In the late 1960s, the radical organization Weatherman practiced “criticism/self-criticism” sessions, wherein the group would select a member in order to attack the individual’s character flaws for hours on end. These meetings became central to the Weatherman experience, as their purpose was to break down the individual so that they could rebuild themselves within the collective. Additionally, group members swapped sexual partners, sometimes breaking up established couples in the process; they called this practice “smash monogamy.” One night, after hours of censure for her perceived “egocentrism,” Susan Stern went to bed “shell shocked.” She confided in Weatherman leader, Mark Rudd, that she felt miserable. He tried to reassure her, explaining, “I know how hard that first real criticism is—it’s the toughest thing in the world to face how fucked up we are. But you’ll be much stronger for it, Susan.” That night, as she was trying to sleep, she heard the muffled sobs

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of her friend Georgia, fending off Rudd in a nearby bed. Earlier, Rudd warned Georgia that she had to “strengthen herself to fight the reactionary tendencies within the collective.” Now, Georgia told him “I don’t want you. I want Mike… I can’t help it. I love him.” Rudd told her, “You have to put the demands of your collective above your love. Nothing comes before the collective.” Lying there, hands clamped over her ears, Susan Stern thought, “Perhaps… Weatherman is wrong.” At the time, the public lacked knowledge of Weatherman’s radical sex practices. This incident and the organization’s support of smash monogamy, however, constitute vital pieces of the decade’s sexual revolution.

The media credited greater structural forces for allowing youths more opportunity and personal freedom. *New York Times* cited class mobility as a causal agent for the sexual revolution. Journalist Andrew Hacker explained, “There is more movement than ever before from place to place, from class to class, with each step forcing adjustments in values and expectations.” Historian David Allyn argues that 1960s youths grew up in unprecedented prosperity, which allowed them to “afford to put aside practical concerns about the future in order to savor life’s pleasures.” Hacker warned that “moral standards become less absolute as the range of choices becomes wider” and inferred that young Americans desired “some kind of fixed relationship” to replace the old ties of family, community and church. The *New York Times* underscored youth participation in the civil rights movement, suggesting that the questioning of some of

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3 Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper, 1984), 340. This version of the story comes from a combination of Matusow, Barber and, of course, Stern’s personal account. Rudd makes no mention of this incident in his own memoir, which was consulted but not cited for this paper.

4 Ibid., 340-1.


7 Hacker, “Pill and Morality.”
society’s rules led easily to the questioning of all. In 1968, the *Los Angeles Times* assessed the situation, finding that the middle class had become a “moral battleground” in America. This article explores the watershed moments in this moral battleground, embodied in every conflict between the old morality and a new morality, in the reemergence of the idea of free love, and the more extreme extension of this idea in smash monogamy. Historians must look closer to understand how Americans in the 1960s defined these gradual changes in morality as radical, how youth ultimately excised radical elements, and finally, how the very institution they tried to destroy, the institution of marriage, became strengthened.

Two types of primary sources, newspapers from the early sexual revolution and memoirs dealing with the later sexual radicalization, provide a window into the changing sexual mores. The eye of the media focused on the sexual revolution for a relatively short period of time. As a more political revolution began to take shape in America, the media stopped looking to the *sexual* revolution and looked to the *political* one. Interestingly, the sexual revolution became more radical when no one was looking. To understand the first battle of the sexual revolution, we must look at the media’s perceptions of the movement. As the sexual revolution moved into new terrains, however, media attention became sparse. As a result, historians have also overlooked the sexual revolution in favor of discussions about political radicalism. Where media sources dry up, historians can turn to memoirs. Former radicals, some of whom spent time in prison, have written about their experiences. Some, like Susan Stern, do not shy away from the negative. In order to understand the continuing sexual revolution, scholars must consider firsthand accounts and secondary materials that discuss the counterculture and sexual revolution. Only then can a clearer picture of the sexual revolution and its impact on the fabric of sex and marriage in America, emerge.

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Historians have examined the sexual revolution from a variety of angles. Nancy Cott, for example, argues that marriage and the U.S. government are interconnected; changes in one lead to changes in the other. The community, she explains, has historically defined marriage in America. The sexual revolution involved a conflict—often direct, always perceived—between two moralities, two ways of life. Few historians have examined the sexual revolution directly; most treat it as a side note to political revolution and upheaval. Accordingly, Elaine Tyler May argues that, “fears of sexual chaos tend to surface during times of crisis and rapid social change.”

May links the roots of the sexual revolution to the Cold War, finding that fears over communism created anxieties over sexual practices. Americans targeted their fears at what Matusow calls “the Dionysian impulse in the hippie counterculture.”

David Allyn injects medical advances into the debate as contraception became “clean” with the pill. Clean contraception meant the young generation, including college and high school students, willingly stepped outside accepted behavioral boundaries by engaging in non-marital sex.

This triumph over human biology granted youth greater degrees of physical freedom, which frightened older generations. Critics of the new morality “complained that the family-centered ethic of ‘togetherness’ gave way to the hedonistic celebration of ‘doing your own thing.’” The focus shifted from the family to the individual and the emphasis on marriage lessened as young people looked for new ways to make connections through numerous partners, anonymous sex, and free love. Smash

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12 Matusow, 293.

13 Allyn, 33.

14 May, 221.
monogamy represented the zenith of the radical sexual movement, hoping to tear away the patriarchal roots of marriage for something better. This came at a personal cost for some as detachment from the norm required more force than some revolutionaries supposed. They saw the American nuclear family as “isolated in its privacy, conformist in its security-mindedness and dull in its routine, often hypocritical mode of existence [that] seemed to confine and diminish the self.”¹⁵ This view of the family presented a new and distinct challenge to sex, marriage, and the old morality in America.

This revision—the sexual revolution—was the “stock magazine piece” of the 1960s.¹⁶ Newspapers reported on the “alleged breakdowns in teenage morals”¹⁷ and became a topic of public discourse and of private conversation, debated in the home, in church, and on college campuses across the nation. The media presented the new freedom as a danger to the youth and a challenge to the old morality. New York Times cited a child-study organization in calling the “hue and cry” over the new morality a “smokescreen to protect the adult world from seeing that its entire moral code is in dire need of revision.”¹⁸ The Los Angeles Times blamed adult hypocrisy, suggesting that American adults had a “lascivious preoccupation on sex at one extreme and a tongue-tied, blind, paralyzing fear of it at the other.”¹⁹

The perception of the sexual revolution as a moral battleground took root in the ideas that the old morality, now known as the nuclear family, was crumbling. Barbara Epstein argues that “for the left to identify with ‘the family’ [it]…associated itself with authority and conventional

morality.” This conventional morality held that one man and one woman married, had children and raised a family, and the State supported these units because it led to a more stable society. Freedom from traditional restrictions countered the very purpose of marriage. Lillian Faderman finds that monogamy’s inhibition of sexual exploration did not make it appear antiquated to the new morality, but rather it “smacked too much of patriarchal capitalism and imperialism. It was men’s way of keeping women enslaved.” In its series on the nuclear family, the Los Angeles Times argued the weakening of traditional marriage and family in scientific terms. One article stated, “its ‘atoms’ are held together not by economic necessity but by a voluntary relationship based on emotional need and, hopefully, loyalty.” Sex fit within these bonds for practical reasons.

Sex also fit as a spiritual exercise, reinforced by Christianity, particularly Catholic doctrine. In the Journal of Social Hygiene in 1951, Edward B. Lyman explained that American society recognized marriage as “a natural law as well as a divine precept.” In the 1960s, the old morality operated under the assumption that sex within “the bond of matrimony” was morally correct, whereas “relations outside the protection of marriage” were immoral. In 1968, the Pope even proclaimed that sex was “not for pleasure and not even for the maintenance of a happy relationship between…couples. It has only one purpose, utilitarian, essential… the procreation of children.”

21 Cott, 2-8.
23 Callan, “Nuclear Family.”
25 Ibid.
Science countered religion here, as mainstream society saw the pill as a de facto invitation to promiscuity and a challenge to the old morality’s positioning of sex only within marriage. The *Los Angeles Times* predicted that the pill would “revolutionize, even subvert, moral standards in all parts of the civilized world.”\(^{27}\) A year earlier, the same paper reported in its nuclear family series that scientific advancements, particularly “birth control pills and containment of venereal diseases [had taken] some of the ‘don’t-ness’ out of sex.”\(^{28}\) Cott suggests that the pill “sever[ed] a link in the chain between sex and marriage.”\(^{29}\) In 1967, the *Los Angeles Times* explained to readers that, “with the day of the pill, girls have a sense of freedom… [that] they can go where they please and when they please without threat of pregnancy.”\(^{30}\) Although the article presumed that girls would engage in sexual intercourse with a steady partner, the moral battleground did not allow for this distinction.

Increased sexual activity and freedom granted by the pill, media outlets noted, constituted a danger to the youth of the nation. The media described premarital sex in negative terms. New morality, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, consisted of medical-like “symptoms,” suggesting the diseased nature of the sexual revolution.\(^{31}\) The *New York Times* referred to students as “casualties of the sexual revolution,” and correlated sex with mental health problems among students.\(^{32}\) The media also portrayed the new morality as a danger to runaways. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in 1967 that, “because of the hippie movement, today’s runaways are exposed as never before to the

\(^{27}\) Hacker, “Pill and Morality.”
\(^{28}\) Callan, “Sex Morality.”
\(^{29}\) Cott, 192.
\(^{31}\) Torgerson, “New Morality.”
\(^{32}\) Donald Janson, “Campus Sex Tied to Mental Ills,” *New York Times*, May 20, 1967. At the University of Wisconsin, 86% of unmarried female psychiatric patients had “indulged in intercourse” and 72% had done so with more than one person. Dr. Seymour L. Halleck concluded that “permissive sexual activity seems to be highly correlated with mental illness.”
three letter hazards of pot, LSD...and sex.” In a series on hippies, the Los Angeles Times reported that “many officials saw [hippies] as a serious threat to today’s young people.” Two years later, the New York Times reported on a commune called Oz that had a policy of discouraging runaways from visiting. This reality did not matter as long as the perception was that runaways would be taken in by hippies and would have sex, and their lives would be ruined.

The sexual revolution took on a political valence to prove that these supposed dangers had no validity. Medovoi argues that the revolution referred both to “New Left ambitions of toppling the state [and] the countercultural overthrow of traditional sexual mores.” Allyn suggests that “Young feminists equated the ‘sexual revolution’ with the oppression and ‘objectification’ of women and saw it, therefore, as something to stop at all costs. The politicization of the sexual revolution complicated all aspects of the battleground. A series in the Los Angeles Times about the nuclear family asked readers if the acceptance of the new morality “among youth [was] that start of a slow, tortuous route out of our hypocritical past to finally a healthier attitude toward sex as a basic part of human relations?” The newspaper would not support the sexual revolution explicitly, but it would promote language of progress.

Meanwhile, the sexual revolution found focus on college campuses where the battle over sex and education made headway slowly. More college students, as noted in the studies

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33 Houston, “Young Girls Running.”
37 Allyn, 5.
38 Callan, “Sex Morality.”
above, reportedly engaged in sexual intercourse. However, college physicians hesitated in prescribing the pill to co-eds more so than local practitioners. One college physician explained that “in giving the pill... we would be implicitly condoning the use they would subsequently make of them.” College physicians, more parent-conscious because of the idea of *in loco parentis*, practiced caution. In 1963, the *New York Times* conveyed physicians’ concerns, explaining that “parents do, under American ground rules, hold the college responsible for their children’s intellectual, personal and moral development.” Off campus, physicians displayed more tolerance for birth control because “they, unlike their university colleagues, have to deal with what happens when conception has not been prevented.” In other words, local physicians have to deal with pregnant, unmarried young women.

This battle over sex on campuses came to a head in 1960 when the University of Illinois in Champaign fired Professor Leo F. Koch for condoning premarital sex in the campus newspaper. Koch’s endorsement and firing put the sexual revolution on the national agenda and had Americans choosing sides. The controversy started when two students, Dan Bures and Dick Hutchison, wrote a letter entitled “Sex Ritualized” that criticized campus dating habits. The missive articulated that with a “compulsion to participate, the inevitable result is the neglect of the dating partner as an individual.” Koch, a biology professor, wrote a lengthy response that Bures, a year later, called “a bitter

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39 Linda Mathews, “Campus ‘Sex Revolution’ Seems Limited to Girls,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1968. The Packard survey in 1968 found that 57% of college males and 43% of college females had engaged in sexual intercourse. More importantly, the Packard survey found that 30% of “men” had had intercourse with more than two partners, while 14% of “girls” admitted to more than one sexual partner.

40 Hacker, “Pill and Morality.”

41 Ibid.


43 Hacker, “Pill and Morality.”

criticism, written with a streak of hardness running through the grain of everything he said.” The often quoted excerpt from Koch’s letter suggests the acceptability of sexual intercourse on campus specifically that a “mutually satisfactory sexual experience” might lead to “longer lasting marriages.” No one wanted to hear his conclusions as long as his argument “condoned premarital sex relations.” Koch argued that “with modern contraceptives and medical advice readily available at the nearest drugstore, or at least a family physician, there is no valid reason why sexual intercourse should not be condoned among those sufficiently mature to engage in it without social consequences and without violating their own codes of morality and ethics.” Moreover, he noted that “A mutually satisfactory sexual experience would eliminate the need for many hours of frustrated petting and lead to happier and longer lasting marriages among our young men and women.” Most individuals who read Koch’s statements could not get past his assessment that “premarital intercourse among college students is not, in and of itself, improper,” despite some cogent statements about new morality.

Reverend Ira Latimer, member of the Bureau of Public Affairs and the University of Illinois’ Dad’s Association, wrote a letter to the university’s female students and called Koch’s “exhortation to sexual promiscuity…an audacious attempt to subvert the religious and moral foundations of America.” He identified Koch’s approach as the “standard operating procedure of the Communist conspiracy [used] to demoralize a nation as a

45 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
necessary preliminary to taking over… Professor Koch’s letter follows this formula point by point.” Latimer further detracted from Koch’s argument, stating “Animal Koch would reduce us to a sub-animal level… All this, of course, is a calculated appeal to the appetites of young men who thoughtlessly suppose that a college campus would be a paradise if coeds were no more ‘inhibited’ than prostitutes.”

Koch appealed the university’s decision but lost. The Court of Appeals described Koch’s views as “offensive and repugnant and contrary to commonly accepted standards of morality and his espousal of these views could be interpreted as an encouragement of immoral behavior.” The same court decision called Koch’s letter “an uncomplimentary reflection on the standards of morality presently existing at the University of Illinois” and refused to repeat the text of his letter, saying, “it would not be profitable to set forth its full text for the purpose of this opinion.”

Koch also had his supporters. A committee of the American Association of University Professors censured the University of Illinois for firing Koch, calling his ouster “outrageously severe and completely unwarranted.” On campus, students demonstrated in support of the professor and hung University President David D. Henry in effigy complete with a sign that read ‘Hanged for Killing Academic Freedom.’

Koch remained infamous for years. When he was hired in 1964 as a science instructor at the “progressive” Camp Summerland in North Carolina, “rumors of nudism and free love swept the area.” Locals distributed hate literature around town,

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51 Ibid.
52 *Koch v. Board of Trustees of University of Ill.* These words echoed the President of the University, nearly word for word, though the court did not cite him. Rather, it reiterated what he said, taking a moral stance against Koch instead of simply upholding his dismissal on contractual grounds.
53 *Koch v. Board of Trustees of University of Ill.*
54 “Professors Score Ouster of Author of Sex Article.”
55 Hefner, “Playboy Philosophy.”
56 Roger Ebert, “Making Out Is Its Own Reward,” *Roger Ebert’s Blog*, January 12, 2010,
accusing the camp counselors of being not only nudists but “sex perverts, Communists and God knows what else.”\(^{57}\) Organized opposition to the camp produced a newspaper that “described alleged nude bathing and reported free love was being taught at the camp.”\(^{58}\) Both state troopers and townspeople attacked the camp “in a violent night raid” and campers evacuated to Camp Midvale in New Jersey. \(^{59}\) Though not specifically named, Koch’s reputation had preceded him. Regardless of any real connection to communists or any political radicals, the old morality identified Koch and his associates with the new morality.

Meanwhile, Reverend Frederick C. Wood, a chaplain at Goucher College, had to defend himself after his audience took one of his sermons as promoting premarital sex. The *New York Times* reported that the “young chaplain…has been answering critics who accuse him of preaching a sermon favoring free love.”\(^{60}\) He dared to say that “premarital intercourse need not be ‘bad’ or ‘dirty…indeed, it can be very beautiful.’”\(^{61}\) This same piece mentioned the Koch case, comparing Wood’s views to Koch’s. The President of Goucher College stood by the chaplain, though, saying that “far from preaching immorality, promiscuity, or advocating premarital relationships… he was attempting to sharpen the sense of personal responsibility in sexual as in all other human feeling.”\(^{62}\)

Free love countered the bonds of marriage and the old morality's admonition against premarital sex. Though free love predated the nuclear family’s incarnation of the old morality,


\(^{58}\) Ibid.

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ebert, “Its Own Reward.”

\(^{61}\) Ibid.

new morality followers used it as a way to reject tradition anew. Yippie John Sinclair explained that “All people must be free to fuck freely, whenever and wherever they want to...in bed, on the floor, in the chair, on the streets, in the parks and fields” to “escape the hang-ups that are drilled into us in this weirdo country.” Free love did not necessarily mean unrestrained sex with just anyone. It meant openness among the members of the commune. They tried to overcome the sexual hang-ups of mainstream America. The communards of the counterculture took their position on the moral battleground, making sexual nonconformity a political statement. The communards made free love a lifestyle, “welcoming sexual initiatives from women as well as men, demolishing sanctions on premarital relationships and attempting to do the same for extramarital and cross-racial sex.” They ignored the trappings of marriage and monogamy, replacing them with open relationships and free love. Some communes practiced “completely free love, where all members engaged in sexual encounters and where group sex or bisexuality might be accepted.” The New York Times reported in 1969 that “in some hippie communes, group sex is standard procedure.” The veracity did not matter, as long as the media presented it this way, the old morality could reject it sight unseen. The article informed readers that “At a few in the Southwest, newcomers are given to understand from the outset that property and bodies are to be shared freely, on demand. At Oz,” a commune near Meadville, Pennsylvania, “orgies were few and far between.”

64 Communard is Zicklin's term, a way to differentiate between hippies living in, say, Haight-Ashbury and those who moved to rural communes. Notably, it was not until late in the decade that newspapers looked outside the urban hippie enclaves to communes like Oz.
65 Cott, 192.
67 Houriet, “Commune Called Oz.”
Communes like Oz were an exception in having less emphasis on sex, but were quite normal in avoiding any emphasis on politics. Oz did not exist to change the world; rather it existed outside the world. At its peak in the summer of 1968, Oz consisted of twenty men, fourteen women and a two-year-old girl, all of whom shared food and clothing, shared shelter and, most importantly, shared life experiences. They did not practice regular orgies or the more extreme forms of free love, but they did share beds. Seven of the women of Oz were married or had an “old man” with whom they regularly shared a bed. Other communes dealt with sex and marriage in similar or more open ways. Billy Digger spoke of the fluidity of marriage contracts, explaining that “people could still have huge ceremonies when they meet something they dug...if someone dug a different person every day, he could have a different ceremony every day.” At Oz, men wore jeans and little else, while women wore long, loose dresses; nudity was commonplace. This, of course, drew attention to the farm among locals in nearby Meadville. “Fed by fears that the farm was converting [or corrupting] numbers of local youth to a radical life style,” residents started harassing the people at Oz. Ultimately, state police raided Oz and charged members with “maintaining a disorderly house” in violation of a century-old statute. Police also charged members with “corrupting the morals of a 16-year-old girl” who lived on the farm with her parents’ knowledge and “tacit consent.” Authorities nailed to the front door of the farm an injunction against using the premises for

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68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
71 Houriet, “Commune Called Oz.”
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
“fornication, assignation and lewdness,” and most of the members scattered to new communes or back to their old lives.

The politics of the old morality intruded on the people at Oz, but in other parts of the counterculture, free love went hand in hand with politics. In fact, the very existence of communes constituted a political statement in itself. As Billy Digger explained, “the basic unit of the culture…would be the commune instead of a house with one man and one woman in it.”74 This contradicted and challenged the most basic notions of the old morality. Digger clarified that “the commune would not be owned by one person or one group but would be open to all people at all times, to do whatever they wish to do in it.”75 Communes challenged the Protestant ethic and American capitalism. Children in the communes “would be the responsibility of everyone, not only of the blood mother or father.”76 This idea broke with American tradition, taking parenting out of the realm of the biological parents and putting it on the collective. The new morality redefined marriage and marital relations even outside of the sphere of sex.

The women's liberation movement found common ground with the counterculture and radical sexuality in rejecting the old morality's sense of marriage. The movement did not fundamentally oppose the union of men and women. Rather, it sought to dismantle the patriarchal, oppressive form of marriage. While marriage had become more optional for women, some wanted it entirely done away with. For others, marriage represented the only form of economic security.77 Stern places emphasis on the beleaguered position of married women. She witnesses “millions of women tired of being mothers, tired of being wives, tired of being mistresses, tired of doing laundry, tired of cooking, cleaning, sewing, serving, chauffeuring, mending, shopping, and suffering the daily tantrums not only of

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74 Golden, 36.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
their children, but of their men as well.”78 Dr. Paul H. Gebhard argued that the sexual revolution constituted “a continuation of the trend toward sexual equality with the female being regarded both by males and by herself as less a sexual object to be exploited, and more as a fellow human with her own needs, expectations and rights.”79

Women’s liberation existed now not only as a branch of the sexual revolution but as fuel for it also. The New York Times articulated that “the revolution…has primarily to do with women, and middle-class women in particular. They are the ones who have finally come to embrace ways of thinking and behaving that have long been customary for others.” Men already had some sexual freedom, but now “women began to stir and breathe, to moan new words: freedom; liberation; independence; employment; unemployment; divorce, birth control. Political, and with a gallop, the Women’s Liberation Movement was born.”80 In the greater sexual revolution, others claimed freedom as a more ubiquitous ideal for all sexes, races, and class. Freedom of choice extended beyond the realm of white men.

On a broader level, the entire New Left had reason to reject marriage as well. Digger asserted that hippies had “none of the shut-in paranoid one-man-and-woman-and-children family structure” of the old morality.81 This negative view of traditional marriage and family spread into the political side of the New Left as well. Zicklin says that the counterculture “spread the idea that contemporary society had become a perversion of nature.”82 This included, and even depended on, traditional marriage. Weatherman member Michael Albert argued that the women’s movement “significantly affected” the group; “it was not only out to end imperialism, but also to end patriarchy.”83 Stern

78 Stern, 9.
80 Stern, 9.
81 Golden, 36.
82 Zicklin, 10.
83 Michael Albert, Remembering Tomorrow: From SDS to Life After Capitalism (New York: Seven Stories, 2006), 166.
agrees, channeling her younger self, she writes: “I’m no longer content to nurture children, or to give a husband support and strength. I need all my strength for the Movement, to fight imperialism, to create a world in which people can live with dignity and without fear and starvation and war.”

Stern effectively equated imperialism with the patriarchy of marriage, and explained that the sexual revolution and political revolution moving forward together was no coincidence.

Like Stern, not all individuals in the movement could afford to detach themselves from the world to live in communes; some wanted to more directly confront the old morality. Groups like Weatherman became active in the late 1960s, taking increasingly radical stances and actions to combat the old morality and the American government as well. Some lesbian feminists “believed it a duty to ‘Smash Monogamy,’ as their buttons proclaimed, sporting a triple woman’s symbol and rejecting [even] the notion of the lesbian couple.” Zicklin argues that the small size of cells in Weatherman or on most communes operated as a direct “answer to the problem of individuality in a large-scale organizational society.” In the nuclear family, the individual made up just one atom within a larger whole, whereas the individual mattered more in a radical cell. Despite the belief in “rugged individualism” and the American Dream, monogamous couples and family units built American society. The revolution fought as much against this system of organization as it did the patriarchy behind it or the imperialism that emerged as a result.

Using the same terminology as the women's liberation movement, Weatherman sought to smash monogamy within its collectives. Weatherman leader Bill Ayers, describing the casualness that smash monogamy could involve, describes a night in which, “Diana and Rachel and Terry and I bedded down together…. In the mayhem we searched our every possibility and I woke up with Terry in my arms, Rachel and Diana curled up

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84 Stern, 123.
85 Faderman, 233.
86 Zicklin, 40.
across the way. We were, we said, an army of lovers.\textsuperscript{87} Prior to this, Ayers and Diana had been a couple. He told her he would not “allow himself to be tied to one woman” anymore and she started spending time with a “number of other men.”\textsuperscript{88} In this, Weatherman operated similarly to Redbird, a lesbian community in Vermont, where members thought they would “smash monogamy too by rotating through everyone in the collective until [they] had been with everyone and then having open sexual options within the collective.”\textsuperscript{89} Forced rotation of partners, self-implemented, as Ayers admits, “took a lot of energy…. [Y]ou were supposed to fuck, no matter what.”\textsuperscript{90} Weatherman employed slogans such as “SMASH MONOGAMY! NO LOVE! NO LIFE!”\textsuperscript{91} The group made up an “army of lovers” who cheered against love and life. This stance, taken literally, could never hold.

This revolutionary trading of partners, however positive in theory, had far more negative effects in practice. The \textit{Los Angeles Times} reported that smash monogamy in Weatherman “led to a situation in which any man could simply announce that he wanted to sleep with a particular woman and she would be required to submit.”\textsuperscript{92} Stern’s account of Rudd’s behavior within the collective illustrates that submission. Smash monogamy did not allow for nonparticipants. At Redbird, they chose lovers by “drawing name[s] out of a hat, and then [would] go about loving that person, until, after several months” they would redraw and go again.\textsuperscript{93} This randomness did break down old standards and surely countered the old morality, but it valued no one as an

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\item\textsuperscript{87} Bill Ayers, \textit{Fugitive Days: A Memoir} (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 142.
\item\textsuperscript{88} “‘Days of Rage’ Riots a Time of Tempering,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, November 26, 1970.
\item\textsuperscript{89} Paul J. Cloke and Jo Little, \textit{Contested Countryside Cultures: Otherness, Marginalisation, and Rurality} (London: Routledge, 1997), 111. The work cites documentation of the community by Cheney (1985).
\item\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{91} Stern, 153.
\item\textsuperscript{92} “Days of Rage.”
\item\textsuperscript{93} Cloke & Little, 111.
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individual; a person’s free will devolved to names in a hat. These campaigns to smash monogamy, Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood wrote in the New Left magazine, *Leviathan*, in 1969 might “produce effectiveness and homogeneity and loyalty” but would not “produce freedom.” 94 These feminist authors understood the problem before the practitioners of smash monogamy did. Theory did not take one’s emotions into account. Diana Oughton asked Ayers, “If this is liberation... then why don’t I feel free?”95 Still, the practice continued in Weatherman as long as the collectives could maintain it—after the organization went fully underground in the 1970s, the practice became less rigid. Ron Jacobs argues that smash monogamy “only freed men from responsibility and, consequently, replicated the structures already in existence.”96

The New Left’s inability to fully subvert patriarchy constituted one of the many reasons why smash monogamy failed. The on-demand sex favored the men of the organization. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “women quickly came to resent the fact this did not seem to work in the opposite direction.”97 Berger argues that smash monogamy “played out in typically sexist ways, in which women were expected to be sexually available to men.”98 Refusal to participate in sexual relations led to dissent, even among the women. When Stern did not want to participate, she lashed out at Carol, who supported smash monogamy. Stern accused Carol of wanting others to “give up our relationships...because [she didn’t] have anyone to fuck.”99 The night Mark Rudd raped her friend Georgia, Stern

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95 Ayers, 142.
96 Jacobs, 92.
97 “Days of Rage.”
99 Stern, 156.
wondered “where did building strength end and torture begin?”

Smash monogamy sowed the seeds of its own destruction. Stern’s tone in her memoir changed after this account. “Monogamy was still the number one topic,” she wrote, “SMASH SMASH SMASH! The illness was growing like a cancer.” The “illness” no longer referred to monogamy, marriage or the old morality. For Stern, smash monogamy became a pathogen. Imprisoned Weatherman member David Gilbert credits the “glorification of violence” for promoting “male supremacy” within Weatherman. But, it seems more likely that male dominance within the organization, not in belief or theory, but in practice, ruined any chance for its success.

The sexual revolution peaked and its most radical aspect failed, but the ideology remained. Weatherman believed that group sex and smash monogamy would “abolish private property and usher in a new age of socialist harmony.” The question now is, if Weatherman’s code of morality forced the rotation of sexual partners, can we call the theory of smash monogamy immoral? It had social consequences and it certainly had its detractors and victims. But, if everyone in the organization had remained committed, smash monogamy would have worked just as open sexual relations had worked at Oz. Oz’s problem, after all, emerged as a result of the outside community’s intervention. Not until Weatherman went underground, and in some cases not until it ended, did the public know what had been going on inside the collectives. Weatherman communiqués did not discuss the sexual revolution. They spoke of imperialism and hinted at patriarchy, but even on the moral battleground of the sexual revolution, sex remained relatively private.

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100 Ibid, 170.
101 Stern, 180.
103 Allyn, 224.
So, what changed? A scientific panel found in 1967 that there was no sexual revolution. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that instead there was simply a “continuation of long existing trends…. Newer contraceptive devices do not seem to have prompted any rise in the percentage of women having intercourse before marriage.” \(^{104}\) Lasch argues that contraceptives, as well as legalized abortion in the 1970s, instead merely “weakened the links that once tied sex to love, marriage, and procreation. Men and women now pursue sexual pleasure as an end in itself, unmediated even by the conventional trappings of romance.”\(^ {105}\) Still, we have not become as open about sex as the rhetoric of the 1960s suggests. Sex Education makes headlines every time a school district attempts to make the discussion of sex more liberal. Birth control emerges in the political headlines again as a campaign season approaches. The sexual revolution brought America sex education, sex on college campuses, free love, women’s liberation and smash monogamy. Each of these challenges to the old morality created a brand new conflict, generating headlines and national debate. The timeline for the moral battleground of the sexual revolution extends beyond the 1960s. Dr. Ira L. Reiss proclaimed in 1967, “[t]here has really be no sexual revolution in a strict sense because the change has been gradual and continuous, and also because the adult institutional control structures of churches, parents, law and such have changed much slower than the youth culture.”\(^ {106}\) Gradual changes, initially seen as radical, became lost in the shuffle of later politics.

A strengthening of the institution of marriage became one consequence of the sexual revolution. Monica Mehta explains that “because marriage is now more optional… for the first time ever, men and women have equal rights in marriage

\(^{104}\) “Scientific Panel,” 6.


\(^{106}\) “Scientific Panel,” 6.
and outside it.” ¹⁰⁷ She suggests that “marriage has been tremendously weakened as an institution” but points to only negative aspects that have been removed, namely “its former monopoly over organizing sexuality, male-female relations, political, social and economic rights, and personal legitimacy.”¹⁰⁸ Mehta defines “traditional marriage” as one “based on love… for the purpose of making peoples’ individual lives better.”¹⁰⁹ Clark-Flory agrees that “marriage has become much fairer. It’s also become much more satisfying for men and women, when it works.”¹¹⁰ The sexual revolution allowed Americans to redefine marriage as something optional, and based on consent of both partners.

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¹⁰⁸ Ibid.
¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
¹¹⁰ Clark-Flory.
John Glenn Dunlap

John Sengstacke of the Chicago Defender had his finger on the pulse of what appeared relevant and timely to black journalism. Acting with the instincts of a true newspaperman, he gathered together representatives from twenty regional and national black newspapers for a meeting of the minds in a crucial time for the black press. These editors met not as competitors, but as concerned newsmen desiring to defend a set of principles that would allow them to continue fighting their cause of first-class citizenship. The five day conference for the Negro Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) held in Chicago in February 1940 proved mostly fruitful. The death of Robert S. Abbot, the founder of the Chicago Defender, and the unfounded allegations of journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner Westbrook Pegler only slightly overshadowed the meeting. Pegler alleged that the black press in America had abandoned its country when they aligned their cause to the fight against fascism in Europe and drudged up reminders that the fight for freedom began at home.\(^1\) Pegler’s indictment, originally intended to discredit the Black Fourth

Estate, had unintentionally elevated the black press to notoriety.\(^2\) By 1940, the black press had recognized a growing need to communicate with one another and share ideas on a host of issues including advertising, foreign correspondence, and the production costs associated with maintaining increased circulations. Though the conference presented an image of unity amongst the various black presses, social and political ideologies kept them from being entirely united.\(^3\) National publications projected conservative or moderate views on civil rights issues whereas local and community-based newspapers championed a liberal viewpoint sometimes mirroring the opinions of militant publications.\(^4\) Sengstacke’s determination to unify the black press began after a long decade in which the black community had endured an economic depression, and struggled to leave the memory of making the world “safe for democracy” behind them.\(^5\) During this decade, African American men and women turned to the black press for information typically omitted from mainstream journalism. The Black Fourth Estate served as a guidepost for African American communities who remained poised to grasp first-class citizenship, but the message journalists delivered was not always unified.

Over the last decade, scholarship on the modern civil rights movement has been guided by historians who showed interest in exploring the movement’s radical roots. Recent literature examines the “long civil rights movement” by way of expanding its time line and framing it within the New Deal era.

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\(^2\) The Fourth Estate is a reference to the press as a notable institution in a societal hierarchy. The use of the term Black Fourth Estate denotes that the Black press is a separate institution apart from the white mainstream press making notable contributions to black journalism and the black community.


\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) African American men who served in World War I had returned to the States expecting the same liberties and rights they had fought to preserve abroad.
This approach allows historians to consider the contributions of labor unions, working-class blacks, and the influence of the Communist Party. Scholars focus on two prominent categories – black insurgent politics and resistance and class tension between working and middle-class blacks in urban cities. These studies are an invaluable source for understanding the black freedom struggle and its transition to the post-World War II movement. Absent from the books, however, are the messages and the messengers who were framing the civil rights movement—the black press.

Black insurgent politics and resistance to institutional racism are addressed in historical studies by Beth Tompkins Bates, Martha Biondi, Harper Barnes, and Cameron McWhirter. These scholars focus on the impact of insurgency on the black community and the efforts of working-class blacks to organize themselves for the purpose of seeking first-class citizenship. Additionally, they demonstrate the power of resistance that elevated African Americans to fight for first-class citizenship and brought them in closer proximity to the post-Civil War promises of inclusion and freedom. Their work suggests that mass protest, resistance, and the organization of labor unions contributed to the black freedom struggle of the early twentieth century.

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century while also shedding light on the gaps in the long civil rights movement, which marginalized its radical components.

A second group of scholars focus on the tension between working-class and middle-class blacks in urban cities. These historians mainly direct their research to urban cities heavily impacted by the Great Migration beginning in 1910. Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, and New York become the focus in studies by Davarian L. Baldwin, Clarence Lang, Kimberley L. Phillips, and Touré F. Reed. These works explore the role of the “New Negro” and examine how class played a significant role during their freedom struggle. Middle-class blacks, in an attempt to gain first-class citizenship, promoted the “politics of respectability” which often propped up the interests of middle-class whites. In contrast, working-class blacks eschewed the advice about proper behavior leveled at them and, despite the tension, played a key role in the freedom struggle. This last group of historians considers the importance of class and how it divided the participants of the black freedom struggle between the 1930s to the 1960s. However, to better understand class tension among African Americans, historians must look at their sources in a different way by comparing the conflicted messages that came from the black press.

Historians of the civil rights movement use black newspapers often as an invaluable source of information for

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studying African American history. Few sources focus primarily on African Americans and the issues that affected them before and after Reconstruction. As a result, historians have privileged newspapers that highlighted the voices of black Americans. The major issues presented in newspapers include employment, housing, education, and leadership. Historians have an opportunity to interrogate the black press, namely by looking beyond the headlines. Race, an issue which has dominated the pages of black newspapers since the Freedom’s Journal in 1827, has also monopolized historians’ focus. This weekly publication, featured articles that dealt with exploitation, mistreatment, and limitations meted out on slaves. By the early twentieth century, black newspapers sharpened their focus and printed stories that challenged African Americans to claim the promise of first-class citizenship using race as a motivating factor. Historians who study the black press have made no distinction between the views of local and national publications since both presses agreed on issues concerning race. Moreover, scholars have overlooked class as a contributing factor to the black freedom struggle. Does a narrative focused on class tension among African Americans, with shared goals of freedom, opportunity, and first-class citizenship, present a different approach to understanding the black freedom struggle? Both local and national papers engaged in class discourses that provide a window into class and community among African Americans in the 1930s. By analyzing and comparing the local and national black presses, a new understanding of the black freedom struggle emerges. This project looks at the tension between working and middle-class blacks by examining the discourses of class in both the local and national black press.

Black newspapers provide an excellent source for understanding how class featured prominently in the relationship between their community and its desire for first-class citizenship. This project considers articles from nine black newspapers published during the mid 1920s and 1930s. Local black newspapers provided a nuanced look at the issues that concerned

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9 Wolseley, 9.
the working class. The strength of these papers comes from the journalist’s proximity to their audience and their ability to gauge the success of their message. Regional black leaders voiced working-class apprehensions over housing and job discrimination using local newspapers as their outlets. In contrast, national black newspapers tackled broader issues, reflecting a wide range of U.S. concerns. Issues like New Deal legislation and the fight against fascism abroad enabled the national press to reach a larger audience. National publications headquartered in major cities like New York, Baltimore and Chicago relied on sensational headlines and “red ink” to grab their audience. Conversely, national publications located in the South exercised caution regarding excessive controversy as an effort to retain advertising dollars generated by white-owned businesses leery of race propaganda. National newspapers situated in the North campaigned vigorously to draw southern blacks to urban cities and assimilate them in the workplace. National publications in the South urged blacks to stay home and promoted agriculture as a viable means of economic subsistence. These contrasts raised the issue of class as national newspapers competed to define the values of laboring blacks across a regional divide. While an analysis of both the local and national black press demonstrates that the concerns of both presses

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11 Early twentieth century newspapers often used red ink in their headlines to grab the reader’s attention. The stories that followed either highlighted a controversial subject matter or promoted propaganda.

appeared identical, a close examination of the language used by each press reveals the nuances that kept the black press in America from establishing a united force in the black freedom struggle.

The black press had a visible strength in its presentation with the creation of a daily, weekly, or bi-monthly public address that shaped public opinion and the discourse of the freedom struggle. In essence, it harnessed the power of the written word and, when coupled with the frequency of its message, served as a form of propaganda to further its cause. Undoubtedly, race became the trumpet that heralded the cause of first-class citizenship and fueled the propaganda. But if historians are interested in examining the weaknesses of the black freedom struggle of the early twentieth century, then race should not be its singular focus. Whereas race generally united the black press in the struggle for freedom, notions of class divided it.

Black newspapers captured voices of the middle class, instructing their working-class counterparts on the best methods for achieving first-class citizenship. Though difficult to determine how the message of the local and national black presses resonated with their intended audiences, what the newspapers reveal is that both presses, acting separately, attempted to unify the black community through their disparate understandings of class. Language created the vehicle for both presses to unify African Americans, and the key to disseminate their respective messages, but the language each press used lacked unity. As a result, regional and national presses furthered a divide between middle and working-class blacks while their notions of class remained mutually exclusive. Local publications generally promoted education as the means by which blacks could amass power. On the other hand, national publications urged the working class to accept their diminished role in the workplace and empower themselves by aligning their objectives in solidarity to working-class whites. Nonetheless, for the masses who divined the pages of the black press out of curiosity, or simply seeking information, the stories carried three basic themes, namely that African Americans were victims, they lacked leadership, and that through leadership, either individuals or organizations could empower themselves. These stories held
importance to all African Americans and to the newspapers that carried them, but each press’ different perceptions of class changed the tone of the arguments and kept the black press from being united for the cause of first-class citizenship.

The First Great Migration of 1910 brought southern blacks to the North for greater economic opportunities in industry. By 1930, an economic depression limited employment opportunities for laboring blacks even as an increased presence of African Americans in urban cities created tension between working-class blacks and whites. In 1932, African Americans tuned on their radios and listened as a wealthy aristocrat made promises of a New Deal and economic equality for all. New Deal programs gave black Americans opportunities in the arts as writers, musicians, artists, and actors, but it neglected laboring blacks in its crowning achievement of the Works Project Administration (WPA). Criticism of New Deal programs permeated the black press during the 1930s even as the Roosevelt Administration courted African Americans and appealed to them to join the Democratic Party. By the late 1930s, black Americans not only joined ranks with the Democratic Party, they also became a visible presence in civil service—three times the amount when Herbert Hoover left office in 1932.13 In this decade, labor unions, black-run organizations, and the Communist Party (CP) courted African Americans seeking to empower both skilled and unskilled laborers. During the Depression, the CP was influential in securing jobs for African Americans by leading grassroots fights in many cities for relief, public works, and emergency housing, along with its efforts to organize several labor strikes in the early 1930s that helped to initiate the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).14 By 1935, the Wagner Act, and the CIO challenged the traditions of white craft labor organizations and racially segregated dual-unionism promoted under the American Federation of Labor (AFL).15 The decade of the 30s witnessed

14 Biondi, 4-5.
15 Singh, 67.
increasing numbers of African Americans voicing discontent along with active resistance to institutionalized inequality.

When Alain Leroy Locke penned *The New Negro* in 1925 in the midst of what later became known as the Harlem Renaissance, black Americans realized that the opportunity to make changes to their social, political, and economic endeavors arrived. But even as black Americans struggled to define themselves in the public sphere, the political arena, and the labor market, they fought to secure equality amidst a growing tide of racism and brutal acts of terror. Lynchings dominated the headlines of the black press even as they campaigned vigorously to end decades of terror that plagued the black community. This decade stood witness to middle-class blacks and entrepreneurs who breathed new life into the black press in the second quarter of the twentieth century and seized the moment “to define [themselves] and [their] community amid American modernism.”

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**The black press and victimization**

During the black freedom struggle, both the national and local black press portrayed African Americans as victims of the economy and signaled a need for the entire black community to rise above its victim status. Both presses invoked language that portrayed working and middle-class blacks as victims of a poor economy, but differed in their approach. The national black press used language that evoked a sense of despair for African Americans. An article in the *Chicago Defender* discussed how the stock market crash had caused “economic turmoil for thousands” and how it “parallels the case of the American Negro” who continuously “fac[ed] a perpetual crisis [and questioned] whether he [was] going forward or standing still.”

National papers often conveyed a sense of urgency when discussing the victimization of working and middle-class blacks and their relation to a poor economy. Journalist George S. Schuyler criticized mainstream newspapers who in the wake of

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the stock market crash called for a ‘return to normalcy’ as a way to prop up American businesses. He argued that “the Negro cannot afford to go back to normalcy” stressing “national necessity and justice” for African Americans “to obtain fair play from the majority group.”

Local black presses did little to dispute the notion of African Americans as victims of a poor economy. However, the need to dramatize the language, in terms of urgency and despair, had paled in comparison to their nobler goal.

Local black presses framed their discourse on victim status using plain language in order to educate the community. These papers dismissed the value of domestic service as a viable source of employment. Rather, local papers printed stories that highlighted increasing numbers of African Americans employed in industrial, clerical, or public jobs. An article in the *New York Amsterdam News* informed readers that the New York Urban League (NYUL) helped fill “over 500 jobs” and planned to train “a definite number of apprentices [for] lessons on operating machines.”

Undoubtedly, the NYUL increased employment for African Americans, but there existed a class component associated with its efforts to place the unemployed in the workforce. As noted by Touré F. Reed, by 1926, the NYUL discontinued its “Domestic Placement Work” choosing to focus on placement in the “better occupations.” This decision placed 906 African Americans in industrial, clerical, or public jobs but only 59 in domestic or personal service. This reflected the League’s “callousness to the needs of lower-class African Americans.”

In addition, the local black press demonstrated the need to inform the working class that their victim status need not remain permanent and that through proper training and education they could raise their status. An article in the *Philadelphia Tribune* praised the efforts of young people who engaged in a “crusade to carry economic knowledge to the Negroes of Harlem” and informed them of the need to support a living wage and better working conditions—ideals that were not directed to

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18 Ibid.
20 Reed, 72.
those in domestic service.\textsuperscript{21} Nevertheless, the notion of African Americans as victims, touted by both presses, became the engine to drive economic change and further the cause of first-class citizenship.

Both the national and local black press extended the language of victimization to the poor wage status of African Americans. Local papers used fierce repetition when discussing poor wage status, and they trained their message of exploitation on working-class blacks. An editorial in the \textit{Los Angeles Sentinel} criticized New Deal legislation that set the value of unskilled labor for public works at $19.00 per month and raised fears that the edict would prompt public employees to “beat down their wages.”\textsuperscript{22} This in turn would force working-class blacks to work at a much lower pay scale than desired. The journalist argued that employers overlooked skilled workers entitled to “higher-bracket classificiations” and assigned them to “common labor projects at [the] lowest wages.”\textsuperscript{23} An article in the \textit{New York Amsterdam News} echoed this sentiment calling for “a more tolerant attitude” and asked industrial companies to include in their employment policies “Negroes in white collar classifications.”\textsuperscript{24} Local publications made class a divisive issue regarding labor, arguing that employers used laboring blacks to “beat down the status of all workers.”\textsuperscript{25} The local press emerged as guardians of the working class, doing more than depict African Americans as victims of the labor market. It also reminded them to demand more and never be satisfied with the status quo. Boasting of its contributions to the community, an editorial in the \textit{New York Amsterdam News} told its journalists that they must view their employment with the paper as a “stepping stone in the progress of the Negro in the business world” and that in time they would “graduat[e] to larger

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} “Young People Back Pullman Porters’ Union,” \textit{Philadelphia Tribune}, December 22, 1927.
\item \textsuperscript{22} “Return to Slavery,” \textit{Los Angeles Sentinel}, May 23, 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{23} “Same Old Deal,” \textit{Los Angeles Sentinel}, December 12, 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{24} “Leaders Express Hope for Race In 1940,” \textit{New York Amsterdam News}, December 30, 1939.
\item \textsuperscript{25} William Pickens, “Solidarity of Workers,” \textit{New York Amsterdam News}, September 22, 1926.
\end{itemize}
Indeed, local black papers portrayed the labor market for African Americans as a place of victimization, and they used the strongest language possible to deliver this point. One editorial referred to the government’s role in keeping down wages as an act that came “a little short of slavery.”

The national black press portrayed the labor market and the wage status of African Americans in the workplace much differently than the local press. National publications recognized the inequality of African Americans in the workplace but their primary focus involved the economic health of middle and professional-class blacks. An article in the *Chicago Defender* ignored the plight of the working class in the labor market and concentrated solely on the income disparity between middle-class blacks and whites. The article noted that “the average income for middle class Negroes is much lower than that for whites of the same class” comparing the middle-class Negro “on par with that of the white mechanic class: printers, painters, chauffeurs, and the like.” National publications exercised caution when discussing middle-class blacks. Editors of black newspapers as middle-class African Americans demonstrated their bias and focused only on positive aspects of this group of African Americans. An article praised “the professional classes” for their ability to “survive comfortably” made possible by a “reserve of money and credit based upon superior earning power.” The *Atlanta Daily World* voiced sympathy for “the upper-class Negroes—the doctors, dentists, school teachers, and small business men [who] were only slightly untouched by

27 “Solidarity of Workers.”
27 “Talking It Over.”
27 “Return to Slavery.”
business depressions…but now feeling the blow.”

The article pointed out the disparity between school teacher’s willingness to work and the scarcity of jobs available to them. In contrast, the national press referred to laboring blacks as the “domestic” or “servant” class who were “less able” to cope with the problems of unemployment as the professional class because of their inability to “lay up a reserve of money for such contingencies.”

Indeed, national publications made a distinction between black laborers and professionals in the middle class by controlling the language and perception of class for African Americans. Although the national black press dodged the issues of a volatile labor market and inequality of wages raised by the local press, they failed to deflect the blows that came their way on the subject of leadership.

The black press and leadership

The subject of leadership surfaced as an important issue to local and national black presses. This issue divided middle and working-class blacks as both groups differed on the notion of power. National publications pushed the idea of African Americans in leadership regardless of whether or not they promoted working-class values. The Atlanta Daily World described the ideal leader as possessing “the courage and diplomacy of Booker T. Washington.”

Nonetheless, the article interjected religious undertones by invoking images of Moses and called for “a great God [to] raise up a leader” someone who will lead them away from the trials and tribulations of being “impoverished, despised, and deluded from the foundation of the


31 Ibid.

32 “Race Hard Hit by Job Shortage.”

33 “The Penalty of Non-leadership,” Atlanta Daily World, September 29, 1935. By referencing Booker T. Washington in this editorial, the author had clearly defined the type of conservative leadership that is best suited for all African Americans, leadership which advocates assimilation for working and middle-class blacks.
American Nation.\textsuperscript{34} National publications often lacked clarity in their definition of an ideal black leader, but they quickly made distinctions of what or who a leader should not resemble. The \textit{Chicago Defender} lashed out at Marcus Garvey and accused him of “misleading a lot of ignorant colored people [and] …trying to make trouble on the inside of the colored race in the U.S.A.” when he advocated that all African Americans should turn their backs on the white man.\textsuperscript{35} The “modern Moses” as one national publication wrote must lead the black race toward “economic prosperity [and] the proper task of leadership [leads to] economic power.”\textsuperscript{36} However, the article voiced skepticism that such leadership existed and claimed that “the [black] leader of today” had not succeeded to help his people reach “economic prosperity” because he had failed “to practice what he so loudly preach[ed] namely: Cooperation in business enterprises.” \textsuperscript{37} Simply put, professionals and community leaders purchased items from white-owned businesses and deposited their money in white-owned banks instead of investing in their own community.

National papers appeared skeptical of the quality of leadership that would come from black intellectuals and they took every opportunity to voice their opposition. An editorial in a national publication noted the abundance of “intellectual timber” but contended that this group lacked the necessary skills to solve the problems faced by African Americans.\textsuperscript{38} The \textit{Chicago Defender} warned readers that “if …progress is bogged in the mire of misunderstanding the ‘Talented Tenth’ of Aframerica, who boast of their race patriotism and group loyalty, will be to blame.”\textsuperscript{39} Black intellectuals, according to the article, served as a detriment to the progress of civil rights. The primary
concern voiced in national publications focused on the issue that the “destiny” of African Americans should rest “not in white leadership” but leadership that came from its own community. The “battle” this time would not center on slavery, but a “battle for economic freedom.” The black national press stressed the importance of drafting African Americans in the service of leadership, but they qualified potential leaders by alienating black intellectuals who dismissed the lure of white leadership, power, and money.

The local press adopted a different perspective regarding leadership largely because the language invoked principles and values that resonated with the working class. Publications also educated readers on the notion of successful leadership. An editorial in a local publication defined the ideal black leader as someone who possessed “the spirit of sacrifice and suffering of a Gandhi, and the courage, knowledge, and determination of a Lenin.” Indeed, New York’s Harlem and the leadership of Tammany Hall brought to the surface the frustrations of working-class blacks toward their representation. Local publications stressed the importance of a new leader whose obligations would include a consideration for “the full equality of colored workers” and that “real leadership” equated to “real service to the people.” Local publications defined leadership in much broader terms. They believed that leadership must incorporate a “world vision, buttressed with a broad social, economic and political philosophy” aimed at making working-class blacks see that their solution was “economic in nature” as well as “international in scope.”

The Philadelphia Tribune asserted that economics played a key factor for consideration by black leaders in order to secure “freedom” which would result in a “happier and more abundant life.” Local papers not only defined the characteristics of successful leadership, but offered

40 J. Blaine Poindexter, “Congressman Hamilton Fish Pleased With Progress of Race During Past 65 Years,” Chicago Defender, February 18, 1928.


recognition as well. One editorial sang the praises of Augustus F. Hawkins, a black assemblyman from California who “fought for the best interest of the consumer, the working man, and the small taxpayer.” 43 Local publications supported the underdog and those who championed their cause. They highlighted the altruism of leaders like Hawkins, using themes like concern for the common man. In doing so, publishers shifted the focus to the black electorate and the need for leaders who would be representative of the black community. Nevertheless, this notion of proper representation often led to a discussion of leadership that stood in opposition to the masses.

Local presses not only exposed the corruption often accompanied by leadership and opposed by the masses, it offered solutions. The article that praised Hawkins for his “recognition of the needs of the masses,” chastised leaders who allocated “fat jobs to a chosen few.” 44 Indeed, this practice transcended racial differences and set a clear distinction of how class exposed a belief that the needs of a superior class of individuals took precedence over the needs of the masses. The Philadelphia Tribune addressed this issue when it admonished “Negro leaders…for their dishonesty in dealing with Negro workers” and warned the “Negro masses” not to rely on their leaders. Rather, it advised them to concentrate on the development of their leadership “from their own ranks.” 45 An editorial that endorsed Assemblyman Hawkins as a defender of working-class blacks, admonished former Assemblyman Frederick M. Roberts for a “legislative career…spent in the service of reactionary business [and] hopelessly out of step with the time.” 46 The emergence of “Black Politics” and the power of the black electorate in the 1940s came about as a result of the massive northern and western migrations and the 1944 Supreme Court decision in Smith v. Allwright that ruled white-only primaries violated the Fifteenth Amendment. 47 Local presses addressed the issue of character for leaders, which the national press simply

43 Los Angeles Sentinel, September 17, 1936.
44 “Negro Leaders Must Come From Ranks.”
45 Ibid.
46 “Keep Him Home,” Los Angeles Sentinel, September 17, 1936.
47 Biondi, 40.
ignored. They acknowledged that the black community needed “strong, wise, honest leadership within the race” but more importantly, a leader who could unite all groups of people. However, leadership encompassed only part of the story in which class weighed in on. In order to gain first-class citizenship the masses would need to empower themselves.

The black press and empowerment

Empowerment for the black community appeared in both the national and local black press. African Americans hinged their strategy for first-class citizenship on racial uplift, but the motivation for this concept raised strong disagreements among local and national papers. Both presses argued that solidarity among workers furthered agency among working-class blacks, but they differed in their presentation of this tactic. National publications strongly believed that the black community, powerless to fight on its own, needed to form bonds with influential whites. The Chicago Defender informed readers that blacks required supportive white leaders to give “sound advice, skillful and whole-hearted support and powerful influence” largely because “the Negro group in America will never be strong enough physically, intellectually, or financially to isolate itself and survive.” National papers argued that working-class blacks could benefit from their association with communist ideologies.

National papers adopted the language of left-leaning political ideologies to project solidarity and support fringe labor unions. One article discussed the views of the American Negro Labor Congress and its hope that “colored workers” would unite with “white workers of the world.” The article articulated that the purpose of this union would ignore race and focus on what “Communists” referred to as “class struggle.” National papers created enemies that working-class blacks could relate to. In their support of the Trade Union Unity, a communist labor organization, a national publication warned of the “struggle

48 “Leaders Express Hope For Race In 1940.”
49 George S. Schuyler, “Making Our Breaks.”
against our capitalist enemy, the bosses and their government.”\textsuperscript{51} This article stressed the importance of “Negro and white workers...to take their destiny in their own hands by organizing under the revolutionary leadership of the Communist party.”\textsuperscript{52} The \textit{Chicago Defender} argued in defense of “full social, economic and political equality of the Negro masses” explaining that “Negro workers [are] part of the American working class in the struggle against the capitalist system.”\textsuperscript{53} Feelings of fear and powerlessness filled the pages of national papers in order to motivate working-class blacks. National presses included gender with this tactic.

Indeed, language was an important tool in selling the idea of union membership to African Americans and the motivation for solidarity often became one of gender over race. The \textit{Chicago Defender} noted this in an article entitled “the Negro working woman” which argued for the support of unions by working-class women who were “prepared to fight” and were “[trained] on the picket line in Passaic, in New York and Chicago.”\textsuperscript{54} To garner this support, the article called attention to “the heartless cruelties” leveled at African Americans and referred to behavior that aligned itself to “terrorist methods” that defined working-class women as “a slave working class.”\textsuperscript{55}

The local press supported working-class solidarity, but used positive and spiritual tones to sell this idea to working-class blacks. The \textit{Philadelphia Tribune} called for “young graduates and under-graduates, fraters and sorors, teachers, social workers, doctors and lawyers” to support black-run unions.\textsuperscript{56} Local papers accepted working-class solidarity as a method to ensure “real emancipation for black people, nearly all of whom are in the working class” while avoiding demeaning language like national

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} “The Negro Working Woman,” \textit{Chicago Defender}, April 9, 1927.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} “Young People Back Pullman Porters’ Union,” \textit{Philadelphia Tribune}, December 22, 1927.
publications. They argued that the mutual interests of working-class blacks and whites would come to fruition when “[They] work[ed] together in harmony.” At times, the language used in newspapers evoked spiritual undertones to appeal to the sensibilities of working-class blacks. One article noted that “the only ‘salvation’ is active, planned cooperation between all workers” and those who were not organized were “at the ‘mercy’ of grasping employers.” Undoubtedly, local publications remained aware of the role that churches and spirituality played in the lives of African Americans. A “Nonmaterial” phenomenon such as Christian morals shaped internal communal standards among African Americans and became a way in which they identified and located class. But solidarity did not stand on its own as the only issue of empowerment that waxed the pages of the press.

The Black Fourth Estate had to decide whether or not an alliance with trade unions could help African Americans reach first-class status. Consequently, local and national black papers criticized the American Federation of Labor (AFL) for excluding working-class blacks and favoring skilled white workers. The *Baltimore African-American* a local publication criticized the AFL for denying membership to working-class blacks under “normal conditions” but welcoming them as strikebreakers, and earning the brand of “scabs” as a result. This journalist reminded his readers of the AFL’s practice to exclude skilled black laborers like plumbers, machinists, and railway mail clerks from their organization. National publications echoed this dissent when they called the AFL “social fascists” who created “a wave of terror” intended to “divide the Negro and white workers from uniting and demanding better economic and social

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57 William Pickens, “Solidarity of Workers.”
59 Lang, 6.
61 Ibid.
conditions.” 62 As noted by Beth Tompkins Bates, during the interwar years from the 1920s to the early 1940s, 90% of white workers favored the union effort and that twenty-four national labor unions, ten of them affiliates of the AFL, barred blacks completely. 63 However, local paper’s criticism of trade unions warned that big labor unions endangered African-American empowerment. The New York Amsterdam News warned readers that union labor threatened “Negro labor” largely because it had “monopolized all government projects” and because it had “made demands on private business” that displaced working-class blacks. 64 This theme appeared in an editorial in the Los Angeles Sentinel as a criticism toward the AFL which “exclud[ed] Negroes on the basis of their merit [and encouraged] independent employers to continue the practice.” 65 Indeed, the black press aimed sharp criticism towards craft unionism, but also critiqued prominent organizations leveled at uplifting the black community.

Support of the National Urban League (NUL), a notable black-run organization, remained an area of contention between local and national papers. National papers criticized NUL for their ineffective efforts to help laboring blacks. The Norfolk Journal and Guide referred to them as “a mere scab agency” that operated “as a supply base furnishing to employers unorganized Negro workers with which to beat down the wages, hours, and working conditions erected by union workers.” 66 By noting the distinction of working-class blacks as strikebreakers and highlighting the pejorative term “scab” in their articles, national publications made class the issue that kept African Americans from full citizenship rights. On the other hand, local papers supported the Urban League because they promoted organized labor. An article in the New York Amsterdam News urged NUL leadership to “join with the league [to] formulat[e] a workable

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62 Harold Williams, “Our Misleaders.”
63 Bates, 5-6.
65 Los Angeles Sentinel, September 26, 1935.
program that would insure confidence in the integrity of the labor leaders and a more democratic stand on the part of labor organizations.” As suggested by Touré F. Reed, organizers of the Urban League believed that organized labor presented an opportunity to adjust the attitudes of black and white workers. Affiliation with the AFL could potentially equip Afro-Americans with the social checks and skills that individuals and the race needed to flourish in industrial society. But even as the local press touted the efforts of the Urban League, it argued in support of other organizations that championed working-class blacks.

The local press supported organizations that empowered working-class blacks. The Los Angeles Sentinel urged Negro labor to “rally [behind] John L. Lewis of the committee for industrial organization in its present dispute with the executive council of the American Federation of Labor.” The article further noted that pressure placed on Negro workers to “dissolve and cease its efforts on behalf of industrial unionism within the Federation” met with adversity by Workers’ Councils and other labor organizations. Nonetheless, these groups urged workers “to send immediate protest to President William Green and other A.F. of L. officers.” By 1933, John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers (UMW) was joined by advocates of industrial unionism to urge the Federation to broaden its base and organize workers irrespective of skills. Lewis and others argued that the AFL craft unions became counterproductive to labor solidarity because they imbued workers with a narrow trade consciousness. After 1935, black workers enjoyed new opportunities in industrial work, and achieved a greater presence in organized labor because of the strides made by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). However, local papers saved their highest praise for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

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68 Reed, 86.
69 “Negro Workers Urged to Aid Industrial Fight,” Los Angeles Sentinel, June 18, 1936.
70 Reed, 128.
71 Ibid.
72 Lang, 68, 75.
(BSCP), a labor organization that promoted the welfare of the working class. The Los Angeles Sentinel urged Pullman employees to vote for Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters an organization they felt would “insure [them] genuine representation” and give workers the “right kind of representation [to] control the union.”73 With control in mind, the press urged its readers to embrace the ways they could empower themselves. Trade unions offered one approach to empower laborers, but a far more effective method utilized the purchasing power of the black community.

National and local press explained that black consumerism defined class but national publications criticized both middle and working-class blacks for their lack of prudence. The Chicago Defender warned the middle and working class to “quit spending like they’re rich” and to abandon the “old American custom of trying to keep up with the Joneses.”74 Undoubtedly, this language evoked feelings of class by comparing African Americans to privileged whites. National publications advised black communities that diligent use of their money would result in greater personal freedom. In contrast, local papers defended consumers and urged them to support “Negro businesses [and] improve security and standards of services of Negro business.”75 By the 1930s, the Chicago Whip’s slogan “Spend Your Money Where You Can Work” instilled in the working class a new directive in black communities where white merchants did business76 However, noting the disparity of Negro workers above the level of porter or handyman in their own community, the New York Amsterdam News changed this slogan to “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work.”77 Local publications took the time to educate their readers on the importance of their purchasing power. A local publication espoused the benefits of co-operatives to “protect the interest of the Negro” and supported the actions of working-class consumers “to buy back the goods [they had] helped to create

73 “Return to Slavery.”
74 “Let’s Quit Pretending.”
75 “Leaders Express Hope for Race In 1940.”
76 Pride and Wilson II, 142.
77 Ibid.
with [their] labor power.” 78 Historian Davarian L. Baldwin explains that, “the desire for autonomous black cultural production through economic control and consumer strategies was prevalent in urban cities and a salient aspect of the New Negro consciousness which sought to break free from white economic dependence.” 79 The local black press believed that black consumerism empowered all classes of African Americans, especially the working class. It provided them with an important tool for achieving first-class-citizenship—purchasing power. It urged “the masses of the community” to go beyond the notion of “receiving the goods they purchase with wages [by sharing] in the profit of the business.” 80 Martha Biondi notes that the Consumer Protective Committee (CPC) formed in 1947 to contest “unscrupulous” white-owned businesses in Harlem. The CPC garnered support from the local black press and champion the idea of Harlem as a community of black merchants. 81 However, both presses stressed to their readers that utilizing their consumer power was not enough to achieve first-class citizenship. The Black Fourth Estate reminded them that the egalitarian goals of the black community could only be achieved through proper behavior.

Politics of respectability played a crucial role in the lives of African Americans, a theme stressed by the national and local black presses. An article in a national publication promoted “a program of building up esteem, respect and understanding.” 82 National publications often included demeaning language in their articles when promoting the importance of respectable behavior. The Chicago Defender demeaned African Americans as children. One article stated that “the American Negro [had] just about grown up [yet had] soberly realize[d] the significance of a man’s responsibilities.” 83 Local publications advocated respectable behavior for African Americans but they couched it

78 A. Phillip Randolph, “The Negro is a Worker.”
79 Baldwin, 7.
80 Ibid.
81 Biondi, 90.
82 George S. Schuyler, “Making Our Breaks.”
in language that promoted positive themes that benefited the community. An article in the local press stressed the importance of “cooperation of the Negro community” in an effort to “elevate neighborhood standards of living...increase public respect...and aspirations of our Negro citizens.” The language of the local press framed respectability in terms and ideas such as “the virtues of tolerance, truthfulness, unselfishness, and honesty” a noticeable contrast from the national black press’ perceptions of respectability.

The press served as an invaluable source of information for African Americans in the first quarter through the mid-twentieth century because it framed the arguments and defined the issues that kept black America from experiencing first-class citizenship. In making their case to the black community, middle-class black journalists and editors differed in their perceptions of working-class blacks. Both presses portrayed African Americans as victims, but the solutions they offered to elevate their status differed dramatically. National papers used fear tactics to motivate working-class blacks. Regional presses stressed education as the best way for the black community to achieve first-class citizenship. Once the black presses solidified their separate definitions of black victims, they each conveyed the need for leadership. National papers looked for leaders who personified a “black Moses” and argued that black leaders, regardless of their political ideology, served as a savior to the black community. Local papers avoided colorful language to describe their ideal leader but evoked principles and values that represented working-class blacks. Both presses found common ground concerning issues of working-class solidarity, black consumerism, proper behavior, and distrust of white-craft unionism, but used different language to sell ideas of empowerment. The national black press engaged in demeaning language because they believed it would motivate African Americans to fight for first-class citizenship. On the other hand, local papers incorporated positive language to inspire working-class blacks to demand equality. Class can be divisive regardless

84 “Leaders Express Hope for Race In 1940.”
85 Ibid.
of race or ethnicity, but African Americans, more than any group, needed to put class divides behind and find unity for their cause. What took precedence for both presses centered on their determination to defend first-class citizenship as each saw fit. Each press carefully selected language to define victimization, leadership, and empowerment. The language that they elected marginalized working-class blacks. When class comes under the microscope instead of race a different story emerges in the black press. The story challenges historians to examine the division in the black community over the fight for first-class citizenship. Nonetheless, the mixed messages that waxed the pages of local and national black papers created a divide. The black freedom struggle of the early twentieth century had the potential to accelerate civil rights for African Americans had it not been mired in the struggle to define class. The messengers failed to take into consideration an important aspect of their message—the audience.

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On February 6, 1794, a group of French and American officers and citizens, including Edmond-Charles Genêt, French ambassador to the United States, celebrated the sixteenth anniversary of the Treaty of Alliance with France. Attendees enjoyed an “elegant entertainment” and proffered numerous toasts extolling the “bonds of Amity and Republicanism [that bound] France to the United States.” During the toasts, Americans praised the French as their “only allies…friends…brethren, [and] fellow-freemen.” Congratulating themselves as participants of successful revolutions, celebrants affirmed their desire that the “spark of Liberty…never be extinguished” and that “Democratic Societies” serve forevermore as “watchful guardians of Liberty.” The tenth toast suggested that “laws and not proclamations” serve as the “instruments” of “regulation.”¹ Newspapers published toasts regularly, making political affiliations food for “public consumption.”² These celebrations belied the burgeoning tension between France and America, mainly the result of

¹ “Pennsylvania February 8,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), February 11, 1794.
growing political radicalism in France and America’s resolute neutrality proclamation. More importantly, the festivities ignored the plight of tens of thousands of French men and women at odds with France and living in exile in the United States. On the surface, exiles freely criticized the February 6th celebration, calling Genêt and anti-Federalists “revolutionary moles” who sought to “overturn…the wisdom of America’s legislators.”

More significantly, exiles from France and Saint-Domingue presented a united front that condemned the radical policies of the Jacobean government.

Scholars of the French and Saint-Domingue revolutionary exiles focus on two major thematic lines of inquiry: the first group has analyzed the process of migration; a second pool of transnational historians have analyzed the impact of the French and Saint-Domingue revolutions and their exiles on participants in the Atlantic community. Historians who concentrate on the process of migration draw insight from numerous studies on the eighteenth-century Atlantic community. Edward Whiting Fox observed two categories of French society existing prior to the Revolution of 1789, one framed on agriculture-based labor and another constructed around its Atlantic ports and based on commercial interests. France’s commercial sector, according to Fox, integrated itself thoroughly into the booming Atlantic community, creating intricate and reliable networks.

R. Darrell Meadows builds on Fox’s research and examines the French migrations of the early 1790s instigated by the French and Saint-Domingue revolutions. His research shows that pre-revolutionary bonds formed by commercial expansion aided exiles. Social, economic, and kinship ties

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Carrie Le Glenn

proved indispensable for émigrés and refugees navigating the “problems of migration, financial assistance and group identity.”

Meadows’ study clarifies the ways in which exiles maneuvered between two revolutions, but stops short of examining their experiences in America.

A second group of historians have come closer to understanding French Diaspora communities, analyzing the impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Atlantic community. Jeremy Popkin explores numerous Saint-Domingue white survivor narratives to demonstrate the tangled and sometimes blurred relationships between whites, blacks and gens de couleur. Popkin explains the first-hand accounts revealed the “choices confronting the actors in this great historical drama and the motives for their actions.” He observes that many refugees wrote their narratives while in exile, suggesting that a block of them felt it necessary to “justify a profoundly unjust and racist system.” While these accounts are instrumental to uncovering the impression the Haitian Revolution had on white Creoles, they offer little insight into the ways in which the revolution helped shape exile communities in America.

Ashli White considers the impact of the Saint-Domingue Revolution on the United States. She argues that Americans, coming face to face with Saint-Domingue refugees, were forced to examine the contradictions and dangers of a republic that endorsed slave societies. The presence of several thousand exiles induced Americans to create new justifications for slavery and mold a national history founded on “exceptionalism.” White’s analysis also sheds light on the dynamic refugee communities established throughout American port cities, such as New York and Philadelphia. She notes that refugees “marked out establishments” and “acted collectively,” continuing their

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6 Ibid., 68.
8 Ibid., 30.
religious worship and social practices in cities.\textsuperscript{10} Although White comes closer to understanding French communities in America than her predecessors, her study does not consider the confluence of French émigrés and Saint-Domingue refugees in forming French communities. Surprisingly, the literature lacks a comprehensive study that examines the convergence of these exiles and how these displaced peoples articulated their relationship to France.

One set of sources offers a unique lens through which to examine French Diaspora communities in America during the early 1790s. French exiles published a series of French and English newspapers in major cities, including Philadelphia, New York, and Charleston. French newspapers kept French and American audiences appraised of the latest news concerning the Saint-Domingue and French revolutions, proffered opinions on the political situation in France, and promoted French consumer goods.\textsuperscript{11} This research examines thirty-one newspaper issues, or one hundred and sixty pages, published between December 1792 and July 15, 1801. Memoirs and witness accounts supplement the personal letters, articles, advertisements and narratives published in French newspapers. Taken together, these sources reveal a dramatic scene of two categories of French exiles in communication with one another. Some refugees shared their personal stories of escape, others engaged in political discourse, while another group asked the community for support in new business ventures.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 28-30.

\textsuperscript{11} Three newspapers in particular present a new outlet to examine French Diaspora communities in America, namely \textit{Le Courier De L'Amerique}, \textit{L'Étoile Américaine} and \textit{L'Echo du Sud}. \textit{Le Courier De L'Amerique}, a bi-weekly newspaper published in Philadelphia beginning on December 4, 1792, ran for a few months, though the cease-publication date is unknown. Claude-Corentin Tanguy de la Boissière published a bilingual newspaper called \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} and promised to include details pertaining to the French Revolution and its “most distinguished characters.” French exiles in Charleston placed advertisements in \textit{L’Echo du Sud}, an 1801 newspaper.
America’s early republic saw an explosion of print culture. Journalism historian Jeffrey Pasley notes that early republic editors performed “purposeful” roles, drumming up support for one political party or another.\(^\text{12}\) Claude-Corentin Tanguy, newspaper editor and Saint-Domingue refugee, continued this practice and voiced strong political opinions, primarily directing invectives at French politicians and abolitionists. French publishers in America during the early 1790s indulged in greater freedom of the press than publishers in France. On September 17, 1793, the French Republic passed the Law of Suspects, making oppositional “conduct, associations, comments, or writings” punishable by death.\(^\text{13}\) One-third of the indictments instigated by the Law of Suspects pointed back to incendiary writing or speech.\(^\text{14}\) In America, however, exiles enjoyed freedom of the press guaranteed by the Constitution’s First Amendment.

Although there are inherent concerns with using newspapers as sources, such as editor bias and news speculation, French-published newspapers reflect the presence of a ready audience.\(^\text{15}\) In fact, exiles published at least thirteen French-language newspapers from 1790 to 1800 throughout the American Atlantic littoral. Aided by the stagecoach and the United States postal system, French newspapers participated in America’s “communications revolution,” a movement known for its impressive geographic reach and rapid spread of

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\(^{12}\) Pasley, 2.


\(^{15}\) Will Slauter, “Forward-Looking Statements: News and Speculation in the Age of the American Revolution,” *The Journal of Modern History* 81 (December 2009). Slauter examines eighteenth-century newspaper practices of *la speculation* and explains that writers used terms such as “risk,” and “chance” to provide readers with “possible outcomes” of events surrounding the American Revolution.
information. Audiences as far south as Charleston read L’Étoile by way of stagecoach. Through newspapers, dispersed clientele constructed a unique exile public sphere. Indeed, French-published newspapers present an opportunity to assess theories laid out by Benedict Anderson and more recently Robert Gross. Anderson writes that “simultaneous consumption of newspaper-as-fiction” becomes a “mass ceremony” through which an “imagined community” materializes. Conversely, Gross contends that early American print culture consisted of a “mixed media [and] diverse readers and communities,” subsequently undermining the simultaneity that Anderson discusses. This paper situates itself between these arguments, finding that in spite of the hysteria instigated through competing interests and variegated forms of media typical of the new republic, French exile newspapers fostered community cohesion through their uniform messages of disdain for the French republic. Moreover, exile newspapers provide an appropriate starting point to answering a problem posed by R. Darrell Meadows. He writes, “As for what it meant to be “French” in a world in which exiles

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16 Richard John, *Spreading the News* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3. John notes that by 1800, the United States Postal System delivered approximately 1.9 million newspapers. Likewise, Jeffrey Pasley observes that politicians considered newspaper key to nation building and offered discounted postal rates to publishers. See Pasley, 8.


crisscrossed the multiple cultural frontiers of the Atlantic time and again, [we] can only speculate.”

This paper argues that through French-published newspapers, refugee memoirs and survival narratives, a French exile public sphere emerged, which manifested itself in a language of revolution. By language of revolution, I mean that exiles articulated their collective identity by focusing exclusively on the pathogenic characteristics of the French and Saint-Domingue revolutions. French print culture communicated and constructed an imagined, idyllic past, helping exiles recreate former racial and social hierarchies in their temporary American communities. Saint-Domingue refugees particularly rejected French republican notions of racial equality and used various outlets of print culture to illustrate how revolutionary rhetoric caused the colony’s ruin. Similarly, French émigrés narrowed their attention to the excesses of the French revolution when critiquing the republic in their writings. Through their collective grievances, exiles renounced the National Convention’s version of a republican government, preferring the American Federalist model instead and shaped French communities that embraced pre-revolutionary racial and social hierarchies.

Caught in the midst of two very different revolutions, several thousand Saint-Domingue refugees and French émigrés settled in American cities. French neighborhoods emerged in cities like New York, Charleston, Boston, and especially Philadelphia up to the early nineteenth century. They shared news and personal experiences with one another, most frequently through newspapers and table fellowship. The world and former lifestyle they presented mirrored a paradise, where symbiotic and peaceful relations between slave and master existed. Out of these exaggerated and optimistic exchanges emerged a collective imagined memory, which founded itself on the racial and social practices of the former government. French exiles built

19 Meadows, 30-1. When speaking of French Revolutionary émigrés and Saint-Domingue refugees collectively, I will use the term “exiles.”

20 See Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, trans. Thomas Burger (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989), 22.
communities throughout American cities based on this imagined memory, making notions of racial hierarchy and class central components to its success.

Refugees memorialized pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue in printed materials by focusing on the island’s economic productivity, enviable culture and peaceful relations with slaves. Jeremy Popkin observes Saint-Domingue enjoyed a privileged position in the Atlantic world, partaking in “Enlightenment culture” and reaping heavy profits for supplying half of the world’s coffee and sugar. Slaves constituted nearly ninety percent of the colony’s population; whites comprised a meager six percent with gens de couleur making up the remaining four percent. Refugees depicted the island as a haven filled with innumerable “riches” whose goods raised “700 millions of livres” and sustained more than “six million people.” Hundreds of ships lined the ports and filled the colony’s stores with “precious merchandise.” Moreau De Saint-Méry explained, “On Sundays...one saw the Whites’ Market flourishing...all sorts of dry goods and eatables...jewels, shoes, hats, parakeets, monkeys.” The capital of Saint-Domingue housed a library, public baths, a theatre, public gardens, and several public squares. Newspapers credited the island’s prosperity to the “generous and hospitable inhabitants” whose hard work made Saint-Domingue “worthy of envy.” One anonymous writer underscored white generosity and recorded that “everywhere Negroes [were] well cared for, and happy.”

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22 Ibid.
23 “Island of Saint Domingo,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), February 4, 1794.
memoirs, plantation owners spoke of affectionate relationships with their slaves, depicting “Negroes [who] sang, and even danced” for them. At the core of Saint-Domingue’s economic prosperity, refugees explained, rested meaningful relationships between master and slave.

France’s émigrés articulated an affinity for pre-revolutionary France, using advertisements to highlight their proximity to former royal institutions and demonstrate an unbroken connection to French consumer demands. A surgeon dentist, Le Breton, placed an advertisement in the local French newspaper asserting that he studied under the royal family’s dentist, Dubois. In addition to boosting his credentials, Le Breton reminded the public of their shared loss and expressed his monarchist allegiance. Another entrepreneur alluded to the quality of French services in his advertisement. The advertisement explained, “Crespin and Co.….established an apothecary and drug shop, equal to those in France.” One publisher informed the public that he acquired two volumes of Les Petits Émigrés, a book written by Madame de Genlis, lady-in-waiting to the royal family. Memories of and references to pre-revolutionary France helped construct a new community, consisting of émigrés and Saint-Domingue refugees, and based on an imagined glorified past.

Stories of death and survival bridged the divide between an imagined past and a vision for the future. Survivors printed escape narratives in newspapers or consecrated them in memoirs. In a newspaper excerpt, refugees regaled how they “escaped the rapacity of the pirates” but were “robbed in defiance of all laws, both human and divine.” On November 15, 1793, Moreau de Saint-Méry read that his friend from Paris, Bailly, “suffered [an] ignominious death, but [died] with a courage worthy of a

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27 Anonymous, “Mon Odyssey,” 73.
28 “Sundry Advertisements,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), March 18, 1794.
29 L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), February 6, 1794.
30 L’Echo du Sud (South Carolina), June 26, 1801.
31 “To the Editor of the American Star,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), February 13, 1794.
hero.” Another article informed Philadelphians (incorrectly) that the Marquis de Lafayette, an American Revolutionary war hero whose “courage...never failed him” had been guillotined. Exiles solidified bonds to one another through meals, conversation, and remorse. During a dinner party with Blaçon, Count de Noailles, and Talon, Moreau remarked that a storm reminded the group of “the misfortunes [they] had escaped.” Conversations about the guillotine often invoked emotional outbursts. Moreau recalled in his memoir the day that he succumbed to “a torrent of weeping” upon learning of a friend’s passing. Though the respective revolutions created different socio-economic changes to exiles, they identified two areas of overlap – each group had faced danger and experienced loss.

Apart from the psychological implications connected with survival, exiles struggled to support themselves and their families financially in America. French consuls distributed various forms of aid to refugees, including money, though this outlet of income proved unreliable due to increasing political tensions. Several Parisian politicians, including Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville, voiced concerns over Saint-Domingue colonists’ loyalty to the French republic. Some suggested that the refugees orchestrated the entire slave uprising themselves in order to undermine the republic’s authority in the colony. Newspapers captured the heated exchanges between refugees and the republic’s representatives. Dumay, a Saint-Domingue refugee, lambasted the French consul for demanding that he quit the refugee hospital, despite his medical needs. In February 1794, French ambassador Edmond Charles Genêt refused funds to refugees wanting to travel to France; rather, he encouraged

32 Moreau, Méry’s American Journey, 3.
33 “Sundry News France,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), February 11, 1794.
34 Moreau, Méry’s American Journey, 92.
35 Ibid., 140.
36 White, 90.
37 Dumay, “To the Editor of the American Star,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), May 1, 1794.
them to “render [them]selves individually [to France].”

Exiles instead sought alternative avenues of support. One thread of support for Saint-Domingue refugees came from the United States. Mr. Clark, a legislative representative, took the opposite approach of the National Convention concerning the refugees and asserted, “It is of little importance...whether the refugees...are aristocrats or democrats, papists or lutherans, they are men, and unhappy.” Although French émigrés did not qualify for the relief extended to Saint-Domingue refugees, they found subsistence elsewhere. Many utilized existing trans-Atlantic relationships, including “kin, friends, [or] business partners.” Often, these pre-revolutionary connections conferred employment opportunities, temporary housing, and loans. Historian R. Darrell Meadows explains that, “human networks...forged through trade, migration and other forms of travel...provided exiles with...crucial support, information, and other resources necessary to...survive the...exile experience.”

New York erected a haven for upwards of one hundred exiles. With the help of United States government, existing acquaintance networks, and various community programs, exiles built temporary settlements mirrored on their previous lives.

French exiles in America adhered to the strict racial hierarchies formerly established in Saint-Domingue. Ashli White notes that approximately “twenty thousand black, white, and colored refugees” migrated to America during the 1790s, some of them enslaved. Creoles taking refuge in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island or New York experienced difficulty enforcing slavery due to the gradual emancipation laws that the states had passed in the 1780s. This did not discourage them, however,

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40 Meadows, 70.
41 Ibid.
42 Moreau, Méry’s American Journey, 274.
43 White, 2.
from placing runaway slave advertisements in French-published newspapers. Madame Lavaud and Mr. Velant, residing in Philadelphia, each offered a four dollar reward to the person who provided information concerning the whereabouts of their property.\textsuperscript{44} Advertisements categorized runaways as subaltern, placing emphasis upon physical appearance. Madame de Chambreu described her runaway as “a congo negro, curled hair, [and] fat.”\textsuperscript{45} Slave owners related other corporal marks, such as brands, to recover their lost capital. Mr. Loyaute mentioned a mark “on [the] right breast” of his “Creole Negro wench,” Claudine, in his advertisement.\textsuperscript{46} A second notice indicated that Paul, another branded slave absconded. Mr. Loyaute assured newspaper readers that both slaves were “bound to their master, agreeably to the laws of Pennsylvania.”\textsuperscript{47} Runaway slave ads reinforced community support for slavery and reaffirmed Creole mores. Writing about honor codes of the American south, historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown explains that “honor was inseparable from hierarchy” and helped to define one’s position in society.\textsuperscript{48} Slaveholding signified status and maintained a thread of continuity from pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue.

Just as French exiles recreated pre-revolutionary societies through slavery, they reinforced notions of class through consumerism. French entrepreneurs abounded in cities like Philadelphia, often identifying themselves as Parisians, offering items that could be found back at home. Consumerism, T.H. Breen argues, accorded individuals a way to “communicate aspirations and grievances.”\textsuperscript{49} Despite their economic abjection, exiles refused to part with the luxury items that characterized

\textsuperscript{44} “Four Dollars Reward,” \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania), May 1, 1794. See also “Four Dollars Reward,” \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania), May 3, 1794.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania), March 8, 1794.

\textsuperscript{46} “Run Away,” \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania), April 1, 1794.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{48} Bertram Wyatt-Brown, \textit{Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

their former lives. Coulaux and Perrin, for instance, made guns and pistols “of the newest fashion...from Paris.”

Mr. Saint-Victor informed the public that his tapestry work resembled “Paris’ newest fashion.” Locksmiths from Paris and Cape Françoise assured the public that they could “repair all sorts of guns, turn metals” or “make all surgeons instruments.” Another shop advertised “French Beds” and “sundry finished chests of drawers” while another manufactured candles. French communities boasted “all kinds of fine liquors of France” as well as “French Coffee-house[s]” and “French chocolates.” Newspapers also marketed to women, informing them of the “good and pretty hats, sold in retail or wholesale” and “hats, of the best manufacture of Paris, looking glasses, and white silk stockings.”

Women could purchase other adornments, such as “Wigs, tates, frisettes, cheroques, bandeaux, braids, curls and queues,” from local shops. Buying French items strengthened concepts of class and, as Breen explains, helped “establish a meaningful and distinct sense of self.” Although French exiles identified with pre-Revolutionary France through consumption of French products, their distaste of Jacobin politics physically and emotionally distanced them from France.

Exiles rebuked the French Republic’s stance toward slavery. Saint-Domingue refugees maintained that the Jacobite policy allowing racial equality perverted the natural racial and social hierarchy. To them, white domination and black subjugation represented the ideal natural balance, whereas the alternative, a society based on equality, retarded progress.

50 “Sundry Advertisements,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), March 18, 1794.
51 “Sundry Advertisements,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), March 1, 1794.
52 “Sundry Advertisements,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), February 6, 1794. See also L’Étoile Américaine, March 6, 1794; L’Étoile Américaine, March 25, 1794.
53 Baldwin, “Chapellier,” L’Echo du Sud (South Carolina), July 15, 1801.
54 Monnar and Craig, “Coiffeurs, de Londres et de Paris,” L’Echo du Sud (South Carolina), July 15, 1801.
55 Breen, 55.
Refugees turned the Saint-Domingue slave insurrection into a public debate over race, encouraging their white, English-speaking neighbors to read about the causes of their plight in French-published newspapers. In this open discussion, refugees eschewed all culpability for the slave insurrection; rather, using newspapers and published memoirs as their open forum, refugees positioned themselves as white victims of the National Assembly (later the National Convention), innocent sufferers of their black assailants, and bystanders absolved of blame from the economic consequences of the slave insurrection. In doing so, colonists vociferously rejected the French republican model of government.

Saint-Domingue refugees censured forms revolutionary rhetoric that subverted racial values and incited the island’s black and mulatto population to revolt. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen confused social and racial classes by its assertion that “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.” Saint-Domingue whites banned publication of the document on the island because of its message of equality. One exile condemned the document, stating that the “incendiary writings and stupid innovators” incited the slaves to rebel. Similarly, a newspaper article pointed to the National Convention’s “wicked principles” and “acts of tyranny” as causes of the insurrection. Another exile called the French representatives in Saint-Domingue “souls devoid of sensibility” and “enemies and persecutors” of “white colonists” who had been “assassinated and burnt by the sanguinary philanthropy of Brissot.” Colonists defined all concessions made to the rebels as traitorous and even labeled several of the convention’s


60 *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), February 4, 1794.
representatives “negrophile[s].” They vehemently denied the accusations of cruelty and slave mistreatment so often issued by the Society of the Friends of Blacks. One writer proclaimed that he “recognize[d] the injustice of those written diatribes…against the poor planters of Saint Domingo! What lies! What exaggerated pictures!” The revolution, refugees argued, overturned the natural balance. Slavery did not represent an inversion of society; rather, it allowed whites to reign in blacks’ disposition towards savagery. Without the bonds of slavery checking black animalism, they argued, blacks posed a serious danger to whites.

By depicting black insurgents as barbaric and animalistic in their public prints, Saint-Domingue refugees simultaneously refuted black claims for equality and reinforced the colonists’ case for slavery. French communities exchanged stories about “Negro” aggression using newspapers, letters and published memoirs as an outlet for public consumption. Articles offered vivid descriptions of the blacks’ violence directed towards whites. One article claimed that “the sword of death...destroy[ed] all without the least mercy or distinction” and that blacks dragged whites “into frightful dungeons” where they “cr[ied] to be relieved.” Refugees meticulously constructed an image of blacks, removing all traces of their humanity in the process. For instance, refugees assigned animalistic qualities to the blacks, calling them “unchained tigers whose roots [remained embedded] in barbarism.” Others merely deduced that the “Negro” was enslaved due to the “heinousness of their race.”

Saint-Domingue refugees undermined black claims to humanity even further by emphasizing black and mulatto violence directed towards women and children. During the

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61 “Information to the Mulattoes of St. Domingo, and to their Powerful Protectors on the Continent,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), February 6, 1794.
62 Anonymous, “Mon Odyssey,” 70.
63 “French Saint Domingo,” 2.
64 Anonymous, “Mon Odyssey,” 84.
65 S.C.E., “To the Editor of the American Star,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), March 18, 1794.
eighteenth century, French visual culture depicted black males as “infantile,” “dismembered” and “incapable of military valor.” Mary Bellhouse explains that the French and Haitian revolutions sparked a shift in visual representations. Later eighteenth-century French visual culture identified blacks as “potential sexual competitor[s]” and “bestial rapist[s].” French printed materials reflected these shifts in attitude surrounding late eighteenth-century definitions of black masculinity. Fears over unaccounted family members added to existing tensions. Plunketh, an inhabitant of Du Fond who addressed himself as “friend and fellow patriot” to Tanguy, the editor of L’Étoile, lamented that “Madame de N*** [was] in prison, and in irons these three weeks” though Plunketh had no news of Tanguy’s own wife and child. Women and children left in Saint-Domingue, without their white male protectors, remained unprotected against the non-white rebels. One man alluded to rape crying, “Many women, young, beautiful, and virtuous perished beneath the infamous caresses of the brigands, amongst the cadavers of their fathers and husbands.” Le Clerc expressed alarm when he freed a group of imprisoned white females from their black jailers, recalling how the women appeared “starved, without stockings…[or] shoes, their hair undone…almost naked.” Though this quotation does not necessarily insinuate rape, Le Clerc’s discussion of poverty is clearly sexualized and drawn from discussions of rape. Saint-Domingue survival narratives included racist literary tropes that mirrored white Americans’ own racial dispositions. Apart from the potential apocryphal nature of these witness accounts, refugees warned French and

67 Ibid.
68 Plunketh, “Aux Cayes, December 19, 1793 To Mr. Tanguy,” L’Étoile Américaine, February 11, 1794.
71 White, 57.
American readers of the dangers of empowered black and colored men.

Refugees also engaged in a public discussion over the economic devastation inflicted by the rebels. Prior to the revolution, the colony constituted the largest source of income for France. In a speech given to the National Assembly in March 1790, Antoine-Pierre Barnave cautioned that to “abandon the colonies, and [the] sources of prosperity will disappear.” Nevertheless, Étienne Polverel and Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, representatives of the National Convention, revoked slavery in Saint-Domingue in late 1793. Saint-Domingue colonists decried the Convention agents. Newspapers claimed that “seven thousand millions in property [were] destroyed amidst blood and fire,” while another article called the island a “land of proscription.” Some refugees proposed that France purposely neglected her colonies or conspired to relinquish the colonies to America. Despite assurances that “France will not abandon her colonies,” refugees postulated that although the ancien regime had certain deficiencies, they fared better under an absolute monarch. They asserted that “years of despotism, alleged against the former government” never “retarded the rapid increase of agriculture,” whereas the Convention succeeded completely annihilating the colony.

French exiles drew many parallels between the black rebels of Saint-Domingue and the revolutionaries in France. For them, the revolution confused racial lines and contaminated social classes. Weaving together news from foreign and French

73 On February 4, 1794, the National Convention legitimized the agents’ decision and outlawed slavery.
74 “French Saint Domingo,” “Boston, Jan. 8.”
76 “French Saint Domingo.”
newspapers, personal letters and gossip from merchants, exiles constructed a negative image of the republic in their own printed materials. A republic founded on total equality, they argued, entertained the possibility for unrestrained excess and chaos. Exiles rejected the French republic model, defining it in conversation with one another as marred by greed, violence, atheism, and judicial flaws. These themes, combined with commentary on the Jacobite government’s propensity towards internal dissent and self-combustion, appeared time and again in French-published newspapers and memoirs. Sometimes editors, authors and readers exercised these points in passing remarks, but just as frequently these themes came directly from newspapers published in France or speeches from the National Convention. Clever editing, use of language and text manipulation gave the texts new shape and meaning, and underscored the revolution’s propensity towards sin and chaos rather than order. By dehumanizing the revolutionaries in the same manner as the black insurgents, exiles rejected the model and legitimacy of the French republic.

French exiles designated the National Convention and its representatives as greedy and feeding off other Frenchmen and women in one of two ways: first, a group of articles depicted ambassadors as intrinsically covetous, stealing or confiscating property without a legal right; second, another selection of articles explored the violent methods used by the convention to divert private wealth to the national fund. Avarice shown by ambassadors represented, by extension, the republic’s own rapacity. Therefore, when rumors emerged stating that Polverel had confiscated landed and moveable property of Saint-Domingue refugees “out of the colony…banished or not,” refugees asserted that he did so for “the emolument of [himself]” as well as for “the profit of the republic.”77 Saint-Domingue refugees admonished the French ambassadors, Polverel and Sonthonax, for their colony’s predicaments, citing corruption as the root cause. One article claimed that when Sonthonax left the island, he took with him “$1.6 million.” 78 Another article

77 Plunketh, “Aux Cayes, December 19, 1793 To Mr. Tanguy.”
78 “Boston, Jan. 8.”
recounted the gluttony of a French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, citing “four chariots… chests… wrought with gold [and] pieces of the crown of France” among his possessions.  

Newspapers noted the corporal punishment meted out by representatives of the revolutionary government to extort goods from French men and women. Henri Grégoire, in an address to the convention, recalled, “A handkerchief had been thrown about the neck… with menaces to strangle [the man], if [the man] did not instantly furnish a certain sum.” Exiles suggested that the convention equated personal wealth to treason in order to legitimate confiscating property that belonged to affluent citizens. Le Vaffeur addressed the convention asserting that, “All traitors, agitators, and rich merchants… should be judged and perish under the axe of the guillotine.” As a result, prosperous merchants became prime targets of the convention. In a published letter to an exile in Philadelphia, one French man wrote, “At Nantes, nearly all the merchants have been guillotined” including “Mr. Bouteiller, an old man of 85 years.” According to L’Étoile Américaine, an additional five hundred merchants in Bordeaux perished. Other excerpts removed any suggestion of the convention’s humanity and instead underscored their innate and insatiable greed. In another published letter, written by Pelletier to the National Convention, read, “All the Lyonnais are overawed by terror… We everyday make some happy discoveries of gold and silver [the amount of which] will astonish you when you come to know them.” Tanguy remarked that the “confiscation of the property of the

80 “Extract of the Mercure Universel, 2d Year of the French Republic,” *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), April 5, 1794.
81 “European Intelligence, Up to the 21st of January, 1794,” *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), April 17, 1794.
83 Ibid.
“Discourse of the Deputation of the City of Lyons,” *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), April 17, 1794.

Ibid.

*Rights of Man and Citizen.*

“European Intelligence.”

“November 26,” *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), February 20, 1794.
detachment robbed Gilbon and his family of the few luxuries they owned.\textsuperscript{89}

While stories like Gilbon’s reflected the army’s proclivity towards torture, other articles reflected the convention’s fondness of blood and excessive use of the guillotine. For instance, an extract from the \textit{Courrier Politique} of Paris explained that, “The affair of Mans was so bloody...as far as Laval the ground was covered with dead bodies.”\textsuperscript{90} Similarly, news from London reported “bloody executions” made possible by the guillotine which “str[uck] seven heads at one stroke.”\textsuperscript{91} In yet another article, French judges complained that in Lyon, “the blood did not stream in sufficient abundance” despite “four hundred heads [being] struck off” within a month.\textsuperscript{92} Regardless of the intended objective of these stories, either in French or other European circles, messages of excessive violence undermined the republic’s claim to liberty in the eyes of French exiles.

Moreover, exiles deplored the revolutionary violence directed towards women and children. Although newspapers mentioned attacks on them in minute detail, the tropes employed by exiles deserve additional exploration. Newspaper excerpts underlined female vulnerability and virtue, not unlike the articles depicting Saint-Domingue female refugees. Narratives describing violence against children similarly undermined the republic’s integrity. One newspaper referenced Olympia de Gouges’ execution twice. The first article indicated that she was “guillotined, not withstanding her pleading pregnancy” and the second excerpt designated her as the “widow of Anbrey, known by his counter-revolutionary writings.”\textsuperscript{93} It is important to note that the newspaper avoided mentioning de Gouges’ personal revolutionary activity, namely her play, The Slavery of Negroes.

\textsuperscript{89} “European Intelligence.”

\textsuperscript{90} “France Authentic News from the Interior,” \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania), March 25, 1794.

\textsuperscript{91} “London, March 4,” \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania).

\textsuperscript{92} “Discourse of the Deputations of Lyons.”

\textsuperscript{93} “Paris, November 4,” \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania), February 6, 1794; “Remainder of the Principle Events in the Interior of France,” \textit{L’Étoile Américaine} (Pennsylvania), March 4, 1794.
Rather, exile newspapers depicted de Gouges as a widow and (almost) mother. Her innocent unborn child, in the eyes of readers, fell victim to the guillotine just as cruelly as its mother. Historian Susan Klepp explains that notions of motherhood, pregnancy, and family shifted in the latter half of the eighteenth century in favor of affectionate bonds between all members of the family. Children became more than objects of economic power. These shifting family dynamics may help to explain why exiles placed so much emphasis on rumors surrounding de Gouge’s pregnancy. The surviving Bourbons received similar press coverage. Concerning the children and sister of the deceased king, the National Convention decreed that “the two children...be sent to prison [and] Maria Elizabeth, sister of Louis, be brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal.”

According to a French Philadelphian newspaper, Parisians shortly thereafter demanded that the National Convention “destroy the son of Louis XVI...as a sacrifice to the safety of the people.” While it is impossible to fully grasp the publisher’s intended message, diction like “sacrifice” denoted an uncivilized, chaotic society and underscored images of childhood innocence.

French exiles condemned the republic’s de-Christianization efforts of the early 1790s, particularly the desecration of churches and assault on the ecclesia. Before 1789, the church played a central role in both France and her colonies. Churches served as centers of learning and aid to the destitute. Priests performed marriage ceremonies, baptisms, gave sacraments and buried the dead. Laws stressed Roman Catholicism even further in the colonies; the Code Noir of 1685 stipulated that slaves “be baptized and instructed in the Roman Catholic, and Apostolic

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95 “Recapitulation of the Principal Events of the Interior of France,” L’Étoile Américaine (Pennsylvania), March 1, 1794.
Faith.”\(^{97}\) Likewise, the law required that slaveholders or those holding authority over slaves be Roman Catholic. Actions against the Catholic Church began as early as November 1789 when the National Assembly voted to requisition and sell off Church property. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy passed in July 1790 required that clergy take “an oath of fidelity” to the National Assembly.\(^{98}\) The National Convention adopted stronger measures against the Church in 1793 by dismissing the Christian calendar. The de-Christianization movement of 1793, Popkin argued, “aimed to abolish it [the Church] altogether.”\(^{99}\)

Printed letters, excerpts in émigré memoirs, and newspaper articles decried France’s de-Christianization efforts. In his November 18, 1793 excerpt, Moreau de Saint-Méry wrote “Our prayers…for all the unhappy people of France where, at this very moment, all churches and places of worship were being closed by governmental decree.”\(^{100}\) Exiles learned how the National Convention sequestered medieval places of worship, including Notre-Dame, and “there made a sacrifice to liberty.”\(^{101}\) Exiles also read about revolutionaries stripping the churches of their wealth. In one excerpt, a message to the National Convention, Cambon announced that the “national treasury [was] increased…by the gold and treasures taken from the churches.”\(^{102}\) The republic did not stop there; separate articles depicted violent scenes of army detachments stealing crosses from the necks of rural women and pillaging “all tombs of Saint-Denis.”\(^{103}\) Newspaper issues abounded with stories that alluded to “indecencies” and conversions of “ancient and august”


\(^{99}\) Ibid., 83.

\(^{100}\) Moreau, *Méry’s American Journey*, 4.

\(^{101}\) “Principal Events in the Interior of France.”

\(^{102}\) “European Intelligence, up to 21\(^{\text{st}}\) of January.”

\(^{103}\) “Digging Up of the Body of Turenne,” *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), February 15, 1794; “European Intelligence, up to 21\(^{\text{st}}\) of January.”
churches “into stables” but also featured stories of assault against the clergy.\(^{104}\) The de-Christianization process required that nuns, priests and bishops withdraw their allegiance to Christ, don “caps of liberty,” and worship “Reason instead of Christianism.”\(^{105}\) Punitive measures for resistance usually involved some degree of corporal punishment. Readers learned how one “John Marie Allard, curate of Bagneau” was guillotined for “having preached up the counter-revolution,” and that the military committee of Mayence executed priests along with a number of rebels.\(^{106}\) Publishers articulated their condemnations carefully, incorporating articles that correlated the de-Christianization effort with sacrifices, indecencies and desecration. In doing so, exiles called into question the legality of the revolutionaries’ actions.

Exile newspapers critiqued the republic’s legal system, citing cases that highlighted suppressed liberties and executions for seemingly minor offenses. The case of Jean Jacques Barbot, an anti-republican writer, accentuated the yoke that the republic placed on the French press.\(^{107}\) Despite the 1789 declaration that guaranteed the “free communication of thoughts and opinions,” Barbot suffered execution.\(^{108}\) Newspaper patrons learned that Nicholas Gornot, a baker, met death for having “secreted some bread” while the bishop Gratien refused “to conform himself to the new calendar” and faced anti-revolutionary charges as a result.\(^{109}\) Other excerpts told stories of both men and women either jailed or executed for singing unlawful songs, failing to wear the revolutionary cockade, or assisting French émigrés


\(^{105}\) “Principal Events in France.”


\(^{107}\) “Principal Events in France.”

\(^{108}\) “Rights of Man and Citizen.”

\(^{109}\) “Courier Politique of Paris”; “Recapitulation of the Principal Events.”
Émigrés reacted strongly to this news. Moreau de Saint Méry claimed in April 1794 that only “atrocious ignorance” could have sentenced Lavoisier to death. An extract from a letter received from Paris exclaimed, “Never was the press less free...whoever would dare to print truths contrary to the wishes of the Convention would be guillotined.” By condemning these actions publicly, exiles situated themselves at odds with France and suggested that a republic grounded by excess would shortly self-combust.

Over half of the surviving issues of *L’Étoile Américaine* included some form of negative commentary about the French republic and the internal dissent. As early as December 1792, *Le Courier de L’Amerique* noticed and commented upon the seemingly “dissolution of society” in France. Moreau de Saint-Méry, a one-time ardent supporter of the revolution, rejected the Jacobin government by tearing apart his Parisian National Guard grenadier hat before discarding it out a window. Some émigrés directed their anger towards the political parties responsible for the division. One Philadelphian émigré wrote, “True Frenchmen will never rejoice at assassinations, demolishing of cities, or conflagrations.” Newspapers also featured stories of family members denouncing one another to the National Convention, underscoring the strain of political factions on kinship ties. The “anecdote of Sillery” worked to this end, showing that the Revolution undermined the family unit and ran counter to the social order implemented by God. A letter published in a newspaper on April 5, 1794

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110 De Plassan, “To the Editor of the American Star,” *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), February 25, 1794; “Principal Events in France.”
111 Moreau, *Méry’s American Journey*, 43.
112 “Letter from France to a Gentleman.”
115 “Letter from France to a Gentleman.”
116 “Anecdote of Sillery,” *L’Étoile Américaine* (Pennsylvania), March 6, 1794.
117 Ibid.
questioned the logic driving the National Convention. It read, “I am a true Frenchman, and the misfortunes of my country sincerely afflict me...over whom are all these victories [Lyon, Toulon]? Are they not over Frenchmen?”

Exiles failed to notice that a new form of French identity, born from the broken remnants of the Bastille and fire-ridden plantations of Saint-Domingue, had emerged. The revolutions systematically used legal, violent, and illegitimate means to discard reminders of pre-revolutionary France and Saint-Domingue. Yet, these revolutionary discards found ways to reconstruct their lives, preferably on their own terms. Exiles proved that they were capable of preserving their pre-revolutionary social and cultural mores while maintaining their French identity. French print culture played an instrumental role to that end, generating a public sphere that constructed an idyllic, pre-revolutionary past, embraced racial and social hierarchies, and encouraged polemic discussions about French politics. French exiles living in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Haven, or Charleston fomented this public sphere by reading the same editorials and advertisements simultaneously or a few days apart. It was not until France’s policies shifted to support pre-revolutionary social and racial hierarchies that French exiles once again, sometimes begrudgingly, reconciled themselves to the French government. Collectively, French-published newspapers provide a window into the late eighteenth-century exile experience.

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118 “Letter from France to a Gentleman.”
LOS FIESTEROS OF OLVERA STREET:
CONSTRUCTING AN IMAGINED SPANISH HERITAGE FOR
LOS ANGELES

Jennifer Beatriz Gonzalez

In September 2008, *Time Magazine* named Olvera Street, the recognized birthplace of Los Angeles, the seventh most popular tourist destination in Los Angeles.¹ Modern-day Olvera Street resembles a Spanish-style open-air marketplace where vendors and restaurants offer visitors a snapshot of a long forgotten Spanish California. Lined with sombreros, colorful clothes, piñatas, and souvenirs, Olvera Street attracts Angelenos and visitors who embody feelings of nostalgia for Spanish culture. Olvera Street also hosts various annual religious and community events, such as Dia de Los Muertos and Blessing of the Animals. Olvera Street grew from a quaint pueblo to a popular tourist attraction in the late 1920s and early 1930s. During the 1930s, Olvera Street became a place where people produced an idyllic, yet modern, public memory of the city. Through a series of concerts, festivals, and parades in Los Angeles and around Olvera Street, a historical preservation association called La Fiesta Association, also known as Los Fiesteros, created a modern image of the city and ultimately redefined its public memory to present the city’s narrative of progress.

Many historians have examined the history and development of Olvera Street, analyzing how it became a conflicted landscape of cultural and political tensions. Some scholars focus on segregated and exploited Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. Among them are Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez who investigate how the Great Depression directly impacted the Mexican American community.\(^2\) By analyzing the 1931 immigration raid at the Los Angeles Plaza, their work reveals how the Plaza and Olvera Street became a space of contestation between individuals of Mexican descent and city officials. Natalia Molina examines public health in Los Angeles from 1879 to 1939 and shows how Olvera Street and other immigrant communities became labeled unsanitary. As a result, Olvera Street became a site of the discriminatory practices of public health officials.\(^3\) George Sanchez demonstrates how Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants adapted to life in the United States through places of cultural reaffirmation such as Olvera Street.\(^4\) Thus, Olvera Street represented a site where the Mexican community was targeted and simultaneously celebrated.

In contrast, scholars such as Phoebe Kropp and William Estrada discuss Olvera Street in terms of tourism. Kropp and Estrada explain how Olvera Street became and continues to be a popular tourist destination that represents a romanticized history of early Spanish California history. They examine the physical landscape used to attract tourists looking for an authentic representation of Spanish California.

A third group of scholars has written about Olvera Street in regards to public memory. Dolores Hayden uses the concept

\(^2\) Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 75.


of public space to interpret and understand the past.\textsuperscript{5} According to Hayden, preserving historical spaces creates public memory. Kropp also explores the development of public memory by examining how Olvera Street transformed into an economic and themed space that idealized and romanticized a Spanish past.\textsuperscript{6} Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett also addresses how displays of public memory transmit meanings through festivals and other tourist attractions.\textsuperscript{7}

These studies of Olvera Street as a site of immigration, tourism, and public memory ignore how the historic site and the activities of Los Fiesteros demonstrate a larger interrelated story of progress for the city of Los Angeles. On the surface, these factors may not seem to fit within a story of progress. This article argues that Olvera Street and the activities of Los Fiesteros, initially created to organize the 150\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary Celebration of Los Angeles, tell a larger story as part of a discourse on progress. I explore how Los Fiesteros altered the city’s public memory and used the image of Los Angeles to demonstrate its growth. Through the organization’s activities, they visually represented a timeline that marked the city’s foundation beginning with an early Spanish past. Los Fiesteros used anti-modern and modern ideals to establish Los Angeles’ discourse on progress. They defined anti-modern as pre-industrial and used imagery through their activities to illustrate the nostalgia of quaint, simple, and romantic Spanish days. Los Fiesteros recreated the picturesque early Spanish landscape to establish an idealized and harmonious image of early Los Angeles that they used promote a discourse on progress. They defined modern as industrialized, set with government institutions, and marked by technological innovations. By tracing

\textsuperscript{6} Phoebe S. Kropp, \textit{California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 225.
\textsuperscript{7} Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, \textit{Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 53.
the transformation from a pueblo to a modern city, Los Fiesteros showed how the city advanced into a modern urban center. Modernity represented the high-rise sky-scrappers that outlined the city’s horizon as well as the transformations in transportation.

Documents and photographs from the Marion Parks Collection reveal Los Fiesteros’ efforts to create a public memory of Los Angeles. Marion Parks served as secretary of Los Fiesteros and as a committee member for numerous other historical associations. These sources provide insight into Los Fiesteros’ activities, the preparations of their pageants, events, and how they promoted Los Angeles to the public. The letters are especially important because they reveal the relationship between committee members and other Angelenos. The documents transmit ideas, beliefs, and the concerns of Los Fiesteros in constructing a new image of Olvera and Los Angeles. Collectively, these sources provide a glimpse into the set of values and ideas Los Fiesteros believed and permanently instilled in Los Angeles.

In addition to the documents published by Los Fiesteros, the Marion Parks collection also includes numerous articles from the Los Angeles Times, which reveal how the media received the work of the association. Newspaper coverage of the construction of Olvera Street, Los Angeles’ 150th anniversary celebration, and other events demonstrate how reporters portrayed and championed the work of Los Fiesteros. The Los Angeles Times supported the efforts of historical society because Harry Chandler, who served as president and publisher of the newspaper, also served as a board member for Los Fiesteros. With Chandler’s influential power, the newspaper covered the activities of Los Fiesteros extensively.

Public memory of Olvera Street embraced pre-industrial or anti-modernist notions of romanticism and charm, while simultaneously promoting LA’s modern image. While it may appear that Los Fiesteros embraced the anti-modernist movement to portray an idyllic past rooted in the nostalgia of early Spanish California, they commodified the Mexican culture and developed the city’s tourism. By organizing and planning pageants, parades, concerts, and speeches and publishing
literature, Los Fiesteros created an atmosphere of amusement and entertainment that neglected to showcase the complexities of Los Angeles’s settlement. In the process, Los Fiesteros presented LA’s story of progress that inherently glorified an idyllic past and excluded the Mexican American community to promote a modern future, which showcased the city’s developments and tourism. While celebrating early Spanish California, Los Fiesteros found negative cultural stereotypes to be antithetical to their narrative on progress.

Prior to its restoration, Olvera Street suffered from the surrounding filth and desolation. Los Fiesteros portrayed Olvera Street as a “miserable, forgotten place, with roofs sagging, walls disintegrating, for lack of protection fronting upon a mean and filthy alley.” Angelenos depicted Olvera Street as a “crime hole of the worst description …bootleggers, white slave operators, dope peddlers all had headquarters and hiding places on [Olvera] street” which undermined its purported historical importance. The troublesome image of this public space changed when Christine Sterling, the founder of Olvera Street, announced to “take over the entire little street on which the historic adobe stands and convert it into a beautiful, sanitary Mexican market.” A large Mexican community, heavily concentrated around the Los Angeles Plaza, presented a problem to Olvera Street’s restoration. City health officials viewed the Mexican community as a threat to the sanitary and healthy image renovators wanted, rendering it as a contested space. They supported Olvera Street’s preservation because they believed that the Mexican community, especially Mexican immigrants, carried diseases and contributed to the unsanitary conditions already present at the site. Promoting a sense of fear that germs and epidemics transferred by the Mexican community, city health officials supported the preservation of Olvera Street to

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9 Ibid.
transform the image of Los Angeles into an ultramodern city.\textsuperscript{11} The overall filthy and unsanitary conditions at Olvera Street provided support to transform and preserve the historic site. After the completion of Olvera Street’s restoration in 1930, the historical site became a contested space. Olvera Street and the surrounding plaza became a central meeting location for people and served as a platform for social and political demonstrations for Los Angeles residents.

Olvera Street became a site of social and political tension during the early 1930s. The Great Depression, the implementation of the Repatriation Act, the 1931 immigration raid at Olvera Street, and the overall negative racialization of the Mexican-American community threatened the livelihood and created anxiety among Angelenos. The Great Depression displaced between fourteen and fifteen million individuals nationwide and in response to this crisis, the Communist Party and the Trade Union party organized a campaign known as Organize the Unemployed.\textsuperscript{12} The organizers protested on March 6, 1930 to raise awareness of the growing financial crisis with one of the demonstrations taking place at the Olvera Street Plaza. Approximately ten thousand people gathered at the Olvera Street Plaza area, where they encountered police brutality.\textsuperscript{13} In 1931, Mexican-American Angelenos became the targets of violence, as immigration officials entered Olvera Street to deport United States citizens of Mexican descent. The raid produced widespread fear and anxiety among the Mexican American community.\textsuperscript{14} Immigration officers and local police authorities closed off the two entrances into Olvera Street and asked the crowd of approximately four hundred individuals to line up and provide legal documentation to prove his or her citizenship. Those who could not prove their citizenship risked forced deportation. The raid, part of a larger effort by the federal government to deport illegal Mexican immigrants, became an effort to deport individuals of Mexican descent, regardless of

\textsuperscript{11} Molina, 129.

\textsuperscript{12} William D. Estrada, \textit{The Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 165.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Balderrama and Rodríguez, 57.
their citizenship.\textsuperscript{15} Olvera Street, so far removed from the reality of the economic and political problems confronted by average citizens, represented the complex relationship between the romantic image Los Fiesteros created and the daily challenges faced by the citizens of Los Angeles.

Against the economic and political upheaval of the early 1930s, Los Fiesteros developed and promoted the restoration of Olvera Street. Los Fiesteros, was comprised of an elite group of approximately twenty-five individuals who worked to create a memory of Olvera Street. Initially, they organized Los Angeles’ 150th Anniversary Celebration; however, after its success they continued to plan events and activities, remembering and celebrating early Spanish California. They advertised and promoted events through the radio, newspaper, magazines, and speeches.\textsuperscript{16} They wrote letters asking for fee waivers and donations for costumes and props.\textsuperscript{17} Additionally, they organized re-enactments of past events and hired impersonators to play historical figures.\textsuperscript{18} Their interest in preserving and restoring Olvera Street stemmed from their desire to establish LA tourism. Los Fiesteros spearheaded one of the city’s greatest events, Los Angeles’ 150\textsuperscript{th} anniversary celebration in 1931. Rallying for public support, they gave over 200 addresses using various media outlets, including the radio.\textsuperscript{19}

Los Fiesteros defined romanticism as the “golden days of pueblos and ranchos.”\textsuperscript{20} Los Fiesteros created a nostalgic atmosphere where men on horseback and señoritas spent dreamy afternoons strolling in the pueblos listening to the sounds of a Spanish guitar. On the weekends, they hosted musical events.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Marion Parks to Mrs. Hodges, January 1930, Marion Parks Papers 1909-1940.
\textsuperscript{17} Marion Parks to Mrs. Otts, 1931.
\textsuperscript{18} “Senora with La Fiesta Cake” Photograph, La Fiesta Association, 1931.
\textsuperscript{20} Marion Parks, The Southwest Museum \textit{Masterkey}, La Fiesta Association, 1931.
entertainment by the Jose Arias orchestra. The enchanting melodies of the Spanish guitar and dreamy lyrics created a sense of longing. Elaborate props, performers, “magnificent horses, the gaily costumed riders, the quaint carriages, and their charming occupants” worked to create an idealized Spanish image. The pageant titles, carefully crafted, captured the nostalgia of “golden days.” One show called the “Departure of Transportation,” traced the progress of transportation in Los Angeles and began with Spanish caballeros entering on horseback and dressed in Spanish costumes. Los Fiesteros hired performers to impersonate the people of Spanish California, but in the process excluded Mexican actors from impersonating characters because they did not fit the racial image the association wanted to maintain.

At a time when the Mexican community was stigmatized for their unsanitary lifestyle and lazy work ethic, Los Fiesteros refused to cast Mexican people in the festivities. According to Los Fiesteros, the Mexican period, 1821 to 1848, became marked by passivity and fruitlessness. Deemed as dirty, ill equipped to learn English, and lazy, Mexicans became stereotyped and marginalized during the early 1930s. The image of the “lazy Mexican” sleeping under a cactus tree became part of an ethnic stereotype that forced the Mexican community to the margins of the image of modern Los Angeles. To capitalize on the “lazy Mexican,” Los Fiesteros incorporated the stereotype to show how Los Angeles progressed from a “slumberous” and “dreamy” environment when “the drowsing pueblo and the sleeping hacienda only aroused to the bustle of an

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22 Ibid.
23 Parks, Masterkey.
24 Marion Parks, Letter Request of Captain Shaler portrait, La Fiesta Association, 1931.
25 Molina, 129.
occasional fiesta or rodeo.”^{27} Los Fiesteros also portrayed an unproductive period when “instead of black smoke of the steamers, leaving its long trail over the waters, only the white sails of the hide droghers…broke the stretch of the sea.”^{28} It was not until the American period starting in 1848 that Los Angeles developed into a productive and modern metropolis. In the “naturally happy and hospitable temperament flowering…” of Los Angeles, “swift changes” took place that transformed the “slumberous” pueblo into a bustling American city.^{29} Los Fiesteros described LA’s Mexican period in negative and stereotypical characteristics to highlight the transformation of the pueblo into a charming modern city.

In response to the negative portrayal of the Mexican past, Los Fiesteros hired Anglo actors and dressed them in Spanish costumes to partake in the pageants, parades, and reenactments during the festival. Photographs document the role of impersonators and their importance in creating an image of Los Angeles’s past based on early Spanish California. One of the most prominent photographs depicts a young woman, dressed in an elegant traditional Spanish dress, posed next to a three-tier cake. The cake features the Los Angeles city emblem and “La Fiesta, 150th Anniversary Celebration” written on it. The woman, playing the role of a young señorita contributed to the construction of the anniversary’s spectacle and embodied Spanish romanticism.

Figure 1^{30}

^{27} Parks, *Doors to Yesterday*.
^{28} Ibid.
^{29} Ibid.
Los Fiesteros wanted visitors to embrace the leisure and simplicity of a Spanish past through the “dons living in the independence and ease of grandees.”

Los Fiesteros use these ideals to provide people with feelings of autonomy and leisure in order to counter the problems wrought by the Great Depression. Americans craved the sense of freedom exuded by the caballeros (Spanish horsemen) and beautiful señoritas strolling the pueblos. The Spanish image meant that the “doorways [opened] upon a golden yesterday of romance, leisure, and simplicity as refreshing as a morning of spring.” Emphasis on “leisure” and “simplicity” created an atmosphere that allowed Angelenos to cope with their daily lives. Nineteenth-century California represented a time when “prosperity ruled the land [and] fiestas graced the town,” rather than the “hurried and harassed era of sophistication.”

Los Fiesteros’ efforts reflected a belief in what Charles Fletcher Lummis had called Hispanophilia, a love for all things Spanish. Other Southwest historians, most notably, John Nieto-Philips, have claimed that Hispanophilia “was born of a desire to return to a simpler way of life…a yearning to experience either through text or through tourism an age of adventure that was far removed from the present-day ills of industrial society.”

Ultimately Los Fiesteros defined romanticism through images of leisure and simplicity; however, they worried about LA’s movement into a modern period because industrialization, the interactions between immigrants, and racial tensions created anxiety. The political and economic demonstrations of the early 1930s, as well as the financial crisis, produced heightened levels of concern for Angelenos. Their anxiety resonated with the nation’s growing apprehension over the use of railroad transportation during the early twentieth century. Fearful of accidental injury, nervous shock, and racial segregation,

31 Parks, Masterkey.
32 Parks, Doors to Yesterday.
33 Parks, Masterkey.
34 Charles Fletcher Lummis, The Spanish Pioneers (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1914), 113.
Americans learned to adapt and maneuver within new private and public spaces.\textsuperscript{36} Similarly, Los Fiesteros expressed concern over the racial and social tensions in Los Angeles. The effects of the Great Depression and the Mexican Repatriation movement caused Los Fiesteros and other Angelenos much trepidation. With a desire to control and provide stability, Los Fiesteros found a way to reconcile their preservation process and simultaneously promote a modern future.

Los Fiesteros embraced anti-modern notions of romanticism and charm to preserve and provide an alternative to the encroaching “material progress.”\textsuperscript{37} Like many other historians and preservationists, Los Fiesteros “reject[ed] twentieth-century urbanism, mass production, and perceived cultural homogeneity.”\textsuperscript{38} Firmly against having the early history of Los Angeles “submerged in the tides of thoughtless modernism and superficial progress,” Los Fiesteros pledged to preserve the “important historical buildings...that have been long forgotten, overlooked, and imperiled by neglect.”\textsuperscript{39} However, in the preservation process, Los Fiesteros simultaneously accepted notions of modernism by transforming Olvera Street into a modern historic site for Los Angeles tourists. They believed that the “high contribution [of] a knowledge of the past confer[ed] [an] enriched understanding of the present, and sounder preparation for the future”; therefore, they found a way to promote “the future,” using pre-industrial notions that valued romanticism and simplicity.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{39} Marion Parks, \textit{The Fractional Value of Romance}, La Fiesta Association, 1931.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
Los Fiesteros’ speeches and announcements at local booster clubs reveal how they worked to simultaneously promote a romanticized view of the past and constructed a modern future for Los Angeles. Prior to speaking at a local booster club, Marion asked, “What type of talk on early California would you like to hear? General, romantic, specialized?” Depending on the audience, Los Fiesteros tailored their speaking engagements to meet the expectations of their audience, who expected to hear stories of quaint Spanish pueblos and the leisure of the Spanish days. The historical association revived feelings of nostalgia and retold stories of California settlement that created a modern image of Los Angeles. By appealing to a sense of adventure and anti-modernist ideals, Los Fiesteros’ efforts supported Los Angeles’ tourism and promoted the city’s modern image. Los Fiesteros also continued to promote a romanticized past and showcased Los Angeles’ new modern image through published tour guides.

Los Fiesteros published tour guides, most notably, *The Doors to Yesterday: A Guide to Old Los Angeles*, which promoted a romanticized, yet modern image of Los Angeles. *The Doors to Yesterday* showcased Los Angeles’s progress. The published pamphlet served as a self-guided tour for Los Angeles and through its descriptions and images, told a story of progress. The guide’s narrative begins with a period of settlement when “the primitive inhabitants of Los Angeles welcomed the first white men with friendliness, gifts of fruits and seeds, [and] danced strange dances for them.” The peaceful imagery highlighted the smooth encounters with Spaniards within a “benign climate” and in “a smiling land.” Los Fiesteros created a nostalgic and overly exaggerated representation of LA’s early days. Los Fiesteros presented the pueblo de Los Angeles as a “metropolis from the seed [the Yang-na Indians] planted.” Los Fiesteros romanticized the experiences of the first inhabitants and glorified the primitive days of the pueblo. To solidify and

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41 Marion Parks to Mrs. Hodges, January 1930, Marion Parks Papers 1909-1940.
42 Parks, *Doors to Yesterday*.
43 Parks, *Masterkey*.
44 Ibid.
promote the city’s progress into a modern period, Los Fiesteros concluded the tour guide with descriptions of modern institutions.

Los Fiesteros labeled modern institutions historical landmarks to further enhance LA’s image as a romantic yet, modern city. Los Fiesteros highlighted Los Angeles City Hall and explained that its erection demonstrated a step towards modernity. They explained that the structure “lifted Los Angeles out of the village class.” Prior to the development of civic institutions, Los Fiesteros considered Los Angeles a “village class” and believed that the development of such institutions inherently gave Los Angeles a push towards further developing a modern city. Other civic buildings, such as the county courthouse, the first public school, and the first federal building also appear in the conclusion of Doors to Yesterday. Described by Los Fiesteros as a “historic seaport of Los Angeles,” the San Pedro Harbor graced the last entry in Doors to Yesterday.

The port, discovered by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, who “dropped anchor [there] 395 years ago,” served and continues to serve as a gateway to transport and deliver goods to other countries. Los Fiesteros reminisced how in the pueblo’s early days “transportation to the pueblo provided first by riding horses and ox-carts” gave way to ships that transported goods across the seas.

Los Fiesteros’ activities created an idyllic yet modern public memory of Los Angeles, which represented the city’s story of progress. Aside from solely creating a modern image, Los Fiesteros, constructed a permanent memory of LA’s development in the early 1930s. Memory, represented “with the help of landmarks that we always carry within ourselves,” helps support certain beliefs and meanings. Anti-modernist and modernist ideals influenced and contributed to Los Angeles’s public memory. Embracing a romantic past, and looking towards a modern future, Los Fiesteros not only produced an idyllic

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
image of Los Angeles, but an everlasting memory of its development. Historical landmarks and recollection of events evoke a certain set of beliefs in the present while trying to reflect on the past. Landmarks such as Olvera Street and the remembrance of the 150th anniversary celebration continue to produce feelings of nostalgia because memory exists through environments. The themed atmosphere of Olvera Street and the spectacle of the 150th anniversary celebration conveyed and still continue to produce powerful socio-political messages that exclude the Mexican community to promote a romantic and idealized early Spanish California past. Los Fiesteros preserved the Spanish culture and simultaneously neglected to represent the Mexican community positively. Excluded from the celebrations, festivals, and pageants, the Mexican community became only welcomed under controlled circumstances. Their image, carefully crafted and designed to fit within Los Fiesteros’ romantic and modern framework learned how to adapt within private and public spaces in the city. The memory of Los Fiesteros and their work with Olvera Street’s preservation project and the organization of the 150th anniversary celebration have contributed to the legacy of LA’s development during the 1930s. What Los Fiesteros claimed “gave Angelenos a new vision of their city,” really was a Californian past based on modern and elite terms.

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50 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 53.
Braxton North

"Now mark this, if the expeditionary force - and I ask for no more than 200 men - does not come in ten days, the town may fall; and I have done my best for the honour of our country. Good-bye.” -- C.G. Gordon, Extract from Diary, December 14th, 1884.¹

On January 26, 1885 Charles George Gordon, on the steps of his palace in Khartoum, Sudan, made his last stand against an onslaught of Ansar Warriors determined to kill the man who had kept them at bay for 317 days.² Having survived the Crimean War and siege of Sevastopol and defeated the Tai-ping rebels in China, the “heroic Christian soldier and single-hearted English gentleman,” was beheaded in “defence of England’s honour” and

presented to the Mahdi. Dispatched by the British cabinet of W.E. Gladstone to relieve the Egyptian soldiers in Khartoum, under the nominal authority of Evelyn Baring in Cairo, he defended to the last his personal fate and imperial duty. The lone Englishman “against the tides of darkness,” “our youngest saint fell dead, sword in one hand and axe in the other.”

Muhammad Ahmed ibn Abdullah Allah, Gordon’s opponent, arose out of the mystical Sufi ascetic tradition and became known as a mujaddid (Mahdi) or, “renewer of the Muslim faith.” The young mystic slowly nurtured a Sudanese nationalist rebellion that targeted foreign garrisons and Anglo-Egyptian forces from 1881 to 1898. His followers sacked military barracks and towns, removed Egyptian administrators, and left British General Hicks dead in the desert along with ten thousand Egyptian soldiers. The Mahdi served the indigenous call for a separate course, a non-European nationalism born from a native response to foreign neglect and mismanagement. These two fatalistic and strident men will forever represent the nineteenth-century atmosphere of sensationalist literary imperialism. Their lives progressed the narrative of heroes and villains within the British context of racial hierarchy and

3 Elizabeth Charles, Three Martyrs of the Nineteenth Century: Studies from the Lives of Livingstone, Gordon, and Patteson (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 214; and W.T. Stead, “In Memoriam,” The Pall Mall Gazette, February 11, 1885. Note: quotations will often apply original English spellings, in addition, the province Sudan is often spelled in its original French or Soudan by the British.


“unequal relations of power.” Gordon’s hero-martyr narrative and the Mahdi’s role as the desert jihadist were initiated and cemented in the 1880s.

On that fateful day, a relief party of British soldiers led by Colonel Wilson cautiously approached Khartoum by steamer down the Nile. Their arrival two days late started a chain of communications covered by news wires within the week. Speculation, “melodrama,” symbolism and a treasure trove of sensationalist literature soon followed. The previous success of Henry Morton Stanley’s exploits to save the missionary explorer David Livingstone had awoken the British imperial public and publishers to the potential to narrate the symbolic meaning of their home-grown adventurers. Historian David Spurr defines this relationship as an “ideological link between commercial exploitation and moral improvement among the races.” Gordon became the first British mercenary to find himself at the confluence of all these effects, making him a modern imperial hero of the people, press, and national imagination.

Once transmitted over the telegraph lines from Cairo to London, a cultural process of interpretation and integration led to Gordon’s story becoming cemented in the myth of British cultural and racial superiority. The Mahdist uprising consumed and reformulated a racial hierarchy inherent in the contemporary source rhetoric. Through the “fantasy of dominance and appropriation” Gordon’s story contributed to the “formation of a

7 Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5.


10 Daniel Liebowitz and Charles Pearsons, *The Last Expedition: Stanley’s Mad Journey through the Congo* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005). David Livingstone (d. 1873) was a British missionary and explorer of Africa seeking the source of the Nile. Henry Morton Stanley was hired to search for Livingstone and report his adventures to the *New York Herald*.

colonial actuality existing at the heart of British metropolitan life.”

How did Gordon end up in this predicament? More importantly, how did Gordon come to represent the imperial culture of Britain? His status as a martyr for the imperial cause has endured. Understanding the historical debate surrounding the Mahdi and Gordon’s legacy requires consideration of new interpretations while applying a cultural and post-imperial literary analysis of news articles, art, cartoons, popular literature, biographies, Parliamentary transcripts, and transnational news coverage. Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose posed the question, how was imperialism understood at home, and did people think imperially? This analysis of Gordon’s history proposes to explore how the hero narrative contributed to the British public’s imperial awareness of themselves and the “Other.”

Adventurers, generals, or politicians alone do not create empires; they are formulated in the metropole and colonies with the populace supporting the structures, rhetoric, and racial ideals espoused by those with the power to imprint these principles. These facets create a self-sustaining loop of support that empowers imperial culture. The social and political influence of the press reached a willing and well-versed audience. Government policies changed, crowds wept, telegraphs and accusations circumnavigated the globe, all eagerly read by consumers craving news of Africa and the unknown. Grasping the rhetoric of the era allows historians to witness the colonial discourse through imperial literary journalism and sensational hero-worship. The advantages to this approach include a more complete picture of the cultural atmosphere and a greater


14 Hall and Rose, 2.

15 Ibid., 1.
imperial context for Gordon’s hero status and the rise of an imperial identity.

In researching General Gordon, the British Government of Gladstone, “new journalism,” and the projection of power in Sudan, a common narrative emerges concerning how the press and public worked in tandem to both promote imperialism and the public worship of martyrs for the empire. General Gordon’s death represents a moment in history when the telegraph line from Cairo to London stimulated the growth of British new journalism. Sensationalized articles written by W.T. Stead and Henry Morton Stanley allowed for the rise of the metropole’s awareness of the empire. The British Imperial culture worked in tandem with these influential men to create the rhetoric of empire that was self-sustaining, self-justifiable and deeply embedded within the public’s perceptions of how and why Britain needed to maintain prestige and power in the colonies.

For nearly a hundred years numerous historians have examined the death of Gordon with the intention of finding blame for the debacle. Many sources acknowledge the role the press and public played in endorsing Gordon’s appointment to Khartoum. Theoretical works by Pratt, Said, Spurr, Anderson, and Hall examined the rhetoric of empire and its influence on the public, which made this imperial moment tangible. How did Gordon become and remain a national hero but also a fatalistic adventurer? Movies, art, statues, biographies and monographs depict a British hero created to serve the community. General Gordon died at the hands of “savages” and “fanatics” who threatened to overthrow the British-Egyptian rule in the Sudan. This perception threatened the entire British Imperial system. It is important to understand why and how these anxieties existed and to what extent they required a public hero to assure Britain of its privileged place in the imperial discourse.

Egypt first came into contact with European ambitions in 1798 when Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Mamluk Egypt with the intention of cutting off British access to the overland route to India. His imperial retinue was composed of the finest French scholars of the age who sought to open Egypt to the European model of economic exploitation. These scholars included hydrologists, historians, linguists and engineers who planted the seeds of the “modern experience of the Orient as interpreted from within the universe of discourse founded by Napoleon.” This military projection of power allowed France to describe, define, create and disseminate the Orientalist imagery within the framework of an objective metropole-based scientific inquiry. All this data, deemed by Said to be the “great collective appropriation of one country by another,” resulted in the twenty-three-volume *Description de l’Egypte*. The powers inherent in the naturalization, description, classification, negation, and appropriation of the “Other” granted Europe the ability to displace Egyptian history and determine its future.

The departure of the French from Egypt under the guns of Admiral Nelson permitted the rise of Viceroy Muhammad Ali (1805-48), who led a significant project of modernization and military reform. Ali utilized a European industrialization template and economic models that propelled Egypt beyond the Ottomans in terms of strength. By 1821 his annexation of Sudan left him in control of the Nile into Equatoria. In 1840, Ali turned against the Ottomans, which resulted in European intervention and an imposed peace treaty stipulating Egyptian autonomy. Ali’s efforts quickly diminished after his military reversals and under his predecessors, Abbas and Said. In 1863, the

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21 Ibid., 84.
22 Collins, 60: Abbas (1848-54), established Egypt’s first railroad. Said (1854-63), provided Ferdinand de Lesseps with the Suez Canal project concessions. The concessions granted to de Lesseps stipulated that Egypt was to provide the labor and any lands that bordered the waterway. Ismail appealed to Napoleon III for these concessions to be rescinded; however,
European-educated Ismail Pasha resumed Ali’s modernization drive claiming that, “Egypt was becoming an extension of European civilization.” ²³ Egyptian cotton exports to Europe during the American Civil War blockade of the South aided these efforts. In response, the Egyptian government borrowed at a rapid pace; unfortunately, depressed postwar cotton prices quickly ruined the economy.

Nineteenth-century Egypt and Sudan suffered from their close association with Britain’s quest for imperial security and prosperity. In 1869, after ten years and 287 million gold francs, the Egyptian government completed the Suez Canal. By 1875, under pressure from European debt collectors Ismail sold the canal to the British for four million pounds. In 1876, the Debt Commission assumed control of Egypt’s economic affairs and promoted Ismail’s son Tewfik to replace his ineffectual father. ²⁴ Under the frugal liberal government of William Gladstone, British colonial administrators flooded Cairo and established an empire on the cheap. ²⁵ Britain now controlled of Sudanese affairs through their ownership of Egyptian debt and foreign policy. When nationalist military officer Ahmed Arabi rebelled in 1881, the British Parliament under Gladstone acted swiftly to put down the insurgency. ²⁶ Simultaneously, the Mahdi’s rebellion slowly peeled away territory from Egyptian control.

General Charles “Chinese” Gordon epitomized the heroic Christian saint martyred while defending the honor of country and humanity. Portrayed as a Lancelot figure or Herculean model, Gordon was earlier employed by Ismail Pasha

\[\text{in exchange Napoleon demanded 84 million francs, which put a heavy financial burden on Ismail’s government. By 1875 Egypt was bankrupt.}\]

²³ Ibid., 60.
in 1874 to govern the Equatoria province, partially secured by the adventurer Samuel Baker in 1871. His commission involved aiding Egypt in its duties to the Anglo-Egyptian Slave Trade Convention by thwarting slavery in the Bunyoro region of equatorial Africa. By extension, Egypt sought to gain suzerainty over the province along the Nile. On the day Gordon left for his post, word of Britain’s beloved David Livingstone’s death surfaced in the news, which passed the adventurer torch to him.

Past historians viewed the Mahdist uprising as a response to corrupt foreign rule combined with localized religious zeal. Contemporary historians describe the “mysterious desert mullah’s” “fanaticism,” “intensity,” or his “malignancy” as related to Islam. Unfortunately, the debate over the Mahdi’s actions often ignores nationalist impulses and his true motivations remains clouded under an imposed history. Gordon, Blunt and other anti-imperialist authors initially praised the uprising in Sudan. The imperialist perspective ended up in the history books with the Mahdi’s actions described as a jihad against the civilizing mission of both England and Egypt.

A critical history of General Gordon’s demise has fascinated historians, biographers, and journalists for over a century. Nineteenth-century authors rushed to tap into the curiosity of the public and express the “spirit and patriotism of the country.” Other authors sought to tell an accurate version of

the events while often succumbing to tropes and egos inherent in the age of imperialism. Unfortunately, authors and historians in the twentieth-century have relied on these writings in their analysis of Gordon while propelling the narrative of blame, heroism, and controversy in their search for the events that caused this national disaster. Historians grappled with his contradictory nature in an attempt to fault him or the British Ministers who sent him to achieve an Arthurian task in Khartoum. To better understand the events of this era, a greater focus on the cultural atmosphere of imperialism is necessary. The national narrative that led to Gordon’s death was determined in the era of imperialism when Europeans believed in divine providence, the White Man’s Burden, and the inherent superiority of the European civilization over the barbarian past.

Most nineteenth-century authors viewed Gordon as a national hero who fought bravely for Great Britain. Sir William Butler proclaimed that he was “the picture of a wonderful life...made perfect by a heroic death.” Charles Coe stands out as one contemporary author who notes: “It is a curious moral phenomenon that this is the man whom the English nation hails as its typical hero.” By the turn of the century, and during the inter-war years, authors and historians began to examine Gordon as the cause of the disaster. In 1918, biographer Lytton Strachey described Gordon as an “Eminent Victorian,” “a contradictitious person—even a little off his head, perhaps, though a hero.” Some of his contemporaries critiqued this interpretation of the mission;

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35 Coe, 21.
however, Strachey is often credited with first finding fault with Gordon’s *raison d’entre*. 

Unfortunately, authors promoting the Gordon versus Gladstone and British Government debate lacked insight into the literary rhetoric of the imperial culture. For example, Achmed Abdullah recalled the nineteenth-century hero worship that surrounded Gordon. Blaming the “rheumatic old generals and smooth talking Under-secretaries,” he set out to praise the chivalry, honor, and humility of Gordon, lamenting his demise at the hands of the government.\(^{37}\) Historians Bernard Allen (1931) and Lord Elton (1954) provided a modern scholarly approach to the subject and debate. Allen espoused the sober narrative based on extensive research and Elton showed a bias favoring the actions of Gordon over government policies. Elton portrays Gladstone’s policy of non-intervention as the cause of failure in Khartoum. \(^{38}\)

Post-imperial historians Anthony Nutting, Cynthia Behrman, Alan Moorehead and Gerald French offer critical insights into Gordon and the Anglo-Egyptian relationship. Nutting finds Gordon in a “selfish pursuit of his destiny,” while French viewed him as having a complete “disdain for all earthly benefits or profit.”\(^{39}\) These authors chart new avenues of research while leaving the national context untouched. This perception of Gordon provides many clues into how his death found sanctuary in the public mind. Behrman deserves credit for first exploring the hero, public, and press dynamic. She carefully traverses the “nature of hero worship” and examines the public’s “ethos” during the siege. \(^{40}\) Consequently, recent scholars are critiquing past Gordon biographers and historians and are beginning to examine unique British, imperial, and rhetorical traits.

\(^{37}\) Abdullah, 261.


\(^{40}\) Behrman, 47.
Historians Kate Campbell, Paul Auchterlonie, Lawrence James, and Daniel Butler brought Gordon’s history into the postmodern era. Cultural and social history enlivened the discourse on the events in Khartoum. For example, Auchterlonie examines the formation of national opinion and notions of cultural superiority while Campbell analyzes new journalism and the “symbolic” and “social and political power of [the] press.” To aid the ongoing debate, the contributions of post-modern and cultural historians need to be applied to the imperial discourse, literary rhetoric, and hero-worship surrounding Gordon and Britain’s involvement in Sudanese-Egyptian affairs.

Edward Said’s works provide the foundation to understanding how Gordon “contributed to the formation of a colonial actuality existing at the heart of metropolitan life.” Pratt describes the colonial contact zones and the subordination of marginal groups through transculturation. While focused on travel writing and natural history, her analysis of how westerners minimize the “Other” and create systems of racial hierarchy reminds scholars that biases may arise from how the British viewed their role in saving the Sudan. Spurr coalesces these two seminal authors and traces how through binary and post-modern analysis rhetorical tropes defining the Other are regularly applied in literature. His analysis relegates the Mahdi to the periphery while the European perspective assigns inherited rhetoric and knowledge to an Islamic-nationalist insurgency. Reading literature and newsprint concerning Gordon and Imperial Britain

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43 Said, Culture and Imperialism, 9.

44 Pratt, 6.

45 See: Spurr, The Rhetoric of Empire.
requires a diverse, multinational, and cultural approach. Movies, paintings, statues, and political cartoons have enhanced his hero-status, compelling historians to examine nearly every angle. This essay incorporates these past monographs into four themes: Gordon in the Imperial context; new journalism and public opinion; public and literary hero-worship; and imperial anxieties and the essentializing of the Sudanese and their aspirations for independence.

General Gordon, “The brave and noble man,” succumbed to the siege of Muhammed Ahmed while under the watchful eye of the British public. His view of Ahmed and the British motivations fluctuated during the siege. In September 1884, he wrote, “Note that I do not call our enemy rebels, but Arabs, for it is a vexed question whether we are not the rebels.”

His observations as an evangelical Christian often tempered his views of humanity while his imperial methodology and identity forced both a diplomatic and military divide. In the tone of debasement he wrote, “if it were not for the honour’s sake of our nation, I would let these people slide,” representing an appropriation of power and the removal of Sudanese national rights. His paramount authority arose within the context of British hegemony and from his past experiences leading indigenous armies. This discourse of power took hold in the rhetoric of the imperial publications that both strengthened and repeated this mantra. In Gordon’s own words he exposed this sentiment when he stated, “I taught the natives that they had a right to exist…I had taught them something of the meaning of liberty and justice.”

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48 Gordon, 39.


Others had a more politically sympathetic ear to the Mahdi while holding onto cultural tropes. Blunt and Gordon agreed that his motivations were reasonable and during an interview for Stead, Gordon stated “that the people were justified in rebelling.” This nuanced perspective rarely reached the public. The everyday empire in the metropole felt itself impervious to cultural contact while constructing boundaries to remain separate from the colonized. Paternalism and opinion mattered in the London dailies. After Gordon’s death the effort to minimize the nationalism inherent in the Mahdi’s actions and the Sudanese right to sovereignty grew stronger. When portraying Gordon and Muhammad Ahmed’s personalities, Winston Churchill declared that, “The Arab was an African reproduction of the Englishman; the Englishman a superior and civilized development of the Arab.” Churchill asserted that “European civilization can penetrate the inner darkness” of the African wilderness, which helps to explain his efforts to naturalize and essentialize the Sudanese. These views prevailed during the twentieth-century assessment of the uprising. Gordon’s personality overshadowed the imperialistic nature of his endeavors in Sudan. Primary sources illustrate how writers portrayed his civilizing mission in Sudan. Blake stated, “Empire follows Art and not vice versa as Englishmen suppose,” which an examination of General Gordon’s admirers and critics show. Rudyard Kipling wrote of the Ansar, “So ‘ere’s to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your ‘ome in the Soudan; You’re a pore benighted ‘eathen but a first-class fightin’ man.” The Sudanese voices are removed from the literature and physical, moral, and cultural attributes and are assigned to them by the authors.

Historian Jenny Lewis finds that “it was in the commercially attractive atmosphere of political controversy, moral indignation, fevered hero-worship, and banal sentiment of

52 Churchill, 26.
53 Ibid., 15.
54 Said, Culture and Imperialism, 10.
the years 1884-5 that the majority of books about Gordon were produced.”

A crisis had shaken the empire “from the sphere of ideological hegemony into the openly negotiable realm of public opinion” with consequences for government policy and public responses. Gordon’s role in the civilizing mission was paramount to his audience back home. With the myth of his anti-slavery crusade supporting him, the public anticipated his victory over “savages” and his attempts to “open up a valuable country to civilization and commerce.”

If Gordon could not achieve this victory then a British relief column must be sent to extricate the general and preserve British pride. The press and public led the charge and applied hero status before any climatic finale and before the politicians took notice.

The memory of African traveler Livingstone, the fate of the Mahdi’s European prisoners, and Hick’s death all weighed heavily on the British sense of self. The Mutiny in 1857, the loss of Afghanistan, and encroaching conflicts with Europe or Russia in the East became infused with an orchestrated response by the press, yet widely accepted by the people, the Queen, and the opposition in Parliament. New journalism marked Gordon’s rise and fall and firmly established the narrative and subsequent rhetoric for future historians. For example, artist George Joy wrote, “On they come, those white-clad, ragged Dervishes, who have swarmed across the river, filled the town, and are even now pouring into the courtyard of the Palace, surging up the steps and almost to the very feet of their victim.”

Descriptions like these

57 Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, Introduction, 23.
59 Elton, 386 and 389.
60 George William Joy, General Gordon’s Last Stand, oil on canvas, 1893, Leed’s Art Gallery, http://www.artmagick.com/pictures/picture.aspx?id (accessed May 17, 2011); “It is stated by eye-witnesses that, overawed by the calm dignity of his presence, they hesitated for a moment to approach nearer. It is this moment that is chosen for illustration--the pause between the mad rush of the fanatics, which overwhelmed the General and the two or three
display how England envisioned Gordon’s predicament. The symbolism of animal behavior threatening Britain’s heroes indicates the prejudice against indigenous Africans. Within this imperial culture, the sensational symbolism of new journalism added meaning to the status of the hero and imperial identity. Artists, authors, historians, and Gordon’s superiors all subscribed to this essentializing narrative while elevating the hero to fit the public’s ideals and morals. Descriptions of the Ansar as savage fanatics or Gordon as a stoic, honorable, and moral figure represents a preservation of the British sense of racial and cultural superiority and imperial identity.

The completion of the telegraph line in the 1870s contributed to the rise of new journalism and shaped the public’s imagination of Britain’s hero adventurers. Journalists realized the power and profit in the adventure narrative and the role of the British hero in popular culture. This authority of print extended beyond the public to include influence over national governance. Gladstone’s popularity depended on his liberal use of melodramatic public oration and manipulation of favorable press. Many historians acknowledge the role of newsprint in shaping the events surrounding Britain’s involvement in Sudan. Journalists, artists, and authors played an important role in the power structure of empire and they proceeded to both create heroes and benefit financially from their stories or untimely deaths.

Was new journalism propaganda? Abdullah claimed that, “those were the days before propaganda became a fine art; the days before paragraphists, press agents, writers of social gossip, and similar specialists could make or mar a reputation.” Noteworthy news articles disagreed, noting “immense competition for news,” and that Gordon’s predicament was the “only topic discussed.” Lord Elton found that the press “poured

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Abdullah, 249.
Williams, 689; and “London Amazed and Mad: Gladstone Roundly Denounced Great Disasters Feared,” *New York Times,*
out romantic accounts of Gordon’s spectacular achievements,” which progressed the imperial hero narrative. 64 News of his death “flashed to a world which for months had drawn its breath in suspense.” 65 Individuals versed in imperial rhetoric, propaganda, and symbolism molded changes to the national-imperial identity.

“Feather-brained” new journalism provided a “social and political power” to the press.” 66 Over the course of the 1880s these journalists gained traction through collusion with the politicians while simultaneously claiming solidarity with the masses and assuring their readers, “They are nearer the people… the wielders of real power will be those who are nearest the people.” 67 Stead wrote of the power of this new journalism stating that, “For the purpose of moulding a constituency into his own way of thinking, the editor has every advantage on his side.” 68 Concerning the professional quality of this form of reporting, he claimed that “Sensationalism in journalism is justifiable.” 69 An article in London’s Times exuded sensationalist rhetoric, urging readers to “think only of the grief of England, tortured by the fate of General Gordon.” 70 Gordon epitomized the literary transference of the physical body into a representation of the national body.

Secondary sources often reverted to these inherited tropes noting the clash that came to define the cultural contact between a modern secular society and the presumed stagnant religious tradition of Islam. 71 This colonial discourse was not

February 6, 1885; and “The Situation on the Nile,” Times, February 6, 1885.
64 Elton, 352.
66 Campbell, 21.
67 Stead, “Government by Journalism.”
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 “The Fall of Khartoum,” Times, February 6, 1885.
simply “transferred or imposed” on the next generation. For example, Stead’s efforts excited a populace who had become increasingly reliant on the immediate satisfaction provided by the telegraph and the popular dailies. Africa represented new opportunities for the ambitious men of empire. News from Africa both terrified and consumed Britain’s young men. Gordon served as their proxy to the unknown. Soon after his return from the rebellion in China he found fame with Britain’s abolitionists while employed by Egypt’s free spending and expansionist pasha. He served as an example of how to achieve greatness conquering Britain’s enemies and those perceived as barbarous and un-civilized.

The hero-identity within the comparative contexts of race, empire, and the Other shows how the adventurous male solidified Britain’s vision of racial superiority while exciting the reading public with frequent updates and tales of heroism. “England has not been made by her statesmen, Whig or Tory, but by her gentlemen adventurers,” claimed Abdullah. Consolidated in the arts and literature, Gordon became a household name for many generations of English students. Art in the form of political cartoons stood by the hero motif and denigrated the perceived government bumbling of the evacuation. Literature praised the motivations of the imperial expedition and civilizing mission while finding room to critique the finer arguments of policy, orders, and conflicting personalities. For example, *Times* journalists wrote that, “One heard only the name of the hero, devoted, simple, obeying without fear, without selfishness, sacrificing all to the cause of civilization and of his country—in short, to the cause of humanity.”

Art created to memorialize Gordon often showed the hero at the moment the Ansar warriors approached him. With steely determination and resolve he “fac[ed] alone the fanaticism of the Soudan.” These works of art and their depictions of the

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72 Hall and Rose, 6.
73 Moorehead, 199.
74 Abdullah, 229.
75 “The Fall of Khartoum,” *Times*, February 6, 1885.
76 Ibid.
Ansar or Sudanese expose the perception the British had of Africans in general. Often portrayed in less detail, their bodies blend together in a mob of color and shining steel with fanatical expressions on their faces. Compare this with the calm resolve of Gordon on the canvas and Britain’s self-image and sense of superiority become evident.

Gordon’s nihilistic belief in God’s will led his biographers to note, “Fate, by token of his inheritance, willed that his trade should be the trade of the sword and the drums…and die with his boots on facing the foe.”\(^{77}\) His ability to push to the last breath in light of enormous odds and with “a smile on [his] lips” endeared him to the public.\(^{78}\) “The age of Chivalry is not dead” claimed the London Times.\(^{79}\) Others noted that he “embod[ied] in himself not the guilt but the highest aspirations of his society.”\(^{80}\) These sentiments provided a voice for the public’s perceptions of themselves within the empire. Beyond the corrupting power of politics or privilege, and only ruled by his sense of duty to God and country, Gordon achieved heroic status. Britain’s sense of spiritual and cultural superiority found expression in the news and print of 1885. The Times reported that “These nations, especially Oriental ones, have a hankering for idols,” and that, “They had made of him a god”\(^{81}\) Adulation and celebration with women seeking to kiss his feet met the returning imperial savior as he entered the city.\(^{82}\) For Gordon to fit the imperial hero model he needed to manifest this Christian symbolism.

Journalists of the 1880s recognized Gordon as a “heroic soldier and Christian gentleman.”\(^{83}\) His Christian motivations to save the “stubborn race” of lazy, “weak,” and feeble citizens of Khartoum drove him to defend them to the death.\(^{84}\) Hall

\(^{77}\) Abdullah, 213.
\(^{78}\) Ibid., 277.
\(^{79}\) “General Gordon,” Times, February 12, 1885.
\(^{81}\) “Situation on the Nile,” Times, February 7, 1885.
\(^{82}\) Charles, 213.
\(^{83}\) “The Fall of Khartoum,” Times, February 6, 1885.
\(^{84}\) Gordon, 121.
attributes this to his misguided Christian humanitarianism and liberal universalism, which shaped his perceptions of superiority and actions of appropriation.\textsuperscript{85} Sacrificed for the honor of the country, his confinement in Khartoum resulted in the Archbishop of Canterbury asking for intercessory prayer.\textsuperscript{86} Many British subjects heeded this call, and with the aid of the press pressured the government to take action.

England’s journalists, both stoking and responding to the national outrage, called for action against the Mahdi.\textsuperscript{87} Military retribution for the riots in Alexandria started the chain of revenge, which culminated in the post-Gordon crushing of the Sudanese independence movement. Military power, supported by the ethos of imperialism gave Gordon strength to impose his will on an entire city. Charles Gordon, the “Gallant general,” “knew better how to defend Khartoum than any living man.”\textsuperscript{88} Even if foolhardy, he intended to follow his orders and honor the prestige of England by completing his civilizing mission even while under the constant barrage of the Mahdi’s guns.

Through debasement, the social problems of the Other were portrayed as cultural barriers that were impenetrable without the aid of the colonizer and his cultural values. Negation served to create darkness, a nothingness that required the imagination and modernity of the European to fill in the blank spaces with light and civilization.\textsuperscript{89} The military strength of the British in the contact zone of Sudan assured an unequal cultural exchange. Military and cultural power as embodied in the fateful hero of Gordon added to his status as a martyr of the British culture. “Gordon went alone” to his death in brave defense of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[85] Cora Kaplan, “Imagining Empire: History, Fantasy and Literature,” in Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, \textit{At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World}, 191-210 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 191.
\item[86] “The War in the Soudan,” \textit{Times}, February 11, 1885.
\item[89] See: David Spurr, \textit{Rhetoric of Empire}.
\end{footnotes}
civilization with many believing that only treachery explained his fall.\textsuperscript{90} For all the peril that the news claimed Gordon faced, the press conversely stated that, “The Mahdi’s forces seem quite incapable of taking any fortified place.”\textsuperscript{91} The British sense of superiority hampered their ability to acknowledge the military strength of the Ansar warriors, leaving them susceptible to drastic and unforeseen defeats.

Gordon appeared “almost superhuman in his efforts to keep up hope.”\textsuperscript{92} “Surrounded by hostile tribes and cut off from communication,” he acted as the consummate British hero with determination and masculine qualities.\textsuperscript{93} The role of the white masculine male in the history of imperial literature is well documented. Often alone and amongst lecherous natives seeking personal advantage, the adventurer hero must call on his superior cultural upbringing to see himself through danger. Gordon served as this archetype numerous times during his career. Depicted as only holding a cane in the heat of battle, he epitomized the British view of their men in uniform. A man of action and of clear vision he became the “most chivalric figure among Englishmen.”\textsuperscript{94}

Gordon personified the metropole’s ideal sober male companion, the “popular hero” “sacrificed” by his superiors.\textsuperscript{95} His true “kaleidoscope” nature tells a far more nuanced story.\textsuperscript{96} A common trait of an imperial hero includes a shunning of status in seeking rewards for hard work over accolades. Conflicted, depressed, subject to outbursts of anger and frustration he suffered human weaknesses, which made him more acceptable to the public. More importantly, with a mystical fatalism and

\textsuperscript{90} Sir Francis Reginald Wingate, “Wingate of the Sudan” in \textit{Archives of Empire Volume II: The Scramble for Africa}, 603-616 (see note 27), 607.

\textsuperscript{91} “The Fall of Berber,” \textit{London Middlesex}, June 18, 1884.

\textsuperscript{92} Wingate, “Wingate of the Sudan,” 604.

\textsuperscript{93} Churchill, 64.


\textsuperscript{95} The Fall of Khartoum,” \textit{New York Times}, February 6, 1885.

\textsuperscript{96} Nutting, 146.
acceptance of his role as martyr he “appealed strongly to the sentimentally minded Englishmen of the Victorian era.” \(^97\) In addition, “the very resistance to Christianity,” as expressed by the Mahdists, “counted as evidence of intrinsic inferiorities which further justified conquest.” \(^98\)

The narrative of the humble, fatalistic, and conflicted hero established Gordon as a consummate British hero. Other unflattering aspects of his personality did not make the news. For example, his views on slavery had always remained fluid as demonstrated by his attempts to appoint the powerful slave-dealer, Zebehr, as governor despite objections from both Cairo and London. \(^99\) He tolerated reputable and powerful slave owners who treated slaves well in his presence. \(^100\) Paradoxically, Gordon, the abolitionist’s poster boy, lobbied for the appointment of a slave-dealer as governor of Khartoum. Later historians attribute this to his deep knowledge of the people’s desires and culture. Spurr argues that this is a form of classification with Gordon acting as the benevolent intermediary who assigns an imposed structure of order upon the blank slate of the Other. In his journals, Gordon wrote that he intended to allow those within besieged Khartoum who wished to go to the Mahdi to do so and lighten the strain on the cities supplies. Often conflicted, yet nearly always assuming cultural and racial superiority, the British Imperial hero supported the idealized and imagined notions of European civilization coming to the rescue of faceless, voiceless, and powerless indigenous clients.

European authors spoke for their subjects while seeking to replace the indigenous landscape with their own vision of modernity. \(^101\) Gordon and the British represented this modernity and Sudan, the colonized, wanting to join this “homogenized community.” \(^102\) Transculturation, as described by Pratt, involves the “subordinated or marginal groups select[ing] and invent[ing]

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\(^97\) Strachey, 252; and Knaplund, 220.  
\(^98\) Pratt, 49.  
\(^100\) Coe, 10.  
\(^101\) Spurr, 28.  
\(^102\) Ibid., 31.
from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture,” and consuming the foreigners representation. Gordon and Gladstone could not envision a natural Sudanese progression towards nationhood. The press parroted this perspective by imposing an African history that began when European explorers and settlers arrived to apply ordered beauty.

Why had Britain become involved in Sudan? Gordon’s orders were to abandon the city, remove the Egyptian presence, and report back to Cairo. However, as soon as word of the siege reached London the calls to relieve him multiplied. Of equal note were the many demands to relieve Britain of the mess she had inherited from Gordon’s missteps. An empire “willy-nilly” was expanded on the heels of a fatalistic and mystical adventurer and supported by an imperially indoctrinated public and press. Voices of reason tried to be heard amongst the din. General Wolseley believed the “war to be a hideous mistake, the outcome of Mr. Gladstone’s foolish policy.” Blunt and others criticized the imperial motivations of the nation and sought to extricate Gordon and the Cairo administrators from the continent. Unfortunately, the death of Gordon so shocked the nation that any attempts to justify the Mahdi’s actions were deemed insensitive and contrary to Britain’s civilizing duty.

November 1884, the Parliament discussed the reported fall of Khartoum and concluded that a Times report established “no foundation for the rumour.” Other dailies printed conjecture with treason by an Egyptian or native soldier, often finding traction with the public. By the first of February 1885 the true nature of Khartoum’s fall flooded into the cities of Europe. William Gladstone proclaimed that he did not know the course of events until he received his daily newspaper. Fluid reporting created rumors that flourished and the public grew

103 Pratt, 6.
104 Moorehead, 161.
105 Lord Wolseley, “In Relief of Gordon,” in Archives of Empire Volume II: The Scramble for Africa, 603-616 (see note 27), 600.
106 Hansards vol. 293, November 3, 1884.
107 Knaplund, 179.
restless with anticipation of Gordon’s assumed escape or capture. Echoing Gordon’s sentiments, the public vacillated between leaving Sudan to the savages and sending in a superior force. Back in the metropole “the national colours were flown at half-mast. Nothing adulterates anger like tears, and politicians and clergymen set about canonizing Gordon.”

Anxiety over the strength of the Mahdi’s call to jihad reverberated throughout the nation. In addition, how Britain’s empire was viewed by the United States and European nations allows scholars to witness the language associated with empire and how power requires a sense of superiority, especially amongst one’s neighbors and rivals. French journalists responded by noting that Gordon’s “character [wa]s unanimously admired,” while concurrently blaming England for “having more gluttony than stomach.” News of Italy’s desire to contribute troops circulated across the globe. The Irish press expressed no pity, noting England’s “piratical career” and “dastardly conduct toward weaker peoples.” Competitors with Britain found reasons to rejoice in the death of Gordon while denigrating the British self-identity and imperial motivations. More sympathetic nations took the opportunity to express dismay at the failures of a civilized and modern nation. For the sake of humanity, they feared a Muslim awakening. On February 6, the Times reported that Paris had claimed, “It is a misfortune for Europe when one of the nation’s representing her does not triumph over the barbarous hordes…who impede the march of true civilization.”

In America the New York Times noted “the peril now confronting the whole eastern empire of the English is

108 Symons, 248.
recognized.” 113 “Islam is now victorious” they claimed, “England must fight down an immense Moslem outbreak.” 114 These fears of a general Muslim conflagration of rebellion appeared in local and international newspapers. British prestige and honor had been dealt a blow and yet, the nation looked east towards India where a large Muslim population could easily threaten British hegemony. Oddly, the reports inflated the strength of the Mahdi in the weeks after the massacre, perhaps to placate the British sense of military superiority. Earlier claims stated “no more than two hundred men” could stop the siege and reverse the Mahdi’s gains. 115

Public and press indignation at the lax relief effort led by Lord Wolseley and Gladstone’s liberal policies forced the government to act. The Glasgow Herald claimed “the opinion of all classes appeared to favour active operations against the Mahdi.” 116 Said states that imperial nations sought to avoid “oppositional effort [from] becoming institutionalized, marginality turning into separatism and resistance hardening into dogma.” 117 Any military or political success by the Other required a swift response in order to assure future acquiescence. This response, though contrary to the themes of appropriation, found application when the honor of Britain was threatened. The Mahdi’s actions crippled the belief that the Sudanese would want and request British authority. British journalists blatantly portrayed the rebellion as a response to Otto-Egyptian mismanagement and not the actions of Gordon or the Anglo-Egyptian governance.

Chaos threatened the imagined unity of the colonizer and colonized. Spurr notes that, “the rhetorical economy of the media creates a demand for images of chaos in order that the principles of a governing ideology and the need for institutions of order

115 Gordon, 220.
117 Said, Culture and Imperialism, 54.
may be affirmed.” 118 Influential historian Benedict Anderson finds that to further coalesce and establish national identity a vernacular history with an accessible shared narrative in print is essential. New journalism and the rhetoric and sensationalism emanating from London served this purpose. 119 “Gordon functioned as example and as symbol,” of the traits held dear by the public, and in death he inspired them and was “universally admired” for his service to the British sense of self. 120

One last page in Gordon’s history appeared on the horizon. How would Britain narrate and conclude the story? Parliamentarian Randolph Churchill bemoaned Britain’s predicament stating, “The fear to go to war in support of an envoy is a certain indication of a decaying empire.” 121 A few contemporaries opposed attempting any vengeful military actions. Coe noted, “it is one thing to deplore his loss and another thing to demand vengeance for his death.” 122 The British imperial public had every intention of avenging Gordon and in the process punishing all those who were involved.

After fourteen long years seeking Britain’s revenge, General Kitchener’s modernized army swiftly defeated the Mahdi’s successor Abdallahi ibn Muhammed at the battle of Omdurman in 1898. 123 Ten thousand Ansar warriors died repaying the Mahdi’s debts to Britain’s philanthropic invaders. However, the Mahdi escaped punishment, as he had died of natural causes a short six months after Gordon. Julian Symons

118 Spurr, 109.
120 Behrman, 59.
122 Coe, 50.
proclaimed that “the British did not free the Arabs from anarchy…they replaced the Mahdist state by Imperial rule.”\textsuperscript{124} The motivation for revenge finally reached its conclusion. The Mahdi and General Gordon were dead; however, their role in defining the imperial hero remains firm. The last pages of this conflict’s heritage have yet to be written; but ironically, in 1967 “a grandson of the Mahdi rule[d] over the land of his grandfather.”\textsuperscript{125} In the spirit of victory, one newspaper reported that, “Gordon is not forgotten in the enthusiasm of the triumph of British arms. Several schemes are under consideration for erecting a suitable memorial to General Gordon at Khartoum.”\textsuperscript{126}

The story of Gordon and the Mahdi requires no placement of blame on any individual or system. However, to understand the dispute between two men and their nationalist motivations requires research beyond biographies, military and political histories, or popular literature. Behrman’s notion that “there is nothing so heroic as a dead hero,” certainly applies to Gordon.\textsuperscript{127} His death, the public reaction and contemporary literature, news articles, and historical monographs left an imprint of how and why a man under great odds can come to represent the empire so thoroughly in a nation’s consciousness. His own sentiment envisions a legacy of Britain’s involvement in Africa that is best concluded in writing, “What have we done to make them like us? Not a single thing…I wish I was the Mahdi, and I would laugh at all Europe.”\textsuperscript{128}

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\textsuperscript{124} Symons, 281.
\textsuperscript{125} Byron Farwell, \textit{The Story of the Mahdist Revolt which frustrated Queen Victoria’s designs on the Sudan, humbled Egypt, and led to the fall of Khartoum, the death of Gordon, and Kitchener’s victory at Omdurman fourteen years later} (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 335.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Westminster Budget}, London Middlesex September 9, 1898.
\textsuperscript{127} Behrman, 48.
\textsuperscript{128} Gordon, 50.
ORAL HISTORY: LEGACIES AND MINORITIES

Oral history as a field of study and a method for gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices as well as memories of people and communities, was established in the 1940s. Of course, the practice and recording of oral traditions is much older and predates the written word. However, audio recordings and digital technologies have catapulted the significance, sentiment, and legitimacy of the documentation and preservation of oral histories, making it an important part of the study of history.

Oral history, in recording the voices and memories of individuals, can provide eyewitness accounts of important events, and thus introduces a new and valuable source of information. Nevertheless, many questions and problems arise in the study, recording, and use of oral histories. Maintaining the integrity of the individual’s voice, altering or editing interviews, and the challenges of memory are some of the realities oral historians must confront. For this article, the editors of Perspectives interviewed three scholars about their expertise in oral history; Dr. Francisco Balderrama, a Chicano Studies and History Professor at CSULA; Sylvia Lubow, a retired Women’s Studies and History Professor as well as a volunteer at the KPFK (one of three public radio stations in Los Angeles) oral history archives; and Dr. Ping Yao, a Chinese History Professor at CSULA.¹ They addressed the challenges, importance, as well as

the uses of oral histories. *Perspectives* would like to thank Professors Balderrama, Lubow, and Yao for taking the time to meet with us and sharing their remarkable insights as important contributors to the field of oral history.

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**FRANCISCO BALDERRAMA**

For both the interviewee and the interviewer an oral history, says Professor Balderrama, is “creating a window of the past.” His latest work, *Mexican American Baseball in Los Angeles*, was published in 2011 and co-authored with Richard A. Santillan, an Ethnic Studies Professor at Cal Poly Pomona. The book began with a 2005 collaborative effort between the Baseball Reliquary, a nonprofit organization that explores culture through the context of baseball history, and CSULA called “Mexican-American Baseball in Los Angeles: From the Barrios to the Big Leagues.” Balderrama designed an undergraduate class that included collecting oral histories from the Latino community on the topic of baseball. He fondly recalled the experience of that course and the importance of oral history in his career when discussing this project.

Balderrama noted that in recent years historians are paying much more attention to sports and recreation to uncover how a community forms identity and baseball is an avenue that can help in discovering that process for Mexican Americans in Los Angeles. Balderrama recalled “it became one of those things that just got a life of its own and got all sorts of connections with

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the local community.” This speaks to the effect that an oral history project can have on the lives of everyone involved. There were scholars and other members of the community who called, offering to teach the course with him or just to give a guest lecture.

It was not just the community that became enthusiastic about participating in the project of collecting oral histories. Students were so passionate about their role in collecting oral histories that they worked overtime. Balderrama remembered, “we had a timeslot of once a week, from 6:10 to 10 o’clock and I tell you we would take a short break but I wasn’t getting out of here until 11 o’clock and the students didn’t want to get out of there until 10:30.” By the end of the course, Balderrama had collected an enormous amount of information about baseball in Los Angeles. There were students in other courses who showed interest in this topic and surprisingly, they too contributed stories that he included in the book. There were many interviewees that confided to Balderrama the sense of personal empowerment they felt as a result of participating in the project.

All of this hard work was turned into an exhibit. The day it opened at the CSULA library Balderrama was amazed at the turnout, “there were five hundred people.” Not only did the students and the participants in the project attend, but also their families and an impressive array of television and radio representatives came. According to Balderrama, the book and the exhibit were really only “step one [to gaining] visibility for the project.” Developing a research base and finding the space and commitment to store those materials were also part of this first step. The oral histories and other information collected so far are located at CSULA and CSU San Bernardino. What was “really momentous” for this project, are the regional and national connections between people from various places who contributed material to what is now called the Latino Baseball History Project. Inspired by this work, professors at other CSU campuses are teaching similar courses on baseball history.

Balderrama felt that this book represents a change for him because as a historian a book is an “opportunity to share text.” This is unlike his earlier monographs because here his students were “really conducting the research.” He saw his role
as “a coach…but it is still more their decision-making process.” When he edited the oral histories, he explained, that keeping the cost of the book down was essential to assure his audience had access to it because “this is public history, community history here.” A framed poster hangs in his office, signed by various baseball players in the Mexican-American community. It is a daily visual reminder of the stories Balderrama and his students helped to record and preserve.

Balderrama differentiates between historians and journalists working on oral history projects. While a journalist “goes for the story,” he explained that over time things change, other facts surface, and a journalist has to move on to the next headline. In contrast, a historian is more invested in the issues and subject over a longer period. Balderrama emphasized, that “there are reporters that do great background work,” but that historians are better situated for the long process of research, writing, reviewing, and editing. For example, there are families that Balderrama has interviewed over decades.

Balderrama made clear that what journalists produce is valuable but a historian’s position allows for a unique commitment not available to a reporter. What is clear about this project is that oral history was the tool Balderrama used to help his students engage with the community that many of them are from. This collaborative venture was a very gratifying part of Balderrama’s career.

SYLVIA LUBOW

Sylvia Lubow is a retired History Professor who spent over twenty years teaching her students about the “world in which they lived and how the past had helped shape their lives.” Lubow began teaching at Los Angeles Valley College in 1969 after receiving her BA in History from CSULA and her MA in History from UCLA. Her teaching specialties included post-Civil War, women’s history, and the Impact of Science and Technology on Society. Following an educational research trip to China in the late nineteen sixties, Lubow also began teaching classes in contemporary Chinese history. In all her classes, she wanted students to understand their political agency, explaining
that many of them “came out as political activists” as a result of her course.

Lubow initiated our conversation with a definition of history as “the past seen through the eyes of the present, with an eye on the future.” For Lubow, the significance of oral history lies in its ability to uncover the memories of “ordinary and oppressed peoples” that are often absent from written sources. The oral historian serves to extract “remembrances, information, ways of living, attitudes, and values” from individuals, and has the formidable task of interpreting and narrating their words. Oral historians must be extremely vigilant during the editing process to avoid prescribing their “own approaches and values.” Still, the process of oral history requires historians to construe meaning from spoken language in order to create a narrative that advances their scholarly purpose. Lubow highlighted the importance of understanding how history has been class-oriented and has mainly been produced by privileged members of society, forming the direction of how people think and what they know about the past. For Lubow, oral history reveals additional views that provide the perspectives of minorities and women, who have been historically neglected and powerless in society.

Lubow recalls implementing oral history in courses on women in the United States, noting that although “the area was still in its infancy at the time,” it offered the potential to “expand women’s place” in history. She instructed students to conduct interviews with older women, asking them how being a woman had affected their lives. The raw material, as a result, gave Lubow “insight into the limitations and the need for the education of students in terms of oral history, its functions, and its meaning.” Lubow explains that if she were to use oral history again, she would be “very cautious” in framing the questions. She would also ask the students about their own perceptions on the subject and the person being interviewed to make sure that their own personal biases were not imposed.

More recently, Lubow has been volunteering at the Pacifica Foundation’s audio archives, which also includes the KPFK public radio station in Studio City, California. She assists in the preservation of the station’s audio materials. Lubow deems the archives an invaluable resource for historians. Reflecting on
her long career, Lubow says that she misses student interaction the most, always finding it “exciting to hear minds [at] work.”

Lubow believes that oral history can be limiting if the interviewee is only asked about contemporary matters. For oral history to be history, the subjects need to explain how they have come to their conclusions; how their upbringing, education, and other experiences shaped their lives. This creates a perspective of time, because history “is never a static thing.” She also stresses that when creating an oral history, the interviewer should examine multiple types of sources, taking into account class, race, sex, place, and time.

For Lubow, there is no clear-cut difference between oral histories created by journalists or historians. Both depend on the perspective and background of the interviewer. For Lubow, the emerging academic appreciation of oral history has made an important “contribution to the totality of history,” allowing for greater diversity and richness in the topics, approaches, and sources used by historians and society.

PING YAO

Director of the Asian and Asian American Studies Program and Professor of Chinese Women’s History at CSULA, Dr. Ping Yao’s time is divided between teaching, researching, and writing. Typically her courses focus on the lives of East Asian women, as does her forthcoming book, Good Karma Connections: Buddhist Women in Tang China, 618-907. Yao was recently awarded the prestigious 2011-2012 Fulbright grant to travel to Shanghai, where she will conduct research on medieval Buddhist women and lecture at Eastern China Normal University. Despite her approaching departure, Yao graciously discussed the exciting opportunities and inherent limitations of using oral history research with Perspectives.

Yao’s research focuses on accessing the intimate ways in which women of the Tang Dynasty “perceived their experience.” Investigating thousands of ancient epitaphs allows Yao to learn about these women’s lives and identities. While not conventional oral history, studying the immensely intimate statements written about those who have died parallels the ability of oral history to
Oral Histories: Legacies and Minorities

access the personal. Additionally, Yao’s own experiences in both China and in the classroom have increasingly drawn her toward oral history projects. She sees the way that history has traditionally portrayed the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution as painfully inadequate. Yao states frankly that the majority of research “does not reflect the perspective of ordinary Chinese people…and their gendered experience during this traumatic era.” Oral history interviews can remedy this deficiency in addition to being uniquely interesting to students. These two attributes have led Yao to assign oral history projects in numerous courses, as a way of creating an archive that will preserve the past and establish personal connections between the students and those they are studying.

The appeal of oral history is its ability to enter new and under-represented communities of women and ethnic minorities that are typically absent from the historical record. Historiography of the late twentieth century tells us that these voices matter and oral history allows us to recover these hidden stories. The powerful possibilities of oral history, Yao also emphasized, must be tempered with an understanding of the field’s limitations. Oral histories have the exciting potential of reaching the subaltern classes in a meaningful way, yet like any other historical methodology, it is also prone to error. The subjectivity of an individual’s memory is one of oral history’s potential pitfalls. However, Yao counters that memory in fact, “provides historians a great opportunity to analyze the interviewees in the historical context by examining the shifting and selectiveness of their memories.” Despite its limitations, Yao has repeatedly witnessed the validity of the narratives her students create. Much like this special feature, Yao’s students have compiled and preserved interviews in video format, thus allowing an unaltered glimpse into the stories they share. The strength of oral history lies in its authenticity and Yao reminds us that this can never be compromised.

The aim of this project was to record the insights and experiences of local practitioners of oral history and their pedagogic methodology. Professors Balderrama, Lubow, and Yao have used this tradition in their teaching and scholarship. They have all made significant strides in the study of oral
traditions and have used the information they discovered to educate students and others interested in the subjects they explore. Their thoughts on the impact this approach has had on themselves, their students, and on their profession is another valuable aspect of these interviews. The paramount feature of their work is preserving minority voices and bringing them to the forefront of education and knowledge. Francisco Balderrama’s project on baseball memories in the Latin American community, Ping Yao’s exploration of epitaphs by the unrepresented women of the Tang Dynasty, and Sylvia Lubow’s use of oral history as a teaching method have helped bring the voices of neglected populations to light.

Videos of the interviews with Balderrama and Lubow are available on the Perspectives YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/PerspectivesJournal.

Ryan Allen
Rafael Buelna
Andrea Corrales
John-Paul Fernandes
Anitra Wetzel

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Margaret Osler’s *Reconfiguring the World* focuses on the shift of intellectual paradigms as Europe transitioned from the medieval period to the early modern era, ca. 1450-1750. Her work explicates the movement away from pure Aristotelian thought and towards an understanding of the world through a new mechanical philosophy of nature. Osler, a Professor of History and Philosophy at the University of Calgary, successfully explains the way in which the early modern period shaped the intellectual foundations of modernity.

Osler’s work poses a simple question: From 1450 to 1750, how did early modern thinkers understand and explain the natural world? To answer this question Osler consults excerpts and reprinted illustrations from philosophical texts written by Aristotle, Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Locke. In eight short chapters, Osler methodically describes how natural philosophy sought a much larger undertaking than what we think of as science today, when it desired to know the causes of all the phenomena in the world.

Osler begins by examining the concurrent influences of an unknowable, all-powerful Christian God and the entrenched principles of Greek Aristotelianism on European thought before 1500. Subsequent chapters describe the tradition of critiquing, adapting, and appropriating Aristotelian and theological thought over the next three centuries. The early modern intellectual movements of Renaissance humanism and the Protestant Reformation signaled the final death of Aristotelian deductive
reasoning. Osler explains how natural philosophers used inductive reasoning to assert a new mechanical explanation of the world. The convergence of mathematics and mechanics inspired advances in physics, alchemy, chemistry, botany, and anatomy, which consequently produced a philosophy of nature that brought a whole new metaphysics to the world.

Most of Osler’s work illustrates precisely how early modern philosophers described and categorized and consequently knew the world. Osler is at her best describing the new tools and techniques with which natural philosophers began to unlock “the secrets of nature.” The axioms of calculus and geometry provided early modern philosophers with the ability to describe the physical world through new sciences of motion and sight. With Aristotelian principles set aside, philosophers such as Francis Bacon began to use empirical knowledge to overhaul our understanding of the world, while Gassendi and Descartes asserted man’s capability of abstract reasoning as proof of man’s possession of an immortal human soul.

A multitude of students walk the halls of academia with at best a vague understanding of who Aristotle or Descartes really were and why exactly they are important to the humanities. In Reconfiguring Margaret Osler has impressively created the first step to remedying this deficiency. As an established expert in the History of Ideas (a field in which she has taught and published since the 1960s), Osler’s work raises the intellectual pedestal on which the early modern period sits by continuing the efforts of scholars such as Thomas Kuhn and his seminal work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962). Reconfiguring does not discuss the numerous Arab, Persian, and Jewish scholars who helped shape early modern mechanistic philosophy, but considering that her work is meant as an introduction to the field, any meaningful discussion of non-western contributions might be beyond its scope. More importantly, Osler’s book does compel readers to pursue the advance of early modern philosophy in greater depth. For students interested in early modern history, science, philosophy, or literature, Reconfiguring the World succinctly clarifies the importance of early modern intellectual thought.

Ryan Allen

James Alex Garza’s *The Imagined Underworld* examines criminal behavior in Mexico City during the Porfirio Diaz presidency, 1876-1911. Garza, an Associate Professor of History and Ethnic Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, shows that upper-middle class Mexican elites sought to transform the capital into a modern city devoid of social ills engendered by criminal activity. He analyzes six prominent criminal cases: serial killer El Chalequero, the love triangle of Luis Yzaguirre and Maria Piedad Ontiveros, the Brilanti house robbery, La Profesa jewelry robbery and murder, Federico Abrego and the death of his lover, and the Arnulfo Arroyo affair concerning an attack on President Diaz. These events demonstrate how Mexican elites constructed images of an underworld full of crime and vice, which they hoped to confine to the lower classes of Mexico City.

Garza begins by examining how social spaces such as *Pulquerías, Bordellos, and Vecindades* were labeled centers of criminality by upper-middle class elites. These perceptions laid the groundwork for the construction of an imagined underworld. Garza explains that the upper-middle class began to draw a distinct line between themselves, the *Gente decente*, and *La Gente del Pueblo*, the indigenous Indian poor. In doing so, they defined *La Gente del Pueblo* as the source of crime and vice and argued that criminal activity ran counter to the ideals of a modern city.

Jealousy and violent relationships characterized the underworld. The love affair between Luis Yzaguirre and Maria Piedad Ontiveros ended when he shot her on October 13, 1890. Garza notes that this event helped shift the immoral behavior associated with the underclass to *Gente decente* in part because the press portrayed upper-middle class men as victims of women who were influenced by the underworld.

Elites in Mexico City began to mimic the criminal behavior of the imagined underworld colonias. The Brilanti robbery of 1888 alarmed the upper-middle class and convinced
them of the need to contain crime and vice. The investigation of the home invasion exposed a complex criminal ring operating in the capital. Garza notes that authorities interrogating the poor in the colonias deemed them inherently criminal. Yet the Brilanti robbery vividly underscored that elites could become targets of the underworld. Growing criminal activity made its way into the city and continued to undermine upper-middle class hopes of order and progress.

Garza also explores the ways in which members of the upper-middle class engaged in criminal activity. Arnulfo’s assault on President Díaz exposed the criminal relationship between the underworld and the police. For instance, the case of Officer Francisco Castañeda who kidnapped and raped a thirteen-year old girl illustrates how police abuse of power and criminality touched all aspects of Mexico City. In short, the Arnulfo affair demonstrates that the fine line the upper-middle classes attempted to draw between themselves and the lower classes did not exist since they also participated in criminal behavior.

Garza’s work brings new information to light by examining how upper-middle class society imagined crime and vice and how these images of criminality ultimately undermined their desires for order and progress since elites perpetrated criminal acts. Garza’s examination of court records, newspapers, and victim accounts draws on new sources for assessing these events and shows the existence of a widespread crime in Mexico City. This study further illustrates how crime and vice were part of the social fabric, woven and imagined by the upper-middle class. In short, this study can serve as a basis for historians investigating nineteenth-century Mexican society.

Jose Alvizo-Arrieta


Amity Shlaes, a Senior Fellow in Political Economics at the Council on Foreign Relations, proposes a different view of
government intervention in stemming the economic distress caused by the Great Depression than offered by historians who argue that the New Deal improved American life and saved capitalism. Shlaes uses a well-researched combination of economic data, media reports, and government records to demonstrate that despite a massive enlargement of federal government regulation, taxation, and spending that there was no real economic improvement. Shlaes contends that Hoover and Roosevelt, both underestimating the underlying strength of the American economy, did more harm than good through artificially attempting to create a recovery that would have occurred years earlier.

Shlaes blames the Hoover administration for aggravating the effects of the stock market crash by encouraging business and unions to expand overall employment by converting full-time workers to a part time workforce, which decreased wages for most families, further accelerating the decline in spending. Congress raised tariffs to protect American jobs, which curtailed exports as a trade war erupted. Increased federal spending on infrastructure had no effect on the rising unemployment. Roosevelt won handily in 1932 promising change with a balanced budget, but under the guidance of Keynesian trained economists he embarked on a “pump-priming” expansion of federal spending, accompanied by extensive regulation and taxation of business. Shlaes contends that some New Deal programs did create temporary work but also had the unintended consequence of harming many businesses unable to compete with new services provided by the government projects. Shlaes further argues that new labor laws strengthening unions at the time of a challenging business cycle raised wages for a few workers but did not lead to increased hiring. The banking reforms and new Wall Street regulations discouraged risk taking by entrepreneurs. The Agricultural Adjustment Bureau futilely encouraged farmers to slaughter livestock, dump milk, and burn crops in an attempt to raise prices for consumers unable to afford them.

Shlaes dramatically recounts the suicide death of a thirteen-year-old boy in the autumn of 1937 to avoid remaining a burden to his family in the opening of a chapter to illustrate the
potential impact of failed economic policies. The boy’s death occurred during the second wave of significant unemployment when businesses faced a cash flow crisis created by new Social Security taxes, increased corporate taxes, and a lack of available credit. Businesses therefore shed employees at the first sign of a new downturn. As the stock market plunged the government blamed corporate and Wall Street greed.

Shlaes hails public resistance to failed New Deal policies. Business leaders such as Wendell Wilkie, forced to sell his utility company to Tennessee Valley Authority, gained notoriety as a public advocate against the further growth of the government. Butchers were the unlikely plaintiffs in the United States Supreme Court case striking down the byzantine regulations of the National Recovery Act. Rural communities without circulating currency and no remaining local banks united to create their own local barter currencies. Alcoholics whose spirits and hopes were crushed by the Great Depression formed Alcoholics Anonymous to find sobriety through group self-help.

Shlaes concludes that given the economic knowledge of their time both Hoover and Roosevelt may have had little choice but to pursue the policies they did to prevent the rise of fascism or communism. However, she posits that the real “forgotten man” of the Great Depression was not Roosevelt’s unemployed worker, but instead the small businessman who faithfully worked hard, paid increased taxes to finance New Deal experiments, received no public benefits, with many praying each day for an end to the national nightmare.

Unresolved issues of the proper scope of government intervention in the American economy exist to this day as evidenced by the vitriolic public discourse about the measures taken by both the Bush and Obama administrations in managing the financial crisis beginning in 2008 and the Great Recession that followed. *The Forgotten Man* adds to our historical understanding of government intervention in the Great Depression and possibly a way to evaluate current government responses to the most recent crisis.

*Robert Bates*

Fabiola Cabeza de Baca wrote about the history of her community in eastern New Mexico at the end of the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848. Her book helps preserve folk culture and also fits within the subject United States borderland history. *We Fed Them Cactus* provides a glimpse into the private lives of Nuevo Mexicanos during a period of transition and reveals how they navigated the Americanization process. Doña de Baca’s sources come from both her memories and the oral histories of these settlers. This emphasis on oral histories illustrates the importance her community placed on the oral tradition. First published in 1954, the book was later reprinted with a new introduction by Tey Diana Rebolledo, a Professor of Spanish at the University of New Mexico who specializes in Chicana/o literature, Latin American poetry and women's literature.

Rebolledo classified this work as “resistance discourse” typical of a generation of women writers from “old landed upper-class New Mexican families” who wrote about a time when power was shifting from “Hispanic to Anglo control” (xxii). What Rebolledo does not suggest is how to tell this story without being pigeonholed. An introduction warning that “resistance discourse,” follows can discourage reading further. Cabeza de Baca simply stated that she wanted to tell “the story of the struggle of New Mexican Hispanics for existence on the Llano, Stacked Plains” (ix). In the first of sixteen chapters, she describes this flat and semiarid landscape as a particularly challenging place to establish a settlement. The seclusion of the Llano helped augment the significance of storytelling for forming personal and community identity. While these stories, replete with blood, sweat, and tears were intriguing, the abundance of Spanish topography, at times, distracted from the narrative.

Through El Cuate, the cook on her father’s ranch, she introduced the stories of ciboleros or buffalo hunters, rodeos, fiestas and how Nuevo Mexicanos traded with Comanche warriors long before and after it became outlawed. The arid conditions of the Llano also influenced this community since
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water shortages were a constant anxiety and this is evident in the fact that the topic of rain ran through many of the stories. In particular, the last chapter discusses how the drought of 1918 reaped havoc on her family and neighbors. To avoid financial ruin, her father sold off the majority of his cattle at below market prices. To keep his remaining cattle alive long enough to steer them to greener pastures, her father and other ranchers fed them cactus. This experience not only inspired the title of de Baca’s narrative, but also reflects the ingenuity of these settlers.

An influx of migration into the area, mostly European-Americans from eastern states, eventually sparked tension with the old Hispano population and homesteaders as power started to shift to the latter group. This is not, however, an example of Hispano resistance strategies used by a conquered people to eschew Americanization. On the contrary, one of her fondest memories is celebrating the Fourth of July and learning English. Cabeza de Baca points out that it was not the homesteaders Hispanos resented but the flagrant violations of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and their rights as citizens.

Rebolledo sees this work as nostalgic and “edenic” but appreciates that it combines the recollections of many to preserve their voices. For Cabeza de Baca, those attributes were important to include in this narrative because they are part of the struggle for survival. Though the book lacks the structure of most published oral histories, this does not diminish its historical value. Aside from offering a history of her community and a record of traditions and rituals, de Baca offers insights into their everyday lives. As such, it is not just a valuable primary source, it is also entertaining.

Rafael Bulena


Kathryn A. Sloan uses nineteenth-century rapto or “abduction by seduction,” cases from Oaxaca, Mexico to analyze courtship practices, free will, and honor among the indigenous and mestizo
working-class. Sloan, an Associate Professor of History at the University of Arkansas, argues that this practice became an increasingly popular practice for adolescents to gain independence and emancipation from parental control during the Porfiriato, the regime of President Porfirio Diaz from 1876 to 1911. She contends that the Mexican government played a pivotal role in this phenomenon, promoting modernity and individual liberty in a traditional culture. These modern ideals are evident in the abduction cases when liberal judges ruled in favor of eloped couples and recognizing their independence.

*Rapto* traditionally involved a young woman tricked or forced into sexual relations or elopement with a man who promised her marriage. Sloan shows that working-class girls planned their own *rapto* and engaged in sexual relations in order to force parental acceptance of a marriage partner. Parents were prone to agree to a previously contested marriage if their daughter’s virtue had already been compromised. *La Reforma* laws of the mid-nineteenth century created an anti-clerical state that privatized communal lands, promoted individual liberty, and identified foreign investment as key features of modernization. The liberal government of the Porfiriato took a strong stance against child abuse by enacting laws to protect the young. The laws allowed youth to rebel, declaring their independence and often cited parental abuse as justification for their emancipation. These cases served to increase the state’s power and to promote liberalism and modernity in Porfirian Mexico. As a result, the government extended individual liberty to the youth at the expense of parental control and tradition.

Sloan examines 212 court cases of *rapto*, love letters, popular literature, and art that, when viewed together, reflect the changing social views of postcolonial Mexico. Organized thematically in chapters on Oaxaca’s history, law, popular culture, courtship and gossip, family, and sexual honor, she argues that the Zapotec and Mixtec indigenous groups have traditionally awarded women a greater degree of political and social power, with gender complementarity playing a key role in community organization. This structure nurtured desire for personal independence among women in Oaxaca, allowing *rapto*
to become an instrument for freedom in the wake of the liberal legal reforms of the nineteenth-century Porfiriato.

Sloan explains that some adolescent girls became genuine victims of seduction, allowing themselves to be deflowered by men who promised love and future marriage. When these girls brought their cases before the court, the men manipulated the law, claiming the young girl was not a virgin when they had sexual relations and refused to marry her. The court often looked to the community to decide such cases, allowing neighbors and family members to denounce or attest to a young girl’s respectability, honor, and courtship practices. Sloan suggests that honor was a multifaceted social construction, dependent on community values and public perception.

Sloan’s case studies create a beautifully written social history of the working-class youth in Porfirian Oaxaca. It supplements the existing historiography of the era by offering insights on courtship, honor, and daily life among the masses through their interactions with the court. Her work identifies female agency in nineteenth-century Mexico, arguing that working-class youths frequently asserted their independence and defied parental authority through rapto and manipulation of reform laws. The monograph will serve as an innovative addition to the study of gender relations and social history in modern Mexico.

Andrea Corrales


Historical analysis and scholarship concerning the American Revolution are voluminous, and focus largely on the intellectual contributions of the founders and framers of the American experiment. T.H. Breen, William Smith Mason professor of American History at Northwestern University suggests a different approach to understanding our nation’s inception. In *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* he argues that “ordinary” men and women fueled the Revolution and pressured leaders to declare independence.
Breen’s conscious reference to embattled farmers as “insurgents” documents the term used by contemporaries, but he struggles to make the connection between the radical connotations of the concept then and now (4). Insurgency, in late-eighteenth-century America, does not resemble our current understanding because physical violence, the centerpiece of most revolutions, did not surface as a predominant feature of the American Revolution. Instead, these insurgents (or patriots) were motivated by their immediate passions amplified through fear, fury, and resentment and a host of emotions encouraged and supported by evangelical religion (11). This book posits that independence and revolution happened long before the stroke of a pen in 1776, and that “the people” through networks, committees of safety, and “schools of revolution” contributed to the narrative of the American Revolution.

Breen narrows his examination to a two-year period beginning in the summer of 1774 with the Coercive Acts that prompted insurgents to drive royal officials from their posts, to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. His retelling of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1774 emphasizes the influence that thousands of New Englanders had on the Congress’s decision to adopt the Suffolk Resolves, a far more radical set of resolutions than the delegates originally discussed. This book differs from other scholarship on the Revolutionary period largely because it argues that patriot communication networks had the strength to unite colonists throughout North America, despite regional differences. These networks or “committees of safety” formed what Breen calls “schools of revolution” and engaged in insurgent tactics that emphasized “civil excommunication” which silenced critics and denounced political offenders (186). Although Breen’s work echoes the scholarship of Gordon S. Wood’s 1992 Radicalism of the American Revolution, his biggest contribution is his recognition of Lockean political philosophy and its influence on “ordinary” people. Insurgents most likely had not read Locke’s work, but his thoughts on the general principles of rights were understood and woven into the fabric of insurgent political ideology (19). Put another way, insurgents did not need the
founding fathers to tell them they had natural rights. They were well aware of these rights and acted accordingly.

Breen relies largely on newspapers, sermons, and Matthew Patten’s late-eighteenth-century journal which he claims bears witness to the extralegal processes that made the American Revolution (5). But Breen’s challenge to the traditional narrative focuses exclusively on white men (as insurgents) in New England while missing an opportunity to bring African Americans, Indians, and women into the story. As the subtitle to the book suggests, we are led to believe that the Revolution of the People comprised a racially diverse group while most insurgents were convinced that the category of “the people” excluded non-whites. Breen only mentions in passing runaway slaves, an issue that galvanized both insurgents and British loyalists as each side accused the other of inciting black resistance. In addition, Breen praises the insurgents for privileging alternative tactics over physical violence, but never discusses how those tactics most likely resonated as acts of terror.

Breen frames the Revolution as an emotional experience that swelled from the citizenry and challenges historians to look even deeper into the contributions of “ordinary” men and women. Graduate students and those interested in the American Revolution would benefit from a close reading of this book and its approach to understanding the political foundation of America and the formation of grassroots politics.

John Glenn Dunlap


In The Case For Islamo-Christian Civilization, Richard Bulliet, a Professor of History at Columbia University, argues that Latin Christian and Muslim histories are deeply intertwined and that neither tradition can be fully understood in the absence of the other, challenging deep-rooted Western Islamophobia. Using sources written by Orientalists as well as Islamic scholars,
Bulliet challenges current distorted Western views in regards to the Middle East and uncovers a similar heritage between Western Christendom during its rise in the first century and Islam with its ascendance during the seventh century. In his preface, Bulliet tells readers that he writes in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks and the growing subsequent Islamophobia. His work shows the shared heritage of Islam and Judeo-Christian civilization, which has been distorted, obscured and rejected by political and social forces for centuries.

Bulliet begins with an evaluation of different aspects of Christianity, such as traditions borrowed from pagan customs as well as Western Christianity’s early notions of superiority over the East. He discusses the many achievements of Islamic peoples, explaining that Islam proved more successful in its conversion efforts than Christianity. He then highlights a common heritage of Latin Christendom and Islam, examining the roots from which both began and the centuries over which both faiths spread. In the second chapter, Bulliet explores the question of “what went wrong” in the Middle East. This notion suggests that the Western world still holds Islam to Euro-American social values. Democracy, freedom of speech, and religious freedom are, for example, socio-political elements of the modern Western cultural tradition. Proposing an alternative point of view, Bulliet explains why Islamic society exists as it does, focusing on past and present Arab and Muslim leaders. Sharia law, for example, the primary statute and authority of Islam, calls for a religious leadership by the ulama and other religious authorities, thus rejecting a Euro-American political idea of separation of church and state.

In relations between the United States and the Middle East, Bulliet shows that American understanding of Islamic culture and society was very limited before World War II. During the Cold War, growing political and military tensions led western powers to strive for domination of resources and a constant flow of oil became paramount. Thus, interest in the Middle East, Islam, its cultures and traditions grew and government programs and institutions supporting research in the region emerged. With greater comprehension, hope that Muslims would become more westernized grew. However, Bulliet argues
that the Middle East must not be modernized through Western means and instead must be understood from within and consider Islamic tradition and its heritage. If this rethinking fails, Bulliet fears that relations between the United States and the Middle East will deteriorate. Bulliet suggests that expectations by western powers further push Islamic and Middle Eastern rulers and leaders to reject western politico-social ideas, becoming more radical in their authoritarian rule and homogeneous religious institutions.

Bulliet reveals a similar ancestry between Western Christendom and Islam and explores the contorted Western and Orientalist outlook of the Islamic Middle East. He introduces new principles to the study of the Middle East and deconstructs western Islamophobia. These new tenets call for on the West to fundamentally change their ideas about Islam and the Middle East and ushering in a different approach to its studies and relations. As a short and concise book that covers much information in just four chapters, this book is appropriate for both graduate and undergraduate students alike, as well as general readers who are interested in the Islamic world, offering innovative ideology and intellectual satisfaction.

John-Paul Fernandes


In Galileo’s Daughter, Dava Sobel not only offers an account of the professional accomplishments and works of Galileo, but also a glimpse into his personal life and familial dynamics. Using letters written by Galileo’s daughter to him creates an intimate portrait of their relationship and the love they shared. Never intended for public viewing, the letters reveal his daughter’s personal thoughts on topics ranging from the mundane, to new discoveries and scientific theories. Sobel, a prolific scientific writer whose work has appeared in the New York Times, Discover, Life, and The New Yorker, also shows that Virginia
supported her father and remained devoted to him until her untimely, heartbreaking death at age thirty-three.

It is at the University of Padua where Galileo met Marina Gamba, with whom he had two daughters and a son. For reasons not fully explained, Galileo did not marry his mistress, thereby rendering all of his children illegitimate. At the age of thirteen, Galileo sent his daughter Virginia and her younger sister Livia to live at the San Matteo Convent in Arcetri. The author reiterates the prevailing view among scholars that he probably did so because he saw few marriage opportunities for them due to their illegitimate status. This reason is debatable, the author points out, since it was possible to legitimize children as Galileo eventually did with his son Vincenzio. Additionally, it was the custom of the time to send young girls to convents for their education. Both sisters dedicated their lives to the Catholic Church and took their vows. Sobel’s close reading of Virginia’s letters thus also offers a revealing glimpse into the lives of medieval women and social culture. In addition, Galileo’s Daughter will be of interest to those interested in Galileo’s association with the Catholic Church. His daughter’s letters show that he did not view the Church as his enemy, since he willingly gave his daughters over to the institution. He also continued to provide support to them and by association, the order in which they resided.

Sobel translated the surviving 124 letters written in Italian by Virginia between 1623 and 1634. Selections from the letters are included in the appendix of the book, allowing readers access to the sources while still following Sobel’s interpretative narrative flow. Unfortunately there are no letters known to have survived from Galileo to his daughter. The author speculates that they were either buried or burned by the mother abbess upon Virginia’s death, perhaps fearing to be accused of harboring the writings of a heretic.

Much has been written about the scientific work of Galileo, but very little has been published concerning his personal life, especially from a first-person perspective. These letters were known to exist by scholars, but were not previously published to this extent in conjunction with a biography. Sobel’s translation and interpretation of Galileo’s daughter’s letters
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offers an interesting and humanizing portrait of the loving relationship he had with Virginia, who emerges as both nurturing and intelligent. Sobel combines Virginia’s writings with well-known historical facts to describe a relationship that endured throughout their lifetime and well past their deaths, as they were buried in the same tomb.

John Fritz


In a letter written near the end of the eighteenth century, Margaret Shippen Arnold praised her sister for her efforts on family limitation. Whereas married women in colonial America prior to 1763 reproduced almost every two years, the Shippen sisters participated in a growing trend that endorsed family planning. In her long-awaited book, Revolutionary Conceptions, Susan Klepp, Professor of Colonial American and American Women’s History at Temple University, examines Mid-Atlantic middle class and elite married white women’s family limitation efforts between 1760 and 1820, using women’s writings, medical writings, and printed materials. To a lesser extent, Klepp analyzes enslaved women’s attempts at family planning, using census data, slave owner letters and diaries. Incorporating statistical data, art history and social and cultural historical methods, Klepp argues that women appropriated the American Revolution’s ideals of life, liberty, and happiness to repudiate traditional patriarchal structures. In return, women implemented affectionate parent-child relationships and asserted agency in their marriages.

Before 1760, female fecundity garnered social praise not only for mothers but also for the fathers whose progeny became a source of capital for nations. The pregnant form evoked an image of beauty, abundance, and strength. On a national scale, large families became a necessary ingredient for prosperity. Locally, children served utilitarian purposes as laborers to supplement the family income. Women steadily embraced
concepts of equality and republican virtue in the latter half of the eighteenth century, placing greater emphasis on sentimental bonds and giving equal status to all children, regardless of gender. Parturient women used endearing phrases like “beloved object[s]” and “little stranger” (109). Similar shifts occurred in portraiture. Klepp’s chapter, “Beauty and the Bestial,” demonstrates how artists prior to 1763 highlighted women’s fertility by incorporating sexual symbols, such as fruit or pearls, into their paintings. Later portraits depicted girls and women paired with books, symbolizing women’s increased access to education.

Klepp’s work reaches its best moments in “Potions, Pills, and Jumping Ropes,” which includes a fascinating analysis of limitation methods employed by women. She reminds readers that pregnancy was not always easily determined in this period. Doctors, midwives, and women of all ethnic backgrounds diffused knowledge about emmenagogues, methods to that stimulated menstruation, and abortifacients. Though family planning infers some degree of male approval, women largely led the campaign and in doing so claimed control over their reproductive systems. From this emerged new meanings of marriage, motherhood, and childbearing.

Thoroughly researched and beautifully written, Revolutionary Conceptions brings to light new information on America’s declining fertility rates. Klepp locates a period roughly between 1760 and 1820 when women maintained substantial control over definitions of fertility, motherhood and family. The advent of modern gynecology after 1820 saw the power over women’s bodies handed once more over to male hands. Students of the history of gender, sexuality, family, and medicine will benefit from Klepp’s research. Her inclusion and careful examination of portraiture reminds historians to seek answers in non-traditional sources. Indeed, her inter-disciplinary approach to the history of family limitation should serve as an example to historians, sociologists, economists and anthropologists alike.

Carrie Le Glenn

★★★
As Alice Royal sat in the refurbished house now a part of Allensworth State Historic Park, she remarked, “This is the bed where I was born…..” (75) The town of Allensworth represented African American attempts to live free from racism and achieve independence through hard work and self-sufficiency during the first decade of the twentieth century. Today, Allensworth colony embodies the desire to preserve important cultural icons. Descendants of the town worked for more than a decade to create the state park where author Alice Royal was born.

This book provides a good introduction to black migration in California especially during the Great Migration, 1910-1930. Although not written by an historian, Royal uses oral history as well as the town’s buildings and institutions as primary sources, making it an excellent teaching resource. The park tells the story of Allensworth’s thriving community during the golden years of 1908-1918. Through refurbished cultural centers and first person narratives, the park and Royal’s book provide an important understanding of African American desires for self-sufficiency in the early twentieth century. Today the town is a shadow of its former self. Nearly destroyed by a lack of water access and the closure of the local train station today, Allensworth primarily exists as a state park despite being home to almost five hundred people. Royal’s book falls short, however, in providing a deeper analysis of Allensworth’s biggest problem, the lack of water. More data explaining the geographic difficulties would give a clearer picture of the town’s struggle. This is especially disappointing since Royal as an Allensworth native was familiar with the town’s original purpose, vision and struggles.

New efforts to preserve African American heritage found many supporters throughout the black community. Friends of Allensworth organizations formed in the late 1980s in Oakland, Bakersfield, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Royal’s work is part of this new vision of the town by offering a historical lens of black self-reliance. It provides scholars with an
understanding of African American history and the history of the American west in the early twentieth century. Royal and others members of the Friends of Allensworth Society sought to preserve the town as critical to African American historiography at a time when many aging participants of the Civil Rights movement looked to educate future generations about America’s past and as a point of understanding and cultural pride. With photographs by Scott Braley, the book is an introduction to historical towns in California. But more importantly, Royal’s work is a valuable oral history that preserves the voices of African American cultural pioneers in California.

David Maynard

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Molly Merryman’s *Clipped Wings* focuses on the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II and demonstrates that they played critical roles and worked side by side with the male military, yet Congress refused to militarize them in 1944. A Professor of History at Kent State University, Merryman examines the reactions of male pilots to their female counterparts and media coverage of women as pilots, such as *Life* magazine. Her work chronicles the WASP from its inception in 1942 until the program’s end two years later. Merryman demonstrates how various cultural influences singled out members of the WASP and prevented them from becoming part of the United States military solely because of their sex.

While the men were off fighting the war, women started working in factories performing tasks that were once reserved for men only. Piloting was one of those jobs since few men were left to ferry planes from one location to the next. Female pilots stepped in and created the Women Airforce Service Pilots. During their two-year existence, the WASPs flew a total of sixty two million miles and delivered 12, 652 planes on domestic ferrying missions (p. 8). All 916 women were experienced, licensed pilots who had completed extensive training, which was
similar to the training for male pilots in the Army Air Force (AAF). All were well qualified and hired by the military but given civilian status. The women supported passage of a bill that would have allowed them to become part of the military and receive the same veteran and hospital benefits as the male pilots.

Merryman argues that male pilots and the media prevented female pilots from becoming militarized. During the WASP’s time of service, male pilots became eligible for the draft as ground troops, thus losing their flight pay to the women pilots. The male pilots lobbied against their female counterparts and attempted to discredit the WASPs through the Ramspect Report, which used statistics of airplane crashes to depict women pilots as inadequate compared to male pilots. Media coverage played a huge part in how society personified the women pilots, which not always positive. Instead of portrayed their services as patriotic, the women were criticized as outside of social norms for taking on a traditionally male role. As a result, Congress opposed women’s efforts to become part of the military; this was the first time Congress denied a bill that was supported by both the AAF and WASP. It was not until thirty years later, in 1977, that Congress passed the bill granting the WASP’s militarization, entitling the women to veteran status after their years of service during the war.

Merryman’s work is a valuable analysis of why the WASPs during World War II were denied the same military benefits as their male counterparts. Her use of Life magazine and interviews with former WASPs are an excellent analysis of the group and the struggles the former WASP pilots had endured. The book is a fascinating social history of a topic that is not widely known or talked about. Readers will enjoy the history of these remarkable women and the way Merryman tells their story.

Helena Núñez

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Merriman, the Charles Seymour Professor of History at Yale University, chronicles the historical period leading up to and following Emile Henry’s bombing of the Café Terminus in Paris in 1894. His work links the bombing in Paris to modern acts of terror in the twenty-first century. He argues that Henry’s actions were the first to target innocent civilians, resulting in a break from previous acts of terror, which had been perpetrated only against government officials.

Paris, according to Merriman, was in essence a two-class society. On the one end of the spectrum was the opulent lifestyle of the affluent as they passed their time attending operas, shopping in the newly emerging luxury department stores, and dining in the restaurants of the grand boulevards. On the other hand, nearly one half of Parisians lived in deplorable conditions, starving, and destitute. The poor often settled in the less expensive outlying areas of the city, seeking work in the center servicing the affluent. Central to Merriman’s argument is Henry, who grew up with the inequalities of Paris and turned to anarchy in an attempt to force revolution. Merriman chronicles the activities of Henry and his obsession with the bombings by other anarchists in France. Henry began his campaign against what he considered to be the unjust French government in 1892 with his first bombing outside a Paris police station, leaving five fatalities. Merriman argues that because of the rising anti-government terrorist actions, panic began to characterize the response of the French government towards these activities. The French media popularized the events, carrying the news of terrorist activities to a broad audience. Widespread knowledge of the isolated events only convinced the French government to implement harsher restrictive laws that further limited freedoms and liberties, which in turn, only fueled the anarchist activities, labeled by the media as the “Dynamite Club.”

Merriman’s background in nineteenth-century French history provides a solid foundation for his work. He traces the rise of anarchist ideas, the modernization of France, as well as
emerging social and political views. The author utilizes archives in France, such as the Archives Nationales, extensively including documents from the various newspapers of the day as well as official reports created by the policing agencies responsible for the security of the city. He is quick to point out the brutality and loss felt by the innocent victims and survivors of the dynamite club's random bombings in the various public spaces throughout the city, which targeted citizens unconnected to French politics. Merriman concludes his work by arguing that while Henry and his collaborators encouraged the anarchist activities they carried out, the movement quickly dissolved into many smaller networks of labor and political groups each with individually exclusive aims. Yet, Merriman reminds us that while Western society today views terrorist bombings as a recent phenomenon, violence perpetrated towards innocent citizens has origins in nineteenth-century France.

The Dynamite Club is a well-researched work on the chaos caused by the terrorist activities committed by Henry and fellow anarchists in France. Merriman clarifies a difficult to understand historical period in French history by offering a concise and well-written book for both specialists and general readers.

Andrew Pereida


Scholars often neglect women of the Napoleonic Empire (1804-1815) in favor of warfare and the men who fought. In her landmark book, Napoleon and the Women Question, June Burton, Professor of European Studies at the University of Akron, remedies this gap in scholarship. She explores how discourses in education, medicine, and law created spaces for women's agency. Burton also analyzes Napoleon's personal attitudes concerning the nature of women using letters, diaries and other accounts to conclude that he did not view them as
weak but rather as productive figures whose role as wives and mothers was central to the success of the empire. She shows how the government reformed women's lives through institutions that aimed at either improving or saving the lives of women. Incorporating personal narratives, journals, and other socio-cultural historical methods, Burton argues that Napoleon's policies reflected his belief that women were essential to the survival of empire, thereby furthering the nascent women's movement. Discourses that exulted motherhood and family as integral to the success of the French nation influenced public policy and helped push forward welfare projects focusing on women, legislation aimed at protecting women and families, and the opening of educational opportunities to women from all social classes.

Napoleon believed women's primary duty as French citizens was to increase the French population through "baby-making" (7). Advice manuals and scientific treatises written by male scientists and surgeons emphasized "the importance of the uterus" which rendered women as "walking wombs" (129). Medical writings also glorified motherhood and provided advice on methods for producing the strongest progeny as well as how to avoid a miscarriage. Such sentiments underlay the creation of new institutions that aided women and provided new opportunities for them. Napoleon established several national educational centers for girls whose curriculum inculcated the skills necessary to be a good wife and mother such as knitting and nursing. Burton argues these institutions set the groundwork for higher education for subsequent generations of young women. The chapter "The Biomedical Foundation of Domesticity" discusses Napoleon's creation of charitable institutions designed to save women's lives by assisting needy mothers financially. The high level of state sponsorship of such institutions conveys Napoleon's belief that women as mothers were essential to the French Empire.

The highlight of Burton's work discusses Napoleon's policies in conjunction with an examination of medical discourses regarding female nature. She draws on evidence from midwives, surgeons, and patients themselves. While the majority of medical science buttressed the ideology of domesticity and
valorization of motherhood, women carved out their space in the public realm through midwifery, which represented an area of science that women were encouraged to join (112). Napoleon created a centralized system of midwifery schools, including one for pre-natal care to poor mothers. For Burton, midwifery served as proof that Napoleon venerated motherhood; he believed women "were naturally better-suited to practice midwifery and to safeguard the woman's femininity" (111). The imperial design of midwifery education encouraged women of all classes to pursue it as an occupation.

Well researched and clearly organized, Napoleon and the Woman Question elucidates new information regarding women during a socially constraining epoch of French history. Burton refutes the notion that Napoleon regarded women as weak and rather viewed them as integral to the survival of French society through their role as mothers. The opening of all-girls boarding schools, the creation of charitable institutions to provide assistance to poor mothers, the emergence of gynecology as a specific medical field, and the increasing importance of midwifery reflect government policies that rendered women as essential to the health of the nation, thereby empowering them. Burton's research will benefit historians of medicine as well as students of the history of gender and sexuality.

Maddie Weissman


Nadje Sadig Al-Ali, Professor of Gender Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, examines Iraqi history from 1948 through 2006 based on interviews with over 180 Iraqi women who now live abroad. Al-Ali uncovers women’s political agency that has often been left out of the broader narrative of modern Iraqi history. She explains that until recently, women and men in Iraq were classified more by class, regional, professional, and political identity rather than by their religion. She also argues that the Iraqi populace would
have been better able to change their own society if the U.S. had not invaded their country.

The women’s memories span different economic and political eras, including the revolution that transformed Iraq from a monarchy to a republic (1950s-1960s), the reign of the Ba’ath regime (1968-2003), the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), the economic sanctions (1990-2003), Gulf War (1990-91), and the recent U.S.-led occupation (2003-2006). The majority of interviewees lived in Baghdad, were educated and middle class. The women were active across the political spectrum, ranging from communist political organizations working for workers and women’s rights, to individuals lobbying in Washington D.C. for U.S. intervention. Women participated in sit-ins, protests, strikes, humanitarian and welfare assistance, as well as underground political work. In addition to the interviews, Al-Ali used a variety of secondary, governmental, humanitarian, and media sources. She also shared her own family’s experience of the many struggles over the past several decades in Iraq, as well as her personal passion for peace and justice.

The women Al-Ali interviewed had mixed views about the U.S. invasions of Iraq. Most were very skeptical of American intentions and believed that oil and geo-political strategy motivated them. On the other hand, some of the women wanted U.S. intervention, even prayed for it, and had faith that the U.S. and British soldiers would bring democracy. Mona N. believed the latter. She hated Saddam’s regime so much that she believed that the Bush doctrine would bring democracy, human rights and freedom, and she even lobbied in the U.S. for the war in 2003. Mona as well as others who managed to escape Iraq shortly after the Gulf War had very different views compared to the Iraqi women who were still living in Iraq and witnessed first hand the continued atrocities that resulted from the U.S.-led war. Suad G. and her daughter Amal expressed their disgust, fear, and anger about the war. Suad points out that if Americans had really wanted to oust Saddam they could have assassinated him; she believes that the U.S. just wanted to take Iraqi oil. Most of the
women Al-Ali interviewed concurred that the wars and sanctions were detrimental to women’s health and participation in public life and contributed to the growing economic dependence of women when many lost their jobs and livelihoods. Nuha, an Iraqi female painter who died in 2004 due to exposure to uranium, explained how sanctions and wars led many families to stock up on food that they could not obtain after U.S. occupation and many had to eat everything quickly due to lack of electricity for refrigeration.

This book offers a unique understanding of Iraqi women and their experiences at a time when great chaos and wars have strained the voices of all, and in particular Iraqi women. Despite the absence of lower class women’s voices, Al-Ali has added to the narratives of Iraqi history. Al-Ali hopes to continue to help the Iraqi women’s voices be heard and plans to interview more poor women and share their stories in the future. Individuals interested in the history of the Middle East, Iraq, and the U.S. at war will gain a greater understanding of the region, women, and its people by reading her important work.

Anitra Wetzel

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