected with her three cousins, Đại, Hương and Vân, all of them siblings. Regardless of just meeting them, it felt like I had known Đại, Hương and Vân my entire life. They were patient with me, despite my broken Vietnamese, and eager to get us the freshest fish for canh chua, (Vietnamese sweet and sour soup) or the best ốc (snails) for us to eat. Leaving Nha Trang, as well as Đại, Hương and Vân was perhaps one of the hardest parts of this trip; in the handful of days here, I had instantly bonded and formed lasting ties with family whom I had never met before. Despite not visiting any historical sites or places of significance, Nha Trang was the most rewarding experience of the entire trip.

¹⁶ Alvin H Bernstein and Paul Gigot, “The Soviets in Cam Ranh Bay,” *The National Interest*. Vol. 3, New York: National Affairs, Inc, 1986.

¹⁷ Pham Thi Yen, “Strategic Use of Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam’s External Relations with Major Powers,” *Strategic Analysis* 45, no. 1 (2021), 38–50.



Figure 9 (top): A waterfall in the outskirts of Nha Trang.¹⁸
Figure 10 (bottom): A beach on an island off the coast of Nha Trang.¹⁹



¹⁸ Christina Monson, *Waterfall in Nha Trang*, photograph.

¹⁹ Christina Monson, *Nha Trang beach*, photograph.

Sài Gòn

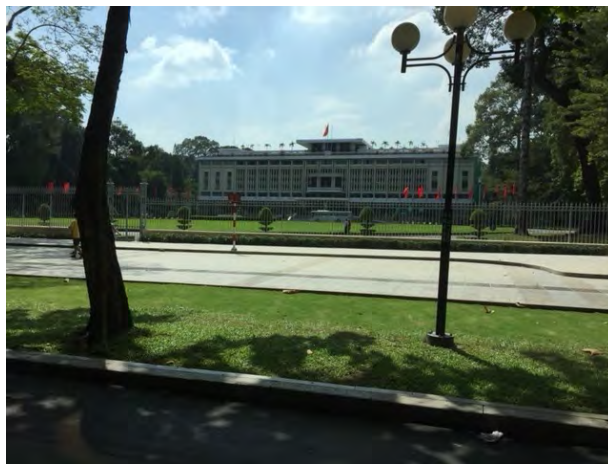
Following the partition of Việt Nam from the 1954 Geneva Accords, my mom, age four at the time, and her family migrated south from Hà Nội to Sài Gòn. Sài Gòn or Saigon, despite being renamed to Ho Chi Minh City after revolutionary leader and former president Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969), has remained the more enduring and recognizable name. Situated in Southern Việt Nam, just north of the Mekong Delta, Sài Gòn is hotter and more humid than its sister city in the north, Hà Nội. Staying in the air-conditioned Sanouva, we embarked on the last leg of our trip. Hà Nội and Sài Gòn have the same big city feel, yet at the same time feel different. Hà Nội is much tamer, almost as if it is the more traditional, older sibling. Perhaps, in hindsight, this makes sense, given that Sài Gòn is the “newer,” more modern feeling city out of the two; however, it is definitely my favorite.

One of the first places we went to in Sài Gòn was the house my family moved to. My mom was excited to show us where she spent her formative years and remembered the exact way to get there, despite the amount of time that had passed. Through the meandering streets, we passed a fish market before coming upon a stream where we turned and walked down the bank before a woman outside of a house stopped us; she was my mom’s old neighbor and recognized her, with delight sparking in her eyes. The joy we all felt, as a family seeing where we had come from, was something that I’ll hold near and dear. After reconnecting with family friends and seeing our personal history, we embarked on a journey to learn more about the history of the country we are from.

Independence Palace was one of our stops; with its first iteration built under French colonization (1858-1885), it was known as the residence of the South Vietnamese president during the partition and conflict in Việt Nam, and later, renamed Reunification Hall after the Việt Nam War ended.²⁰ It is a small,

²⁰ “Reunification Palace,” Lonely Planet, <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/vietnam/ho-chi-minh-city/attractions/reunification-palace/a/poi-sig/403140/357884>.

yet important, museum as it serves as a reminder of the durable legacy of the Vietnamese people, under French rule and in the aftermath of war. It is interesting to see how this building, as well as others throughout Việt Nam, will endure in the years to come. The next site we visited was the Củ Chi tunnels, a system of tunnels running under Sài Gòn that were used extensively during the war.²¹ Visitors are encouraged to enter the tunnels, guided of course, to experience the intense, claustrophobic feeling that tunnel runners must have endured as they delivered supplies or used the tunnels as escape routes. hilariously, there are “American-sized” tunnels, ones that have been widened and made taller, to accommodate tourists.²²



*Figure 11: Independence Palace.*²³

²¹ Mark Edmundson, “In the New Vietnam,” *Raritan* 28, no. 2 (2008): 155.

²² Edmundson, “In the New Vietnam,” 156.

²³ Rick Monson, *Independence Palace*, photograph.



Figure 12: Christina (author), laughing and coming out of the Củ Chi tunnels.²⁴

At some point in Sài Gòn, we all realized that we were homesick and, most of all, craving American food. Perusing TripAdvisor, Louie and I were shocked to find an American barbeque place a short walk away from our hotel. Naturally, it wasn't hard to convince my dad, a Marine raised in Wisconsin, that we needed to go there; it was my mom that needed convincing. Once we did, however, we stopped at TnT BBQ, not once, but twice. It was the respite my palate needed and a reminder of home.

Some of my best memories in Sài Gòn occurred with my mother, who I had a strained relationship with during that time. One night, she came knocking on my hotel door with a wild look in her eye. "Con (child)," she asked, "I saw there is a lady down the street selling ốc, do you want to come with me?" I hesitantly agreed to go with her, as it was just us. To my surprise, I had a great time with my mom, while we voraciously ate numerous types of ốc, many of which you cannot get in the US. Chè (Vietnamese sweet soup, a dessert), comes in many varieties. My personal

²⁴ Rick Monson, *Christina coming out of the tunnels*, photograph.

Travel

favorite is chè thái, which contains mít (jackfruit), vải (lychee), and nhãn (longan), in nước cốt dừa (coconut cream and half and half sauce), though each recipe is different based on who makes it. My mom and I stopped at a chè vendor and, knowing it was my favorite, my mom grabbed one for me. She handed it to me, watching me take a bite with a devious expression on her face. I made a slightly disgusted and confused face, asking her “Why does my chè taste like green onions?” She laughed and explained she put fresh sầu riêng (durian) in it, which I generally do not enjoy, just to see my reaction.

Perhaps my most memorable and favorite experience was our Bến Tre trip. Situated in the very south of Việt Nam, in the Mekong Delta, Bến Tre isn’t a far car ride away from Sài Gòn. Sitting in a wooden boat, we floated down one of the many offshoot streams before coming to a stop at a kẹo dừa (coconut candy) factory, with factory being used in the loosest sense. Situated entirely outside under thatched roofs, we experienced the entire candy-making process: how it started with the whole coconut, and ended as a delightful, chewy candy. It is my deepest regret that I didn’t bring more kẹo dừa home.



*Figure (left): Lily Pond at a rest stop on the way to the Mekong Delta.*²⁵

*Figure (right): Floating down the Mekong Delta.*²⁶

Going home, to California, was an exhaustive experience. Mirroring my family's departure in 1975, we flew out of Tân Sơn Nhất International Airport. Despite my initial reluctance to go to Việt Nam, I connected with my family and myself on this trip. It was an eye-opening experience and I found myself not wanting to leave as a strange feeling came over me; I realized that I was home. The chaotic streets, wild, crazy foods and ingredients, and the natural lush beauty of the country resonated with me. I found pieces of myself in Việt Nam, history that I connected with, and bonds that will last a lifetime. I look forward to going back.

²⁵ Christina Monson, *Lily pads*, photograph.

²⁶ Christina Monson, *Mekong Delta*, photograph.

Bibliography

- Annear, Christopher M., and Jack Dash Harris. "Contemporary Vietnamese Cuisine." In *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Vietnam*, 1st ed., 475–485. Routledge, 2022.
- Bernstein, Alvin H, and Paul Gigot. *The Soviets in Cam Ranh Bay. The National Interest*. Vol. 3. New York: National Affairs, Inc, 1986.
- Edmundson, Mark. "In the New Vietnam." *Raritan* 28, no. 2 (2008): 154–63.
- Farney, Teresa. "Hanoi's Signature Egg Coffee a Unique Taste Experience on Foodie Tour in Vietnam." *TCA Regional News*. Chicago: Tribune Content Agency LLC, 2019.
- Hồ, Xuân Hương. "Autumn Landscape." In *Spring Essence: The Poetry of Hồ Xuân Hương*, translated by John Balaban. Port Townsend, Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 2000, 18–19.
- Hookway, James. "Starbucks Brings Its Coffee Culture to Vietnam." *Dow Jones Institutional News*. New York: Dow Jones & Company Inc, 2013.
- Knight, Kim. "Survivors of Operation Babylift Reflect on Horror and Healing from the 1975 C-5A Crash in South Vietnam." *Mobility Forum* 28, no. 1 (2019): 16–18.
- Lonely Planet. "Reunification Palace," <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/vietnam/ho-chi-minh-city/attractions/reunificationpalace/a/poisig/403140/35788>.
- Vu, Oanh Thi Kim, Abel Duarte Alonso, Wil Martens, Lan Do Thi Ha, Thanh Duc Tran, et al.. "Hospitality and Tourism Development through Coffee Shop Experiences in a Leading Coffee-Producing Nation." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 106 (2022): 103300-. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103300>.
- Yen, Pham Thi. "Strategic Use of Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam's External Relations with Major Powers." *Strategic Analysis* 45, no. 1 (2021): 38–50. doi:10.1080/09700161.2020.1870270.

Author Bio

Christina Monson is a current master of arts student in history at California State University, San Bernardino. With research interests surrounding postwar Việt Nam, Vietnamese diaspora, the influence and impact of Vietnamese culture on its former colonizers and on where the diaspora settled, she hopes to eventually obtain her PhD and become a professor. Outside of her studies, Christina is a huge Green Bay Packers fan, an avid reader, an enthusiastic tabletop and video gamer. She enjoys physically pushing herself in the gym, relishes in brunch and cooking, and adores spending time with her loved ones, including her two dogs, Thor and Ophelia.



To order copies or for further information, please visit the journal website at <http://historyinthemaking.csusb.edu>