THE FORUM
JOURNAL OF HISTORY

Volume 4
Spring 2012

Phi Alpha Theta
Alpha-Nu-Gamma Chapter

California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Hilda Iorga
Graduate History Student

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Ashlyn James
Undergraduate History Student

Erica Jameson
Graduate History Student

Andre LeBlanc
Graduate History Student

Andrew McEachron
Graduate History Student

Mindy McKenzie
Undergraduate History Student

Elizabeth Metelak
Undergraduate History Student

Wyatt Oroke
Undergraduate History Student

Andrew Pagan
Undergraduate History Student

Alexandra Schindler
Undergraduate History Student

FACULTY ADVISORS

Dr. Molly Loberg
Professor of History

Dr. Thomas Trice
Professor of History
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## FRONT MATTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td>Editor’s Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td>About the Editors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xii</td>
<td>Article Summaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ARTICLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Case For Context: Eisenhower Post-Revisionism and Third World Nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>A Curious Elixir: Medicinal Beer in the Age of Prohibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Hanging Prosperity on a Wall: Private Art Collecting as Conspicuous Consumption, United States, 1945-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>From Novelty to New Art: The Evolution of the Intellectual Critics’ Opinion of Talkies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Ambiguous Identity: The Question of Middle Class in Late Imperial Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Between Domesticity and Revolution: Inherent Contradictions in the Early Women’s Rights Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>From the Darkness to the Family: Evolving Orientalist Representations of the Katipunan in Euro-American Travel Literature, 1899-1917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
104 | A New Era In American Foreign Policy: Jimmy Carter, Human Rights And Iran | Elena Reynolds

119 | British and Dutch Perceptions of Cannibalism in Borneo, 1882 – 1964 | Adrienne Smith

133 | Fashion and Feminism: The Mass Mockery of Twentieth Century Suffragettes | Nicola Williams

BACK MATTER

151 | Acknowledgements

153 | Information for Authors
As Cal Poly comes to the end of another academic year, it is with great honor that I announce the fourth volume of The Forum, Cal Poly’s journal of history. Although an endeavor of this magnitude is not without its trials, the experience has nevertheless been fulfilling; one that will stick with me for years to come.

The last two years, The Forum has been recipient of the Gerald D. Nash History Journal Award in both print and “digital” categories. This year, we hope to maintain the tradition of quality that editors past have instilled in the journal with the presentation of Cal Poly’s finest historical writing by students.

This issue is marked by its variety of cultural and political topics, incorporating research papers and historiographies written by both undergraduate and graduate students. As it is Phi Alpha Theta’s mission to promote the study of history through the exchange of learning and ideas, I believe the variety and creativity of topics represented in this issue, medicinal beer, presidential legacies, and cannibalism amongst others, achieves these goals.

As I finish my graduate work in the coming months and bid farewell to both The Forum and Cal Poly, I have nothing but confidence that the journal will continue to improve and grow in the coming years. Since its inception, The Forum has been an excellent example of Cal Poly’s “learn by doing” philosophy and truly acts as a forum for students to express their passions for history. I have no doubt that future editors will continue this legacy.

Hilda Iorga
Executive Editor
ABOUT THE EDITORS

Editorial Board:

Back Row: Dr. Trice (advisor), Erica Jameson, Andrew McEachron, Andre LeBlanc

Front Row: Mindy McKenzie, Elizabeth Metelak, Ashlyn James, Alexandra Schindler, Andrew Pagan, Hilda Iorga

Not Pictured: Wyatt Oroke

Hilda Iorga is the executive editor of The Forum as well as a graduate student in her second year of the Master of Arts program at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. She received the Spencer Wood Memorial Award for the 2010-2011 academic year. Hilda holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of California, Berkeley and plans to pursue a career in museums or as an editor in the academic publishing industry upon completion of her MA. She currently volunteers as a docent with the History Center of San Luis Obispo.

Ashlyn James is graduating from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in June 2012. She majored in History and also earned a minor in Studio Art. She is interested in the study of European imperialism, Asian History, and Art History. This year she held the position of Fundraising Chair
for Phi Alpha Theta and interned in Kennedy Library’s Special Collections and University Archives. During her time at Cal Poly she also interned at the History Center of San Luis Obispo and worked as a teaching assistant and a tutor. Ashlyn enjoys reading, painting, and flameworking. She plans to start Cal Poly’s teaching credential program in the fall and hopes to teach high school history once she graduates.

Erica Jameson is graduating Spring 2012 with her MA in History. Her areas of interest focus on the American West, and Comparative Genocide Studies. She and her amazing teenage offspring live in Cayucos. Prior to pursuing her master’s, she had eight years’ experience teaching U.S. History, and in 2007 received the “Art of Teaching” award from the Kern High School District. She is the current owner and director of Jameson Ranch Camp, a summer camp for children, located in the southern Sierras. When not reading and researching, Erica can be found wave watching in Cayucos, riding horses in the Sierras, or exploring international locales.

Andre LeBlanc is a current graduate student at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where he also received his BA in History in June of 2010. Andre hopes to apply his master’s degree towards junior college education and will graduate in Fall 2012. His primary areas of interest are in ancient Asian Civilizations and early American history. Outside of university life, he enjoys a variety of pastimes including racket sports, photography, bargain hunting, surfing, and watching rerun episodes of Cheers and The Wonder Years with his lovely wife. Andre’s immediate goal is to put his education to use and acquire a full-time instructor position in history.

Andrew McEachron is finishing his Master of Arts in History in June 2012. He got his Bachelor’s in History with a minor in Religious Studies from Cal Poly in 2010. His areas of study include frontier history and modern American History. He enjoys spending time in the outdoors camping and backpacking and is hoping to find a career that can incorporate both his interest in history and the outdoors. He also loves hockey, both watching and playing, and has spent the last 5 years playing for Cal Poly’s Roller Hockey team.
Mindy McKenzie is a third-year history major who enjoys studying the American West and European social history in particular. When she is not debating the merits of theses or reading, she devotes a majority of her time training Week of Welcome Orientation Leaders, and developing Soar, Summer Orientation, as a Crew Lead. She hopes to graduate next spring and delve into a career in Student Affairs. Mindy also finds delight in cats, splashing in puddles after a rain, and line dancing.

Elizabeth Metelak is a third-year history major with particular interests in modern Eastern European history and modern Latin American history, followed closely by everything else there is to know. When she decides to give the books a rest, she enjoys running, cycling, and building recumbent bicycles out of composites materials as a part of Cal Poly’s Human Powered Vehicle Team. After she graduates in June, Elizabeth plans on teaching high school social studies in Connecticut with Teach for America for two years. While she hopes to follow this with graduate school, she remains open to whatever life has in store.

Wyatt Oroke is a third-year history major. He is most interested in genocidal studies, with a concentration on genocides occurring in the later half of the twentieth century. Last year Wyatt was awarded the Hilda Heifetz Family Scholarship by the Cal Poly History Department. This year Wyatt was also the Outreach Chair for Phi Alpha Theta and played a significant role in bringing Holocaust survivor Albert Rosa to Cal Poly to speak. Wyatt was a keynote speaker at the College of Liberal Arts Academic Day at the beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year, where he spoke in front of all the incoming College of Liberal Arts students. Wyatt has worked as a resident advisor for Trinity Hall over the past two years; Trinity is the community associated with the College of Liberal Arts. In the future Wyatt plans on working in the Teach for America program, and eventually earning a doctorate in both history and education.

Andrew Pagan, known as Ondy to many of his friends, is a third-year history major who enjoys Modern Southeast Asian History, especially that of the Philippines, the politics and cultures of Contemporary China and Japan, and theories of power, colonialism, nationalism, masculinity, and narrativity. When not thinking about Imagined Communities or critiquing Eurocentrism,
he enjoys eating Thai food, spending time with friends, hiking, traveling, and embarking on spontaneous adventures. This year, he served as a group leader for Cal Poly’s Week of Welcome Program, Vice President of Cal Poly’s chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, a National History Honors Society, and as a member of EPIC Christian Fellowship’s CORE leadership team. Upon graduation, Andrew hopes to share the wonders of World History and passive voice-free writing with high school students.

**Alexandra Schindler** graduated with honors from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in March 2012, having earned a Bachelor of Arts in History and a minor in Global Politics. Heavily involved with the History department, she was chapter president of Phi Alpha Theta in the academic year 2011-2012. Obsessed with obtaining all sorts of historical knowledge, her favorite periods/types of history include Ancient Egypt, World War II, and the nineteenth century Native Americans. Having completed two internships, she is looking forward to the future and achieving her dreams of becoming a museum curator and traveling the world.
ARTICLE SUMMARIES

The Case For Context: Eisenhower Post-Revisionism and Third World Nationalism | Seth Draine

In this historiography, the conclusions made by historians of the revisionist camp that assert the hidden handed yet ultimately successful legacy of President Dwight D. Eisenhower is placed under review by considering the work of post-revisionist scholars’ assessment of the Eisenhower administration’s foreign policy decisions during the 1950s. Specifically, the insights and arguments made by such scholars suggest that the administration’s hasty use of covert action in Guatemala, Iran, and Indonesia failed to recognize national movements and histories, ultimately leading to detrimental effects to both citizen and state. Rather than damn the Eisenhower administration from the safety of hindsight, this paper seeks to give context to this crucial period in American and world history by complicating our understanding of Cold War foreign policies to include geopolitical and economic strategies as well as a deconstruction of the post-colonial environment in which such decisions were enlisted. It will conclude that although Eisenhower’s ultimate goal was to avoid the casualties of conventional global war and the devastation of nuclear aggression, the covert actions pursued during his time in office and the atrocities accrued within the Third World must be given more weight when assessing the president’s legacy.

A Curious Elixir: Medicinal Beer in the Age of Prohibition | Andrew Engdahl

Though it may be seen as outlandish by modern medical standards, alcoholic beverages were widely prescribed as a form of medicine prior to the advent of Prohibition in the United States. In fact, “medicinal beer,” specifically, was so widely accepted for its importance as a therapeutic agent that the question of its viability caused a determined group of American physicians to launch a legislative battle that had a lasting impact on the domestic politics of the United States in the early 1920s. Although The New York Times covered this debate extensively from 1909 to 1922, the movement for medicinal beer has largely remained a historical
enigma of the early twentieth century. I aim to argue that the debate over the validity of this curious elixir led several American doctors to join together to form the first solid legislative resistance movement to the restrictions of the Eighteenth Amendment. This paper will initially explore the traditional uses of medicinal beer in the late 1800s, the debate over the therapeutic merits of beer within the medical community at the turn of the century, and the various internal and external factors that influenced the rise of the movement. Furthermore, I will illustrate the major elements of the medicinal beer movement after the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment, discuss the motivations and actions of the major supporters and opponents of the movement, and ultimately elaborate on how the movement failed to re-legalize beer. Though these obstinate physicians stood together in the name of beer, the focus of their ire did not revolve around the questionable therapeutic benefits of the dubious brew alone; in the eyes of the medical community, the government had overstepped its bounds by trying to control what a physician could determine to be medicine.

**Hanging Prosperity on a Wall: Private Art Collecting as Conspicuous Consumption, United States, 1945-1960 | Elise Erb**

Thorstein Veblen laid forth the theory of conspicuous consumption in 1902, but his ideas were perfectly suited to the art collecting tendencies of the American social elite after the Second World War. This conspicuous consumption was demonstrated in the world of private art collecting in three primary ways. The first manner in which the social elite demonstrated their wealth through the art market was by purchasing art. Whether or not a new piece was acquired at a sale, just having the time to attend demonstrated wealth. The second way that conspicuous consumption was demonstrated in the art market was through owning pieces that held status in the art world. This status was acquired through attributes such as artist, style, and the previous history of the piece. The final way that conspicuous consumption was practiced was through the advertisement of art acquisition in the newspapers, both before and after the sales. All of
these efforts put together made art collecting in the period right after the Second World War more about making a social statement than making a cultural or economic statement. Private art collecting after the Second World War served as a perfect vehicle for the American elite to show their wealth.

**From Novelty to New Art: The Evolution of the Intellectual Critics’ Opinion of Talkies | Samantha Hennes**

This essay focuses on the critical reception of early talkie films and how this critical consensus of the artistic value of the talkie film changed over time. Rather than examine mainstream critics of the era this essay looks at the intellectual critic who represented a different class of movie-going citizens. The intellectual critic hated the talkie when it first arrived, however, as they began to look at talkies with different aesthetic standards their views on the talkie became more positive. By using movie reviews and essays written by famous intellectual critics spanning a period of about three years, this essay comes to the conclusion that movies were not the only thing that changed with the introduction of sound, but rather the way that intellectual critics viewed movies changed as well.

**Ambiguous Identity: The Question of Middle Class in Late Imperial Russia | Elizabeth Metelak**

In most understandings, the middle class stands as one of the unique and defining factors of the modern era. While most American and European analysis characterizes the middle class as the driving force of modern society and politics, historians should proceed with caution when expanding these ideas to the case of the late Russian Empire. For this paper, I have focused on a variety of publications - novels, newspaper articles, plays, and philosophical essays - in order to unravel the various levels and interactions that define the Russian middle class. Through my analysis of literature and public actions, I conclude that Russia’s middle class actually formed in three layers of wealth and refinement defined most accurately by the ambiguities between them rather than their marked differences. Moreover, the internal and external conflicts faced by these categories undermined the political and social influence of the middle class within
the empire. These conclusions present a Russian middle class decidedly different from the middle classes often presented in Western scholarship, challenging assumptions that the middle class develops along a universal pattern and plays the same roles regardless of historical context. to learn the ways of the ruling class.

**Between Domesticity and Revolution: Inherent Contradictions in the Early Women’s Rights Movement | Laura Neylan**

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how *A Domestic History of the American Revolution* reflects the time period in which it was written: 1850. Elizabeth Fries Ellet authored this account of the American Revolution amidst a transitional period for women’s rights. The fact that a female wrote the book is notable, yet the contradictory portrayal of women in the book is even more compelling. Ellet conveys that women challenged their stereotypical gender sphere during the revolutionary conflict and yet simultaneously depicts women in a stereotypical, virtuous manner. This contradiction reflects the competing ideas on women’s rights during this period. The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments was created two years before the publication of Ellet’s work, which suggests that ideas about female equality would have been familiar to Ellet. However, the ideology of the cult of domesticity—the notion that women belonged at home—was also prevalent at this time. Thus the dualistic portrayal of women by Ellet in her work reflects these contradictory ideas.

**From the Darkness to the Family: Evolving Orientalist Representations of the Katipunan in Euro-American Travel Literature, 1899-1917 | Andrew Pagan**

On July 7, 1892 in the Philippines, Andres Bonifacio founded the Katipunan, a revolutionary society intent on the elimination of Spanish rule from the region. Despite the high hopes of many Katipuneros, Spanish control did not cease until American forces claimed sovereignty over the Philippine Islands in 1898. The United States quickly established control over the Philippines, crushing militant Filipino resistance in a two year conflict they termed the “Philippine Insurrection,” but Filipinos more accurately refer to it as “The Philippine-American War.” In the early
twentieth century, European and American travelers penned firsthand accounts of the Philippines, describing various aspects of Filipino culture, life, and history. Previous examinations of these documents have proven partially successful in terms of constructing a history of the region, but too few scholars have spent time examining the motivations and prejudices behind these works. I suggest that American and European portrayals of the Katipunan from 1899-1917 evolved over time to justify changing American colonial policies in the Philippines. Travelogues published during the years of the Philippine-American War consistently stressed the “secret” and “mysterious” natures of the Katipunan in order to imply that the Philippine people did not share their revolutionary goals. Later, while the United States made it imperial policy to aid their “little brown brothers,” travel account discourse functioned to characterize the Katipunan as an organization that suffered under the cruelty of the Spanish, and, like the rest of the Filipino people, required American aid and direction.

**A New Era In American Foreign Policy: Jimmy Carter, Human Rights And Iran | Elena Reynolds**

Jimmy Carter, of all United States presidents, was perhaps the most passionate advocate of human rights. Upon assuming the presidency, Carter announced the beginning of a new era in American foreign policy—one centered on human rights. His hope was to see his “fundamental tenet” realized throughout the world. Having witnessed mistreatment and injustice throughout his childhood in segregated southern Georgia, Carter felt compelled to make the world a better place—a place where men and women could experience true freedom. For him, human rights meant more than ending arbitrary torture, arrest, and imprisonment. It demanded the active pursuit of democratic principles, including the restoration of morality and the implementation of racial, religious, and gender equality. To accomplish these goals, the United States would have to lead by example. However, trying to convince world leaders to stop their oppressive ways was no easy task. This essay will focus specifically on Iran, the country that challenged Carter’s human rights vision the most. First, it will explore how Carter’s fundamental tenet shaped his policies in Iran. Second, it will examine whether or not his human rights
policies were to blame for the Islamic Revolution and the Islamization of Iran. Third, it will seek to determine the success or failure of his human policies in Iran and as a whole.

during the years of the Philippine-American War consistently stressed the “secret” and “mysterious” natures of the Katipunan in order to imply that the Philippine people did not share their revolutionary goals. Later, while the United States made it imperial policy to aid their “little brown brothers,” travel account discourse functioned to characterize the Katipunan as an organization that suffered under the cruelty of the Spanish, and, like the rest of the Filipino people, required American aid and direction.

**British and Dutch Perceptions of Cannibalism in Borneo, 1882-1964 | Adrienne Smith**

In the nineteenth century, Europeans occupied Southeast Asia seeking to spread trade and colonial rule. British and Dutch travelogues written during 1800-1905 often contained accounts of cannibalism in Borneo. Motivated by imperialism, and a fascination with cannibals, Europeans ventured further into Borneo’s interior to learn more about these tribes while gradually establishing colonial rule. The way these travelogues conveyed Borneo cannibalism contributed greatly to the impression of the Orient in Europe. The logs depicted the indigenous people as savage and desperate, shaping how Europeans rationalized bringing the values of the West to Borneo. British and Dutch perception of Borneo cannibalism defined the indigenous people as barbaric and justified European colonization.

**Fashion and Feminism: The Mass Mockery of Twentieth Century Suffragettes | Nicola Williams**

A vast array of historical research has been conducted that relates to the struggle of earlier suffragettes in the United States, but far less attention has been paid in this sense to later waves of the suffragette movement. It is important for historians not to make the teleological mistake that as 1920 and women’s suffrage approached, the women’s fight became increasingly easier. For this paper I have used the New York Times as a limiting lens through which to analyze the reaction to women’s suffrage during
these later periods in the United States. Through my analysis of letters, articles and cartoons, I have managed to conclude that as 1920 approached, men and women who valued conventional expectations regarding gender stratification, became increasingly scared of the potential for change generated by the suffragettes. This same collection also prove that instead of trying to unite the public against suffragettes purely through political argumentation, these traditionalists advertised a mockery of women’s fashion as a tangible, highly relatable way to suggest that women lacked the mental sense required for voting. As opposed to other research, which has revealed occasional, brash forms of opposition to the suffragettes at their rallies, my research suggests that this ridicule was continuously pervasive around New York City, on a daily basis. My research, using primary sources from New York City, commonly known as the birthplace of the Women's Rights Movement, makes a valuable contribution to the historical record by complicating the accepted, over-simplified picture of the suffragette movement.
ARTICLES
SETH DRAINE is a biking and surfing enthusiast *and* an avid bowler. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in History and a Social Science Teaching Credential at California State University, Long Beach in 2008 where he received department portfolio awards for his research and writing, including the topics of African American involvement in the Philippine-American War and the prescribing and use of minor tranquilizers in post-World War II American culture. After teaching English in Ecuador during the spring of 2009, Seth moved to the central coast to pursue and earn his Masters of Arts in History at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. “Mr. Draine” now teaches eleventh grade United States History at Nipomo High School and resides with his fiancé in San Luis Obispo.
THE CASE FOR CONTEXT: EISENHOWER POST-REVISIONISM AND THIRD WORLD NATIONALISM

By Seth Draine

Assessment of President Eisenhower’s foreign policy legacy by “revisionist” historians beginning in the late 1970s revealed the leader’s decisive and insightful tactics that kept America in relative peace at the beginning of the Cold War. Contrary to the image of Ike as an amiable golfer, removed from the tough policy decisions that not only preceded and followed his presidency but existed during his time in office, the majority of Eisenhower scholarship agrees that through tactful and decisive actions, Ike “ran the show.”

Stephen Ambrose is one such esteemed and well-versed scholar of the Eisenhower presidency who, having met and conversed at length with the former president, has produced a substantial number of publications on the subject.

---

and remains the preeminent scholar on Eisenhower. Throughout his writings, Ambrose maintains that, for better or for worse, Eisenhower’s “impressive agility, quickness, and intelligence of mind” guided his own style of foreign policy. For Ambrose, guiding Eisenhower’s foreign policy was his firm belief that “nuclear war was unimaginable, limited conventional war unwinnable, and stalemate unacceptable,” while stressing the importance and readiness to fight communists “with every weapon at his disposal—just as he had fought the Nazis.” Ambrose acknowledges the administration’s failures within the Third World, including perceiving and overreacting to communism within social reform movements as well as a borderline obsession with falling dominoes, however, Ambrose withholds judgment from these policy decisions claiming that “to say Eisenhower was right about this or wrong about that is to do little more than announce one’s own political position.” To this end, Ambrose questions the historians’ ability to remove Eisenhower from the Cold War containment framework of the decolonizing world due to “domestic pressures, the relentless engagement of Moscow and Peking” meddling in the Third World, and the “unrealistic expectations of Third World leaders in their requests for military and economic aid.”

Other scholars of the revisionist camp take a less-balanced yet equally celebratory portrait of the President. H.W. Brands defends Eisenhower’s involvement in the developing world by suggesting that despite the Eisenhower administration’s packaging of their policies “in the wrappings of ideology, the product they sold reflected primarily a geopolitical interpretation of American strategic, military, diplomatic, and economic interests and demonstrated shrewd weighing of the effects on the international balance of power of the particular activities of specific nonaligned countries.” The most recent biography on the President by journalist Jim Newton, by far the most disappointing considering the wealth of declassified information available since the 1970s and 80s, offers

---

3 Ibid., 111, 130.
4 Ibid., 621-622, 619.
a repetition of earlier works with a glossier nostalgia for “a nation [left] freer, more prosperous, and more fair” after Eisenhower left office. Questionable policy decision are legitimized and long-view consequences are acknowledged yet disregarded as the Iranian coup of 1953 “seemed costly” yet in the end, “Iran lay safely nestled within the American orbit for the balance of Eisenhower’s tenure,” agreeing that “for the first time in three years, Iran was quiet—and still free.”

Despite the insightful validity that the majority of the revisionist perspective provides, much of the “post-revisionist” scholarship has asked readers to give more weight, when considering Eisenhower’s legacy, to the use of covert actions within decolonized regions and the impact it has had on the developing world. Following Ambrose’s intentions for a clearer picture of the Eisenhower administration, this historiographical essay seeks to give this crucial period in American and world history the context it deserves. Specifically, it will examine the insights historians have provided on the motivations and impact of covert operations, suggesting that a misreading or failed recognition of regionally specific contexts led the foreign policies of the Eisenhower administration down interventionist paths with detrimental results in the Middle East, Central America, and South-east Asia. Thus, context, rather than damnation from the safety of hindsight, is the purpose of examining Eisenhower’s use of covert action throughout the Third World. By complicating our understanding of Cold War foreign policies to include geopolitical and economic strategies, as well as deconstructing the Cold War and post-colonial environment in which such decisions were enlisted, a more complete understanding of America’s use and impact of covert action will arise.

Despite this historiography’s argument for context, it does not strive to be a fully exhaustive historiographical narrative, nor an all-inclusive accounting of covert action and intervention during the Eisenhower years. For the purpose of brevity, only the most well received scholars on each regional intervention are discussed followed by a deconstructive account provided by historians of cultural studies to add an additional dimension to Eisenhower’s foreign policy decisions. Nor does this historiography include other interventions and plans pursued around the world such as in the Congo, Indochina, Burma, Laos, Venezuela, or Cuba. What proceeds is a chronological and regional

---

8 Ibid., 119
discussion of the CIA covert operations in Iran, Guatemala, and Indonesia by “post-revisionist” historians and authors. It seeks to dissect the motivations and impact of Eisenhower’s covert foreign policy decisions and the dangers of ignoring crucial regional contexts.

In *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle Eastern Terror*, Stephen Kinzer’s spy novel-like coverage of the players, intricacies, and motives surrounding the 1953 overthrow of Iranian president-elect, Muhammad Musaddiq, provides a bilateral, economic context for the CIA led coup and the dramatic repercussions that have plagued the region since. Taking a critical stance on the orchestrating and participation in the coup, Kinzer argues that British oil control in the region was threatened by Musaddiq’s desire to nationalize the industry, propagating unfounded fears of Iran’s path toward communism. The result was the re-installation of Reza Shah who supported British and American oil interests yet continued an oppressive tyranny that ultimately led to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, inspiring fundamentalists such as the Taliban to gain strength and momentum in a post-Cold War world.

Despite Kinzer’s suspense ridden prose, his revealing narrative through the use of both Iranian and American sources (following on the heels of leaked CIA documents in 2000 to the *New York Times* that both confirmed and added to historians’ knowledge of the American led events in 1953) has contributed to an argument that supports the long view of history—where actions have far reaching and often unforeseen impacts. To develop this argument, Kinzer addresses the three parties present during the build-up to the coup—Muhammad Musaddiq of Iran, Winston Churchill of Britain, and from the United States, Dwight Eisenhower and Allen and John Dulles—and their varying desires and motives during the crisis.

Kinzer sets the stage with a brief overview of Iran’s long historical dilemma between moral obligation and authoritarian foreign rule, beginning with the rise of Zoroastrianism during the sixth century B.C.E. and ending with the corrupt and irresponsible economic behavior of the Qajar monarchs in 1925, allowing British colonial rule to overwhelm the political and economic (oil) institutions of the region. Fast-forward twenty-four years of modernization attempts, Nazi sympathizers, and a British/Russian invasion to instate Reza Shah Pahlavi, Kinzer reveals his tragic protagonist, Mohammad Musaddiq. As a secular nationalist, Musaddiq was a champion of the democratic process, free press, and the right of Iranians to discard British colonial subjugation in the
political process and their primary economic industry—oil. On this secular nationalist platform, Musaddiq was elected as Prime Minister in 1951, and soon thereafter, nationalized the Anglo Iranian Oil Company.

For the second party, Britain, this development was unacceptable on two counts: Britain maintained the right to rule their established colonies, and that the oil profits from their colony sustained the British economy. Inciting help from the third party, the United States, proved to be a necessary yet difficult task. For former president Harry S. Truman, Cold War anxieties consumed his worldview and colonialism was merely a waning, outdated mode of international relations. After failed attempts at negotiation and reconciliation between Iran and British interests, what ultimately bridged this ideological gap, for Kinzer, were the Korean War and Soviet international communism. With the return of the Conservative Churchill and the election of more active containment policies of President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the White House was sold on the threat of Iran's takeover by communists as not only endangering the Middle East, but British supported efforts in Korea as well.

If Kinzer paints the White House as being courted and persuaded by the British, it was the clever work of the Secretary of State John Foster and his brother, head of the CIA, Allen Dulles that ultimately convinced Eisenhower to approve the CIA-led coup of Musaddiq. By distorting the implications of negotiation deals between Britain and Iran concerning their oil holdings as well as stirring dissent among prominent ties in Iran, the Dulles brothers were able to make the case to remove an unreasonable and unsupported Musaddiq regime. After expressing his “desire not to know too much,” Eisenhower was given the “broad brush [strokes]” of the coup, leaving the ground work of Operation AJAX up to CIA officer Kermit Roosevelt who implemented the operation’s psychological warfare of propaganda and mob insurrection that ultimately led to the arrest, overthrow, and imprisonment of Musaddiq.

As stated in the preceding paragraphs, one of the major contributions of Kinzer’s work to the fields of American history and foreign policy has been his insistence of, not merely economic and Cold War anxieties as agents of

---

10 Ibid., 130-132.
11 Ibid., 152-154, 156, 159-160.
intervention within the Third World, but allied pressure and manipulation of these factors toward unscrupulous ends. Furthermore, Kinzer's extensive historical accounts of both British era colonialism and pre-modern roots of foreign distrust and contempt offer a more complete understanding of regional problems and priorities. However, such a macro-approach does have its pitfalls. Just as Kinzer takes the long view of historical impact leading up to the election of Musaddiq, his conclusion that the events that followed the coup's reinstating of Reza Shah Pahlavi's oppressive regime led to the overwhelming distrust and anger toward the United States and the West creates a simplified picture of the Middle East. Certainly Reza Shah's oppression and imprisonment of religious leaders and political adversaries contributed to the Islamic Revolution and terrorist fringe that spiraled from it. However, overall distaste for the West must include other factors such as the Suez Crisis just three years later, Kennedy's land and liberal reforms imposed on the Shah, and Johnson's and Nixon's support of Israel. Kinzer's contribution to our remembering of the 1953 CIA-led coup is invaluable, riveting, and illuminating, however, by presuming such a clear line of causation, he simplifies the very region that he works so diligently to complicate.

Just as Kinzer works to expand our understanding of the Iranian coup by concentrating on the persuasive arguments made by European allies and within the White House, John Foran's "Discursive Subversions: *Time Magazine*, the CIA Overthrow of Musaddiq, and the Installation of the Shah" complicates the policy decision further through a deconstruction of U.S. domestic influences. By examining popular cultural discourse in America during the 1940s and 1950s, Foran sheds light on the influences of Orientalism within the press and its great impact on American foreign policy in Iran and the subsequent CIA-led coup in 1953. For Foran, along with the Cold War context of the political economy of oil and geostrategic power within the Middle East, the 1953 coup was a product of a battle over discursive hegemony between the Orientalist discourse of American and Iranian actors, specifically Musaddiq. Ultimately, it was *Time Magazine*'s condemnation of the tumultuous region.

---

during Truman’s presidency that helped bring about an administration more willing to intervene in Iran’s internal affairs.\textsuperscript{13}

Due to his source emphasis on popular press, Foran first seeks to articulate his “thick descriptive” theoretical dimensions by defining and explaining cultural studies in the context of Marxist literary criticism and subaltern studies to create what he defines as “third world cultural studies.”\textsuperscript{14} Within these general and fluctuating boundaries of his version of cultural studies, Foran contends that the press, most notably Time magazine, “framed” public and elite discussion through its ability to create a general popular mood, provide a check on policy elites, and to give or withhold legitimacy from dissenting views. In turn, these “frames” of constructed social realities, reflected long-standing Orientalist images and stereotypes of Easterners as inferior, childish, and feminine.\textsuperscript{15}

To understand how Time influenced American foreign policy, Foran argues that from its inception, the magazine was a key shaper of American political culture and through its devotion to Republican, pro-business lines, and commitment to bringing the “serious issues of world politics” to an educated American audience, by the 1940s and 50s Time (and its subsidiary Life) had become the most influential shaper of public opinion in America.\textsuperscript{16} To demonstrate this assertion, Foran reveals not only the fluctuating attention by Time to the events in Iran and the change in U.S. administration, but the language used to report on it throughout each stage of the international development. In this instance, although all politics in Iran were covered as corrupt in the U.S., the treatment of Reza Shah and Musaddiq differed significantly. While the Shah maintained both Middle Eastern stereotypes of youthful ignorance and Western sensibilities of class and educated business interests, Musaddiq is at first briefly depicted as honest, of Western education, and devoted to


\textsuperscript{14} Clifford Geertz’ use of “thick description” was intended to understand human behavior and language by deconstructing their historical, social, and cultural contexts. Marxist literary criticism benefits from Geertz’ work by referring to “texts” as reflections of their historical and social surroundings, thus revealing the silent language of class consciousness hidden beneath the text. Subaltern studies works to reveal the agency of actors outside of a world-systems hegemonic power structure.

\textsuperscript{15} Foran, 161-162.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 165.
democracy and anti-Soviet communism, but then quickly turns into a weak man of childish fanatical tantrums.  

By the time of the 1952 election, much of *Time* and *Life* magazine had been devoted to criticizing the Truman administration’s weak stance on containment and supported the installation of “strong men” in order to insure stability and “order” in regions of interest. With Eisenhower’s election (Henry Luce, editor-in-chief of *Time* and *Life*, often bragged that his editorial work had elected Ike into office), *Time* and *Life* publications were at the forefront of positing communist “domino theories” with Iran, not Vietnam, at the top. Both publications heavily supported the removal of Musaddiq under these presumptions. However, for Foran, this fear was a view held at the top, not by lower-level Iranian specialists within the State Department, who arguably had more contextual knowledge of the region and its underlining nationalist prerogatives. Thus, the influence of the press in sustaining a Cold War view of the world helped legitimize the necessity of a coup and in the aftermath of political trials of Musaddiq, the benefits of a redefined “older,” “wiser”, yet a rejuvenated and “firm” Shah.

Foran qualifies his theoretical approach by admitting the absence of a clear line of causality between Orientalist discourse and foreign policy decisions. However, this does not make these mindsets irrelevant, as they serve as contextual realities that reveal themselves in the language used by policy officials, perpetuating and applying ideas of weakness versus strength, masculinity versus femininity, and aptitude versus child-like ignorance. Therefore, a deconstruction of why and how ideological frameworks are created and sustained is crucial for understanding the decision making process of top foreign policy leaders.

In his well received analysis, *The CIA in Guatemala*, Richard Immerman argues that though protection of United Fruit (UFCO) business interests in Guatemala was paramount, a basic misunderstanding of Guatemalan people and history by the U.S. government and public resulted in the ensuing coup and conflict between the two nations. Rather than “merely another instance of big stick diplomacy,” American covert action in Guatemala illustrates McCarthy-era, Cold War ethos of economic and ideological security abroad from a Soviet

---

17 Ibid., 169-171.
18 Ibid., 174.
19 Ibid., 179.
international-conspiracy. The result was a skewing of regional revolutions where the line between nationalism and communist subversion was narrowed to a point where threats to U.S. interests became the only discernible difference. To thwart communist subversion, the Eisenhower administration pushed for the use of decisive and preventative covert measures as opposed to costly and thinly spread containment policies.

The argument for context begins with an understanding of the 1944 Guatemalan Revolution and the nationalist desire to overthrow a legacy of exploitation and underdevelopment by foreign rule in Guatemala. Immerman traces back racial divisions and land consolidation to sixteenth-century Spanish rule, however, the dichotomy between imperial growth at the cost of Guatemalan underdevelopment explodes with the liberal era of industrialization, foreign investment, and public services beginning in the late nineteenth century. Specifically, Guatemala’s growing dependence on U.S. business investment, most notably but not solely United Fruit, resulted in the skewing of land ownership, exploitation of indigenous labor, reliance on an export based resource economy for revenues and imports to sustain population needs, and political leaders that accommodated such foreign investments at the cost of the Guatemalan people. In October of 1944, such disparities within the nation were taken to the streets and with it the overthrow of the oppressive regime of Jorge Ubico Casteneda. In his place emerged the revolution’s first elected president, Juan Jose Arevalo, under promises of land and labor reform as well as social programs that would become the cornerstone of the new Guatemalan government.

From the October Revolution in 1944 to the election of Jacobo Arbenz in 1950, Immerman contends that U.S. lack of preparedness (Ambassador Boaz Long admitted to the State Department that the overthrow of Ubico was “the farthest thing from my thoughts”) and understanding of the causes behind the decade’s revolutionary and nationalizing events was due to a state of denial about the capabilities of the “children” of Guatemala. Therefore, when Guatemalans voiced dissent of “Yankee imperialism”—signified by United Fruit-led government corruption, tax evasion, racist policies, and indifference
to public welfare and wages—materialized in the revolutionary government’s capitalist modernization plans for infrastructure development and agrarian reform, UFCO lobbyists cried foul. What followed was a suspicious eye on the labor reform policies under Arevalo, and a heightened sense of anxiety over the election of Arbenz with his promise to continue Arevalo’s social reforms as well as initiate agrarian reforms. Such agrarian reforms sought to expropriate, with compensation, land left idle by 2.2 percent of the population (which, by 1950, claimed 70 percent of Guatemalan land) to the rest of the Guatemalan people, thereby diversifying Guatemala’s export-based economy and reducing their dependency on imports.\(^\text{23}\) Arbenz’ measure was soundly rejected by UFCO which voiced its fear of a loss of stability to policy makers within the United States government.

However, as opposed to what authors Schlesinger and Kinzer have written on the influence of United Fruit lobbyists and the revolving door between the company and U.S. political office, Immerman maintains that even without such business influences and pressures, a government led removal of Arbenz was imminent simply within the Cold War beliefs of communist international threats.\(^\text{24}\) For Immerman, a misunderstanding by U.S. policy makers of the intentions of Guatemalan reforms coupled with the broad definition of communism developed within the polar world of Cold War ethos brought about the perceived need for intervention. By the time the more active anti-communist foreign policy of Dwight Eisenhower (in comparison to Truman) was elected into office and John Foster Dulles was appointed as his Secretary of State, much of Washington was in agreement that communism could be defined as simply “opposing United States interests” and that identifying such elements could be concluded through a “duck test” where the accused were guilty by merely walking or talking like a communist.\(^\text{25}\)

Immerman relies on the wealth of behind-the-scenes insights revealed through the Eisenhower Diaries, NSC documents, and “Whitman file” transcripts between the President and Dulles to reveal the hard-line, anti-communist beliefs that guided the President and Secretary of State in opposition to what

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 65.  
\(^{25}\) Immerman, 105
they believed were the failed containment measures of the Truman administration in China and Korea. In light of these documents, Immerman contends that ignorance and a general lack of information and evidence did not stop the administration from green lighting project PBSUCCESS, the covert operation to overthrow Arbenz, into action. Repeatedly, “tenuous and indirect” evidence as well as intelligence that showed “nothing conclusive” for an international communist conspiracy left Dulles continually frustrated in his attempt to find a connection.\textsuperscript{26} This lack of direct communist evidence to support covert intervention strengthens Immerman’s argument for a nationalist revolution unable to be translated into the absolutist language of Cold War polarity.

Christian Appy expands on the argument for a lack of evidence and understanding of the Guatemalan people used to justify military intervention into Guatemalan politics. However, in his article “Eisenhower’s Guatemalan Doodle, or: How to Draw, Deny, and Take Credit for a Third World Coup,” Appy concentrates on Eisenhower’s personality, a product of his competitive spirit as well as societal trends of Cold War urgency and polarity to make his unique argument. For Appy, the means by which the Eisenhower administration both denied involvement as well as took credit for the 1954 Guatemalan coup is emblematic of the mentalité that drove the administration to intervene in the first place. Just as policy makers created a shaky, yet unchallenged narrative to comment on their Latin American success, so too did Eisenhower and Dulles “file the edges” of Guatemalan communist evidence to make their actions fit their predetermined national security priorities. Appy argues that this is partially indicative of Eisenhower’s competitive, score-keeping spirit, where the odds for success (cited in classified papers as merely twenty percent) were pitted against images and assumption of “Amero-centric” “superpower arrogance” that shaped much of Cold War policy. Thus, as Appy writes: “Once Eisenhower had concluded that Guatemala had fallen within the ‘Soviet orbit,’ that satellite’s internal life and history was, by definition, rendered largely irrelevant.”\textsuperscript{27}

Though much of Appy’s argument is informed by the work of highly

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 185.  
regarded scholars on the subject, his original vantage point is guided by the many personal letters and diary entrees available through the Eisenhower Library. The most interesting, and unique, source used sets the tone and trajectory of Appy’s deconstruction: a sketch drawn by Eisenhower the day after the coup on a morning meeting agenda outline (for an image of the “Eisenhower doodle” see Figure 1). From the roughly sketched images of a bare-chested Anglo (presumably a self portrait), gun boat and non-military vessels, as well as “Internal security” and “Guatemala” written twice, underlined, and traced repeatedly, Appy attempts to deconstruct the images as representative of the assumptions and themes that shaped U.S. Cold War foreign policy. For Appy, these images shed light on how “Eisenhower envisioned the world he so profoundly affected”—a faceless world, void of the individual Guatemalans he sought to redirect, in need of Anglo strength and security. Thus, despite Eisenhower’s self-publicized support of the non-existent “Guatemalan counterrevolutionaries” and “people-to-people” exchanges, “he left no evidence of any serious interest in the people of Guatemala.”

Those readers who have little patience for cultural abstractions and deconstructions will be pleased that Eisenhower’s doodle does not serve as a “smoking gun” or central primary source for any argument of subconscious motives or actions. Rather, through the use of personal letters by Eisenhower, Appy extracts a common theme of competition, from the golf course to the bridge table, which can be seen in his secret organizing and public explanation of the 1954 coup. From laughing at Secretary of State Dulles’ and assistant Henry Holland’s warning of the twenty percent chance for a successful coup of Arbenz as well as its legality under international agreements, to his preoccupation with golf games leading up to and during the time of the coup and his desires to take credit for what was projected as another notch within the anti-communist struggle, Appy raises important questions concerning the level of interest Eisenhower had for the actual people of Guatemala—that Eisenhower was at once intricately involved yet emotionally removed from the coup itself.

28 Appy’s work is informed by prominent scholars on the subject including Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, Richard Immerman, Piero Gleijese, Jim Handy, Blanche Wiesen Cook, and Nick Cullather.
29 Appy, 186.
30 Ibid., 197-198.
Along with the actual planning of the coup, media propaganda within Guatemala as well as the United States played a key role in its success. At once, the administration faced the difficult task of denying U.S. involvement, presenting Guatemala as a dangerous “communist beachhead,” and revealing a popular Guatemalan resistance that did not exist, while taking credit for the covert operation. To achieve this ambitious goal, Appy suggests that the threat of communism within Guatemala was relentlessly presented as a real and dangerous international threat while descriptions of the actual “popular revolt” were left vague and inconclusive. Any challenges to the legitimacy of the revolt were not only dismissed as a “communist lie” but “regarded as a retroactive justification for the very operation they were disavowing.” Thus, the vilification of the Arbenz government and the subsequent dismissal of foul play

---

31 Ibid., 205.
32 Ibid., 209
closely paralleled the domestic fear mongering campaigns of McCarthyism. In the end, through a complacent press and presidential memoirs and speeches, both Eisenhower and Dulles were able at once to affirm Guatemalan popular support for the counterrevolution as well as cite the event as a victory for U.S. desires to thwart the communist threat throughout the world.

As with most actions, the true impact of the intervention is only revealed in its enduring legacy. For Immerman and Appy, the impact of the Guatemalan coup was indeed far reaching. Primarily, the 1954 coup reinstated the life Guatemalan’s had fought to diminish. Castillo Armas, the first in a long line of U.S.-supported presidents after the coup, not only reversed the land and labor reforms to support United Fruit once again, but installed an oppressive regime that fell hard on dissent through “Gestapo-like tactics” resulting in a fifty year cycle of repression and killing of over 200,000 lives. Beyond the persecution of the Guatemalans themselves, both Immerman and Appy make a compelling argument that the perceived success of the 1954 coup led to misguided conclusions that were applied to subsequent interventions. Just as the Iranian coup a year earlier provided a framework for the events in Guatemala, the blanket model of combining military threats, covert operations, and indigenous alliances are argued to have been directly applied to the soon to follow intervention in Indonesia and the Bay of Pigs invasion the following decade.

Both Immerman’s and Appy’s discussions of Cold War policy through preemptive action in Guatemala complicates our understanding of the motivations and assumptions behind Cold War covert actions. Although in one sense Immerman’s and Appy’s work testifies to the incredibly blurred and uncertain world in which foreign policy leaders worked, it also speaks to this paper’s theme of selective ignorance of regional historical directions and the extent to which the Eisenhower administration was willing to ensure economic, political, and ideological security in Latin America. Thus, during a time when the actions of individual actors became increasingly more powerful, and the implications of such decisions more detrimental, an examination of personalities and viewpoints has the potential to reveal additional context to motivations and reasoning of Cold War policies.

During the beginning years of the Cold War, little room was left for neutrality as Soviet/American bipolarity effectively mapped out and kept a
running score of regional ideological and political affiliation. For the Eisenhower administration, the Sukarno government in Indonesia fit this mold of dangerous neutrality and, running on the momentum of perceived successful subversive action in Iran, Guatemala, and the Congo, opted for another round in CIA-led covert political disruption. In Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia, Audrey and George Kahin argue that the covert operations used to provoke and abet a major revolution and civil war in Indonesia during the late 1950s is attributed not only to “presidential prejudice” of popular elected leaders, but a reliance on poor intelligence gathering by the CIA and the political naiveté that followed. With a wealth of over 45 years of research including both CIA and Indonesian documents as well as firsthand accounts and interviews conducted by George Kahin in Indonesia during the 1940s revolution, the Kahins’ critical yet sophisticated assessment of the failed 1959 coup warn of the dangers in using past and ultimately detrimental CIA led actions as guidelines when applied to complex and varying regional contexts.

To give context to American involvement in the region and Indonesia’s non-alignment decision, the Kahins describe America’s favorable yet at times contradictory role in the 1949 Revolution. Though America had supported the popular revolution against Dutch colonial control, after the successful declaration of the independent Indonesian state the U.S. refrained from holding the Dutch accountable in the United Nations to relinquish its control over the culturally significant region of West Irian (New Guinea). The Kahins maintain that although the Dutch were probably correct in their desire to withhold the small portion of the island to appease the nationalism of chauvinistic elements in Holland needed to pass the decolonization agreement through Parliament, the Indonesians saw the act as an illegitimate retention of culturally significant land. Ultimately for the Kahins, the support of the United States behind the Dutch West Irian issue as well as unscrupulous, U.S.-mediated debt negotiations that favored the Dutch made Indonesian alignment with the U.S. a less than favorable resolution.

In an act of realism and balance, much of which has come from George Kahin’s residency and connections in Indonesia during the post-revolution

era, the Kahins portray the revolution’s shaky government as a less than ideal system, far from a popular utopia of democratic self-determination. Due to the region’s unfortunate history during WWII, Japanese occupation, and the revolution against the Dutch, much of the country’s government, infrastructure, economy, and social well being had been either dismantled or destroyed. With the country experiencing growing hardships and the colonial hegemonic educational structure severely weakened during the decade leading up to the revolution, much of the incoming political contenders espoused left of center variants of socialist, anti-foreign capital control. Within this context, Sukarno, Indonesia’s president from 1945 to 1967, sought a “guided democracy” to strengthen national unity where exploitation of weaker groups would be avoided through a more balanced power structure. 35

This desire for unity sounded alarms for President Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dulles, and CIA operatives in Java (including brother, Allen Dulles). Following the Truman administration’s loss of China, criticized for allowing the weakening Nationalist government to maintain its territorial integrity and thus unity in time of crisis, the Eisenhower administration perceived the proposed plan for Indonesian unification as a potential threat for communist subversion. Criticism and warnings by U.S. ambassador in Indonesia, John Allison, that the barriers which propped up non-alignment sentiment in the country were rooted in the debt and territorial issues surrounding the United State’s support of the Dutch, were ignored and ultimately led to his reassignment in Czechoslovakia. Based on the inaccurate conclusions of a communist “absolute majority” on select islands made by the CIA (specifically John’s brother, Allen Dulles), despite counter evidence provided by ambassador Allison, the Eisenhower administration not only chose to support rebel colonels against the government, but discouraged compromise between the opposing sides through a refusal to bend on the Dutch territorial and debt issues as well as through encouragement and support of rebellious army colonels. Though the opposing sides were far from willing or prepared to engage in another war, the U.S. had anticipated the possibility of a civil war and was already building up support for the rebels during the ultimately futile negotiations. 36

35 Ibid., 53.
36 Ibid., 95, 115-119, 143.
As U.S. officials had predicted, the result was a civil war in 1958 between the Sukarno government and the rebels, secretly backed by American forces through unmarked air support and armaments. For two years leading up to and during the war, U.S. support continued for the rebels, yet due to an overestimation of popular support for rebel leaders (hurt by Indonesian awareness of U.S. support), an underestimation of nationalist support for Sukarno, and the capture of American pilot Allen Pope, the Eisenhower administration was forced to reassess its policy. In a move to increase flexibility, yet in hindsight painfully contradictory, Secretary of State Dulles and President Eisenhower made the decision to switch their support to the Sukarno government while continuing, albeit severely limited, support for the rebels. In the end, U.S. meddling in the affairs of Indonesia had strengthened the very forces Americans had tried to diminish: the non-alignment of the Sukarno government, the army’s increased authority through martial law, as well as the now growing popularity of the communist PKI party due to their capitalization of outrage over U.S. involvement. The result was a tripolarization between these now enlarged, tense, and brittle fractions leaving neither an effective form of governance nor political stability, paving the way for a major political explosion ending in a failed communist coup, an army-led counter-coup, and the beginnings of a singular military dictatorship under Suharto in 1965, lasting until 1998.

As what is now embarrassingly clear and yet frustratingly absent during the time, was any consideration to dissenting views of intervention. However, despite these inconsistencies, an argument for a clearer vision based on the present benefit of hindsight is perhaps too much to ask of historical actors. Rather, what is particularly troublesome with the case of covert action in Indonesia is not only the flip-flopping of U.S. support during the civil war, but more importantly the willingness of the Eisenhower administration to encourage such a steadfast, uncompromising division that would most certainly lead to a devastating loss of life (thousands during the Civil War and over half a million during the 1965-66 massacre under the military coup victor, Suharto) and societal cohesion. Thus, as with the covert actions in Iran and Guatemala, despite intentions of precision and strategic action meant to ultimately save lives

---

37 Ibid., 190.
38 Ibid., 220.
39 Ibid., 228.
by avoiding conventional or atomic warfare, the intervention methods chosen ultimately reflect a failure to gather as well as consider known intelligence of regional and historical circumstances, resulting in the loss of life and societal disruption well beyond the organizers’ predicted consequences.

This stage within the Cold War offers a glimpse of the world at the height of modernity: societal power and structure whittled down to two competing ideologies, one claiming supremacy as the bearer of history and the future, while the other asserting its authority as the protector of human rights and freedom; technological might to annihilate thousands at the push of a button; and the ability to overrule the natural boundaries that had once offered societies security and comfort from foreign threats. With the amazingly destructive power to human life, society, and nature displayed during the Second World War, many saw the urgency of this global crossroads and chose to act, not with the total might of their visible arsenal, but with the precision and quickness only possible under the cloak of secrecy.

With modernity, however, the perceived ability of individuals to supersede and manipulate humankind and the natural world in which they reside, comes the responsibility to use all of the knowledge at one’s disposal. Though President Eisenhower was merely a single individual, surrounded by persuasive cabinet members and consumed by a Cold War culture of uncertainty, distrust, and urgency the actions he chose to pursue failed to set a precedent for appropriate conduct within a new and changing world. With the perception of repetitive triumphant operations so close in their rearview mirror, Eisenhower and his administration continued down an interventionist path, ignoring evidence that challenged what they believed had been successful manipulations of foreign government and society. For the Eisenhower administration, despite their efforts to use far less invasive and physically damaging methods, societal scars left from the coups d’état had far reaching implications. By validating or glossing over events that had such a detrimental effect on the people, government, and overall well being of developing nations, historians not only risk promoting a repetition of such short-sighted decisions, but also threaten our global reputation as a nation that holds freedom above oppression.


ANDREW ENGDAHL is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in History as well as a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration/Marketing at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. His academic interests lie in the study of Pre-Industrial World History, specifically with regard to the Middle Ages and Early Modern Europe. He is also an Eagle Scout, a graduate of the Orfalea College of Business’ Leadership Program, and an active member of Cal Poly’s Alpha Nu Gamma Chapter of the National History Honor Society, Phi Alpha Theta. Andrew’s hobbies include traveling, rock-climbing, dancing, reading, and surfing, and will be studying abroad in the 2012 Cal Poly in Spain–Summer Program. Andrew is currently employed as a History/Writing tutor for Cal Poly Athletics as well as a Teaching Assistant in the Cal Poly History Department, and upon graduating from Cal Poly he plans to pursue a Ph.D in History and become a college professor.
A CURIOUS ELIXIR: MEDICINAL BEER IN THE AGE OF PROHIBITION
Andrew Engdahl

Though it may be seen as outlandish by modern medical standards, alcoholic beverages were widely prescribed as a form of medicine prior to the advent of Prohibition in the United States. In fact, “medicinal beer,” specifically, was so widely accepted for its importance as a therapeutic agent that the question of its viability caused a determined group of American physicians to launch a legislative battle that had a lasting impact on the domestic politics of the United States in the early 1920s. Although The New York Times covered this debate extensively from 1909 to 1922, the movement for medicinal beer has largely remained a historical enigma of the early twentieth century.

Thus far, most of the scholarly discussion of Prohibition has tended to focus more generally on subjects such as bathtub gin, the American flapper

---

The overwhelming majority of historians that have addressed the subject of beer in relation to Prohibition have predominantly focused their discussions on the development of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement, the rise of the Anti-Saloon League, and the general trials and tribulations of major American breweries like Anheuser-Busch, Coors, and Pabst. Be that as it may, there have been a select few scholars that have touched upon the subject of the medicinal beer debate in their writings, but only to a certain extent. Dr. Charles Bamforth, the Chair of the Department of Food Science at the University of California, Davis, provides a reasonable glimpse of the movement for medicinal beer by noting that the campaign for “medicinal beer” arose in 1921 when a group of brewers and physicians lobbied the government for the right to produce and distribute beer as medicine. However, Bamforth provides very little information on the subject beyond the most basic of details. Furthermore, his writings also lack statistical figures that would provide a sense of scope for how many physicians actually did perceive beer to be a viable medicinal supplement. Likewise, Dr. Stephanie Pain, the associate editor of the peer-reviewed journal *New Scientist*, and Beverly Gage, an associate
Andrew Engdahl

professor of history at Yale University, each have written articles that address the motivations of the doctors that pushed the movement for medicinal beer, but do not elaborate extensively upon the movement’s overall impact on U.S. Prohibition as a whole. Although I agree with the majority of the claims that are made by these scholars, I feel that there is much more to be said about the medicinal beer movement than has been presented thus far. With that in mind I intend to further illuminate this historical enigma so that it may be more appropriately recognized as an important element of the early Prohibition years.

I aim to argue that the debate over the validity of this curious elixir led several American doctors to join together to form the first solid legislative resistance movement to the restrictions of the Eighteenth Amendment. This paper will initially explore the traditional uses of medicinal beer in the late 1800s, the debate over the therapeutic merits of beer within the medical community at the turn of the century, and the various internal and external factors that influenced the rise of the movement. Furthermore, I will illustrate the major elements of the medicinal beer movement after the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment, discuss the motivations and actions of the major supporters and opponents of the movement, and ultimately elaborate on how the movement failed to re-legalize beer with the passing of the Willis-Campbell Law. Although these obstinate physicians stood together in the name of beer, the focus of their ire did not revolve around the questionable therapeutic benefits of the dubious brew alone; in the eyes of the medical community, the government had overstepped its bounds by trying to control what a physician could determine to be medicine.

Although beer has long been viewed as a recreational beverage, it was widely perceived to be a relatively versatile medicinal agent toward the end of the nineteenth century. For example, according to Frederick William Salem, an ardent beer activist of the 1880s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture published a report in 1866 that stated that “moderate use of pure beer [would] aid digestion, quicken the powers of life, and give elasticity to the body and mind.”

This position received further support in 1881 when *The British Medical Journal* printed an article that praised the merits of alcoholic beverages like beer for their merits as nutritious stimulants. By the early 1900s, the perceived medicinal benefits of beer had grown so extensive that it became widely accepted as a viable therapeutic agent in the treatment of typhoid fever, constipation, diabetes, staph infection, and tuberculosis. Lastly, medical professionals praised beer as a useful solvent in the administration of other drugs because they believed that it could effectively slow the absorption rate of hypnotic drugs to maximize the duration of their effects. From a modern perspective these supposed medicinal qualities of beer might seem laughable, however, it is important to note that advancements in the field of medicine at the turn of the century led many doctors to reevaluate just how effective their malty remedy really was.

In the early 1900s, it became obvious that professional opinions of the therapeutic merits of medicinal beer began to shift, as the debate over the subject within the medical community soon rose to national prominence. According to a *New York Times* article from 1909, some medical students contended that alcohol had no therapeutic benefits at all, and even if it did, its use in the medical field had diminished significantly. By 1917, the viability of alcohol was called into question further by Dr. Haven Emerson, the Health Commissioner of New York City, who had correctly identified alcohol to be a depressant that caused “damage to the heart, kidneys and blood vessels, as well as to the stomach and liver.” In response to these comments, Dr. Abraham Jacobi, an ardent advocate of the medicinal benefits of alcohol, contended that alcoholic beverages still remained “valuable” and “indispensable” as traditional remedies, and that the “prohibition movement kept up by ‘400,000’ women [was] no

---

8 Shapter, 44-46.
12 “Value of Alcohol in Medicine Small.”
proof” that alcohol had lost its edge as a mainstream medicine.\textsuperscript{14} In retrospect, the decline in the use of beer in medicine can perhaps be best explained by the fact that advancements in the medical field began to show that beer was simply not as effective in treating disease as it had once been thought. However, as Dr. Jacobi made abundantly clear, the influence that the Prohibitionist movement wielded over the debate cannot be ignored.

By the time the debate over the validity of beer had risen to national prominence, support of Prohibition in U.S. politics had grown substantially. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, organizations, such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement and the Anti-Saloon League campaigned heavily to rid the country of alcoholic beverages in every capacity, and this increasingly popular sentiment likely had an impact on how some doctors handled their treatment of medicinal alcohol.\textsuperscript{15} Prohibitionists wanted to use any information they could to have alcohol outlawed, and the growing doubts about the therapeutic benefits of beer within the medical community likely served beneficial to their cause. Regardless of whether or not these temperate sentiments held any sway over the medical community at large, the Prohibitionists ultimately succeeded in rendering alcohol illegal through the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment on January 16, 1919. Shortly afterward, Congress also passed the Volstead Act, which served as the Eighteenth Amendment’s bill of enforcement in that it levied harsh penalties for the production, sale, and transport of beverages that exceeded 0.5% in alcohol content.\textsuperscript{16} The passing of the Eighteenth Amendment and Volstead Act caused the debate within the medical profession to shift sharply from being a question of whether or not beer was truly a viable medicine to being a question of what the government had the right to regulate within the medical field.

On March 18, 1922, \textit{The British Medical Journal} published an article titled “Prohibition and the Medical Profession.”\textsuperscript{17} Summarizing the results of a survey distributed among 53,000 medical practitioners in the United States by the \textit{Journal of the American Medical Association}, the article was meant to objectively

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Munching; Plavchan; Goyens; Ganey and Hernon; Downard; Cochran; Blocker, 233-243; Baum; Baron.
\textsuperscript{17} “Prohibition And The Medical Profession,” 448.
frame the state of opinions within the American medical community over the viability of medicinal alcoholic beverages. One of the central elements of the discussion revolved around the relevance of medicinal beer in the contemporary treatment of patients. Of the original 53,000 U.S. medical practitioners that had been asked to participate in the study (37% percent of all physicians working within the U.S. at the time), 31,115 chose to offer their responses. It is unclear why 21,885 physicians chose not to participate in the study, but any number of reasons could have contributed to this statistic. Laziness or indifference on the part of some of the physicians could have influenced these results, but such assertions are purely speculative. Regardless, assuming that these figures were accurate, one can infer that this statistical sample had captured the opinions of nearly 22 percent of the approximate 143,243 doctors that were in active practice in the United States at the time.\(^\text{18}\) Based on these numbers alone, there is no question that the subject of Prohibition was a hot topic for debate within the medical profession because over one-fifth of all physicians in the United States had decided to weigh in on the issue.

Overall, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*’s survey findings yielded peculiar results. On the question of whiskey as being a necessary medicinal agent, the survey had generated a nearly even distribution of professional opinions, in which 51 percent of the respondents found its effects valuable and 49 percent did not. When posed with the same question with regard to wine, just 32 percent considered it a viable medicine while 68 percent did not. However, perhaps the most surprising response of all was the fact that, of the doctors surveyed, only 26 percent of them found beer to be a viable medicine.\(^\text{19}\) Dr. Stephanie Pain referenced these survey results in her essay titled “The Battle for Medicinal Beer,” but she limited her discussion solely to the statistics on medicinal whiskey.\(^\text{20}\) What needs to be emphasized here is that the overwhelming majority of physicians in the United States (approximately 74% of them) did not feel that beer was a viable medicinal supplement when compared to whiskey and wine. Although it was apparent that the use of medicinal beer was on the decline, it is important to note that a sizeable minority of physicians still valued the beverage as a therapeutic agent. When framed in this context, it

\(^{18}\) Ibid.
\(^{19}\) Ibid.
\(^{20}\) Pain, 44-45.
becomes readily apparent that a consensus was shared by many doctors during the period that the government had no place in trying to control what they and their colleagues could determine to be viable medicinal treatments. Regardless of whether they were advocates or skeptics of the viability of medicinal beer, many physicians believed that, as a result of their education and years of training in the medical field, the responsibility of what a doctor could prescribe as medicine should have been up to the discretion of the doctor, and him alone. As such, many within the American Medical Association chose to fight for their right to prescribe medicinal beer as a matter of principle.21

After a great deal of public debate and lobbying, the medical profession finally won a small victory for itself when Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer issued a ruling that rendered medicinal beer exempt from the constraints of the Volstead Act on March 3, 1921.22 Palmer ruled that the Internal Revenue Bureau did not have the power to limit the number of permits that it could distribute for the manufacture and sale of medicinal beers and wines, with the only stipulation being that only reputable brewers would be eligible to apply for the permits.23 Though Palmer had long been a strong advocate of Prohibition, his decision to loosen the regulations on the production and distribution of medicinal beer had essentially rendered it legal. Although it is unclear exactly why Attorney General Palmer chose to make this surprising turnaround, there are a couple of plausible explanations. Beverly Gage noted that his motivations likely lied in the fact that Palmer had been under a considerable amount of pressure from what remained of the U.S. brewing industry. When coupled with the fact that the Attorney General was only days away from being replaced, as Warren G. Harding had just been elected to the presidency of the United States, it is entirely possible that Palmer’s imminent replacement may have influenced his decision to shake up the political environment for his successor. However, one can never know for certain and this is likely the result of speculation on Gage’s part.24 Needless to say, Palmer’s decision to accept a doctor’s right to prescribe medicinal beer had left the Prohibitionist organizations feeling bewildered and threatened. The Anti-Saloon League, specifically, became so incensed

22 Pain, 44-45; Bamforth; Gage, 112-117; “Medical Beer,” The New York Times, March 12, 1921.
23 Ibid.
24 Gage, 112-117.
with the success of the medicinal beer campaign that they filed an appeal to the Department of Justice against the Treasury’s ruling.25

Given the circumstances of this situation, it is easy to understand the frustration that was felt by the Prohibitionists at the time. Since it had been established in 1893, the Anti-Saloon League had worked tirelessly to break the spirit of the American saloon and to bring about the complete and total ban of alcohol in the United States.26 With this one decision by the Attorney General, the organization came to feel that the “booze-free” America that they had spent nearly three decades trying to build had been undermined. The members of the Anti-Saloon League knew that the American Medical Association’s motivations did not lie simply in the endorsement of beer’s supposed medicinal benefits. The Anti-Saloon League recognized that there was more to the medicinal beer campaign than met the eye, and they stood resolute in the assumption that the entire movement served as a front for American doctors to use their strategic position in the medical field as a loophole with which they could take advantage of reintroducing recreational alcohol to the general public.27 Though there may be some truth to these negative sentiments, it is important to note that though a minority of a mere 26 percent, over a quarter all physicians within the U.S. at the time still found beer to be a vital and entirely necessary medicine.28 There may very well have been a handful of corrupt doctors that wanted to take advantage of the medicinal beer movement for the sake of personal gain, but I would argue that it is more likely the case that the majority of doctors that stood for medicinal beer did so because they supported the right of their colleagues to practice medicine as they thought best for their patients.29 However, regardless of the true motivations of the advocates of medicinal beer, Attorney General Palmer’s decision to allow reputable brewers and doctors to produce and prescribe medicinal beer went into full swing in the later months of 1921.

Immediately following Attorney General Palmer’s decision to allow physicians to prescribe medicinal beer a mere eight months earlier, the Internal Revenue Bureau began to institute a sweeping set of new regulations on October

25 “Medical Beer.”
26 Downard.
27 “Medical Beer”; Pain, 44-45; Gage, 112-117.
28 “Prohibition And The Medical Profession,” 448.
29 Pain, 44-45; “Prohibition And The Medical Profession,” 448; “Physicians Ask Veto of Anti-Beer Bill.”
24, 1921 that began to lay the framework with which medicinal beer was to operate within the confines of Prohibition regulations. Among these new regulations were stipulations that held doctors to a standard in which they could not write prescriptions for themselves nor prescribe more than one pint of beer per patient in a ten-day period.\(^{30}\) Furthermore, the privileges for the production and sale of medicinal beer were only extended to nine states: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin.\(^{31}\) Lastly, the breweries within these states were required to obtain permits before they were able to begin to produce beer for medicinal consumption. Any brewery that had openly produced beer after the Eighteenth Amendment became the law of the land remained ineligible for these permits once they became available.\(^{32}\)

However, regardless of these circumstances, the Prohibitionists only viewed these regulatory measures as temporary concessions to the medical and brewing industries as they endeavored to revise the provisions of the Eighteenth Amendment so that medicinal beer could be rendered illegal once more.\(^{33}\) The “dry” faction within the United States at the time had felt that the push for medicinal beer had “outraged” the Volstead Act and the Eighteenth Amendment by rendering druggists as the new “bartenders,” drug stores as the new “saloons,” and doctors as “beer dictators” that would only serve people who wanted to drink.\(^{34}\) By late November of 1921, Congressman Andrew Volstead and Wayne B. Wheeler, the author of the Volstead Act and the national counsel of the Anti-Saloon League, respectively, succeeded in their goal of passing the Willis-Campbell Law through Congress. This new legislation effectively rendered medicinal beer to be illegal in every capacity, while wine and whiskey were deemed to be viable medicinal supplements that could only be prescribed in quantities of less than half a pint per ten-day period.\(^{35}\) This development is notable because the Prohibitionists had allowed themselves to come to the same conclusions about wine and whiskey as the wide majority of medical professionals at the time. Both physicians and Prohibitionists alike considered


\(^{33}\) Ibid.


\(^{35}\) “Only 9 States Get Beer as Medicine”; “Medical Beer”; Pain, 44-45; Gage, 112-117; Bamforth.
the two substances to be far superior to beer in seemingly every way in terms of their therapeutic effectiveness. However, despite this new consensus, there was still a portion of the medical community that felt that government had betrayed them by passing the new law. As such, when the Willis-Campbell Law passed, some physicians continued to lobby the government in the hopes that medicinal beer would be granted a reprieve.

Following the leadership of Dr. John P. Davin, the Executive Secretary of the New York Medical Association, the doctors of the New York Medical Association petitioned President Harding to veto the Willis-Campbell Law immediately after the bill passed. However, when these fervent requests fell upon deaf ears, a last stand on the subject was made not by a coalition physicians, but by a brewery lawyer. On December 31, 1921, William M.K. Olcott, an attorney to a couple of brewers known as the Piel Brothers, argued on behalf of both physicians and the brewing industry alike before the Federal Court of Brooklyn that the Willis-Campbell Law stood in violation of the Constitution. He made his case on the grounds that the law had invaded upon the personal rights of physicians to be able to prescribe what they deemed fit in the treatment of their patients, and was thus unconstitutional in nature. Furthermore, Olcott contended that the law had interfered with human rights because it destroyed the right of breweries to cooperate with the medical field, and that the government had overstepped its bounds by usurping police powers that it had never been given before to interfere with the power and authority of the states. Although Olcott made a valiant effort on the part of the brewing industry, he ultimately failed to convince the government to grant beer medicinal status, thus ending the medicinal beer movement and rendering the manufacture and consumption of beer illegal until Prohibition was eventually repealed eleven years later.

Though only a small facet of the historical monolith that is the subject of U.S. Prohibition, the narrative of the medicinal beer movement provides a fascinating perspective of the history of the early 1920s. The advent of Prohibition
in the United States led many determined doctors to campaign for their right to prescribe beer to their patients. Though not all within the medical profession agreed upon the viability of beer as a medicinal agent, many supported the medicinal beer movement because they believed that the government had overstepped its bounds by putting restrictions on what a doctor could prescribe as medicine. Conversely, Prohibitionist organizations like the Anti-Saloon league believed that the advocates of medicinal beer secretly harbored ulterior motives in pursuit of their beer-lauding agenda. The Prohibitionists believed that by granting beer official legal status as “medicine,” doctors would be able use their professional influence as a means with which they could reintroduce the recreational consumption of beer to the general public. As such, the Anti-Saloon League fought incessantly to put the debate to rest and discredit the therapeutic effectiveness of the curious elixir once and for all. However, regardless of the suspicions of the movement’s critics, the campaign for medicinal beer served to show that not all American citizens were happy with the changes that had been implemented by the Eighteenth Amendment. Although the movement ultimately failed, it still served as the first solid legislative resistance movement to the constraints of Prohibition. Through Attorney General Palmer, physicians and brewers alike had won a brief period of legal status for medicinal beer, but the Prohibitionists were determined to stop them and repealed the ruling. The advocates of medicinal beer took the issue to court and lost, but their struggle had shown the government that they would not readily submit to the federal controls that had been forced upon them. The determined medical professionals that had supported the medicinal beer movement in the early 1920s did not want to relinquish their right to treat their patients as they sought fit, and though they ultimately failed to get the government to grant beer lasting medicinal status, they refused to go down without putting up a valiant fight.


Yale History Department. “Beverly Gage, Associate Professor,” Yale University. [http://www.yale.edu/history/faculty/gage_b.html](http://www.yale.edu/history/faculty/gage_b.html) (accessed May 8, 2011).
ELISE ERB is pursuing her bachelor’s degree in History at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo with a minor in Art History. Her historical interests lie in post-World War Two western political and social history. Most recently, she spent four months living in Washington, DC interning with the Trust for the National Mall. When she’s not studying history, she can be found telling prospective students and alumni how awesome Cal Poly is, in her role as a College of Liberal Arts Ambassador.
On a brisk evening in New York in the spring of 1949, cars pulled up on 57th Street. Out of the cars stepped well-dressed women, and well-educated men, each met by attendants in striped trousers.¹ These members of high society stepped out not in front of a theatre or the latest restaurant; instead, they arrived at an art auction at Parke-Burnet galleries during the boom period of the American art market after the Second World War. Such patrons brought Parke-Burnet Galleries their most lucrative season ever in 1945, grossing more than six million dollars; the same spring that saw the end of the Second World War in Europe, bringing massive social and political changes to the world.²

The art market provides the perfect way to study American society as a whole in the time period of 1945 to 1960. Scholars have examined all of the pieces that played into the art market after the Second World War: the general post-war climate, the economic trends in art collecting, and the theft of art during the war.³ All of these topics have been studied without intersecting

---

the three. The years from 1945-1960 encompassed a period when the average American lived in fear of “the bomb” and communism, watched jobs disappear as soldiers returned from the war, and traveled across the country on Route 66, the ultimate American road-trip. However, elite Americans found themselves with more disposable income than ever; income which they spent on art. Scholars have often examined art collecting as a broad topic from an economic standpoint, ignoring the life that art takes on as a social phenomena and an indicator of status. This view overlooks the human desire involved in the acquisition of a piece of art. Scholars such as William Goetzmann and W. G. Constable acknowledged that as the wealth of collectors increases so does the demand for art, but none took the step to explore the logic and social ramifications behind art collecting. Another topic of recent interest to scholars is the tragedy of Nazi and Soviet art theft. We know that the United States government established the elite military division of Reparations, Deliveries and Restitution dedicated to the return of looted works, but we do not know what the art elite in the states might have felt about these exploited works. The idea that the American social elite might have valued the unique history of a recovered piece of art is one that deserves further study. I argue that conspicuous consumption


Ibid., 119.


became critical in post-war America in order for elites to show that they had not only survived the war, but were in fact now more prosperous than ever before.

**Conspicuous Consumption: Applying Veblen to the Post-war Art Market**

Private art collecting typically serves as a prime example of conspicuous consumption. Thorstein Veblen first presented the idea of conspicuous consumption in 1902 through his work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. At its most basic, the concept suggests that society valued the consumption of goods for unproductive means because it became a mark of social status, especially the consumption of desirable goods. Veblen applied his ideas to servants, food, lifestyle and household goods in the early Victorian period in which he wrote.

In his writing, Veblen never specifically mentions the application of his ideas to art collecting among the social elite as a display of wealth, but I believe it to be a logical application of Veblen’s ideas that has heretofore been unexplored. Veblen believed that conspicuous consumption could only be practiced in a “quasi-peaceable” time, which the United States achieved for the first time in more than a decade during the post-war period. Collecting art took both time and money, things not squandered in times of turmoil. It took time to go to galleries and seek out pieces for purchase and viewing in New York. Americans did not experience art on a public and daily basis like Europeans living in old cities filled with old masters did. Art collecting allowed conspicuous consumption of both time and large amounts of money, showing that the money did not need to be used for practical means.

A critical part to understanding conspicuous consumption depends on understanding Veblen’s definition of waste. Veblen defines waste in his context as the expenditure of time or money that does not serve human life or well being in general, not a misuse of time or money, as we tend to define waste in modern daily conversation. Through this definition, Veblen recognized that conspicuous consumption serves a purpose and is not useless, as an outsider might perceive it. For a modern audience, it is key to remember Veblen’s understanding of waste as we apply his ideas to private art collecting.

---

9 Ibid., 65.
11 Ibid.
12 Veblen, “Conspicuous Consumption,” 73.
Conspicuous Use of Idle Time: The act of buying as a social spectacle

In the post-war art world, the show of status and conspicuous consumption began the moment the buyer set foot in the establishment where they would later purchase a work of art. Large-scale art auctions and private buying sessions became the two primary ways to legally acquire art in the United States after the Second World War. Different social implications came with each method of buying art: one showed conspicuous consumption through presence, and the other through the implied prestige of the work purchased.

Art auctions served as major social events, on the same scale as theatre. In her 1953 New York Times article, “Where Art and Economics Meet,” Aline Louchheim described the scene at Parke-Burnet Galleries, the largest auction house in New York at the time, during one particular auction. She described the sale as an “exciting spectacle” with women dressed in mink coats and men peering at art through magnifying glasses. Louchheim said that attendants wearing “striped trousers” met these high-class potential buyers when their fancy cars glided up outside. Such ostentation would have been impossible for the rest of the social elite and passers-by to ignore. By showing up at the auction dressed in their finery, high society members gained status among their peers. In this case, it became more a matter of being seen than what they actually bought or did at the auction. Veblen addressed the idea that mere presence could serve as conspicuous consumption when he said that one’s presence at an event served as a way to show strangers that one possessed social status. The social buying practices of the American elite in the post-war period perfectly evidence this idea. A socialite certainly did not purchase pieces at every auction attended, but every event they attended added to their social prestige and status.

Private buying provided an experience on the other end of the art-buying spectrum from art auctions. Dealers like Wildenstein & Co. made their name selling only the finest and most desirable pieces of art. One news article, printed

9 Ibid., 65.
11 Ibid.
12 Louchheim, “Where Art and Economics Meet.”
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the firm, called Wildenstein & Co. the “Cartier of the art world,” a true testament to the caliber and prestige of the firm.\textsuperscript{16} When buying art from a dealer like this, the buyer would be ushered into a room covered in rich drapery with two chairs in the middle. The dealer would then bring paintings into the room to be shown one at a time, no more than six in a session.\textsuperscript{17} Only those who could afford the best and rarest of works could participate in the private buying experience.

While it may not seem that private buying would be conducive to displaying wealth publicly, this method brought status to the buyer through the prestige of the acquisition. The amount of money that Wildenstein & Co. brought in allowed them to build up an impressive stock that included works by the likes of Rembrandt and Winslow Homer. The firm could then take their time selling the pieces for the best price and to the most prestigious buyer.\textsuperscript{18} Aline Louchheim explained the company’s sales strategy: “Many of the greatest objects have been in the firm for twenty-five or thirty years. Many are rarely offered.”\textsuperscript{19} This meant that while buying a piece from private sessions did not provide a public venue to display wealth, more prestige came from the act of owning a piece from one of these elite institutions. Visiting one of these institutions alone did not act as conspicuous consumption, but walking out having purchased something there certainly did.

The act of going to a public auction to purchase art was the most conspicuous act of the art acquisition process because it made the act of buying art public. Just as Veblen said that conspicuous waste of time should become an integral part of conspicuous consumption, going to art sales became a social expectation in order to maintain status.\textsuperscript{20} Whether purchased at an auction as part of a grand spectacle, or purchased in the privacy of a private buying room, the process of buying a work of art became a way of practicing conspicuous consumption. The pageantry of an auction and the prestige of owning a rare work of art showed status and wealth.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Veblen, “Conspicuous Consumption,” 62.
Conspicuous Use of Idle Money: Owning as a social spectacle

The conspicuous consumption did not end with the purchase of a piece of art. Just owning a piece of art did not automatically confer status upon the owner. Different attributes of the piece created different levels of conspicuous consumption. In his book *Art as an Investment*, Richard Rush explained that the determining factors in a painting’s price in America in the post-war period were the following: artist and period of work, quality compared to other works by the artist, subject and size of the work, condition, previous ownership history, signature, who had owned the painting previously, seller, location, and timing of the sale, and who attended the sale.\(^{21}\)

Aline Louchheim noted in 1949 that nineteenth-century French artists were the most desirable and most popular, along with newer realist and anecdotal paintings.\(^{22}\) Works by these artists sold for the most money on a regular basis. Owning one of these paintings would act as conspicuous consumption because other collectors knew that these works were of high value, and therefore had spent a significant amount of idle money to acquire the piece. Of course, the more rare the piece, the more money it took to purchase. Private dealers such as Wildenstein and Co. often sold pieces like this, meaning that prices came to be known only through anecdotal evidence.\(^{23}\)

In 1961, approximately 500 people in the world were buying the highest priced works of art, those over 50,000 dollars.\(^{24}\) Not everyone buying in the United States at this time would have been in this elite category of buyers. However, the art buying public would have known which artists and styles were selling for the highest prices, so displaying certain works would display higher status.

The previous ownership and story of a piece also conferred value upon a painting. Ownership was important because if a painting had a well-known owner in the past, it had probably undergone examination for authenticity. The greater the number of previous owners, the better a reputation the painting had.\(^{25}\) Paintings with documents proving its authenticity, origin, and past,


\(^{25}\) Ibid., 286.
brought even more value to the piece. Previous ownership would also give a price history to the work, showing the new owner if the work gained or lost value and popularity.

While previous ownership was an important part of the history of a work of art, the more recent history of art tragedy proved more exciting to buyers in this post-war period. Buyers in the years directly following the war were suddenly looking at pieces that had the unique history of being victims of Nazi and Soviet art theft during the war. The public knew what had happened because the major newspapers at the time ran stories about Nazi and Soviet atrocities during the war. The Nazis and Soviets began looting the nations that they invaded in the autumn of 1942, even going as far as creating specially trained art theft battalions. While pillaging occurred wherever the Nazis went, the majority of art raids took place in the private collections and museums of Europe. One writer for the Los Angeles Times, stationed in Paris at the time, wrote about watching as the French government moved the Mona Lisa out of the Louvre to protect it from Nazi looting. The pieces that were stolen either became part of the private collections of high-ranking Nazi leaders, or were tragically burned.

As the Second World War drew to a close, the Allied forces created a task force commonly called the Monument Men, who retrieved as many of the looted pieces as they could. While this history is never specifically mentioned as a reason why the value of a piece would rise, this attribute is mentioned by Louchheim in her article “Where Art and Economics Meet” when discussing the pieces in a specific sale in 1949. This suggests that the tragic and exciting history of a piece would increase its value for the consumer of the day.

Because of the new history of the Second World War, this post-war period gave rise to new ideas as to what made a work of art valuable. Walter Benjamin was one of the thinkers who brought forth new ideas in this period. Benjamin posed the idea that works of art with unique histories would garner more money

27 Ibid., 288.
29 Nicholas, The Rape of Europa, 72, 15.
30 Tillinger, “History’s Greatest Art Theft.”
31 Nicholas, The Rape of Europa, 415.
32 Louchheim, “Where Art and Economics Meet.”
on the market. In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin said that the “unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject to throughout the time of its existence.”<sup>33</sup> This meant that the work of art gained value and authenticity as time passed and it became a part of the fabric of history. In the context of private art collecting, this meant that pieces with a unique history could raise the potential for conspicuous consumption more than a work without a significant history.

Price necessarily served as the final indicator of conspicuous consumption in the art world. During the 1944-1945 season, the New York art market made its largest amount of money to that date, more than six million dollars.<sup>34</sup> The post-war period was a time of economic boom, so the elite had much more money to invest into the purchase of art.<sup>35</sup> This desire to purchase art created a bull market in the art world.<sup>36</sup> This meant that the art market was selling more lucratively than in recent historical memory. Some scholars suggested that part of this desire for luxury items was fueled by Hollywood movies such as <i>Gilda</i> starring Rita Hayworth. Now Americans had the money to buy the luxuries highlighted in films for the first time in over fifteen years.<sup>37</sup> Since no one had the money to buy luxury items during the war, purchasing art became a successful manner of conspicuous consumption because it created that Hollywood look for the first time since the war ended. This explains why a bull market in art occurred right after the war, the social elite wanted their due again having temporarily lost their wealth with the crash of the stock market and the entry of the United States into the war.<sup>38</sup>

The sheer act of spending money on a piece of art served as means of conspicuous consumption. However, for the piece to obtain status, it needed to have certain qualities of style, artist, price, and history. Americans showed


<sup>34</sup> Two articles differ on the exact amount in sales during this season. The figure is quoted as $6,165,920 in “Art Auction Sales at Record High.” and as $6,604,045 in Aline B. Louchheim, “Where Art and Economics Meet.”

<sup>35</sup> Rush, <i>Art as an Investment</i>, 215.


<sup>37</sup> Jeezer, <i>The Dark Ages: Life in the United States, 1945-1960</i>, 118.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 34.
their newly reacquired wealth by spending on the luxury items they gave up during the preceding depression and war, including art.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Making Conspicuous Consumption Conspicuous: Advertising the spectacle.}

The social elite of the post-war period went through the process of going to sales and buying art, but what good did this process serve it if no one knew about their purchases? Conspicuous consumption was about being seen. To ensure visibility, the social elite used the art sections of newspapers to advertise their newly acquired wealth to both those within and outside of, their social circles.

The primary way of advertising the procurement of art was through news “blurbs.” Both before and after the sale, newspapers would run a story, often no more than a few lines, about the auction. The articles after the auctions summed up what had been bought, how much it cost, and when the buyer or seller allowed disclosure, who bought it.\textsuperscript{40} Articles printed before the sale would tell the reader the previous ownership of the works being sold, and highlight any important pieces.\textsuperscript{41} When the art auctions were in the paper before the actual sale occurred, it added status to the sale, and to the pieces bought there. One 1947 article detailed all of the works that would be sold at auction that weekend from the estate of Mrs. Walter B. James of New York.\textsuperscript{42} The pre-advertisement of a sale ensured a large turnout including the most elite members of art collecting society, which drove up the prices of the works and increased prestige.\textsuperscript{43} Articles that ran after the sale made sure that all members of society knew what had been bought by whom and for how much. Since not all of high society would be at any auction, high profile purchases were advertised so that wealth and social standing could be displayed for all to see. The short advertisements in newspapers provided just such an opportunity for


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{43} Rush, Art as an Investment, 289.
those who were not in attendance to see what was bought. This advertisement of what was bought allowed the vicarious consumption of the non-elites who could not participate in the art market because of the restrictive cost involved.

The “Arts” sections of major metropolitan newspapers provided another way of advertising wealth. These sections were not necessarily written for the elites already purchasing art. A critical reading Louchheim’s article “Where Art and Economics Meet,” reveals that everyday newspaper readers were likely the intended audience, not the art collecting elite. The article gives an in-depth description of what an art auction was like and what went into each auction.  

The art buying elite would not have need to be told what happened at an art sale because they would have known from experience, however, the general public would have held a high interest into what happened at an art auction. After years of economic turmoil, the American people needed a way to prove that the worst was over and they were once again on top of the global market.  

The social practices of the rich, art buying elite provided the perfect way to see proof of the return of good times.

In order for this to be clear in the packed metropolises of post-war America, conspicuous consumption needed advertisement. Veblen recognized this and said that wealth could not be properly advertised unaided. In other words, Veblen meant that wealth would not advertise itself. Conspicuous consumption of art meant making sure that all members of society knew about the acquisition of art. The newspapers were the best way to achieve this advertisement in the post-war world.

**Conspicuous Consumption: Showing America that better days were here again**

In the post-war period in America, the art world became an outlet for social elites to practice conspicuous consumption. From the moment society members stepped out of their shiny black cars in front of an auction house, they proved that they had achieved prosperity once again. Even those who bought their art in the confines of private buying rooms showed their wealth through the prestige attached to their purchases. The art itself gained or lost prestige based

---

44 Louchheim, “Where Art and Economics Meet.”
on various attributes of the painting including artist, price, and previous history. In this post-war period, previous history came to include the history of Nazi and Soviet art theft during the Second World War. Art collection would have gone largely unnoticed if newspapers had not published stories about the art market, and specific art sales, for art collecting elites and everyday people alike.

The act of conspicuous consumption became important in the post-war era because the elites needed to show they survived the sixteen-year period of war and economic depression that just ended. The social elite needed a way to prove they more than just survived, but came out as affluent as before, if not more. This may have seemed like a waste of time and money, but it proved they did not need that time to work, or that money to buy necessities: a luxury that had not existed just a few years before. Art became more than just something to hang on a wall. It became a way to demonstrate status in a world where status could once again be relevant, perhaps even reveled in, and not be seen as distasteful.


**WORKS CONSULTED**


SAMANTHA HENNES is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in Psychology, at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. While her passions in history vary, the movie industry has always had a particular draw for her, and she generally chooses to focus on social history. She is a member of the History Honor Society Phi Alpha Theta and is also involved on campus as an Ambassador for the College of Liberal Arts and a member of the first Greek letter fraternity for women Kappa Alpha Theta.
Those involved in the movie industry during the late 1920s spoke constantly about talking pictures. Opinions on the “talkie” varied greatly, common headlines in both the Los Angeles Times and New York Times ranged from negative articles with headlines, such as “Beauty Lost in Talkies,” “Talking Films Try Movie Men’s Souls,” and “Union’s Discount ‘Talkies’” to more supportive articles, such as “All Films to Be Talkies,” “Another Movie Miracle,” and “Talking Picture New Era.” While some viewed talkies as something to ridicule, calling them “moanies” or “squeakies,” others viewed them as the future of the motion picture industry. The different opinions on talkies were not specific to certain member of the movie industry. Not all movie producers or directors liked talkies and not all critics or actors hated them. Monte Bell, a prominent film director of the time best explained the debate by using producers as an example. Bell

had three producers who each gave the public different opinions on the talkie. While one producer claimed that silent film was dead, his counterpart would claim that silent film still had merit while another claimed that the talkie would revolutionize the industry. In examining the talkie debate, it becomes clear that opinions about the talkie were dynamic. As the silent film era came to a close many who spoke harshly of the talkie during its infancy came to support it. In general, movie directors and the public favored the talkie. One of the strongest voices in the early years against the talkie, however, was that of the intellectual film critic who represented a “higher-brow” movie-going audience that considered film to be art rather than just an entertainment. In order to better understand why this change of opinion in the talkie debate occurred I plan to examine the changing views of the intellectual critic during the silent-to-sound transition era.

Thus far, scholars who mention the opinions of members involved in the talkie debate, only mention the opinions rather than analyze them, however the work of Myron Osborn Lounsbury examines the film critic and serves as a starting point for my analysis of the intellectual critic during the talkie era. While the primary focus of Lounsbury’s book *The Origin of American Film Criticism* is the shift in vocabulary during the thirty-year period between 1909-1939, she does focus on an influential movement in film criticism that occurred during the talkie era, called the “little cinema movement”. The “little cinema movement” had three goals: to exhibit foreign films that were unpopular to the masses but deemed important by intellectuals, to re-examine older but controversial movies, and to develop an audience for independent and experimental film makers. According to Lounsbury this movement influenced the quality of

---


motion picture writing. Essentially what Lounsbury’s examination of the “little cinema movement” suggests is that to some film, moved more towards the way of a serious art, rather than merely a source of entertainment. This notion of film as a serious art was a rather new concept during this time, however, it helps to explain why the intellectual critic was so harsh to the talkie. The intellectual critic, influenced by the “little cinema movement”, held film to strict aesthetic standards and the talkie challenged their notion of these standards.

The intellectual critic of the talkie era explored the possibilities of film through their critiques of movies, and what they praised or neglected gave a great deal of insight into their opinions. In examining opinions and reviews of early and late talkies, it appears that the intellectual critic became more accepting of the talkie as they changed how they evaluated film. Before the talkie, the intellectual critic viewed film as a purely visual art; therefore they placed great importance on the visual aspects of a film, like the camera angles rather than the quality of dialogue. However, the talkie caused the intellectual critic distress because the use of sound and dialogue transformed what was once purely visual into a hybridization of forms, which confused their evaluation process. To reconcile this distress, the intellectual critic showed disdain for the talkies and dismissed it as a novelty. However, when it became clear that the talkie was not a fad, the intellectual critic readjusted, first, they stopped viewing film as a purely visual art and focused more on the actor on screen and then they moved toward improving the talkie in order to make it into a new form of art, that emphasized a harmony between visual aspects of film and dialogue.

**Intellectual Superiority: What Differentiated the Intellectual Critic from the Average Critic?**

The intellectual critic represented a movie-going population with sophisticated taste who expected more from the movies than the masses. They viewed film as a source of art rather than just a source of entertainment. Unlike the studios the amount of money a movie made in the box office had little merit when it came to the evaluation of a film. To the intellectual critic, a film was enjoyable if it had artistic merit. Due to this emphasis on artistic merit

---

the intellectual critic represented a higher-minded audience that separated
themselves from other critics by asserting their intellectual superiority. The
intellectual critic achieved this by distancing themselves from the consumer
aspects of film and the opinions of the masses.

The intellectual critic viewed the talkie as a gimmick to make money
rather than a quality movie, so they used their intellectual superiority as a means
to defend the artistic merit of film. One of the loudest voices in the attack of
the talkie was artistic critic Gilbert Seldes. Seldes was a seasoned critic of the
arts and wrote The 7 Lively Arts which examined various forms of art such as
theater, music and dance.\(^8\) When it came to film evaluation, Seldes was more
concerned with what he considered the “theoretical” approach in examining
film, such as aesthetics, and was against what he considered the “practical” ap-
proach often taken by the movie industry that relied more on making money.\(^9\)
Seldes attacked those involved in the practical side of the talkie debate; arguing
that, “the director preoccupied with practical matters of the dull-witted and
ignorant owner of movie property” did not handle movies for a “high-brow”
audience well.\(^10\) Seldes’ attack is a perfect example of how important it was for
the intellectual critic to distance themselves from the consumer aspect of the
movies. The fact that Seldes, uses words like “dull-witted” or “ignorant” indeed
of words like “greedy” show that Seldes is more concerned with the intellectual
aspect of a movie rather than its success or monetary value. He choice of words
that attack the intelligence of movie makers, make the comparison that while
these talkie makers are “ignorant” Seldes himself is intelligent for noticing
these problems. Intelligence asserted the notion that film critics like Seldes
understood the difference between good and bad cinema as opposed to the
amount of money a production made.

Echoing back to ideals of “the little cinema movement” intellectual critics
also asserted their intellectual superiority by reviewing unpopular movies they
valued for artist merit as opposed to popular movies valued by the masses that
were merely entertainment. Welford Beaton was an intellectual critic who voiced
his praise for unpopular films as a way to differentiate himself from the masses.

---

\(^8\) Gilbert Seldes, The Seven Lively Arts, (New York: Sagamore Press, 1924)
\(^10\) Ibid., 96.
Beaton owned *The Film Specter* which was a Hollywood periodical known for providing “a refreshingly unbiased Hollywood insider’s view of the movies.” Beaton reviewed countless movies in this publication many of which were praised by Seldes.\(^{11}\) Beaton’s review of the movie *The Crowd* exemplified the ideas of the intellectual critic as opposed to that of the masses. The Crowd was a silent film that came out during the talkie era and was considered widely unpopular. According to Beaton the film would not do well in the box office but he considered the film worthy of great deal of praise.\(^{12}\) The box office was a way for theater owners to hear the voice of the masses. When critics like Beaton went against the idea of the masses they suggested that film was something more than a product to them and that their ideas about film as an art were more thoughtful than those of the average film-going masses.

### A Visual Art: The Intellectual Critic’s View of Film before the Talkie

When the intellectual critic evaluated film, prior to the talkie era, one of the main things they focused on was the visual aspects of the films. The word choice in reviews of silent films suggests a great appreciation for the visual components of film. To the intellectual critic the camera was a key component in the process of making good films. The talkie challenged the idea of visual aspects of film being most important, and this explains the intellectual critics’ initial resistance to the talkie.

When intellectual critics evaluated film they praised visual aspects of film because to them sound and dialogue were an unnecessary component of a good film. Gilbert Seldes’ book *An Hour With the Movies and the Talkies* is a prime example of the amount of importance the intellectual critic placed on the visual aspects of films and emphasizes the importance of movement in silent films. He looked at the physical action of moving and talked about pantomime artists such as Charlie Chaplin. He notes Chaplin’s facial expressions during a scene in *The Gold Rush* where Chaplin starts to dance the ballet, and Seldes explains how “you can see what is going on in his mind and what awaits him at the dinner party.”\(^{13}\) To Seldes the facial expression was enough to tell a story and therefore it is easy to see how sound essentially is unnecessary to an art that

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 94.


\(^{13}\) Seldes, *An Hour With the Movies and the Talkies*, 63-66.
needs only visuals. Seldes rarely mentioned the plot or story of a film and his neglect of other aspects of film solidified the importance of the visual aspects to the intellectual critic. The language he used to describe films such as *The Last Laugh* suggested that a strong visual element made a film into art. He stated that, “It was as solid as a Dutch painting; as a movie it was interesting because everything that could be touched or heard or felt was somehow translated into visual terms.” His comparison suggests that films were strengthened when their visual components fit together well. In fact, the intellectual critics during this era were so focused on visual aspects of film that to many, sound seemed unnecessary. The intellectual critic believed that art thrived when it worked within the limitations of its medium. For the intellectual critic this medium was purely visual and adding sound would change the medium, and the art.

The intellectual critic’s notion of film being a visual art was challenged by the introduction of the talkie because it restricted the camera’s freedom of movement. Before the introduction of the talkie the motion picture camera was thought to be not only the basis of the motion picture industry, but also highly perfected and readily portable. Many foreign silent film directors experimented with revolutionary camera angles. One example, the Russian cinema, mentioned in Seldes’ book, featured increased camera movement and sweeping long shots. Consequently, the release of the talkie put a halt to much of this experimentation. Sound microphones restricted the movement of actors as well as the camera. Director Clarence Badger pointed out the flaw with the use of the camera when filming a talkie, “The difference is that the same lighting is serving both medium shot and close-up, so that one or the other is bound to lose something of its photographic beauty.” The loss of photographic beauty would have been devastating to the intellectual critic since the visual aesthetics of film were of such great importance to them. The talkie changed the way that films were made; it demanded close-ups and soundproof stages which limited

---

14 Ibid, 105.
15 The significance of Seldes’ use of a Dutch painting is that from an art history standpoint, Dutch paintings are well known for their vibrant color and use of depth. While color was not an issue during this time period, the visual depth and life of a movie was.
the camera movements and the overall aesthetic style of the silent film praised so highly by the intellectual critic.

**Early Views on the Talkie: The Intellectual Critics Uncertainty in Evaluating the Talkie**

The talkie changed the way that films were made and how they looked. This caused a tension in the reviews of critics who did not know how to handle the shift. In the reviews of early talkies, there was a tension between the old style of film review, i.e. visual aspects, and the new review, which would appeal to the masses. At first, the intellectual critic was still too focused on comparing the talkie to silent films and this approach lead to a general dislike of talkies.

Talkies confused early intellectual reviewers because visual aspects were not longer the only way to tell a story, and while focusing on visual aspects alone was enough to evaluate a silent film, this was not a comprehensive enough evaluation for the talkie. Welford Beaton’s review of the early talkie *The Jazz Singer* revealed the early tension film critics felt because of the talkie. In his review Beaton quickly criticized the overuse of the close-up. Seeing as the intellectual critic of the day was so focused on the camera and the visual aspects of film, the overuse of a close-up went against everything the intellectual critic found valuable in film. The problem with Beaton’s review however, was that unlike the silent film, the talkie was not a purely visual art. Essentially the talkie was not purely visual because the addition of sound added a new aspect to the film. Dialogue replaced the sole reliance of facial expressions and movement to tell a story and this confused early talkie reviewers. Beaton seems aware of this dilemma and he acknowledges the fact that the talkie is a new kind of film. In his review he suggested that he would be unable to use typical motion picture standards to criticize this film. Although Beaton understood that the talkie was something new, because of this newness Beaton was ill equipped to evaluate the film.

Beaton was against sound in early talkie pictures because, like many other intellectual critics, he felt that sound was unnecessary, however Beaton was one of the first intellectual critics to realize that the talkie would dominate the movie industry. To Beaton, sound was unnecessary because, “Nothing that can

---

20 Beaton, “The Jazz Singer,” in *Selected Film Criticism* 1921-1930, 149.
21 Ibid., 149.
be left to the imagination should be included in a motion picture.”

Beaton thought the sight of a closing door was enough to allow the audience the chance to imagine the sound. The audience gave life to a silent picture, but with the talkie, the movie did that itself. So when Beaton reviewed the first talkie, *The Jazz Singer*, it seemed only natural that he would be against the use of sound. Although he was against sound, he also suggested that movie producers support the talkie because it would be foolish for them not to. According to Beaton, “As speaking pictures become better known the public will demand them.”

Beaton’s mention of the public pointed out that the talkie was intended to please the masses, not the intellectual class of movie patron, but he also realized that ultimately the masses controlled the movie industry, and understood the inevitably of the talkie replacing silent films.

While Beaton understood that the talkie was inevitable, many other intellectual critics were not as certain; most of them did not evaluate the artistic aspects of the talkie because they considered it a passing fad. It was clear that the talkie was not something they took seriously. Richard Watts Jr’s who wrote for The Film Mercury reviewed the talkie, *The Broadway Melody* and used the word “heart-warming” to describe it. When Watts uses the word “heart-warming” he is describing the emotion of the piece rather than evaluating the technical aspects of the film that make one feel this emotion, in doing this he focuses on the entertainment value of the piece rather than the intellectual or artistic value of the piece. In another review, Welford Beaton said the talkie *The Cocoanuts* did what it set out to achieve as it made the audience laugh. While both Watts and Beaton’s reviews are positive about the talkies, they lack the critical scrutiny used in their evaluations of silent films suggesting the talkie was insignificant. After all, the role of a critic is to “ask and answer valuable questions about a work of art” and since critics failed to do this with certain talkies, it was clear they did not consider the talkie a work of art.

---

23 Beaton, “Background for Screen Appreciation,” *The English Journal*, no.2 (February 1941), 89.
24 Ibid. 149.
The Talkie is Here to Stay: How the Intellectual Critic Came to Accept the Talking Picture

It was clear that the intellectual critic felt a great deal of dissonance when it came to the talkie. Alexander Bakshy, a critic similar to Seldes because of his background as an art critic, remarked, “It is a sad reflection of the limitations of intellectuals and artists all over the world to see history repeat itself in the contemptuous resentment with which they are greeting the talkie.” While Bakshy appeared to argue against his fellow critic, in the same essay he critiqued the talkie. Bakshy’s statement displays two separate needs: a shift in focus for the intellectual critic and improvements for the talkie. In order to accept the talkie, the intellectual critic needed to focus less on visual aspects of film and more on the presence of the character and also suggest ways in which the talkie could improve.

Richard Watts Jr. represented a major shift in how the intellectual critic viewed the talkie because of his focus on personal aspects of films. One of the first people Watts praised, James Gleason, was the writer of the talkie *The Broadway Melody*. In Watts’ review, he highlighted the fact that the writer role gained significance as an important aspect of film. He praised Gleason in his review and said, “Nevertheless there was manifest with pleasant frequency throughout the picture a quality of dialogue and characterization…” As the talkie grew in public popularity many Broadway playwrights and journalists were involved in the scripts of movies because they understood how to write dialogue. Watts placed a great deal of importance on people involved in the movie, i.e. actors, writers, directors, etc. suggesting that because of a greater focus on people the intellectual critic was less focused on the visual aspects of film as the talkie grew in popularity.

The intellectual critics’ shift in emphasis from a visual to personal aspects is best explained by the work of scholar Robert Spandoni whose research on the audiences’ reception of early sound films suggests a growing importance of the “figure” or actor in sound films. While Spandoni’s article focuses on audiences in general, his concept can still be applied to that of the intellectual critic because they were ultimately still members of the movie going audience.

---

Spandoni argues that the figure on screen in sound films struck viewers as very present. It is obvious that the presence of these figures was noticed by the intellectual critic as evident in reviews from critics like Watts. As sound film became more and more popular the figure on screen became more important to the intellectual film critic. While Spandoni’s work focuses on the beginning of the talkie era as well as the general publics’ opinion, his work is still applicable to the intellectual critic in later years because their reception of the talkie was similar to that of the general public.

As the intellectual critic began to accept the talkie, it became clear that they wanted to evaluate the talkie as a new art, and therefore not compare the talkie to existing forms such as the silent film or theater. Before I go into the commentary these critics had on the talking picture I would first like to emphasize the word “new” when it came to the art to the talkie. Apart from silent films, the talkie was commonly compared to the stage. The intellectual critic of later talkies felt that the talkie was something different than both silent films and the stage which meant it would need to develop artist merit differently than existing forms. In fact, Gilbert Seldes was adamant that the talkies not borrow too heavily from the stage. Seldes thought that if the talkie borrowed from the stage it would hinder the medium’s ability to grow. Similarly, Bakshy pointed out the flaw in comparing the talkie to the stage stating that the comparison implied that they dealt with the same material when in actuality they did not. To the intellectual critic of the late talkie it was clear that in order for the talkie to develop into something worthy of their time, improvements needed to be made; to make the talkie into a new art that was independent of the silent screen and the stage.

The intellectual critics felt the way the talkie handled dialogue did not meet the artistic standards they wished this new art to hold, and therefore because they were willing to critique it shows their acceptance of the talkie as more than just a fad. Seldes explained that one major flaw with motion picture dialogue was the strong reliance on it. He gave an example in his book *An Hour With The Movies and The Talkies* using a parting of two lovers. He explained that the

---

30 Seldes, *An Hour With The Movies and the Talkies*, 152.
31 Bakshy, “The ‘Talkies’” in American Movie Critics, 47.
two lovers in a talkie would merely say “we must part” as opposed to showing the emotion of the scene by saying the line and also showing an embarrassed young man and an angry young woman. Seldes was not alone in this opinion of the overuse of dialogue in the talkie. Another important intellectual critic of the era, Harry Potamkin, suggested that dialogue was the “anti-cinema” and thought that “speech-as-utterance” was a better route in use of natural speech. Overall, the intellectual critic wanted sound in films to be natural, not forced or unnecessary. However, the fact that these intellectual critics were paying attention to improving the talkie suggested that it was important to them. While they may not have accepted the talkie as art in the same respect as the silent screen, it became clear that the intellectual critic considered that, with some improvements, the talkie could be a new art.

As the intellectual critic accepted the talkie, their critical attitude and their reception coincided with that of the public. Famous scholar Walter Benjamin suggested that with most forms of visual and emotional enjoyment there would be a distinction between criticism and enjoyment. However, when it came to the screen there was no distinction, instead criticism and enjoyment coincided. While I agree with Benjamin’s theory, he suggested that this fusion of criticism and enjoyment happened instantaneously. This was the case for the general public. However when applied to the intellectual critic it becomes clear that the fusion of criticism and enjoyment happened gradually over time. The intellectual critic of the late 1920s and the 1930s was a complex individual. Struggling to separate themselves from the masses and representing a different set of the movie-going population, the intellectual critics’ acceptance of the talkie did not happen at the same time as the general public.

Once they looked at the talkie in a different light many of these intellectual critics became more accepting of the talkie as a new art, rather than something to be compared to silent films. To the intellectual critic, film was a purely visual art that they held to strict aesthetic standards. With the introduction of the talkie the visual performance of these films did not meet the standards of the intellectual critic. This caused a great deal of disagreement amongst critics.

32 Seldes, An Hour With The Movies and the Talkies, 142.
While in the early years many intellectual critics viewed the talkie as something for the masses, once it became clear that the talkie had staying power, the intellectual critic found a new way to evaluate film. Rather than focusing on visual aspects alone, they focused on the personal aspects of film. They also realized that the talkie needed to be improved before they could completely accept the new art. The talkie presented the intellectual critic with a way to re-evaluate what elements were important to the art of film, and while the talkie was still very much in infancy during this time their critiques showed that they believed, with some improvement, the talkie could reach a new level of artistic merit.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Potamkin, Harry Alan. “‘A’ in the Art of the Movie and Kino,” in American Movie Critics.


____. The Seven Lively Arts. New York: Sagamore Press, 1924.


ELIZABETH METELAK is a third-year history major with particular interests in modern Eastern European history and modern Latin American history, followed closely by everything else there is to know. When she decides to give the books a rest, she enjoys running, cycling, and building recumbent bicycles out of composite materials as a part of Cal Poly’s Human Powered Vehicle Team. After she graduates in June, Elizabeth plans on teaching high school social studies in Connecticut with Teach for America for two years. While she hopes to follow this with graduate school, she remains open to whatever life has in store.
In the first decades of the twentieth century, Russia struggled to present the world with a coherent image. The 1905 Revolution, a series of strikes and riots sparked when Tsar Nicholas II ordered his soldiers to fire on peaceful demonstrations, died down only when Nicholas reluctantly conceded to the creation of the Duma, the first parliamentary system the Russian empire had ever seen. As the autocracy begrudgingly accustomed itself to the existence of the Duma and a quasi form of constitutional autocracy, Russian political tendencies remained in a state of constant flux - each elected Duma would clash with the autocracy and find itself disbanded within a few short months. Terrorist attacks and massive labor strikes periodically unsettled matters even further, as did the outbreak of war across Europe in 1914. Simultaneously, Russian society wrestled with new ideas of identity and culture, only compounding the uncertainties of this volatile atmosphere. Central to these questions lay the emergence of a middle class that had steadily grown over the preceding decades, a segment of society considered above the peasants and industrial laborers, but still beneath the wealth and refinement of Russia’s aristocratic elite.

In American and European understandings, the middle class has come to epitomize the modern era, as when Vanessa Schwartz alludes to the
modernization of Paris as designed by and for the Parisian bourgeoisie.¹ In Western regions, political processes and democratic ideals are said to rely on the middle class while simultaneously catering to its wants and needs - developments characterized by the birth of such trends as political liberalism and consumer culture. While room for debate certainly still exists within these frameworks, most accept such characterizations with little hesitation, often extrapolating to create a sort of universal middle class based upon them.

Meanwhile, scholars of Imperial Russia have debated the role and nature of their own middle class practically as long as it has existed, but have found seemingly little to agree upon except the uniqueness of the Russian experience of modernity.² In her analysis of suicides between the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, Susan Morrissey perceives increasing suicide rates among the educated population as a response to the failure of the 1905 Revolution and a modern middle class society increasingly defined by materialism.³ Sally West, however, claims that this same materialistic consumer culture served as a normative influence that guided the development of an increasingly diverse Russian society.⁴ Meanwhile Stephen Lovell focuses on a growing suburban estate culture as evidence of the impossibility of social cohesion within the middle class(es), dwelling on the ambiguously intermediate status to which this culture testified.⁵ For Roshanna Sylvestre, as well as Samuel D. Kassow, James L. West, and Edith W. Clowes, this ambiguity becomes the focus of their discussions on crime and civil society respectively. Through their analysis, a vaguely three-tiered middle class emerges faintly from the surrounding haze – the lower-middle class meshchanstvo, the mainstream bourgeoisie, and the more intellectual ranks of the

³ Morrissey, 321, 344-345.
⁵ Lovell, 66-87.
intelligentsia – but even these groups find themselves marked by a measure of overlap between their members and a certain fluidity between their definitions. Delving deeper into the material and literary displays of the early twentieth century reveals cultural clashes and characteristics that simultaneously define and obscure the existence of a Russian middle class, handicapping its abilities to strongly influence the development of modern politics. Through these discussions, we see the ambiguous nature of Russian middle class society as its most consistent aspect, and perhaps the only truly defining factor thereof.

The Russian middle class began with the birth of the intelligentsia, a segment of educated Russians determined to distance themselves from the autocratic regime with which they vehemently disagreed. While this once uniquely Russian social category has subsequently spread worldwide, its long and active legacy in nineteenth-century Russia gives rise to its reputation as the oldest and highest tier of middling society. This group’s cohesiveness stems not from an economic sense of class, but from a unified ideology grounded in education and progress. Previous efforts to shape the course of Russian development, from the Great Reforms in the 1860s to the Liberation Movement at the turn of the century, bolstered this identity and endowed the intelligentsia with a certain credibility of opinion. While not its most defining factor, Sylvester nonetheless demonstrates that economic status helped establish the intelligentsia as a role model for the rest of respectable middle class society, a standard to which others strove to live up to at least in appearance, if not in character. She illustrates this with the appeal of Odessa’s Literary-Artistic Society, which, while designed for a strictly intelligentsia clientele, actually resonated more with the lower middling groups striving to attain a similar appearance of refinement and legitimacy. Moreover, the intelligentsia possessed an acute awareness of and sense of pride in this role, made apparent by their vocal rejections of anything they perceived as a corrupting influence. Hence their quickness to discard the overtly sexual themes of the novel, Sanin, as amoral and pornographic, a sign of cultural exploitation and an offensive departure from acceptable behavior and

---

6 Kassow, West, and Clowes, 4.
7 Ibid.
8 Sylvester, 9.
9 Ibid., 11-12.
morality. Odessa’s literary intelligentsia expressed similar views as they strove to implement social and cultural improvements through their publications. Sylvester presents the “civilizing mission” of Odessan journalists on numerous occasions, illustrating how authors presented developments in well-meaning calls for reforms, hoping to lift the dregs of urban society to civilized heights. 

As strong as these reforming urges from the intelligentsia may seem, however, the strength and influence of the intelligentsia found itself under siege, particularly in the wake of the 1905 Revolution and its failure to bring about effective political changes. The post-revolutionary years found many willing to question the heart and soul of the intelligentsia, to reevaluate its legacy in light of twentieth century developments. Landmarks, a collection of essays published in 1909, sets about critiquing the intelligentsia and providing suggestions for a possible revival. Aleksandr Izgoev’s essay dismisses the guiding influence of the intelligentsia by focusing on their “powerlessness” to mold their own families according to their beliefs or to create any sort of “ideological inheritance” that would provide them with a sense of continuity. He holds the Russian student to be a sham, who “[studies] rather little and poorly,” caught up in a culture of peer pressure and lack of content, from which he will emerge into the void that is intelligentsia life. Others testify to this period as a time of crisis for the intelligentsia, where it must either acknowledge its past mistakes and rectify them, or become the ruin of Russia. Nikolai Berdyaev, author and religious philosopher, accuses them of cliquishness and dogmatism, sequestering themselves from mainstream society and failing to engage in truly intellectual dialogue. While he acknowledges the crippling influence of the autocracy on the intelligentsia’s development, he does not excuse them from culpability for

---


11 Sylvester, 30, 33-37, 90.


13 Izgoev, 97, 100.


15 Berdyaev, 8-9.
their own actions. Together, these authors present an intelligentsia waning in influence - stagnant and in desperate need of ideological reinvigoration. For them, the intelligentsia might succeed in influencing Russia’s modern political and cultural ways of life, but without updating their perspective, that influence must indubitably come in a negative form.

Of all the middling social groups, the bourgeoisie find themselves most often categorized as the heart and soul of the middle class, but this holds true more in Western Europe than in Russia at this period. For Russian society, this position developed less distinctly and much more tenuously. Some attribute the bourgeoisie with the advent of progress, prosperity, and consumption in Russia’s urban atmosphere, along with all the “trappings of western bourgeois civilization” - banks, offices, museums, cafés, universities and more. Coupled with this constant search for novel ways to improve and enjoy the comforts of their urban existences lies increasing attempts to mold the lower echelons of society to reflect bourgeois values. Fierce and vocal protest against this process and way of life, however, became just as integral to its role in modern society. The trend of hooliganism as investigated by Joan Neuberger testifies to the presence of middle class-ness in modern Russia while simultaneously undermining its power and influence.

Literally “town dwellers,” bourgeois families sprang up from Russia’s traditional merchant estate into a distinctly urban tradition of bustling commercial activity and industrialization in the late nineteenth century. The relative newness of a cultured bourgeois led many to perceive its claims to respectability as utterly pretentious, founded upon borrowed and outdated intelligentsia literature and a putting on of airs that they viewed as laughably offensive. Through petty crimes and loud public displays, hooligans rebelled against these airs in an “outrageous” lack of public decorum. Their crimes ranged from causing drunken ruckuses in intentionally public arenas to loosening the bolts of park

16 Ibid., 10.
17 Sylvester, 20.
18 West, 347.
benches in order to embarrass unsuspecting members of respectable (middle class) society and assaulting the taxi of a well-known Odessan police chief and his wife. 21 The artistic players in these spontaneous forms of rebellion, the self-proclaimed futurists, outlined the intentions of these riotous actions in the title of one of their earliest publications, proclaiming a strong desire for their behavior to serve as a “Slap in the Face of Public Taste.” 22 They went beyond a mere rejection of proper bourgeois appearances, commercialization, and moralistic literature to launch a full scale assault against the overbearing triviality they saw within these institutions. 23 Their willingness to tell bourgeois society to “Go to Hell!” worried recipients of these attacks by emphasizing the fragile construction of their position and their vulnerability to lower class vulgarity. 24 The involvement of middle class students in hooligan-style attacks only reiterated this vulnerability, and helped blur the lines between working-class and bourgeois culture to an even greater degree. 25 By challenging the bourgeoisie, the hooligans and futurists do inadvertently acknowledge its growing influence on urban cultural standards. Ultimately, however, the hooligans’ cultural attacks and public mockery of “bourgeois propriety” testify to a segment of society unable to rally the middle and lower classes to its causes or have a strong voice in the deciding of Russia’s future. 26

We tend to view the bourgeoisie as the essence of middle classness the way that it appears in much of Europe at this time. In Russia, however, a rapidly growing lower middle class challenged the idea of a bourgeois monopoly on public culture and civil society, lending its own distinct personality to the urban scene. The meshchanstvo - consisting predominately of those employed in “semi-professional and lower white collar positions” - took advantage of the rise in social mobility to enjoy some of the trappings of bourgeois and intelligentsia culture, yet still struggled to achieve the respectability that marked their wealthier, more refined counterparts. 27

21 Sylvester, 100-102. Neuberger, 189-191.
22 “Slap,” 51-52.
23 Neuberger, 193.
24 “Go to Hell” (1914), in Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes, 1912-1928, 85-86.
25 Sylvester, 103.
26 Neuberger, 185.
27 Sylvester, 12.
On the one hand, the *meshchanstvo* seems to form the backbone of the urban public to a much greater extent than the bourgeoisie, dictating many of the trends and behaviors of city life.\(^\text{28}\) Popular entertainments and moral admonishments alike focused their attention on the pleasure and enlightenment of the *meshchanstvo* crowd, while the consumer identity portrayed in most advertising geared itself directly toward this same audience, selling the “well-being, culture, and comfort” to which it aspired.\(^\text{29}\) This *meshchanskii* desire for such markers of refinement becomes most apparent in “The Little Family,” an Odessan satire of Jewish *meshchanstvo* culture published in 1912.\(^\text{30}\) Rachel, the mother of the family, laments the state of her furniture as lacking in opulence, testifying to a general desire for material wealth as well as the idea that one’s possessions defined one’s place in society.\(^\text{31}\) Meanwhile the search for a wealthy, well-established husband for Mathilda, the oldest daughter, highlights the *meshchanstvo* appetite for upward mobility. Clearly, her parents hope to achieve bourgeois respectability for the entire family through their daughter’s marriage.\(^\text{32}\) This play’s publication to a lower middle class audience reveals the author’s desire to both censure and uplift the *meshchanstvo* by pointing out a few of the crass idiosyncrasies that prevent it from rising to a truly cultured status.\(^\text{33}\) This trend of moralizing literature filled the periodicals of the day, but always alongside tales meant for sensationalized *meshchanstvo* entertainment.\(^\text{34}\) By aiming as much to fulfill lower middle class demands as to shape what those demands look like, these works indicate a modern society heavily geared towards both *meshchanstvo* criticism and consumption.

The *meshchanstvo* struggle for both the material benefits and moral standing of middle class culture also served as a staging ground for many questions about the nature of Russian society and its future. Though now enjoying many of the privileges of education and culture, the lower rungs of middle class society and really the entirety of the middle classes, faced continuous challenges.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 128.
\(^{29}\) Ibid., 106-128. West, 359.
\(^{31}\) “‘Semeika’ili ‘Gospoda Odessity,’” in Sylvester, 131-132.
\(^{32}\) This can also be seen in the son’s paths in business and the family’s despair over Esther’s emancipated behavior and associations.
\(^{33}\) Sylvester, 130-131.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 126.
to the culture they sought to attain or preserve. Radical individualism often undermined social standards of behavior, both public and private, that the *meshchanstvo* at least idealized, if not actually followed.\(^{35}\) This new creed of the individual typically arose in the shocking new literature of the period, which sparked outrage in all levels of middling society for its vivid, vulgar descriptions and amoral attitudes. Artsybashev’s descriptions in *Sanin* of the seduction of Lida, with all her thrills and “tremors” and Sarudin’s violent fantasies, embody these individualistic urges to live a life of pleasure and “spontaneous impulse.”\(^{36}\) Instead of advocating for the fulfillment of civic duties and social reforms, Artsybashev and his contemporaries touted a reckless embrace of natural impulse regardless of outcome.\(^{37}\) Indeed, his vivid descriptions of carnal passion, even when only imagined by his characters rather than performed, bear a frightful correspondence to many of the sexually violent crimes publicized in Odessan journals and newspapers.\(^{38}\) Instead of using these tales to warn, admonish, and reform, as Odessan journalists did, the authors of this literature glorified their characters’ bold attacks on the middle class status-quo. They rejected middle class morality and ideas of responsibility, choosing to live for the self and its desires, however contrary to the norm they might be. Thus the *meshchanstvo* found itself and the bourgeois life it sought dismissed as stifling and aimless, hinting that not all might be well in the shining parlors of the bourgeois, and directly challenging all the things they strove to gain in their pursuit of wealth and a better way of life.

In the face of all this questioning – intellectual critique, hooliganism, and risqué literature – Russia’s middle classes strove to present a united front toward their antagonists that they would never admit to amongst themselves. The intelligentsia, bourgeois, and *meshchanstvo* clashed constantly over the standards of culture and enlightenment to which they all laid claim.\(^{39}\) Moreover these three layers of middle society were complicated by their similarities of appearance and the rapidity with which fortunes rose and fell in this volatile period. No guaranteed means to discern between the petty businessman, well-to-do banker,

\(^{35}\) Engelstein, 359-420.

\(^{36}\) Artsybashev, 331-332. Engelstein, 385.

\(^{37}\) Note that *Sanin* eventually commits suicide and many other characters that Engelstein discusses do as well.

\(^{38}\) Sylvester, 44-45, 62, 97-100.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 12, 15, 76, 102-103.
and scholarly intellectual existed in the bustling cities of modern Russia. While one might hazard a guess based on specific attributes or places frequented, one never possessed any certainty of with whom one dealt. Combined with a reality of fortunes lost and fortunes gained practically overnight, one never knew if a resident of a lower end meshchanstvo neighborhood “belonged,” or if they might be a learned intellectual fallen on hard times. In light of this ambiguity, it becomes problematic to speak of a single middle class, or even of three distinct middle classes. Due to the blurring of social boundaries and widespread class conflicts, the middling classes found themselves ill-equipped to combat the challenges inherent to a modern Russian state and significantly less able to influence politics within an autocratic Russia struggling to translate its relevance to the modern world. While clearly shaped by Russia’s particular historical context, these developments perhaps complicate American and European understandings of middle class-ness, calling into question foundational assumptions concerning the nature and influence of the middle class within the modern world.

40 Ibid., 10.


LAURA NEYLAN is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in History with Psychology and Law and Society minors. Colonial American history especially interests her. She is proud to be a College of Liberal Arts Ambassador, a Phi Alpha Theta member, and an Open House Committee member. Laura enjoys traveling, watching movies, and hiking. She is also looking forward to studying abroad in Peru and traveling to Chile this summer.
In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and other notable women’s rights activists created the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments at the Seneca Falls Convention. These women pushed for equal rights in antebellum America, yet these rights would not be recognized until the twentieth century. The prevalence of the cult of domesticity ideology helps to explain this discrepancy. According to historian Catherine Clinton, “the creation of the cult of domesticity, the redefinition of the home as women’s domain, was a delicate process designed to channel women’s contributions into a proper course.”1 While some women of the mid-nineteenth century wanted to assert their independence, many women and especially men endeavored to keep women in the domestic sphere.2 They also defined the ideal woman as virtuous.3 Ultimately, these competing ideas made antebellum America a transitional period for women’s rights.

---

3 Ibid.
One book, *A Domestic History of the American Revolution* written by Elizabeth Fries Ellet in 1850, exemplifies the transitional nature of women’s rights in this period. This history focuses on the roles of women in the American Revolution. I argue that *A Domestic History of the American Revolution* reflects the transitional period of antebellum America in that the author both emphasizes the stereotypical virtuousness of women and audaciously conveys their abilities to exist outside their stereotypical realm. I will assess the way that the author portrays Revolutionary era women in her book and secondly consider the example that the author herself presents. Although she associates domesticity with femininity, she challenges male dominance not only by writing a history, but also by writing one that focuses so heavily on the experiences of women during this period.

Historians have argued that a “cult of true womanhood,” or “a belief system that prescribed and proscribed respectable femaleness during the antebellum and postbellum periods,” initiated and perpetuated the necessity of portraying women as virtuous. Historian Natasha Kristen Kraus emphasizes that this cult of true womanhood cultivated “four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.” In her *Domestic History of the American Revolution*, Ellet conveys each of these stereotypical female virtues. For my purposes, I will focus on piety and domesticity. Interestingly, in the same passages that illustrate these virtues, Ellet simultaneously demonstrates the independent capabilities of women.

Ellet portrays the stereotypical piety of women but also portrays women’s abilities to act outside of their prescribed gender sphere. A story about women on the home front of Wyoming perfectly illustrates this contradiction. The British troops and their Native American allies set fire to a house in which women hid from the soldiers. Ellet describes the women loading guns with gunpowder and spitting liquids onto the fire to defend this home. Eventually, when all hope seemed to be lost and “death appeared inevitable, the prayers of the pious mother seemed to be answered by direct interposition from Heaven.”

---

4 Ibid., 16.
5 Ibid., 26.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 146.
The British troops turned back from the house just in time. This anecdote emphasizes the piety of one of the women of the house, as her faith alone rescued her from near death. God answered the woman’s prayers directly, implying that she maintained a very close relationship with God, as well as demonstrating Ellet’s stereotypical portrayal of women as devout.

The same passage, however, depicts women loading guns and putting out the fire in order to protect themselves and their home—a responsibility usually given to men. The fact that the woman in the passage chose to defend her home may merely reflect the fact that her husband was not there to complete this task himself. Yet regardless of her husband’s presence, this woman capably defended her home both through stereotypically female means and stereotypically male means. Additionally, the reader should note the inherent contradiction in this passage: a woman acted outside of the virtues of true womanhood in order to defend one of these said virtues—domesticity.

While in the previous passage Ellet inadvertently refers to domesticity, in other parts of the book she blatantly employs the stereotypical portrayal of women as domestic creatures. Yet even as she conveys women as domestic, she also demonstrates their importance to the political patriotic cause. In the following passage, Ellet utilizes a metaphor that characterizes women as domestic while simultaneously discussing women’s vast political contribution to the Revolutionary War:

It is almost impossible now to appreciate the vast influence of women’s patriotism upon the destinies of the infant republic. We have no means of showing the important part she bore in maintaining the struggle, and in laying the foundations on which so mighty and majestic a structure has arisen. We can only dwell upon individual instances of magnanimity, fortitude, self-sacrifice and heroism, bearing the impress of the feeling of Revolutionary days, indicative of the spirit which animated all, and to which, in its various and multiform exhibitions, we are not less indebted for national freedom, than to the swords of the patriots who poured out their blood.

---

9 Ibid., 145.
10 Ibid., 42.
Ellet first identifies America as the “infant republic,” implying not only that the country is new, but also that someone had to give birth to it.\textsuperscript{12} Because women carry children and give birth, women metaphorically gave birth to this “infant republic.”\textsuperscript{13} Therein, this passage portrays the stereotypical domestic role of women. The author tries to convey the integral, often underestimated, role that women played in the Revolution but she illustrates this message with the use of a metaphor that contradictorily reaffirms the stereotypical domesticity of women. Ellet’s verb choice also illuminates this contradiction, as she demonstrates the burdens that women “bore” in the conflict and discusses that women were “bearing” the revolutionary spirit.\textsuperscript{14} This particular verb again evokes the notion of women giving birth to the new nation. Ultimately, although Ellet attempts to portray that women contributed equally as much as men to the Revolutionary War—a revolutionary concept in itself—the language that she utilizes to portray this message actually reasserts the stereotypical female value of domesticity.

Ellet knowingly portrays women as both pious and domestic, two of the most important characteristics cultivated by the “cult of true womanhood” as determined by historian Natasha Kraus.\textsuperscript{15} However, it seems that the inherent contradictions found within these passages do not trouble Ellet. In the first instance, Ellet stereotypically depicts one particular woman as pious but also concedes that this woman can operate successfully outside of her prescribed sphere—the home. In the second excerpt, the author intends to draw the reader’s attention to the part that women played in the Revolution, yet she articulates this point by employing a stereotypical metaphor. It seems that what appear to be blatant contradictions to modern readers were fully logical to the author in antebellum America. These contradictions ultimately manifest the transitional period of women’s rights in which they were written.

Just as Ellet’s portrayal of stereotypical, virtuous women becomes convoluted with instances of women’s abilities to act outside of their gender sphere, Ellet’s depictions of women’s initiatives outside their female realm are marked by virtuousness. In one example, a British officer revealed to a local woman

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Kraus, 26.
that his troops planned to surprise General Washington's army. The woman then decided to trek to the location of Washington's army to give him advance warning. This woman clearly acted outside of her gender sphere and made decisions without her husband’s counsel: “again she returned to her chamber; but her mind was more disquieted than ever, for she thought of the danger that threatened the lives of thousands of her countrymen. Her resolution at length was formed, and at dawn of day she waked her husband, and informed him flour was wanted for the use of the household, and that it was necessary she should go to Frankford to procure it.” Though she claimed to be walking to Frankford for flour, she actually made the journey to alert General Washington. Ellet emphasizes that the decision was “her resolution”—not the prerogative of her husband. Furthermore, she woke her husband to tell him she was going, not to ask for permission. This woman endeavored to enter a stereotypically male sphere of action, and she did not ask for permission. The woman was ultimately successful; the British troops arrived at Washington's camp only to see his army already on the march.

While this anecdote illustrates women's capability to navigate outside the home, it also subverts this message by reaffirming women's ties to the home. The woman cannot just decide to act and then follow through. She must provide an excuse to her husband. Although independent-minded, her submissiveness can be seen through her responsibility to inform her husband where she was going and why. Furthermore, the excuse that the woman made—that the house required additional flour—affirms her ties to her stereotypical gender sphere. Therefore, even when Ellet depicts women functioning outside of their stereotypical gender sphere, she simultaneously affirms women's relationship to this sphere.

The author’s contradictory portrayal of the history of women during the Revolution clearly reflects the transitional period of the mid-nineteenth century, but the author’s inferred ideas and potential motivation to write this book also

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., 98.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
reveal much about this complex era of women’s rights. Ellet’s chosen title for her book, *A Domestic History of the American Revolution*, perfectly illuminates the inherent contradictions of this period. The term *domestic* refers both to the nation as well as to the home and, as previously stated, historians define the cult of domesticity as a redefinition of the home as a woman’s sphere. However, Ellet’s use of the term in her title arguably reflects a different definition. If *domestic* here simply referred to the home, the reader would expect to find anecdotes of only the home front. Ellet includes many stories about the home front during the war, but she also incorporates many narratives that are not located in a home. The main continuity between the stories that occur at home and the anecdotes that unfold elsewhere is that they both focus primarily on women. Ellet depicts women that followed behind their soldier-husbands in wagons, women kidnapped by Native Americans, and women that positioned themselves as spies for the British or American armies. Although Ellet portrays women as domestic under the home definition, the variety of locations found in Ellet’s stories suggests that Ellet associates domesticity with femininity more so than with the home front. Ellet’s association of femininity with domesticity conveys the strength of the concept of the virtuous woman. Regardless of where a woman goes, she is domestic by Ellet’s definition. Thus, Ellet can be classified as a proponent of the cult of domesticity.

This identification alone, however, would be too simple. The author, like others of the period, both promoted the stereotypical depiction of women but also challenged it. According to Clinton, “many of the advocates of domesticity developed attitudes antithetical to those promoted by men. The emphasis on female values and female culture posed a serious challenge to male hegemony.” Regardless of how Ellet portrayed women, the fact that she mentioned them at all was revolutionary for this era. The presence of a history focused primarily on the role of women in the revolution threatened the gender hierarchy of the mid-nineteenth century.

Ellet’s decision to write this book, too, demonstrates an attempt to expand the acceptable role of women in society. As noted by Clinton, “women

24 Clinton, 40.
25 Ellet.
26 Ibid.
27 Clinton, 47.
pioneered by incorporating new interests into their realm: religion, literature, and art, to name a few. Most women may have been confined to domesticity, but the ways in which they challenged their imprisonment were diverse and fascinating.”28 A Domestic History of the American Revolution, then, exemplifies Ellet’s efforts to “challenge” the female sex’s “imprisonment.”29 Clinton accurately characterizes the challenges to female inferiority as fascinating; the contradictions of Ellet’s work exemplify the complex forces at work in society in antebellum America.

In conclusion, the female-focused anecdotes of A Domestic History of the American Revolution reflect the transitional period of the mid-nineteenth century because they both uphold the standard of the virtuous women and convey that women could successfully navigate the world outside of their prescribed gender sphere. The author, too, exemplifies this era of transition as her writing both identifies domesticity and femininity as nearly synonymous and represents an attempt to break free of her gender sphere. A Domestic History of the American Revolution, then, can be seen as a vestige of the transitional early women’s rights movement; a movement not fully realized until the twentieth century. The standard of the virtuous women and convey that women could successfully navigate the world outside of their prescribed gender sphere. The author, too, exemplifies this era of transition as her writing both identifies domesticity and femininity as nearly synonymous and represents an attempt to break free of her gender sphere. A Domestic History of the American Revolution, then, can be seen as a vestige of the transitional early women’s rights movement; a movement not fully realized until the twentieth century.

28 Ibid., 53.
29 Ibid.


ANDREW PAGAN, known as Ondy to many of his friends, is a third-year history major who enjoys Modern Southeast Asian History, especially that of the Philippines, the politics and cultures of Contemporary China and Japan, and theories of power, colonialism, nationalism, masculinity, and narrativity. When not thinking about Imagined Communities or critiquing Eurocentrism, he enjoys eating Thai food, spending time with friends, hiking, traveling, and embarking on spontaneous adventures. This year, he served as a group leader for Cal Poly’s Week of Welcome Program, Vice President of Cal Poly’s chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, a National History Honors Society, and as a member of EPIC Christian Fellowship’s CORE leadership team. Upon graduation, Andrew hopes to share the wonders of World History and passive voice-free writing with high school students.
FROM THE DARKNESS TO THE FAMILY: EVOLVING ORIENTALIST REPRESENTATIONS OF THE KATIPUNAN IN EURO-AMERICAN TRAVEL LITERATURE, 1899-1917
Andrew Pagan

Introduction
On July 7, 1892, news of the deportation of Philippine patriot Jose Rizal to the southern city of Dapitan motivated a group of lower class individuals to create the Katipunan. Although primarily political, this revolutionary society embraced Catholicism, attracting members from the lower classes. The formation of the group marked a shift in Philippine revolutionary politics. No longer would the wealthy and educated Ilustrado class petition for political and economic reform from Spain. Rather, the Katipunan called on persons from all socio-economic strata to participate in an uprising against Spanish colonial rule. In the Philippines, many revere the Katipunan, but outside of the region, more varied views of the organization exist. In the early twentieth century, European and American travelers penned firsthand accounts of the Philippines, describing various aspects of Filipino life, culture, and history. Strangely enough, travelogue portrayals of the organization changed between 1899 and 1917. Early unsympathetic characterizations of the Katipunan as a secretive and shadowy group eventually gave way to descriptions of the society’s trials under the Spanish. This essay explores the reasons behind varying
characterizations of the Katipunan in this time period. I suggest that American and European portrayals of the Katipunan from 1899-1917 evolved over time to justify changing American colonial policies in the Philippines; early twentieth century descriptions of the group as shadowy or menacing validated American conduct during the Philippine-American War, while later representations of the organization as a victim of Spanish cruelty legitimized supposedly benevolent U.S. governance in the region.

This paper examines European and American travelogues written between 1899 and 1917. Depending exclusively on these documents has advantages and disadvantages. Written by foreign travelers, these accounts provide firsthand descriptions of cultural practices that governmental organizations or Southeast Asians may not have considered worth adding to the historical record. Unfortunately, travelogue writings only contain “Western” perceptions of Southeast Asia, which suffer from biases against Asian individuals and cultural practices. Consequently, these accounts bear little value in the construction of a balanced history of Southeast Asia. This noted, by dissecting the biases of Euro-American travelogues, this paper reveals Euro-American prejudices towards the Philippines, and how their perceptions shaped and legitimated colonial practices, thereby transcending the limitations of such accounts.

In its analysis of European and American travelogues, this paper draws its theoretical direction from the contributions of various scholars, many of whom write within the field of postcolonial theory. For instance, it borrows of Marc Bloch’s idea that consistent half-truths within historical documents function as a “mirror of the collective consciousness.” Additionally, this essay inherits much of its theoretical direction from Edward Said, who argues that Euro-American discourses focusing on the Orient define foreign cultures in Western terms, ultimately functioning to exoticize “the other” and justify Occidental imperialism in the East. Mary Louise Pratt contends that travel and exploration writing produced European perception of “the rest of the world,” in the process encoding and legitimating imperialist enterprises. Extending on Pratt and Said’s argument, Han Mui Ling claims that European travel writing concerning Singapore proved instrumental in the European characterization of

---

the Asian nation, and that both description and definition of the region served to substantiate British colonial governance.\textsuperscript{4} This work also draws upon Homi K. Bhabha’s theory that representations of colonized peoples must undergo constant modification, since they usually stem from the transforming needs and desires of the West.\textsuperscript{5} Finally, this article owes much to Julie A. Tuason’s suggestion that changes in \textit{National Geographic} reporting on the Philippines from 1898-1908 reflect the evolution of American rationalizations for colonial rule in the region.\textsuperscript{6}

The existing historiography of the Katipunan focuses on the group’s relationship with the Philippine people. This essay relies on the work of the Filipino historian Teodoro Agoncillo, who challenges historians whom label the Katipunan an elitist or marginalized organization, contending that the group’s leaders originated from the middle and lower classes, representing the will of many of the Philippine people.\textsuperscript{7} Additionally, this paper draws from the historical writing of Reynaldo Clemena Ileto, who suggests that folk religious traditions and cultural values underscored and motivated popular revolutionary movements in the Philippines.\textsuperscript{8} Ileto argues that the Katipunan succeeded in large part not because of the spread of Western values or Ilustrado literature in the Philippines, but due to their tendency to relate their political struggle to religious ideals embraced by the masses.\textsuperscript{9} My thesis departs from the strategies of the dominant Katipunan historiography. Instead of analyzing the perspective of the populace towards the Katipunan, I examine European and American perceptions towards the group in order to understand how such viewpoints contributed to colonial rule in the Philippines.

\textsuperscript{5} Homi K. Bhabha, \textit{Nation and Narration} (London: Routledge, 1990), 294.
\textsuperscript{7} Teodoro A. Agoncillo, \textit{The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan} (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1956), 315.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 79.
European Conquest and Impact in Southeast Asia and the Philippines

European imperialism in sixteenth-century Southeast Asia marked the beginning of a period of increased Western influence in the region. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, the world experienced what historian Anthony Reid termed “The Age of Commerce,” which included a period of trade and political centralization along the Southeast Asian mainland.¹⁰ In the fifteenth century European financial interest in Southeast Asia led to the eastern region’s transformation into a highly successful zone of trade.¹¹ Additionally, the possibility of converting foreign peoples to Christianity and nationalist sentiments contributed to a Western presence within Southeast Asia.¹² In 1511, seeking greater financial gain and tiring of the limitations of trade, the Portuguese obtained control of the port of Malacca, thereby committing the first act of European imperialism in Southeast Asia. In the nineteenth century, a combination of demands for new raw materials (such as rubber and tin), centralization among the mainland Southeast Asian kingdoms, and the development of more efficient modes of transportation led to the colonization of almost all of mainland Southeast Asia.¹³

In 1571, the Spanish established their colonial headquarters for the Philippines at Manila.¹⁴ Spanish control over the islands grew slowly and never covered the whole region; both the country’s highland sections and southern Muslim areas never came under Spanish rule.¹⁵ Despite this, Spanish colonization of the Philippines did create an organized nation where only a group of disunited islands had previously existed.¹⁶ Additionally, contact with Europeans led many of the residents of the Philippines to adopt a form of Catholicism that blended Christian beliefs with animist indigenous traditions.¹⁷ Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, native dissatisfaction

¹³ Ibid., 39-43.
¹⁵ Ibid., 78.
¹⁶ Owen, *The Emergence of Modern*, 181.
with the economic and social policies of the colonial Spanish government spread throughout the Philippines, leading to a revolution against the imperial power in 1896. Many Americans took notice of this, and their desire to expand the U.S. frontier coupled with a thirst for wealth led the Western power to initiate the Spanish-American War. At the conclusion of the war in 1898, the United States entered into a colonial relationship with the Philippines that would not cease until after WWII.

The Highest and Most Respectable Society: History, Composition, Religion

Meaningful examination of European perceptions of the Katipunan requires a sufficient understanding of the movement. For this reason, this paper now turns to a brief overview of the organization. As previously mentioned, on July 7, 1892, a handful of lower class Filipinos, including the workers Andres Bonifacio and Deodato Arellano, founded the Katipunan in response to increasing Spanish repression and the exile of Jose Rizal to the southern Philippines. The society, more formally known as Kataastaasan Kagalang-galang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (The Highest and Most Respectable Society of the Sons of the People), vowed to establish an independent Philippines, defend the poor and repressed, and unite all Filipinos.

On August 26, 1896, fighting broke out between the Spanish government and the Katipunan. As the armed struggle against the Spanish continued, the Katipunan split into two opposing groups: the Magdiwan, who supported Bonifacio, and the Magdalo, who backed the popular general Emilio Aguinaldo. Conflict between the two factions resulted in the death of Bonifacio, after which Aguinaldo sided with the American government in their attempt to colonize and control the Philippine Islands.

The composition and religion of the Katipunan prove crucial to the examination of its representation in Euro-American travelogues. The Katipunan drew both its leadership and membership from the middle and lower classes; Andres Bonifacio himself worked as a laborer. By the beginning of 1897,

18 18 Owen, The Emergence of Modern 150-156.
20 Owen, The Emergence of Modern 289.
21 Agoncillo, The Revolt of the Masses 46.
22 Gregorio F. Zaide, History of the Katipunan (Manila: Loyal Press), 112.
23 Ibid., 113.
24 Ibid., 142.
25 Agoncillo, The Revolt of the Masses, 46.
the organization lay claim to anywhere between 190,000 and 400,000 members, most of whom did not come from positions of wealth or power.\textsuperscript{26} The Katipunan’s mass appeal stemmed not only from their political objectives, but also from their ability to articulate their values to the Philippine populace through references to folk cultural values and religious practices.\textsuperscript{27} For the common Filipino, the experience of Holy Week shaped the style of brotherhood and strategies of organization during the late Spanish and early American colonial periods. The \textit{Pasyon}, a narration of Christ’s death and resurrection, provided peasants with a meaningful model to follow when envisioning the transition from colonial oppression to revolutionary independence.\textsuperscript{28} Katipunan initiation rituals discussed in Euro-American travelogues borrow symbolism from the \textit{Pasyon}. A Katipunan recruit’s passage from the first stage of the initiation ritual, which occurred while wearing a blindfold (a phase of darkness), to the next, in which he encountered a single oil lamp (a phase of light), references Christ’s death and resurrection.\textsuperscript{29} The final act of an individual’s induction into the Katipunan, the blood oath, represented the mixing together of the society member’s inner character, or “loob,” in order to establish a state of moral and spiritual unity.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{Imagining the Katipunan: Violence from the Shadows, 1899-1901}
During the first few years of American rule in the Philippines, from approximately 1899-1901, representation of the Katipunan in Euro-American travel accounts ranged from the mildly unfriendly to the blatantly pejorative. Additionally, many of these works stressed the mysterious and secretive nature of the society, and oftentimes accused the group’s leaders of misleading their followers. Whether condemning the Katipunan as a vast organization of evil power or merely noting its shadowy character, European and American travelogues from this period ultimately functioned to frame the organization as distinctly separate from and unrepresentative of the majority of the Philippine people. In its historical context, this perspective validated false American

\textsuperscript{26} Zaide, \textit{History of the Katipunan}, 52.
\textsuperscript{27} Ileto, \textit{Pasyon and Revolution}, 10.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 176.
perceptions of pro-independence freedom fighters during the official years of the Philippine-American War.

In the early period of American rule in the Philippines, European and American travel writings used language and descriptions of Katipunan initiation rituals to highlight the secret nature of the Katipunan. While this focus does not contradict fact, its prominence and the scant attention paid to the revolutionary, patriotic, or religious qualities of the group warrant examination. Ramon Reyes Lala, in his 1899 account of the Philippines, refers to the Katipunan as “secret,” while a travelogue by Joseph Earle Stevens, also written in 1899, typcasts the group as “mysterious.” A 1902 account by Henry Codman Potter characterizes the group as a “secret society,” while an academic article from 1901 refers to the Katipunan as “a secret organization appealing to native ignorance and prejudice.” Michael Shoemaker describes the “blood brotherhood” mark of the Katipunan extensively, making the organization seem both bizarre and barbarous. L.W.V. Kennon provides even more detail regarding Katipunan rituals. He calls the Katipunan initiation “solemn and terrifying,” mentioning the presence of a human skull, a loaded revolver, and a short sword in a dimly lit room.

These characterizations of the Katipunan did not simply arise out of European or American fascinations with the enigmatic, but out of a need to see the society as such to justify American policy in the region. From 1899 to 1902, the United States officially waged war against Philippine forces seeking independence in what the American government termed “The Philippine Insurrection.” The term “insurrection” implied that anti-American forces consisted of “rebels rebelling against legitimate authority” who “enjoyed little

33 Henry Codman Potter, The East of To-day and To-morrow (New York: The Century Co., 1902), 61.
popular support.”\textsuperscript{38} Justification of U.S. presence in the Philippines hinged upon the notion that the common Filipino gladly welcomed American rule, and any dissenters came from a small and aberrant portion of the population.\textsuperscript{39} In reality, the Philippine-American War engaged a huge portion of the Philippine population, resulting in 200,000 deaths, most of them Filipino civilians.\textsuperscript{40} European and American travelogue writers ignored the religious significance of Katipunan initiation rites, interpreting their rituals as a sign of mysteriousness. By subverting the Katipunan’s symbolic references to the \textit{Pasyon} of Christ into displays of secrecy, travelogues marginalized the organization, suggesting that the majority of Filipinos do not share its revolutionary goals. In this manner, Euro-American travel accounts supported wartime justifications of the American colonial government.

Euro-American travelogues did not only contain strange emphases, but also outright errors, particularly in regard to the Katipunan’s leadership. Kennon refers to the Katipunan as a group “appealing to native ignorance and racial prejudice.”\textsuperscript{41} Even more inaccurately, Michael Shoemaker argues that “the richest and most educated Filipinos” along with “a few native priests” led the patriotic organization.\textsuperscript{42} The scholarship of Teodoro Agoncillo disproves such notions; the majority of the Katipunan’s membership emerged from the lower classes.\textsuperscript{43} These inaccuracies deserve not merely acknowledgement, but also further study, as they can act as a “mirror” of Western biases and ideologies.\textsuperscript{44} Rationalizing American imperialism in the Philippines depended upon a view of the average Filipino as receptive to U.S. rule. By falsely typecasting the pro-independence leaders of the Katipunan as elitist or deceptive, travelogue


\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} For a particularly compelling discussion of the American colonial government’s treatment of the Filipino dead, as well as how the creation of categories such as “insurgent” led to the erasure of wartime violence and the promotion of imperial rule based upon “benevolent assimilation” see Vicente Rafael, \textit{White Love and Other Events in Filipino History} (Durham: Duke University Press), 19-51.

\textsuperscript{41} Kennon, “The Katipunan of the Philippines,” 208

\textsuperscript{42} Shoemaker, \textit{Quaint Corners of Ancient Empires}, 170

\textsuperscript{43} Agoncillo, \textit{The Revolt of the Masses}, 46.

\textsuperscript{44} Bloch, \textit{The Historians Craft}, 106.
writers imagined them as entirely separate from the majority of the Filipino population. This act parallels American wartime rhetoric describing a Filipino people friendly towards U.S. dominion, validating colonialism and repression of anti-American forces during the Philippine-American War.

A few travelogue writers go further than picturing the Katipunan as secretive, bizarre, or led by elites; they present the society as a violent and menacing organization. For instance, Shoemaker accuses the Katipunan of attempting to “slaughter all Spaniards” and “massacre all Americans.” He then goes so far as to refer to the group as the “Brotherhood of Human Bloodhounds,” assigning an almost bestial quality to its members. In another text, Frederic Henry Read calls the Katipunan “a terrible secret society” even suggesting that they borrowed their name (abbreviated as K.K.K.) “from the murderous brotherhood of the Klu-Klux-Klan.” Perhaps the most telling representation of the Katipunan as violent exists in Kennon’s article, where the author provides anecdotes (of questionable reliability) featuring Katipunan members burying a man alive, shooting an Ilocano and seven of his friends, and cutting up three women and an old man with swords.

Harsh characterizations of the Katipunan justified America’s colonial presence in the Philippines. During the Philippine-American War, many Americans thought Filipino forces consisted mainly of cruel bandits and thieves who sought not political independence and civil rights, but power and wealth. Picturing the Katipunan as a violent society connected to both bloodhounds and the Klu-Klux-Klan legitimates this perspective. By supposing that pro-independence organizations like the Katipunan held responsibility for acts of violence not only against Spaniards and Americans, but also against their own people, travelogues created a moral imperative for U.S. opposition to Filipino revolutionary forces. Together, travelogue portrayals of the Katipunan as secretive, elitist, or violent confirmed American opinions towards the Philippine-American war, ultimately sanctioning U.S. rule in the region.

46 Ibid.
47 Frederic Henry Read Sawyer, *The Inhabitants of the Philippines* (London: S. Low, Marston and Company, 1900), 82.
49 Clymer, “Protestant Missionaries,” 126.
The Brotherhood Joins the Family: 1902-1917

Travel accounts written after the official end of the Spanish-American War in 1902 illustrate a substantial shift in Euro-American perception of the Katipunan. These accounts no longer characterize the society in a negative light. Rather, they take a sympathetic view of the organization, characterizing it as one that suffered under the cruelty of Spanish rule. Oftentimes, European and American descriptions of the Oriental “other” seem ambivalent since they must constantly revise themselves in order to adapt to the changing political and economic needs of the West. Changes in travelogue depiction of the Katipunan highlight the need to aid America’s “little brown brothers” in the Philippines, a concept that dominated rhetoric justifying American rule in the region. Instead of actually describing the Katipunan, travel account discourse from 1902-1917 emphasized the cruelty of Spanish rule in the region, and the ensuing need of all Filipinos for American aid and direction.

A 1904 travelogue written by Homer C. Stuntz provides a moving example of a new way of viewing the Katipunan. Stuntz recalls the torture of a suspected member of the Katipunan by a Spanish priest, and subsequently points out that thousands underwent similar treatment. In his account, a Spanish Friar tricks a young Filipino man into coming to his house and has him flogged until he faints from blood loss. Upon awakening, the Friar orders him hung from the building’s rafters by his thumbs. The Filipino prisoner does not escape until he feigns death, leaping from a second story window and fleeing to a nearby village in the mountains. Both before and after this story, Stuntz reminds readers that tragedies like this took place without any sort of trial.

Another anecdote, contained in four of the travelogues this article examines, further illustrates changing European and American perceptions of Spanish rule. In one version of this story, Spanish soldiers captured over a hundred men and imprisoned them within Fort Santiago. In order to keep river water outside of the prison, a Spanish sergeant threw a rug over the building’s one ventilating shaft, leading over 70 of the men within the prison to die of

---

50 Bhabha, Nation and Narration, 294.
51 Homer Clyde Stuntz, The Philippines and the Far East (New York: Jennings and Pye; Eaton and Mains, 1904), 124-125.
52 Ibid., 125.
suffocation. The particulars of this story vary in different travelogues, but its main themes: the neglect and uncaring of the Spaniards coupled with the chance deaths of numerous Filipinos, stay constant. The prevalence of this tale in American travelogues points to colonial government’s perception of the Spanish as irresponsible and even violent rulers.

Post Philippine-American War travel accounts often juxtapose the bravery of the Katipunan with shortcomings of the Spanish, a strong contrast with earlier Euro-American travelogues. One 1905 document calls the Spanish ignorant for characterizing the Katipunan as Masonic. A 1917 work goes even further, referring to the Spanish as “stupid” in their perception of the Katipunan as a “danger to all Europeans.” A text from 1906, composed by the Englishwoman Campbell Dauncey, praises the Katipunan, noting that they fought to honor Jose Rizal’s memory, completing his work by turning the “Spaniards and their dreadful priests out of the island.” In another 1906 travelogue, John Foreman credits the Katipunan with allowing the Philippine masses to express their discontent towards the Spanish Church and government. Later, in 1907, a travelogue writer speaks of the Katipunan and Emilio Aguinaldo in heroic terms, praising their bravery and patriotism in a battle against cruel Spanish troops.

Nineteenth century transformations in travelogue treatment of the Katipunan supported U.S. presence in the Philippines. Around 1905, official U.S. government rhetoric justifying colonialism in Asia had eschewed focus on economic opportunity in order to focus solely upon the moral responsibility of the United States to care for their “little brown brothers” in the Philippines. Travel accounts framing the Katipunan as both victims and brave opponents of the Spanish, instead of as secretive and upper class murderers, support claims of “benevolent assimilation” by painting Americans as either the liberator of

57 Foreman, The Philippine Islands, 364.
the Filipino people from Spanish cruelty, or partners in a war against a common foe. The American colonial government in the Philippines consistently promoted such portrayals. In using Katipunan centered narratives to describe the cruelty of the Spanish government, European and American travel writers do not simply use portrayals of the Philippines (the Orient) to establish Occidental superiority. Rather, Euro-American travelogues define the Katipunan as victims, thereby defining the Spanish as irresponsible rulers, and in turn defining the Americans as capable and benevolent colonial masters. In doing so, these travel accounts established American’s supposed moral responsibility to control the Philippines.

Conclusion
From 1899-1917, Euro-American travelogue representation of the Katipunan transformed to justify changing American colonial policies in the Philippines. From 1899-1901, during the years of the Philippine-American War, European and American travelogue writers consistently framed the group as mysterious, led by the elite, or violent in order to support negative American perceptions of Filipino freedom fighters. Later, after the war ended and the U.S. government promoted a policy of “benevolent assimilation” in the Philippines, travel account depictions of the Katipunan had little to do with actually describing the organization; rather, they vilified Spanish colonialism and expressed the need for U.S. aid in the Philippines. Regardless of their specificities, Euro-American portrayals of the Katipunan always served to justify American rule in the Philippines, revealing the flexibility and utility of imperialist attitudes towards their colonial possessions. As observed in the case of U.S.-Philippine relations, Orientalist imaginings of foreign peoples rarely represent a homogenous and unchanging style of thought, but an ideology adaptable to various situations.

61 Said, Orientalism, 3.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ELENA REYNOLDS is pursuing a Master of Arts in History at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and is a member of Cal Poly’s Phi Alpha Theta chapter. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a minor in Political Science from Bob Jones University, where she graduated cum laude. Her academic interests include Armenian and Middle Eastern history, Holocaust and genocide studies, and United States foreign policy.
A NEW ERA IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY: JIMMY CARTER, HUMAN RIGHTS AND IRAN

Elena Reynolds

It is a new world that calls for a new American foreign policy … We have reaffirmed America’s commitment to human rights as a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy.¹

— Jimmy Carter, Address on Human Rights and Foreign Policy, University of Notre Dame, May 22, 1977

Few presidents have expressed such passion for human rights, as has Jimmy Carter. In both his 1977 inaugural address and a commencement speech given at the University of Notre Dame later that year, Carter shared his vision for a new era in American foreign policy—one based on the democratic idealism of Woodrow Wilson, which championed freedom, peace, and human rights.² He clung to this Wilsonian worldview, believing that “the demonstration of

American idealism was a practical and realistic approach to foreign affairs.” Like Wilson, Carter felt that he did not have to choose between idealism and realism. As a result, he struggled to find balance between his idealist bent and the realism that confronted him as president.

Despite coming to office with little experience in foreign affairs, Carter gave careful thought to his international agenda, placing human rights at the top of his list. He believed that America should keep its allies and adversaries accountable for their human rights records, regardless of the risks involved. To accomplish this, he set consequences for nations violating human rights, using American humanitarian aid and financial assistance as leverage to force countries into compliance with his policies. He would use such methods in Iran. However, inexperience, political gaffes, conflicting advice from his advisors, and a series of disastrous events outside his control would ultimately undermine his ambitions, efforts, and achievements as president.

Carter is often blamed for the disintegration of U.S.-Iran relations, yet he was not the first or last president to make mistakes there. Nearly every president, from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Gerald Ford, blundered when it came to Iran, but Carter’s miscalculations were perhaps the most glaring. To critically evaluate Carter’s human rights policies in Iran, it is vital to look at presidential decisions made there prior to his presidency. Gaining this context makes it easier to understand the obstacles he faced coming into office. Once this is understood, the following questions can be answered: How did Carter’s fundamental tenet shape his policies in Iran? Were Carter’s human rights policies to blame for the Islamic Revolution and subsequent Islamization of Iran? Did Carter’s human rights policies fail in Iran?

For more than a century, the United States enjoyed a healthy relationship with Iran. James Bill, historian, Iranian expert, and former State Department diplomat, states, “Few international relationships have had a more positive beginning then that which characterized Iranian-American contacts.” Despite

---

promising beginnings, signs of tension were evident prior to World War II and continued into the postwar period. In 1925, when Reza Shah Pahlavi staged a successful coup overthrowing the Qajar dynasty, his goal was to unify his nation and stop foreign influence in its internal affairs. However, his rumored ties with Nazi Germany led to an Anglo-Soviet takeover in 1941. This event fueled Iranian resentment toward foreign interventionism. The staged coup placed Pahlavi’s oldest son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, in control as a constitutional monarch. During World War II, United States troops stationed in Iran received extraterritorial rights, including exemption from punishment under Iranian law. Iran viewed this as an infringement of its sovereignty and vehemently objected. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ignored the problem, upholding United States civil and criminal codes. Things were further complicated at the Tehran Conference in 1943, when Roosevelt refused to meet with the shah. Iranians saw Roosevelt’s behavior as an insult and a symbol of American arrogance and ignorance of their country.

Despite becoming a constitutional monarch following the 1940s coup, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi did not gain full control until after another coup in 1953, backed by the United States and Great Britain. This coup deposed democratically elected nationalist Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. Outraged and visibly disillusioned, nationalists viewed the coup as a symbol of American imperialist designs. Iranians’ image of America as a liberator and protector from Soviet, British, German, and French aggression was tarnished by this incident. To make matters worse, the shah used the coup to consolidate power, leaving his people further embittered toward the United States. According to Bill, “this direct covert operation left a running wound that bled for twenty-five years and contaminated America’s relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran following the revolution of 1978-79.”

The relationship was strained further under President Lyndon B. Johnson. Despite considerable interaction with Iran as vice president, like leaders before

7 Strong, 46.
8 Bill, 46-47.
9 Ibid.
10 Mossadegh was considered a threat to American and British oil interests. He had also been stirring up anti-American sentiments, protesting United States support for monarchical authoritarianism after the shah received, at his request, $10 million in military aid. Bill, 50.
11 Ibid., 4-5.
12 Ibid., 86.
and after him, he overlooked how the shah’s human rights violations combined with unwanted United States military occupation could become a breeding ground for resentment. In 1963, the shah launched his White Revolution, an attempt to modernize his country economically, structurally, and politically. Like John F. Kennedy, Johnson enthusiastically supported the program and the shah’s subsequent crackdown on those protesting the changes. The United States would continue its support for Iran, viewing the shah as a valuable ally for his attempts at westernization, support for Israel and United States policies in the Middle East, and condemnation of Egyptian president Abdul Nasser’s perceived radicalism.

During the Nixon and Ford administrations ties strengthened between the two countries. Both Nixon and Ford gave generous military assistance to the shah, hoping to insure regional stability. Gradually Ford would express his concern about arms sales, especially after the shah began to crack down on political dissidents. To combat these problems, Congress enacted legislation restricting the amount of American military aid and economic assistance given to countries violating human rights. Despite the legislation and concerns about the shah’s aggressive behavior, the United States maintained its positive relationship with the shah and his political elites, while ignoring the dissatisfaction of the Iranian masses.

When assessing Carter’s relationship with Iran, it is important to examine how his fundamental tenet shaped his policies there. While Carter continued many policies established under the Nixon and Ford administrations, his Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, noted, “there would be marked differences in the way in which we conducted our bilateral relations, particularly as regards arms sales and human rights.” As part of his human rights agenda, Carter criticized and questioned the wisdom of selling large amounts of armaments to Iran, a newly developing country with a poor track record on human rights. Fearing the relationship could be permanently damaged, the State Department urged Carter not to speak publicly about the shah’s human rights violations.

---

13 Ibid., 154.
14 Ibid., 156. Strong, 46.
15 Bill, 176-177.
17 Bill, 97.
18 Vance, 314.
during the first few months of his presidency. Instead, Carter let actions speak louder than words. He began with strict enforcement of his human rights policies, leaving vacant the ambassadorship to Tehran for six months.\(^{19}\) Carter also cancelled the sale of 250 F-16 fighter planes and suspended tear gas shipments. Carter’s goal was to force the shah to change his ways in order to obtain the supplies he requested. Initially Carter’s policies succeeded, as historian Donald S. Spencer notes, “for no national leader on Earth submitted with greater alacrity to U.S. human rights pressure.”\(^{20}\)

To appease the United States, the shah took bold steps toward liberalization, making changes in Iranian law, policy, and personnel. He reorganized his cabinet and released hundreds of political prisoners. In addition, he pledged to end the torture of inmates, grant more freedom to the press and political opposition groups, and expand individual access to due process. The shah also permitted the International Red Cross to inspect prisons and assess human rights issues within the country.\(^{21}\) Despite improvements, the shah’s reforms were simply for show. He was eager to gain approval and therefore willing to kowtow to the United States to get what he wanted.

While Carter tried to play tough, some of his advisors expressed concerns that doing so would permanently jeopardize the relationship between the two countries. As a result, the administration chose to approach human rights issues more cautiously during Secretary Vance’s May 1977 trip to Tehran. While there, Vance invited the shah to the White House that November, an invitation the shah gladly accepted. This extension of friendship was one way through which Carter hoped to maintain positive relations. Vance spoke briefly to the shah about human rights, explaining that these policies were not new, but rather important American traditions that the United States pledged to uphold. The shah defended his country’s human rights record and need to restrain Communists and other groups trying to undermine his leadership. He made it clear that he did not oppose United States human rights policies so long as they did not single out his country, threaten his leadership, or compromise national security.\(^{22}\) Following these issues, the two men discussed arms sales.

\(^{19}\) The hope was that the shah would be reminded of the “disdainful distance at which he would be kept by the new Carter team” as long as he oppressed his people. Donald S. Spencer, *The Carter Implosion: Jimmy Carter and the Amateur Style of Diplomacy* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 74.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.

\(^{21}\) Strong, 48-49.

\(^{22}\) Vance, 318-319.
Vance informed the shah that Carter would honor a promise made under the Ford Administration for a sale of 160 F-16 fighter planes. The shah had also requested highly sophisticated radar-equipped aircraft (AWACS) with state-of-the-art electronic surveillance and communication devices, but Vance made it clear that these would only be given pending congressional approval.23

The shah had originally requested ten AWACS, but Carter reduced the number to seven in the proposal sent to Congress. Congress rejected the plan “on the grounds that the security of advanced electronic devices could not be assured in Iran.”24 Although Carter intended to submit a revised proposal at a later date, the shah was infuriated by the delay or worse, the complete rejection of the sale. To express his dissatisfaction, the shah sent Carter an angry letter threatening to cancel the order.25 Carter was troubled by his predicament and recalls in his memoir that, “I was attempting to reduce the sale of offensive weapons throughout the world, but it was not possible to make excessively abrupt changes in current practices, because of contracts already in existence.”26 Carter saw the decision to sell more arms as a double standard, yet he knew that the United States could not afford to lose Iranian oil or its surveillance stations along the Iran boarder, which were vital to monitoring Soviet missile activity. The United States had formed a valuable alliance, which was not worth losing for the sake of human rights. Since alienating Iran could prove disastrous, a situation Carter readily acknowledged, he was forced to part with his fundamental tenet.

In the fall of 1977, Congress finally approved the AWACS sale, but only after the insertion of safeguard provisions. The incident, which evidenced distrust of the shah’s regime, was a major embarrassment to U.S.-Iran relations and tarnished Carter’s image as a president committed to reducing arms sales. For Carter, the ordeal exposed his internal conflict between idealism and realism. For the shah, it raised concerns about Carter’s trustworthiness.

The shah’s November visit to Washington was an opportunity to ease tensions created by the AWACS debacle. During the visit, the two had time to discuss the AWACS sale. The shah told Carter that he understood the situation

23 Ibid., 316.
25 Strong, 49-50.
26 Carter, 434-435.
and agreed to provide a detailed list of future military needs in order to prevent a repeat of the incident. The shah’s statements revealed his expectation that the United States would continue to supply the military needs of his country and it appears that Carter agreed to do so. In addition to the AWACS fiasco, the two leaders discussed oil, weapons deals, and economic issues. The shah’s human rights practices were briefly addressed, but Carter did not pursue the topic. Both leaders seemed pleased that human rights had not interfered with issues like oil prices. However, the agenda proved contrary to Carter’s claim that human rights were a primary foreign policy objective. Whatever progress was made during the visit, it is clear that Carter caved to political pressure and was willing to forgo his fundamental tenet in this instance and many others throughout his presidency.

Six weeks after the shah’s visit, Carter traveled to Tehran on New Year’s Eve. He had not planned to visit Iran during his nine-day overseas trip, but the country was a convenient stopping point on his way from Poland to India. Prior to his arrival, Carter’s Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, issued a memo outlining five foreign policy issues that needed to be addressed with the shah. These included energy and oil concerns, nuclear cooperation, and Middle East stability. Human rights were placed at the bottom of the list and Christopher urged Carter only to address maintaining Iranian law and order. Human rights were yet again an afterthought.

Perhaps the most visible sign of Carter’s parting with his fundamental tenet came during a speech he delivered at the shah’s New Year’s Eve dinner party in which he stated, “Iran under the leadership of the Shah is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership, and to the respect, and admiration and love which your people give to you.” While Carter’s well-intentioned speech might have been customary to reiterate strong relations between the two countries, it might also have been viewed as a manifestation of his ignorance about Iranian dissatisfaction with the shah. However, earlier events showed this not to be the case. Carter admitted that he saw no visible signs of popular discontent in his short time in Iran, but acknowledged that he was aware of the brutality of Iran’s secret police (SAVAK). However, he was willing to put strategic and economic concerns above human rights as evidenced in the AWACS sale. He

27 Bill, 233.
28 Carter, 437.
did not want to compromise in this regard, but political pressure dictated his course. Secretary Vance once commented that, “Carter did what he thought American values and interests demanded, even though he was keenly aware of the political risks.” But perhaps the greatest political risk was putting American needs above those of the Iranian people. In the years to come, that speech would come back to haunt him as Iran degenerated, presenting the greatest challenge his administration would face.

One week after Carter’s visit, riots broke out in Iran. The island of stability was no more. By mid-1978, opposition to the shah had grown into a full-fledged Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, a well-known political and religious figure recently returned from exile. Carter was now faced with the difficult task of figuring out what to do. Throughout the revolution, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter’s National Security Advisor, and Cyrus Vance fought over what actions should be taken. Brzezinski and Vance were both experienced in foreign policy, but held vastly different positions on a number of key issues. While Vance was a cautious, steady diplomat, Brzezinski was a more impatient hard-liner. As a result, they clashed over human rights and foreign policy issues on a regular basis.

Brzezinski, saw the larger geopolitical implications of Iran’s move toward an Islamic government. He realized the danger this posed not only to U.S.-Iran relations, but also to America’s future in the Middle East and saw steadfast support for the shah and military force as the only way to stop the revolution. Even though he knew Carter was opposed to force, Brzezinski continued to press for it. Vance, along with several cabinet members, favored reforms and a centrist government, believing this to be the only way the shah could save himself.

At the urging of Washington, the shah attempted to suppress unrest through reforms (liberalization). He freed nearly 1,500 political prisoners and promised to hold parliamentary elections in 1979. He also established a centrist coalition government, which failed due to the deterioration of his power. The shah’s governmental reforms had come too late to solve the country’s problems.

---

29 Spencer, 65.
31 Spencer, 189.
The shah’s attempt to curb violence through military force also failed, because his soldiers no longer followed his instructions.

Throughout the ordeal, Carter’s advisors were in gridlock. Brzezinski, thoroughly exacerbated by disagreements and indecision, took matters into his own hands. He used his status as chairman of the Special Coordinating Committee to undermine the State Department’s ability to collect and analyze information. This allowed him to shape policy decisions while claiming that the State Department was receiving all necessary information. Brzezinski also made secret contacts with the shah through the Iranian ambassador, Ardestir Zahedi. By this time Brzezinski felt the only thing the shah could do was exercise “unwavering and confident force” to hold his regime together.32 He tried to push the shah in this direction, but after receiving conflicting advice from Brzezinski and Vance, the shah cut off his ties with Brzezinski.

Conflicts continued throughout the administration with Assistant Secretary Patricia Derian insisting that the shah implement more reforms, while Ambassador William H. Sullivan in Teheran disagreed with Brzezinski’s proposal to use force, expressing his doubts that the shah “retained sufficient support to use force effectively.”33 As the shah’s power continued to decline, disagreements arose between Brzezinski and Vance again over whether or not the United States should move toward discussions with Ayatollah Khomeini. This infighting, which continued throughout the entire crisis, confused Carter at a time when he needed clarity most. In the end it seems that Carter’s team spent more time working against each other than for their president.34

But Carter’s story does not end here. After his government was overthrown, the shah was forced into exile. Eventually his declining health prompted him to request treatment in the United States. Despite reservations, the Carter administration granted him entry because he had been a long-time ally. This decision proved disastrous. As a result, the United States embassy in Tehran was seized and fifty-two hostages were taken and held for 444 days. Initially Carter deemed military options too risky, fearing the hostages might be killed. When Carter realized that he could no longer depend on diplomacy, he organized a

32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
rescue operation that failed miserably. He took full responsibility for the incident, but the damage done to U.S.-Iran relations was now irreparable.

Were Carter’s human rights policies to blame for the Islamic Revolution and subsequent Islamization of Iran? Carter’s speech, in which he proclaimed Iran an “island of stability,” certainly fueled anti-shah sentiments, but to say that his policies were responsible for the revolution and subsequent Islamization might be unfair. Historian Gaddis Smith believes that Carter’s human rights policies were not to blame for the revolution. He suggests that there was little Carter could have done to prevent or suppress the violence short of military force. Smith indicates that Carter’s unwillingness to do so did not derive from his human rights policies, but rather his belief that force would not save the situation.\(^{35}\)

Others like Historian Donald S. Spencer believe Carter’s “extreme” and aggressive human rights policies, which demanded immediate change, were responsible for the acceleration of the revolution and Iran’s shift toward a fourteenth-century theocracy. He argues that Carter’s human rights agenda demanded the impossible and pressed too hard for “complete and immediate capitulation by the Shah to their own perception of what Iran should become.”\(^{36}\) Spencer observes that Carter’s human rights policies failed because he urged the shah to westernize his country, in spite of strong opposition by the Iranian people. He also condemns Carter for censuring the government for failing to make drastic changes quickly enough and then abandoning the shah, who continued to follow previously given instructions from Washington. In doing this, Spencer argues that Carter successfully subverted a major strategic and political ally.\(^{37}\)

Perhaps the most important question to ask when assessing Carter’s presidency is whether his human rights policies failed in Iran. Historian Frank Ninkovich views Carter’s human rights policies as unsuccessful due to his refusal to relinquish support for the shah. Ninkovich portrays Carter as afraid of failure, which derived from his strong Wilsonian ideals. He argues that Carter could not get past his crusade for human rights and deal with real world problems outside of that context. In an attempt to avoid catastrophe, he brought it upon himself.

---

\(^{35}\) Smith, 244.

\(^{36}\) Spencer, 65-66.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 66.
Ninkovich believes that had Carter severed ties with the shah and recognized Khomeini, the United States may have saved its relationship with Iran.\textsuperscript{38}  

Like Ninkovich, Gary Sick, a member of the National Security Council during the Iran hostage crisis, acknowledges that Carter was “instinctively a peacemaker and reformer,” which left him uncomfortable with using military force.\textsuperscript{39}  However, he does believe that, “The assertion that the shah was paralyzed into inaction by the human rights policies of the Carter administration simply is not supported by the evidence or the shah’s own testimony in dozens of conversations during the crisis.”\textsuperscript{40}  Sick adds that like Carter, the shah could not decide whether to launch radical reforms or a bloodbath due to “self-interest and internal political realities, not on fear of offending Washington.”\textsuperscript{41}  Sick suggests that Carter’s human rights policies in Iran were not a failure, but due rather to the indecision on both sides, which prevented a viable solution from being reached.  

Like Ninkovich and Sick, historian James Bill asserts that, “The central contradiction in America’s general goals in Iran was that the United States had both real political and economic interests as well as a genuine commitment to democratic principles.”\textsuperscript{42}  Bill believes that Carter’s human rights policies failed because he wanted the best of both worlds, which was impossible given the complex nature of international relations.  

Overall, Carter’s human rights record was inconsistent. Initially both he and his advisors denounced human rights violations in the Soviet Union, Iran, South Korea, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Uganda, and numerous other countries. While they suspended military and economic aid to South American and African countries, they refused to do so permanently in Iran. Fearful of losing a valuable alliance, Carter also ceased criticism of the shah’s human rights record. He also shied away from denouncing the Soviet Union’s policies after Leonid Brezhnev threatened to halt arms control negotiations.\textsuperscript{43} 

\textsuperscript{38} Frank Ninkovich, \textit{The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900} (Chicago: IL, 1999), 251-252.  
\textsuperscript{39} Gary Sick, \textit{All Fall Down: America’s Tragic Encounter with Iran} (New York: Random House, 1985), 173.  
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 169.  
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{42} Bill, 49.  
\textsuperscript{43} Strong, “Essays on Jimmy Carter and His Administration: Foreign Affairs.”
In addition, he turned a blind eye to human rights violations in China and the Philippines and did nothing to prevent Pol Pot’s regime in Cambodia from carrying out genocide.\(^4^4\)

Even though his human rights policies may have been plagued by contradictions, it is important to note that Carter did enjoy some diplomatic successes, such as mediating a historic peace agreement, known as the Camp David Accords (1978), between Israel’s Menachem Begin and Egypt’s Anwar Sadat. This tremendous achievement “revived a long-dormant practice of presidential peacemaking, something every succeeding chief executive has emulated to varying degrees.”\(^4^5\) Many historians applaud Carter’s attempts at diplomacy throughout the world, and even in Iran, but acknowledge that his failure was giving in to the shah’s requests for arms, rather than standing firm on his commitment to human rights.

Jimmy Carter, more than any other president, incorporated human rights into his foreign policies. Despite unexpected struggles and setbacks, he constantly reminded Americans that they could not remain indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere. In doing so, he improved the global image of the United States, lent international credibility to human rights issues, and helped set the tone for world politics in the following decades.\(^4^6\) Carter’s vision for a new era in American foreign policy was certainly commendable, but perhaps America was not yet ready to take the step.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


ADRIENNE SMITH is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in Women and Gender Studies at California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo. She is particularly interested in modern Latin American and Middle Eastern studies. Adrienne is from the central coast of California, and in her free time enjoys spending time with family and friends, going to concerts, reading comic books, eating tacos, and traveling.
BRITISH AND DUTCH PERCEPTIONS OF CANNIBALISM IN BORNEO, 1882-1964

Adrienne Smith

During Europe’s quest for direct control of Borneo from 1882-1964, British and Dutch explorers penetrated Borneo’s interior to establish colonies. Explorers witnessed elaborate cannibalistic ceremonies. Some Europeans were excited by the existence of cannibals, others used the indigenous tribes’ cannibalistic customs to dehumanize them. This paper asks how British and Dutch travelers viewed cannibalism in Borneo, and why? I will argue that from 1882-1964 British and Dutch perceptions of cannibalism in Borneo generated exploration, while creating a stigma toward the indigenous people.

My research required the use of travelogues in order to reach a better understanding of the European perception of Southeast Asia. Travelogues provide a first-hand account of what colonizers experienced during their attempts to establish colonial rule over the East. The benefit of using travelogues is their representation of European knowledge as a whole during imperialism. The disadvantage of using travelogues, however, is they only focus on European interpretation.

The examination of multiple historical approaches gives a better understanding of Europe’s perceptions of Southeast Asian culture. Clifford Geertz argues the need to examine a historical event through the understanding of
its place and time of occurrence.\footnote{Clifford Geertz, \textit{The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected essays}, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 19.} Whereas Edward W. Said explains that the West’s knowledge about the Orient was generated from preconceived notions of what the East was not.\footnote{Edward W. Said, \textit{Orientalism}, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 12.} S.N. Balagangadhara focuses on Europeans’ intellectual limits in understanding the “phenomenon of Orientalism.”\footnote{S.N. Balagangadhara, “The Future of the Present: Thinking through Orientalism,” \textit{Cultural Dynamics} 10, no. 2 (1998): 101-121.} While Mary Luis Pratt explains that travelogues show how Europe saw itself in relation to “the rest of the world” and the need for direct control of the Orient.\footnote{Mary Luis Pratt, \textit{Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation}, (London: Routledge, 1992), 5.} Han Mui Ling uses the development of a “place” and how it embodied “imperial manhood” through travelogues.\footnote{Han Mui Ling, “From Travelogues to Guidebooks: Imagining Colonial Singapore, 1819-1940,” \textit{SOJOURN} 18, no. 2 (2003): 258, 261.} Finally, Catalin Avramescu argues travel literature was written with a “critical intention” to put down those they came in contact with, while bolstering themselves.\footnote{Catalin Avramescu, \textit{An Intellectual History of Cannibalism}, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 13.}


The rise in competition between European powers for trade in Southeast Asia triggered a shift in imperialism that focused on colonial control of numerous territories. The Netherlands’ need to colonize was a reaction towards British efforts to expand their sphere of influence in Indonesia.\footnote{Paul H. Kratoska, \textit{South East Asia, Colonial History: Empire-building in the Nineteenth Century}, (London: Routledge, 2001), 56.} In an attempt
to keep up with the Dutch, the British occupied Burma, Malaya and Borneo ruling their territories as separate governing districts of the empire.\textsuperscript{11} In 1887, the French “secured control over South Vietnam’s” government, coming in direct control of Indochina.\textsuperscript{12}

As a result of European imperialism, Southeast Asia was divided by political borders and took on a new shape under the direct rule of European Powers. The advertised goal of Imperialism was to bring “modernity” to “backwards” parts of the world.\textsuperscript{13} For example, the Dutch colonized Indonesia for over three centuries, and through government united the population toward a common interest and national identity.\textsuperscript{14} Unjust Spanish rule over the Philippines prompted a political and national revolution by Filipinos in 1896-1898.\textsuperscript{15} When Imperial powers departed, they attempted to leave behind an administration that would benefit their interest in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{16}

Until the early nineteenth century, North Borneo was a “loose suzerainty,” with its international affairs controlled by the Sultanate of Brunei.\textsuperscript{17} The Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824 divided Borneo trade rights, in an attempt to protect British and Dutch trade interests.\textsuperscript{18} Borneo was divided territorially between the British who controlled the North, and the Dutch in the South.\textsuperscript{19} In 1841, Englishman James Brook, was granted control over the western part of the island, beginning the Raja Dynasty.\textsuperscript{20} In 1881, North Borneo was governed

\textsuperscript{12}Oscar Chapuis, \textit{Last Emperors of Vietnam: from Tu Duc to Bao Dai}, (Westport, CT: Green Wood Press, 2000), 2.
\textsuperscript{14}Adrian Vickers, \textit{A History of Modern Indonesia}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.
\textsuperscript{16}Nicholas Tarling, \textit{Imperialism in Southeast Asia ‘A fleeting, Passing Phase’}, (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), 35.
\textsuperscript{17}James Stuart Olson, \textit{Historical dictionary of European imperialism}, (Westport, CT: Green Wood Press, 1991), 92.
\textsuperscript{18}R. Haller Trost, \textit{The Territorial Dispute Between Indonesia and Malaysia over Pulau Sipadan and Pulau Ligitan in the Celebes Sea: A Study in International Law}, (University of Durham: International Boundaries Research Unit, 1995), 6.
\textsuperscript{19}Tamara Thiessen, \textit{Borneo: Sabah, Brunei, Sarawak}, (Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2008), 6.
\textsuperscript{20}Eur, \textit{Far East and Australasia 2003}, (Routledge, 2002), 204.
by a council located in London, known as the British North Borneo Chartered Company.\textsuperscript{21} North Borneo was declared a British protectorate in 1888 and the rest of Borneo became a protectorate of the Dutch in 1891.

**Cannibalism in Borneo**

Cannibalism had been practiced throughout Southeast Asia for centuries before Europeans arrived. In the islands of New Britain, especially Borneo, the natives were “great cannibals” and killed many whites.\textsuperscript{22} The British and Dutch settled along the coast of Borneo. In the “heart of the island” lived the most “savage, primitive and wild” people.\textsuperscript{23} Numerous tribes inhabited the island, but mainly the Kayan, Ibaan, Milano, Iheir and Dyak tribe practiced head hunting and cannibalism. According to Friedrich Ratzel, the practice of cannibalism in Borneo stemmed from a “religious concentration.”\textsuperscript{24} Duarte Barbosa explains, cannibals “eat human flesh” with the belief they are “perpetuating the man eaten” by “incorporating him in their own living bodies.”\textsuperscript{25}

**Cannibal Ceremonies and Beliefs**

Europeans’ fear and intrigue of cannibals in Borneo came from first-hand accounts experienced by explorers. Travelers were shocked by skulls and human remains ornamenting villages. “The skulls of deceased foemen” littered a cannibal village to such an extent the “children play with them as with toys.”\textsuperscript{26} Europeans witnessed women and children joyfully “partake of the flesh.”\textsuperscript{27} The Dyaks of Borneo were cannibals who participated in “human sacrifice” and seemed “greatly addicted to it.”\textsuperscript{28} Women especially loved devouring the

---


\textsuperscript{27} Henry Ling Roth and Hugh Brooke Low, *The natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo*, (New York: Truslove & Comba, 1896), 217.

\textsuperscript{28} George Windsor Earl, *The eastern Seas, or, Voyage and adventures in the Indian Archipelago, in 1832-33-34: comprising a tour of the island of Java, visits Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Siam, and e, also an account of the present state of Singapore, with observation on the commercial resources of the archipelago*, (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co, 1873), 270.
“breast” of those being sacrificed according to Henry Ling Roth. Wealthy members of a tribe would donate slaves for the main course of a death feast. “Rich members” of the tribe would give a number of slaves to sacrifice and take full enjoyment of watching them experience “slow torture and then eaten.” The owner of the slaves would take great joy in preparing them for a feast. The rich tribe members of the Ibans often participated in “imbruising his hands in a fellow creature’s blood,” and ornamented their houses with “skulls and teeth.”

Head-hunting expeditions provided the human flesh needed for a feast. The indigenous tribes of Borneo frequently “organized man-hunting expeditions.” Explorers were terrified by the thought of hunting a man like he was an animal. According to Carl Bock, there was nothing more horrifying than “head-hunting expeditions,” and the “tortures of the “death-feasts,” on the return of the victorious parties. Head-hunting was not practiced as a sport among cannibal tribes. “Head-hunting” was practiced as a “religious rite” by the Dyak tribes. By taking a man’s head, a tribe member was bringing good spirits upon his village. “Human flesh” was mainly devoured at a feast that followed a “successful head-hunting expedition.”

A victim’s flesh was thoroughly cleaned and prepared in a way that brought out the most flavors. When a “man was killed and eaten,” his flesh was “wrapped in leaves,” and eaten as a “delicacy.” Cannibals would also take parts of their victim’s body as trinkets. Rev. James Chalmers was invited to a cannibal feast where he witnessed guests “with pieces of human flesh dangling from their neck and arms.”

Head-hunting raids were vital to cannibal ceremonies among Borneo’s tribes. A victorious battle supplied many men for a cannibal feast. Many of the battles were fought between differing tribes on the island of Borneo. After attacking a small Malay village, the Iheir and Kayan tribes “sliced off the flesh”

---

29 Mackellar, 135.
31 Roth, 217.
32 Mackellar, 135.
33 Carl Bock, Temples and elephants: narrative of a journey of exploration through upper Siam and Lao, (London: S. Low, 1884), 438A.
34 “The Head–Hunters of Borneo,” 189.
35 Ibid., 189.
36 Mackellar, 135.
of one their enemies.\textsuperscript{38} When a raid party returned home the tribe members brought out the human flesh and “roasted and ate it” during a celebration. \textsuperscript{39} There was a different respect applied when eating a warrior who had lost his life in battle. By eating a dead warrior “his strength and wisdom enters into them.”\textsuperscript{40} Cannibals believed that by “eating the heart of a brave enemy” they would become “endued with the bravery of the victim.”\textsuperscript{41} There was an even deeper spiritual meaning in eating those who had been killed during war. Among Dyak and Milano tribes, it was the practice to “cut up and consume the raw heart” of a warrior killed in battle in the hopes that those partaking would become “braver.”\textsuperscript{42}

**Cannibal Tours**

The written accounts of head-hunting expeditions and ritualistic ceremonies sparked a new type of European exploration. The boom in cannibal tours came after the settlements and relations with the Dyak tribes were established. Borneo was a place where tourists could take “unusual pictures” of “cannibals, war-dances, weird ceremonies, and customs.”\textsuperscript{43} Travelogues sparked tourists’ enthusiasm about seeing a cannibal feast. Both tourists and cannibals profited from the new tourism industry. The interaction between tourists and the interior tribes educated both groups about one another. Tourists would often hire cannibals to hunt sharks, just to watch them work.\textsuperscript{44} A form of trade between the tribes and tourists was established, allowing Europeans to leave Borneo with souvenirs and trinkets. The tours became less about seeing cannibals and more about “tourists cannibalizing the exotic.”\textsuperscript{45}

Cannibal tours offered an opportunity for Europeans to experience what they read from travelogues. Cannibalism was no longer a piece of fiction, but a

\textsuperscript{38} Sir Spencer St. John, \textit{Life in the Forest of the Far East; or, Travels in northern Borneo}, (London: Elder and co, 1868), 133.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{40} Mackellar, 135.
\textsuperscript{41} Arthur Stuart Walcott, \textit{Java and her neighbours: a traveller’s notes in Java, Celebes, the Moluccas and Sumatra}, (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1914), 328.
\textsuperscript{42} Roth, 217.
\textsuperscript{43} Edward A. Powell, \textit{Where the strange trails go down: Sulu, Borneo, Celebs, Bali, Java, Sumatra, Straits settlements, Malay, states, Siam, Cambodia, Annam, Cochin-China}, (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 2.
\textsuperscript{44} Karel Čapek, \textit{War with the newts}, (New Haven: Catbird Press, 1936), 20.
\textsuperscript{45} Adrian Franklin and Mike Crang, “The trouble with tourism and travel theory,” \textit{Tourist Studies} 1 (2001): 5-22.
tangible practice that could be seen by all Europeans. They no longer had to read about cannibals; they could experience them first hand. Tourists would experience the change of atmosphere while entering the interior jungle. Where they were able to see how close cannibals and the “civilized” man lived. “Cannibal tours” in Borneo were an experience of nature as a “wild/tame dualism,” which attracted tourists from all over the world.46

The reality of cannibalism lured European tourists to Borneo. Tourists wanted to “experience the primitive” and observe those who had “eaten human flesh according to Edward Bruner.”47 Most tourists’ experience with cannibal tribes was superficial. Cannibal tribes acted out human sacrifices and cannibal feasts to attract tourists for trade and viewing fees. Tourists’ preconception of cannibalism was supported by these theatrical reenactments. Adrian Franklin and Mike Crang explain how cannibal tours provided a “dramatic contrast between visitor and locals.”48 Tourists witnessed primitive people so barbaric they partook in human flesh happily. Europeans couldn’t fathom the idea of eating a human being unless in dire desperation. To see people at such a low level of civilization was almost incomprehensible.

**European Perception**

European colonizers used cannibalism in Borneo to degrade the native people. Cannibalism in its most “repulsive form was universally practiced” and those who participated were regarded as “savages at the very lowest stage of human culture.”49 Europeans were disgusted by members of cannibal tribes and referred to them as grotesque and child-like. The Dyak people of Borneo were seen as “ugly looking people” with “little hair” upon their bodies.50 Their primitive lifestyle and easily aroused excitement made cannibals no better than little children in the Europeans’ eyes. Members of cannibalistic tribes were referred

---


48 Franklin and Crang, 5-22.

49 Keane, 187.

to as “savage” and often compared to “school boys” with their immature nature.\textsuperscript{51} Explorers mocked the significance of the head-hunts for cannibal tribes.

The constant fear of falling victim to cannibalism haunted explorers and their families reading about their experiences. According to traveler Edward Powell, “Heads are to a Dyak as money is to a man in civilized countries.”\textsuperscript{52} On a nightly basis traveler John Thompson found himself dreaming of “savage tribes” eating him while still alive or “being cooked one limb at a time.”\textsuperscript{53} This same fear was in the minds of the families left behind in Europe by explorers. A boy who had just read about cannibals in “Look and Learn Magazine” feared for his father’s safety in Borneo, imagining cannibals had “stuck him with a poison dart and ate his brains.”\textsuperscript{54}

It was hard for Europeans to understand why Borneo’s tribes practiced cannibalism. Malays were represented as “barbarous,” and “men who eat human flesh from choice.”\textsuperscript{55} Cannibals were described as a “cruelly disposed people” who enjoyed killing their enemies with “horrible and barbarous tortures.”\textsuperscript{56} Explorers couldn’t stand the thought of a human eating another human. Travelers wrote about interior tribes who “ate human flesh” and how it made them “sick to see them,” and they were “afraid and horrified.”\textsuperscript{57} Cannibalism was an “attested practice” and in its “most odious forms,” “horrible to the imagination of civilized nations.”\textsuperscript{58} Colonizers felt by being in Borneo they were in turn helping the interior tribes become more humane. Explorer J.H. Moor stated, “It is simply wonderful what civilization will do for the hungry cannibals.”\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{52} Edward A. Powell, \textit{Where the strange trails go down: Sulu, Borneo, Celebs, Bali, Java, Sumatra, Straits settlements, Malay, states, Siam, Cambodia, Annam, Cochin-China}, (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 119.
\textsuperscript{55} J.H Moor, \textit{Notice of the Indian Archipelago, and adjacent countries: being a collection of papers relating to Borneo, Celebs, Bali, Java, Sumatra, Nias, The Philippines, Sulus, Siam, Cochín China, Malayan Peninsula}, (Singapore: no recorded publisher, 1837), 123.
\textsuperscript{56} Roth, 215.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 219.
\textsuperscript{58} Moor, 123.
\textsuperscript{59} New York Central, Hudson River Railroad, “Travel 10,” (1906), no. 5, 434.
European ignorance, discrimination, and sense of entitlement portrayed cannibals as barbaric and in need of civilization.

Conclusion
European imperialism during the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries defined European power in Southeast Asia. These countries were ruled as political extensions of their mother countries. The territories colonized by Europeans went through political, economic, and national changes while being ruled by the West. Southeast Asian countries had closer ties with “European metropoles” than each other. The countries established by European intervention in Southeast Asia progressed through imperialism and created a strong sense of nationalism among its Southeast Asian citizens. The island of Borneo was seen as the center of maritime trading between all Southeast Asian countries. British and Dutch powers invested a lot of time in establishing colonies and trading control in Borneo.

Between the years of 1882-1964, Europeans attempted to discover the unknown of Borneo’s interior, and observed the indigenous people engage in cannibal acts. Travelers witnessed cannibal tribes participate in barbaric head-hunting raids. Some Europeans were invited as guests to elaborate cannibal feasts. The accounts of cannibalism inspired those living in Europe to participate in Imperialism by being a part of cannibal tours on the island. Explorers perceived cannibalism as an abomination practiced by backwards people. Europeans’ perception of cannibalism came from fear of anything different than what they considered civilized. The portrayal of cannibalism by British and Dutch explorers created intrigue for other travelers, while depicting cannibals as primitive and savage. Europe’s occupation of Southeast Asia forever intertwined these two cultures, influencing their perceptions of one another and what it means to be “civilized.”


Earl, George Windsor. The eastern Seas, or, Voyage and adventures in the Indian Archipelago, in 1832-33-34: comprising a tour of the island of Java, visits Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Siam, and c, also an account of the present state of Singapore, with observation on the commercial resources of the archipelago. London: Wm. H. Allen and Co, 1873.


Powell, Edward A. First. *Where the strange trails go down: Sulu, Borneo, Celebs, Bali, Java,*

Sumatra, Straits settlements, Malay, states, Siam, Cambodia, Annam, Cochin-China. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1922.


“The Head-Hunters of Borneo.” Science 1, no. 7 (1883): 189-190.


Thomson, John. The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China, and China, or, Ten years' travels, adventures, and residence abroad / by J. Thomson ... illustrated with upward of sixty wood engravings by J.D. Cooper, from the author’s own sketches and photographs. New York: Harper and Bros, 1875.


NICOLA WILLIAMS is in her second year at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in History. She is a member of the History Honor Society, Phi Alpha Theta and a member of the Cal Poly University Ambassador group. She enjoys English Tudor history as well as the history of the French Revolution particularly. She is originally from England but attained her U.S. citizenship this past quarter. In the future she plans to return to England to attend graduate school, where she will continue the study of History.
FASHION AND FEMINISM: THE MASS MOCKERY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY SUFFRAGETTES

Nicola Williams

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.”

– Deuteronomy 22:5.

In the book *The Ladies of Seneca Falls*, author Miriam Gurko refers to this quote to help show the forms of continuous mockery that early feminists bravely faced in response to their revolutionary ideas and clothing – specifically in this case, bloomers. Women of the early suffragette movement such as Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott were known to adorn these pantaloons, which were far more practical than the fashionable dresses of the day, some of which could weigh up to twelve pounds. The stories of these women are common across the historical record. They helped to lead the political propagation of the suffragette cause despite harsh opposition. State by state they achieved the right for women to vote. Near the turn of the century, however, the suffragettes decided to fight for the vote on a national level. To do this, they rallied other

---


2 Ibid., 141-142.
women and became increasingly commercialized, advertising fashion trends and women’s clubs to aid their cause. ³

It is easy to assume, and consequently many historians do, that due to the greater number of women involved in the later wave of the movement and the immense foundation built for them by earlier feminists, these women faced very little opposition. Indeed, a book such as Gurko’s, which focuses solely on the struggle of the early suffragettes, cannot be found for the later suffragettes. This assumption is a teleological mistake: assuming through the use of hindsight that as 1920 and women’s suffrage approached, the women’s fight became increasingly easier. There are admittedly, exceptions to this inaccuracy. While many historians barely mention the opposition to the suffragette movement, several books refer to the public’s anxiety towards the later wave of suffragettes, but even these do not account for the scope of ridicule the women faced.⁴

At the end of the nineteenth century, to the delight of some and the scorn of others, the suffragette movement became increasingly visible in North America and above all, in New York City through increased commercialization, and the organization of suffrage parades. As the women’s potential to generate change became evident, traditionalists attempted to rally opposition. I will argue however that rather than attempting to unite the public behind

³One of several books that explain the commercialization of the suffragette movement: Margaret Finnegan, Selling Suffrage: Consumer Culture and Votes for Women (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).


political argumentation against suffragettes, traditionalists utilized the mockery of women’s fashion as a tangible, highly relatable way to express their growing fear of the new woman generally and the suffragette as an extreme expression of this new phenomenon.

“The new woman” was a term used to define women who broke away from traditional expectations, but finding exactly what this meant to people in the early twentieth century is hard to describe and consequently, historians have done so in a variety of ways. Elsie Clews Parsons, a feminist anthropologist from 1916 said that “the new woman means the woman not yet classified, perhaps not classifiable, the woman new not only to men, but to herself.”5 In short, the new women were about breaking away from the more traditional limitations set upon them. Historians describe their fight to “express their sexuality,” demonstrate independence, expand their geographical limitations and to overcome previously accepted restrictions.6 In the book *New Woman* by June Sochen, the new woman is described as someone who “left the home for the factory, a career and the marketplace.”7 This is a description of the geographical alterations described above, and focuses on middle class new women who went to work, as opposed to upper class new women who indulged in women’s clubs and shopping instead. While not every new woman could be labeled a suffragette, the most extreme demonstration of these principles could be found in the suffragettes, who fought to politically alter their world based on these ideals.

Traditionalists, on the other hand, valued conventional expectations regarding gender stratification and consequently opposed the new women and the suffragettes especially. In the historical record thus far, traditionalists have not been clearly defined except as a group who strongly disagreed with the new women. Traditionalists, for the purpose of this paper, shall be defined as the men and women who maintained the conventional opinion that women should be men’s “weaker, better half.”8 Consequently, many of these individuals found themselves adamantly involved in anti-suffragette organizations and clubs. The

---


6 The geographic changes caused by the suffragette movement are elaborated upon in Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).


8 Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity and desire in the women’s magazine, 1800-1914* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 64.
general sentiment behind their actions can be most succinctly put into the words of one anti-suffragette editorialist who claimed: “Womanhood can not have its cake and eat it. If women want the kind of consideration to which they have been accustomed they must live by the conventional standards.” Overall, the traditionalists found any women striving to break their social boundaries highly unrespectable.

The fear that traditionalists felt for the new women was mainly due to the juxtaposition of female action in the early twentieth century to the strict dogma of the nineteenth century, created under the assumption that women were sedate and innocent. Even towards the end of the nineteenth century, women were projected as passionless, demure beings, whose sole task was to take care of their husbands and children. The world of knowledge and argumentation was considered to be a strictly male domain. Both men’s and women’s insistence upon this divide is revealed through many different primary sources. Jane Austin herself resolutely stated that, “A woman, especially if she have the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can.” Coming from a woman, and an intelligent one at that, this quote helps to suggest the level to which such an ideal was ingrained into society. In Steppin’ Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930, Lewis Erenberg succinctly describes the nineteenth century as one of “gentility, combining a moral fastidiousness and cultural refinement to discipline the will.” Considering that these strict expectations had been in place for the better part of the century, it seems logical that the women to challenge these societal tenets would have been met with stiff opposition.

The new women faced serious ridicule due to the extreme diversion from their traditional role, which they demonstrated by leaving their homes for the first time, dressing in more practical clothing, and altering the previously accepted political ideology as it pertained to their sex. Unfortunately for them, the more conventional members of society refused to accept these adjustments. In 1895, in a competition to define the new woman, one competitor wrote: “Who cuts her back hair off quite short and puts on clothes she didn’t ought,
and apes a man in word and thought? New Woman. Who rides a cycle round the town, in costume making all men frown, and otherwise acts like a clown? New Woman.” This ridiculing poem clearly shows a feeling of dismay towards the new woman. The very fact that a competition to define this new kind of woman existed, proves that she was viewed as an entirely new phenomenon. It also illustrated that this problem vexed society as a whole, rather than just a few fastidious individuals. In fact, Mary Wollstonecraft herself sadly conceded that when a woman showed any sign of ambition, she was “hunted out of society.” This does not paint an image of manageable mockery, but harsh and persistent ridicule, coming through an array of different media.

Specific examples of the fears that invoked this ridicule could have been found throughout New York City in the twentieth century and especially in publications such as the New York Times. It was highly concerning to people at the turn of the century that women seemed to be forgetting their roles as traditional, stay-at-home mothers, and consequently, were tearing apart the ideal American family. Traditionalists also feared that in the women’s attempt to change they were not so much becoming new women, as slowly changing into something more masculine. To analyze this mockery effectively, I shall draw sources solely from New York City. It may appear that New York City, as the birthplace of the women’s rights movement, presented one of the most accepting locations for women’s suffrage to flourish. But in fact, New York City became a center for controversy in this time, with passionate fighters on both sides of the debate attempting to rally men and women. The New York Times, as a widespread newspaper that printed letters from people who argued all along the spectrum of women’s rights, presents a good limiting lens through which to analyze this political trend.

The multiple publications of H.Y. Mayer’s cartoons, each based around the mockery of women’s fashion, clearly show the fear created by the changes in women’s role. Between 1909 and 1913, Mayer was the author of five, full-page cartoons in the New York Times that related to new women. On each page Mayer depicted ten to twelve different, smaller cartoons, each telling a different

13 Hernandez, 90.
joke relating to new women. Together these images reveal the prevalent fear of the changing sex roles.

Mayer drew a specifically detailed image in March 1912 in response to the traditionalists fear that new women may forget their motherly instincts. In the bottom left corner of his page, a single woman is portrayed with a look of extreme pride on her face. She is young, youthful and seems to be enjoying the new fashionable garment she is wearing as she reaches out her hand to meet someone, engrossed in this apparently glamorous world. Her dress is unnecessarily layered: folds of material draped around her body increase her size by at least half, but this is not the focus of humor in the piece. The quote below the reading suggests: “Now that the fashion of the panier permits it, why not bring the papooses along.” Only after reading this does the reader notice two babies, camouflaged by the elaborate folds of their mother’s dress, sitting in two of the drapes as if they were cradles. The humorous nature of the cartoon and the impracticality of the suggestion instantly cast aside the notion that this is a serious suggestion. Even when the children are with her, engulfed in her very dress, the woman does not notice them. Distracted by her new world this mother is far from the traditional cradling, stay-at-home woman that the Victorian era propagated. H.Y. Mayer seems to be insinuating that the new fashions have distracted her from her role as a good mother – perhaps he is even proposing that these two worlds simply should not mix. The literal picture is, of course, an exaggeration, but it portrays the very real fear, cradled by traditional New Yorkers, that women would forget their most basic human role as mothers. The fear seemed to be that turning away from motherhood would naturally lead to a more masculine persona.

Mayer played with the fear of a transition towards a masculine image in several of his cartoons, but two of the most obvious depictions of this fear were drawn into his April 1911 collection. In the bottom left hand corner of the page, a man is shown sitting in his chair, shaking a paper. The caption below reads, “Durn those fashion papers!” The reason for the man’s frustration is quite obviously due to the woman standing next to him who presumably, is his wife. It is hard to tell who she is at first for she is dressed as a man, in pants that

17 Ibid.
leave only a few inches of her ankles showing, a striped, button-up shirt, and a cone-shaped hat. The only telling signs of her sex are a ribbon on the hat, her long tied hair in a bun, and her earrings. Her face is strangely distorted, suggesting that she is not attractive, though, judging by the man’s furious reaction, this was probably not always the case. The reader is given the impression that the prevailing fashion trends of the day transformed a once feminine, perhaps even beautiful woman, into an unattractive, almost male figure.

Further up the page in Mayer’s 1911 collection of cartoons is another depiction of this fear, propagated through the mockery of fashion, that suggests women’s new habits caused them to be almost indistinguishable from men. In this image, a priest is standing in front of what appears to be two men. The quote underneath it, however, states, “The Justice: Ahem – er – and which is the blushing bride?”18 Only then does it become clear that one of the figures is supposed to be female. This is hard to tell because the figures are standing with their backs to the reader. Both are dressed in identical, slightly baggy trousers, long coats, and large hats reminiscent of Napoleon Bonaparte. The suggestion Mayer hoped to make here is obvious – women, specifically through fashion, have decided to become so similar to men that soon enough there will hardly be a noticeable difference between the two. Once again, the literal depiction is imaginary; Mayer most likely did not believe that men and women would begin to dress in an identical manner. The suggested fear, however, that women were growing slowly more masculine, was all too real to traditional New Yorkers. It is no coincidence these last two cartoons have utilized women’s fashion as a tangible way to express the deeper fear society held about the evolving women.

Traditionalists found fashion was a highly effective rallying tool against the ‘shocking’ new women because New Yorkers were already in an uproar about the new trends. In one New York Times article a writer, who identified himself only as “an artist,” begged women to refrain from following the new fashions, specifically the new hairstyles, because he found them unattractive.19 Another New York Times article tells the story of a young woman who walked down Wall Street in an incredibly tight gown. After receiving an array of shouted ridicule, the woman tried to take refuge in a bank. But, she had attracted such

---

18 Ibid.
19 An Artist, “Artist’s Appeal For Women,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1901. (No further name is offered for the author).
a crowd of followers that the bank became full, and the mob of people flowed out onto the street, all the while catcalling and jeering at her. Eventually the woman took refuge in a telephone box until police could come and defuse the situation. Such an aggressive reaction suggests that the crowd was not simply letting the woman know she had made a fashion faux pas, but also that they felt the dress was representative of something bigger, a problem worth shouting about. The crowd clearly felt that the way this woman dressed represented a change in the way she perceived her role in society. In other words, the anecdote helps to prove the already prevalent association that the public held between fashion and the overall change in women.

If the general changes to women were worthy of such an uproar, it was nothing to the fear instigated by the suffragettes. Traditionalists worried about the ideologies that new women embraced because they were privileges traditionally attributed to men, including: leaving the home more often, expressing their sexuality, and generally defining the limitations for their own sex. The suffragettes took these philosophies to a new level because they declared themselves not only smart enough to help make decisions for society, but strong enough to be considered as eligible to do so as men. In other words, while the new women were seen to engage in offensive new habits, the suffragettes were attempting to create permanent change – a far more terrifying notion.

It was far easier for the traditionalists to prove that the new women (and by default, the suffragettes) lacked common sense because of their ridiculous clothing, than to address the various ideologies that constituted the suffragette debate. The dogmas of the suffragettes and the anti-suffragettes was complicated by the fact that people varied greatly in their motivation for joining each respective group. As Irene Frieze acknowledges in her book *Women and Sex Roles*, the opponents of suffragettes argued their points based on a list of topics including: religion, the fear of defeminization and loss of motherhood. For big businesses, especially the liquor companies, the suffragettes posed other threats. There was already a fear that women’s suffrage may lead to prohibition, and big businesses were concerned that women were “reform-minded,” a trait which would alter the entire game of politics. Similarly, the supporters of suffrage

---

21 Frieze et al., 336. This point was also reiterated in Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: W.W Norton and Company, 1965), 75.
varied in their reasoning. Some women argued simply that the vote was just, and others, that it would increase white, native supremacy. Abolitionists also supported women’s suffrage as a step towards their own cause. Populists felt that women could be made into “party loyalists,” and people who concerned themselves mostly with the Labor Party supported suffrage in correlation to equal pay for women, which would reduce the competition of cheap female labor.

Several New York Times articles also help to suggest that the suffragette was seen as the epitome of the new woman, and that mocking the fashion of both was considered a justifiable and inarguable way to undermine them. One article in particular, a letter written in June of 1913, expressly shows this trend. One man named A. Meerman wrote in to the New York Times on June 12 of that year, to complain about recent trends in fashion for the new women. He referred to a trend from Paris that called for women to wear wider brimmed hats and larger skirts, so big that it was hard for the wearer to sit. To conclude he exclaimed “And yet women want the right to vote! It’s the joke of the century!” In other words, the fashions that Meerman, like so many others, depicted as impractical, became a prevalent source of opposition to the notion that women were sensible enough to vote. Mrs. Dodge, the leader of an anti-suffragette organization, took this connection even further when she reportedly blamed suffragettes for the indecent new fashions. The suffragettes faced similar ridicule through the early twentieth century, much of which was difficult to directly argue with because it was presented in an indirect manner.

H.Y. Mayer propagated this connection in a light yet distinct way in his cartoons, when he focused on the lack of sense that he felt was displayed in women’s fashion as an attempt to prove the impracticality of women voters. In 1913, Mayer drew a picture of two women, each with a fashionable hat pulled over one eye with the caption “to restore perfect vision exponents of the ‘Hat-over-one-eye’ idea should travel in teams.” In short, he suggested that the two women traveled together so that the girl with only her left eye

23 Frieze et al., 337.
24 Ibid., 337.
26 Ibid.
revealed could combine with the other, who had only her right eye revealed, and together they could have the vision of one person without a hat. The comedic nature of the page proves this was not a serious suggestion. Mayer instead, was arguing that the women were dressing in such an impractical way that they could not function individually, that they lacked skill and vision. This could easily be extrapolated to suggest that women lacked the vision needed to vote. Similarly, an image in 1911 showed a woman crawling along the floor because this was the only way to get her incredibly large hat through a doorway.\(^{29}\) The fact that Mayer saw women as utterly nonsensical is clearly shown through these depictions and many others like them, including those that focus on masculinity and a digression from motherhood, as discussed above.\(^{30}\) It can be expected that New Yorkers would have understood these depictions of mild stupidity as, at least in part, an argument against the suffragettes due to the political prevalence of the suffragette debate at the time. Whether they did or not, the continual propagation of the asinine nature of the new women was a bitter struggle for the suffragettes. To help ensure that this connection was made, however, Mayer also drew several cartoons that connected to the suffragette movement far more directly.

Mayer’s many images of ridiculous women frame several drawings that directly relate to women’s suffrage, making it is all too clear that he intended to propagate a lack of respect for the new women, and the suffragettes especially. The first also appeared in 1911. Near the top of the page an elegantly dressed woman, an elderly gentleman and a young boy are all individually chasing their hats that were blown off in the wind. The caption above it reads “No More Hatpins. Equal Rights For Women.”\(^{31}\) The suggestion here is that the woman, sure that she deserves all the rights and restrictions that men receive, decided to disregard the hatpins that most women used at this time to keep their less-than-form-fitting hats on their heads. Consequently the woman has gained the right to chase her hat, which fell off just like those of the men. This trivial attempt at equality suggests that this is indeed what Mayer believes of all issues in women’s rights: they are trivial. In other words, the right to vote for women would be about as useful as the disregard of hatpins.

Many of the Mayer’s images commented on women’s rationality and

implicitly discussed politics, one image however, plainly showed the disrespect Mayer felt for the suffragette movement. Published in 1912 one drawing, significantly placed on the top, center portion of the page would have attracted the viewer’s instant attention. The title: “Suffrage and Fashion – The Parade” is placed so closely to the title for the entire comic that it could almost be considered a subtitle.32 Below the text is a row of four women, drawn from a side angle, each following the one in front, holding signs with “vote for women” printed upon them.33 Through this description so far, the image seems like a credible depiction of women’s rights parades, there are however, a few major differences. Firstly, the women are all entirely blacked out. This artistic choice suggests several subsidiary arguments. Firstly, it implies less of a human presence in each character, as though the women are not parading due to their own intelligent, political analysis, but for some other reason, perhaps merely to ‘follow the pack’. This idea is exacerbated further by the portrayal of a poodle at the end of the line, following along obediently, much like the women themselves. To increase the association between the women and the poodle, each of them, rather than standing straight, is bent in a kind of hop. Their feet are a few inches from the floor in mid-jump, prancing like the dog along the pavement. The women’s outlines, conveniently enhanced from being blacked out, are also distorted by strange curling lines and bulges caused by the strange clothing they are wearing. If anything these distortions make the women more similar to the poodle, which is stereotypically shaved to accentuate the balls of fur along his body.34 The artist suggests that the women and the poodle share a lot in common. Neither is particularly graceful or intelligent and both are simply on the street to parade their odd new styles and get attention. While Mayer clearly mocks women and, implicitly, suffragettes in many of his drawings, this depiction represents the pinnacle of his distaste. Sadly, Mayer’s desire to advertise his distaste was not a rare sentiment at this time.

Mayer was only one of many traditionalists who mocked the suffragettes, a fact that is made evident by the reappearance of Mayer’s work over four years and the other articles in the New York Times that have already been discussed. The continuous mockery of the early suffragettes that Gurko adamantly describes,

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
did not significantly fade as 1920 drew closer.\textsuperscript{35} On the contrary, the ridicule spread throughout the beginning of the twentieth century from the occasional harsh comment and political opposition to this more widespread ridicule, propagated by the mockery of fashion, which became slowly more desperate as the suffragettes power to effect change became evident. Analyzing the work of H.Y Mayer, it seems that the mockery of fashion was lighthearted. His work was in fact, simply a lighthearted twist on the otherwise heated ridicule of suffragettes through the use of fashion, a fact made clear through further analysis of the New York Times.

Several articles in the New York Times reveal the prevalence of fashion as a way to mock the suffragettes, in a more serious manner than cartoons may suggest. One example of this came from a New York Times reporter after his visit to a fashion show that was displaying the work of a prestigious fashion designer by the name of Mrs. White.\textsuperscript{36} Despite the non-political nature of the show, Mrs. White was asked in a question and answer section what she felt suffragettes should wear. In response, White began by asking why on earth women would want to vote. She then continued to suggest that if women wanted to vote they should wear cassocks (long, single colored gowns, most commonly related to ecclesiastical dress). Knowing that White did not support women’s suffrage, it seems unlikely that she suggested such a thing so as to depict the women as holy. More likely she was suggesting that they try to move away from the ‘scandalous’ gowns that new women were so often mocked for wearing. The very fact that the issue of suffrage would be brought up at a fashion show reveals the prevalence of a correlation between the two. On top of that, the fact that White responded so adamantly that she was in opposition of the suffragette cause suggests that she felt this a prevalent topic, so in need of discussion that she could waiver from her own clothing collection for a minute or two. It surely would be beneficial for White to stay away from highly charged political topics due to a desire not to offend any potential clients. White’s reaction then suggests that either she was uniquely passionate about the topic — which seems unlikely in comparison to other articles — or that being vehemently against women’s suffrage was so common that she was not concerned about offending a great number of people. This latter option is given credence by the other New York Times articles that suggest the commonality of such brash opposition.

\textsuperscript{35} Hernandez, 90.

Further articles, from several different New Yorkers, varying in importance from a bishop to an average citizen, reinforce the commonality of this ridicule. So prevalent was the suffragette debate that the New York Times covered one incident in which a bishop spoke at an all-girls’ school graduation. In his short speech to the young ladies he apparently felt that one of the most important messages to communicate to them was that the new women were freaks, each one a “horrible, misshapen monster.” In another article, covering an anti-women’s rights lecture, one Mrs. Maud Ernest described the suffragettes as conceited and egotistical. She even went as far as to say that they were disgusting. These are only two examples of many that flooded the pages of the New York Times, varying in both length and severity.

The few historians who refer to the mockery of later suffragettes, tend to focus on specific, overt instances of mockery, such as those found in the book Selling Suffrage by Margaret Finnegan. Specifically, Finnegan refers to demonstrations of violence at suffrage parades. The most pertinent of these in proving the opposition to the suffragettes involved a parade in 1913, during which several men jumped onto the suffragette floats where they accosted and fondled the women. Ultimately the riotous crowd injured three hundred people. Finnegan however, transitions from these tales to noting the positive effect of parades for the suffragettes due to the emotional effect they created. She then claims that suffragettes were able to fight off this kind of harassment most of the time by using simple logic. Such a refusal to demonstrate the significance of this overt ridicule is shocking, though the very fact that she acknowledged it at all means she did more than many other historians in investigating the real struggle of the suffragettes.

40 Finnegan, 52-53.
This ‘real struggle’ can be seen through the distinction between the mockery discussed by Finnegan and the mockery discussed in this paper. Evidently, opposition to the suffragette cause would have occurred at suffragette events such as parades. By only focusing on this type of mockery, however, it is implied that suffragettes and their supporters could avoid mockery most of the time. The mockery presented in this paper, however, was all detailed in the New York Times, a general publication that would have been found throughout the homes and streets of New York City. This proves that the mockery was not only present for the women who threw themselves into the thick of suffragette controversy, or only on certain days when events were held. I have shown that this ridicule was pervasive around New York City, on a daily basis. Not only that, but while one failed parade may be forgotten, the indirect propagation of ideas through daily ridicule - that women were stupid and incompetent - lingered on. The mockery I have discussed was less obviously hostile than the examples presented by Finnegan. However, it was constant and subtle enough to ensure that the suffragettes had a difficult time directly addressing the stereotypes it propagated. This is evident due to the fact that instead of supporting this mockery with extensive argumentation, traditionalists, such as Bryant Lazelle, who wrote a letter to the New York Times in 1910, explained that he felt that no argument was necessary to prove that the suffragette ‘movement’ was nothing more than a “species of modern hysteria.”  

While the mockery varied in seriousness from cartoons to political speeches, and in credibility from average citizens to bishops, it is evident that new women, and suffragettes especially, faced mockery on all sides. Rather than delving solely into political argumentation, traditionalists found that larger crowds of opponents could be rallied behind the mockery of women’s fashions, due to the fact that these trends already outraged New Yorkers and were visible to even the most politically uneducated. The array of mockery proves that, despite their increased numbers, maybe even because of their increased numbers, the women of the later suffragette cause faced incredibly prevalent ridicule and opposition. While this in no way undermines the brave efforts made by the earlier suffragettes, it does imply that the second wave of suffragettes deserve further acknowledgement for the mockery they endured. While more subtle, the ridicule was no less persistent. No doubt, these ideas carried on past 1920 and the achievement of women’s suffrage, less overt but ever-present.

---


Despite the feeling at times that the 2011-2012 edition of The Forum would never reach completion, with enough determination and assistance, the issue became a tangible product of Cal Poly’s finest history writing. The following is an attempt to show gratitude to the many people who helped make this issue a reality.

First, I thank The Forum’s advisors, Dr. Tom Trice and Dr. Molly Loberg, who both provided patient guidance, advice and reassurance over the course of the last year. They also provided me the opportunity not only to be part of the journal, but also to gain an invaluable experience that would be hard to come by elsewhere. Without their dedication and support, it is unlikely the journal would have much of an existence or future.

Next, I thank this year’s editorial board, a group of graduate and undergraduate students who, despite their course loads, extracurricular activities, and other obligations, continually exceeded expectations by remaining devoted to quality writing.

To this year’s group of contributing authors: you should feel very proud of your achievement. Not many can say they have had their student essays published. I thank you for allowing The Forum to be a part of what I am sure will be stellar careers.

I also want to thank all those who submitted papers this past year. Due to the nature of publishing, it is nearly impossible to showcase every submission, but you should be sure that the board and I enjoyed reading each and every submission. I hope that you will continue to pursue publication in The Forum.

The Cal Poly history department has never ceased to amaze me in its commitment to student learning and its support of The Forum is no different. Kim Barton and Sherrie Miller tirelessly work to ensure our needs are met. I am grateful also to our history professors for their careful attention to student work and willingness to encourage and support student publishing.

The Forum also thanks graphic communication student Lauren Peterson for her help formatting the journal. It is through her keen design skills that we are able to achieve an attractive and professional publication.

Thank you to fellow editor Andre LeBlanc for working around the frenzy that is student schedules and taking beautiful photographs of our editorial board and contributors.
Additionally, The Forum thanks Cal Poly librarian Marisa Ramirez, who year after year assists us in archiving The Forum on Cal Poly's Digital Commons. Electronic publication has helped the The Forum reach a wider audience and ensures a place in Cal Poly history long after its paper disintegrates.

Finally, I want to thank the Cal Poly community for its support of a student-run academic journal as well as its commitment to a free and respectful environment for the exchange of ideas.
INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The Forum welcomes submissions from currently enrolled or recently graduated students from all accredited colleges and universities. Submissions must be historical in nature and should be sent electronically to calpolyforum@gmail.com in accordance with the stated requirement and procedures available on our website: http://calpolyforum.wordpress.com. The following summary explains our policies but should not be considered exhaustive.

Editorial Procedure: All submissions to The Forum are read and evaluated by a panel of three editors using a double-blind review system. All decisions rest with the executive editor(s) and the faculty advisor based upon the needs of the journal. The editors may request revisions and, where appropriate, reserve the right to make adjustments to the text.

Style: Excluding book reviews, all submissions should follow the Chicago Manual of Style (Turabian) and cite all sources using footnotes. Papers should also include a complete bibliography of all works cited. Book Reviews should use parenthetical citations.

Length: Upon initial submission, book reviews should be between 500 and 800 words. All other submissions should be between 1,500 and 5,500 words, exclusive of footnotes and bibliography.

Recency: All papers must have been written within one year of their submission. Therefore, a paper submitted during fall term must have been written no earlier than the previous fall term.

Recommendation: All submissions must be accompanied by a recommendation form. Typically, this form must be completed by the professor of a class for which a paper was written. In rare cases, the editors may waive the recommendation requirement. Please see our website for complete information.