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EDITOR’S NOTE

In my experience, historical research is about as close as we can get to time travel. When we interpret artifacts of the past, we become the living vessels—the messengers—for people’s stories. The articles included in this year’s edition of The Forum reflect Cal Poly History students’ commitment to honoring these stories. Nine stellar students dedicated their time and energy to composing the works which you are about to read. And let me tell you, writing for history is not a simple task. To prepare their final drafts for the journal, students spent any length of time between weeks and months diving into the archives, analyzing primary and secondary sources, drafting, and completing many rounds of revisions. As a result, we have the opportunity to show you some of the innovative work we get to do in our History classes.

This journal, however, would not exist without the department’s outstanding faculty and staff. We thank each of these individuals for building diverse and inspiring curriculum, submitting professor recommendations, and encouraging students to hone their unique voices. We send a special thank you to our faculty advisor Dr. Lewis Call and department administrative staff Denna Zamarron and Celine Realica for providing exceptional support throughout this process. Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the The Forum’s editorial board. These four editors’ thoughtful and constructive comments were instrumental in selecting student works and crafting the final product of the journal.

I hope you enjoy this year’s edition of The Forum.

- Katie Cederborg, Executive Editor
Author Biography

Michelle Mueller

Michelle Mueller is a second-year History major with a minor in Women and Gender Studies. She wrote her article for Dr. Kathleen Murphy’s “Introduction to the Study of History” class. Mueller is an advocate for women’s safety on college campuses. After attending law school, she plans to work for a women’s rights non-profit organization or interest group.
“Let's Hear It From the Girls”: Abortion Activism at Cal Poly, 1970-1980

Michelle Mueller

Amidst the second feminist movement from the early 1960s to late 1980s, young students across the country used colleges and universities as battlegrounds for attaining female bodily autonomy. Thus, in the small, agricultural town of San Luis Obispo, one is left to wonder: How did Cal Poly students participate in the national movement for abortion and contraceptive rights? Responding to judicial decisions, the second women’s rights movement impacted every corner of the nation through judicial law and review. College students across the country engaged in student-led protests, sit-ins, and live debates to facilitate conversations about abortion and body autonomy. However, Cal Poly students approached activism in a less obvious fashion: on-campus discussions, forums, and student editorials on the topic of abortion.

While few prominent news sources detail Cal Poly students’ role in the movement, editorials and reports in campus newspapers reveal that Cal Poly students and professors regularly debated the topic of abortion. Exemplifying Cal Poly students’ more discreet form of activism, just over a year before the Roe
v. Wade Supreme Court decision,¹ Cal Poly’s student newspaper the Mustang Daily published an editorial titled “Let’s Hear it From the Girls”² discussing abortion activism on campus. The authors, Carole Jones and Vickie Hale wrote, “We are two girls who have been following the abortion issue in the paper and are wondering why there has been no response from the females of this college. Where are all the girls hiding?”³ Writing in December of 1971, the authors were shocked to find that the large student body had not responded to the fiercely debated topic of abortion. Hale and Jones defended the right to bodily autonomy, satirically claiming that if a man volunteered to experience nine months of pregnancy and its unpleasant side effects, then women would consider a male perspective on the topic of abortion. At the end of their article, Hale and Jones claimed that a woman should have a right to choose to continue or end her own pregnancy and no one, especially a man, should challenge her decision. With two female students pushing for a response from their campus community, or to “hear it from the girls,” Hale and Jones called fellow co-eds to speak up in support of women’s rights to bodily autonomy. As a discreet form of activism, students used the Mustang Daily to advocate for abortion rights, while also seeking to inspire other Cal Poly students to share their own opinions on the topic.

Despite the absence of more public forms of student activism in San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly students led open discussions with local community health officials, students, and professors on the moral and ethical dilemmas of legal abortion. In a weekly briefing of campus events in 1972,⁴ the Mustang Daily’s editorial board reported on a discussion of the moral implications of abortion among professors of philosophy Dr. Walter Bethel and Dr. Stan Dundon and Shirly Buma, a psychologist at the San Luis Obispo County center. Bethel and

³ Ibid.
Buma agreed that, technically, an embryo is not a “life,” as it is not a citizen, and abortion is both a personal matter and protected as a woman’s right to bodily autonomy. Assuming a pro-life position, Dr. Dundon disagreed with Dr. Buma and Dr. Bethel, arguing that “an embryo is a person” and “abortion denies the fetus its right to develop its full potential.” He claimed that “aborting a fetus is worse than killing a fully developed person.” Providing an educated insight into the topic, students, professors, administration, and members of the community could read the standpoints of their peers and leaders with full trust and even provide the reader with reasoning on both sides of the topic to decide their own opinions, without attending the in-person event.

Later in Bernard’s article in the Mustang Daily, the editorial board reported that there would be another debate in the College Union on the following Tuesday which would discuss the “Administrative and Legal Aspects” of abortion with other Cal Poly professors in multiple open debates on the complicated subject of abortion on Cal Poly’s campus. Due to the debate’s local news coverage and high attendance, these forums held long-lasting impacts on both the Cal Poly campus and San Luis Obispo community. The debates provided critical and thoughtful comprehension of the complexities of abortion and considered the multifaceted sides of the pro-life and pro-choice stances. As a result, the debates shaped a more reasoned narrative for a reader or audience member. Promoting activism on campus, in-person discussions allowed students and professors to voice their opinions, asking questions and commenting on the divisive topic. Thus, dismantling the stigmas surrounding abortion, students used debates to understand and advocate for their stance on the topic.

News coverage of contraceptive services was critical to the process of normalizing abortions for the student population. An article in the Mustang Daily

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5 Barnard, “Abortion is an Individual Matter.”
6 Ibid.
informed students of abortion services and contraceptives at Cal Poly’s health clinic, La Femme, and the discounts offered to students. The article explained the length of the operation and adoption and counseling services, saying, “the operation costs $100 for Cal Poly students” and patients “are asked to return to the clinic three months after the operation and...later in the year to talk about their feelings on the surgery and their general mental state.” Through its medical perspective on abortion and efforts to debunk myths surrounding the procedure, the Mustang Daily helped to break down stigmatic barriers for students. With education as a critical aspect of activism, the Mustang Daily dismantled many misconceptions surrounding abortion on Cal Poly’s campus, informing students on abortion so they could form more educated perspectives.

A second campus student newspaper, Outpost, interviewed students at Cal Poly who shared their own experiences, contributing to a national effort to humanize the issue. The Outpost featured editorials and spotlights on Cal Poly students and provided an outlet for students to speak on relevant issues to the campus community.

In 1972, the Outpost profiled a 19-year-old Cal Poly student, Carla, and her journey through unwanted pregnancy, birth control, abortion, and overcoming guilt. Carla’s first reaction to getting an abortion was negative and at times, humiliating: She “vomited at the thought of [getting an abortion],” but, ultimately, went through with the operation, believing it to be the best option for the wellbeing of her fetus and future. The student’s story highlighted the stigma surrounding abortion and the scarcity of resources available to college-aged women experiencing unwanted pregnancies. Carla’s focus on how others in the hospital would perceive her shows the tremendous and lingering stigma

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8 Ibid.
that abortion carried. However, sharing Carla’s story also allowed Outpost readers empathize with women receiving abortions. Using storytelling to shed a light on the experience of abortion for college-aged women, the Outpost cultivated a more personal narrative when discussing the issue.

While most Cal Poly students did not engage in the more publicized forms of protest of the era, student activists used school newspapers to discuss their opinions on abortions, report discussions and forums on campus, and communicate personal stories. Student-led newspapers on Cal Poly’s campus educated their readers, and encouraged other students to voice their opinions. Cal Poly may not have hosted the famous abortion protests written in history textbooks, but students and faculty members engaged with the topic and played a distinct role in debates on abortion during the 1970s.
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Author Biography

Sam Mcclintock

Sam Mcclintock is a fourth-year History major, with research interests in colonialism and 20th century world history. Under the guidance of Dr. Andrea Oñate-Madrazo, he wrote his article centered around Filipino-Americans in California as his senior project. After graduation, Sam will pursue a teaching credential in social studies at San Jose State University.
Filipinos in California, Community and Identity: A Personal Inquiry

Sam Mcclintock

A 2001 obituary for a woman named Segunda C. Reyes headlined, “Longtime leader, dies at 90.” The article, posted in the Stockton Record, listed some of the important aspects of Reyes’ life: She immigrated from the Philippines in 1931, ran hotels to provide housing for Filipino farm laborers, and helped establish social clubs for Filipina women. It even highlighted a non-profit organization named after her, committed to social support and outreach for senior farm laborers in the San Joaquin County community. She was survived by three children, thirteen grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and even two great-great-grandchildren. I am one of her great-grandchildren.

For a time, the obituary was no longer available on the Stockton Record’s digital archives. The Segunda C. Reyes foundation has since ceased operations, and the city even paved over the park that bore her name. Nevertheless, the discovery of Reyes’ obituary began a very personal journey for me to uncover my

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own history. Who was Segunda C. Reyes? What was her life like? How do hers and Filipino immigrants' experiences in early 20th century United States echo to today?

In my research, I found that the experiences of Filipino individuals living in the United States in the early twentieth century were inexorably tied to the political, economic, and social currents of the unequal relationship between the Philippines and the United States of America. While other migrant groups arriving to the Western United States at the time experienced similar conditions, the conflux of American imperialist aims constituted Filipinos' unique location in society.

This paper focuses on three specific moments that fed into early Filipino immigrant identities the United States. First, I will discuss the experiences of Filipinos who migrated to the West Coast of United States in the 1920s and 30s, fleeing colonialist foreign policy in the Philippines only to be denigrated by a racialized society set a baseline as the first significant wave of Filipino migrations. Next, I will consider how the provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 led to demographic shifts in who immigrated as communities and family units became more permanently settled in the 1960s and 70s. Last, I will discuss how second-generation American-born Filipinos explored their parents' histories and cultural roots in the effort to carve out an identity.

Constantly in flux, people experienced identity in diverse ways. Thus, analyzing historical trends, this paper will show how the resulting structures that Filipino migrants developed were and are based on a variety of unique, individual sociocultural backgrounds. The United States’ imperialist initiatives in the Philippines laid a foundation for an American Filipino identity still experienced in a variety of forms today.

The impetus for migrations of people from the Philippines to the United States is centered on the historically unequal relationship between the two nations. Dating back to the Spanish-American war of 1898, the United States
intervened in the Philippines’ conflict with Spain in the hopes of gaining control over the crumbling empire’s maritime colonies. What immediately followed was a brutal campaign of “pacification” in the Philippine-American War concurrent to a massive influx of American administrators, clerks, and teachers to the islands with the express goal of reorienting the Philippine economy and society to be more favorable to the United States. In doing so, the United States asserted colonial dominance over the Philippines. As a result of the U.S.-centric education program, many young Filipinos turned to the imperialist country as a place to escape poverty wrought by the transformed industrial export economy. Because of their fringe legal status as “nationals”—neither citizens nor aliens—Filipinos circumvented discriminatory immigration laws. This allowed labor recruiters to hire Filipinos to work on Hawaiian sugar plantations as early as 1906 and later, more extensively, on the mainland as agribusiness boomed during the 1920s.

Carlos Bulosan's writings capture the struggle, violence, and heartbreak that the earliest generation of Filipino migrants looking for a way out of poverty experienced in America. Originally published in 1943, Bulosan’s semi-autobiographical novel America is in the Heart survives as Filipino scholars’ deliberate effort to remember the racial differentiation and exclusion that early migrants encountered. While more recent histories of Filipinos in America recognize that Bulosan’s work only reflects a single experience, it is vital to the historiography of Filipino-American stories. America is in the Heart established an archetype of a single, male, migratory, poor, seasonal-worker experience similarly recounted in many other personal histories about the 1920s and 1930s. Therefore, the book served as a focal point for other histories about Filipinos to contest and

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4 Espiritu, Home Bound, 26-27.
5 Baldoz, 12-13.
pivot on. Many of Bulosan’s writings are imbued with a bottom-up perspective that he and some other Filipino people from his generation maintained: hope in the possibility of a more equitable United States for future generations.

Fred Cordova’s seminal 1983 work *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans* serves as an important contribution to the historiography of writings about Filipinos in America. Contextually, it is a significant and early compilation of the Filipino immigrants’ lives and experiences during the 1920s and 1930s. In terms of content, it serves as a focal point for history owing to the idea of constructing a kind of Filipino-American identity. The book positions itself as a way to actively rectify the absence of histories written about the contributions and exploits of Filipino-Americans from their own perspective. In the author’s words, “They wrote their own history, which is our-story, revealing simply but inspiringly that they have actually been real live people, human beings making it in American society.”

If *America is in the Heart* was one man’s story of life in America, then *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans* serves as a collection of many stories and starting place to celebrate the exploits and achievements of Filipino-Americans.

The methodology for the ways in which many compilations of personal narratives, oral histories, and collections of photographs are preserved and reproduced reflects the networks of members of the community who wished to contribute to the publication of the work in question. Yen Espiritu attributes access to the interviews in *Filipino American Lives* to established community networks of elderly Filipinos in the San Diego area. The Stockton Oral History Project’s *Voices* thanks not only its interviewees, but also its interviewers who retrieved narratives for the collection. These social and familial networks were essential to my research too: our family copy of Cordova’s *Filipinos*

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6 Fred Cordo, *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans* (Demonstration Project for Asian Americans, 1983), xiii.
contains not only a dedication on the inside cover to my uncle for his interest and persistence in remembering but also my grandmother’s annotations along the margins of certain pages, pointing to photos of the people she knew personally.

Changes brought on by imperialism in the Philippines not only affected how Filipino people positioned themselves within the relationship between the United States and the Philippines but also in the creation of a disconnected, transnational, and diasporic dialogue. Cultural theorists in the late 1990s and early 2000s argued that scholars should not limit Filipino Studies to just the United States or the Philippines, highlighting the varied importance of colonization and encounters with imperial powers in mapping the ways that Filipinos identified themselves.

E. San Juan emphasizes the multinational dimensions of Filipinos in the United States through a postcolonial lens to corroborate Filipino experiences and the socioeconomic impacts of a framework of colonial discourse: that Filipino bodies were and are inexorably displaced and made subaltern by racist policies, and that identity-construction ought to include other nuanced factors and solidarity with other global subaltern minorities to combat hegemony. The author argues that “[V]iolent colonization and unmitigated subjugation by U.S. monopoly capital” are the chief factors that set Filipinos apart from other Asian-Americans, and the history and consequences of U.S. colonization are vital to establishing a future direction for the diaspora. Theoretical constructions of transnational identity pave the way for later sociological discussions about framing the position of Filipinos in U.S. society. Rick Baldoz’s *The Third Asiatic Invasion* takes a two-fold examination of U.S. policy. First, the book explores how colonial governments’ policies enforced in the Philippines directly clashed with nativist domestic policy on the mainland. Second, the book discusses the

Filipinos navigate the liminal in-between space of racial differentiation and legal loopholes. S. Lily Mendoza offers a critique of the studies of intercultural communication in an expansion to these theoretical foundations. She argues that in scholarly circles, the pervading narrative of “core-periphery exchange” verges on its own hegemonic, “essentialist” narrative, and insists that the nuance of “indigenization” and “decolonization” are valuable components to consider when looking at the construction of transnational diasporic identity.

In the 21st century, scholars tend to expand who is included in the Filipino identity and what it means to analyze Filipino experiences. More diverse identifiers such as gender, sexuality, and the nuances of economic class expand Filipino self-identification. The physical dimensions of race play an important role in defining Filipinos’ relationship to white America. Gender distinctions of Filipina experiences and dimensions of femininity also inform identity construction and the ways individuals interact.

A common argument in many more recent developments is the idea that Filipino experiences are not unilateral nor stagnant. Yen Espiritu builds off the critical transnational discourse of scholars like San Juan Jr. and frames larger patterns in the context of familial relations and migrations. She argues that economic and social factors influenced decisions made by family members and the community to decide who migrated and when—especially within the context of changes caused by post-1965 immigration legislation and encounters with the racialized economic and cultural landscape of the U.S. Dawn Mabalon’s *Little Manila is in the Heart* is concerned with the deliberate destruction of the physical evidence of Filipino spaces. In her book, Mabalon laments the demolition of Stockton’s “Little Manila” district that once housed and supported the businesses and leisure spaces of those early immigrants that occurred as part of urban

11  Baldoz, 12-17.
redevelopment projects in the latter half of the twentieth century. Mabalon, Espiritu, Baldoz, San Juan Jr., among others contend that there is not one kind of Filipino: Different political, economic, sociological, and theoretical currents historically impacted and continue to contribute to the diverse ways that Filipinos experience and interact with these forces. They were not all men, and they were not all disparate laborers as in Ronald Takaki’s generalized portrait of Filipinos as a component of Asian-American history.

Many previous works discussing Filipino Americans involve very little published cultural and historical memory. Each collection of narratives and photographs begins with the author’s thankful dedication to their subjects and a sense of remorse that they could not have captured more. While this will always be the struggle of documenting and recording history, it stands to reason that, in this moment, some one hundred and twenty years since the United States wrestled social, political, and economic control from the Philippines, many peoples’ stories survive. This paper’s existence, thanks to the diligence of second-generation immigrants, is proof. There will always be a sense of lost opportunity—of the physical evidence of treasured newspapers, photographs, and even buildings discarded or destroyed for their perceived lack of value—an attitude that realizes the value of Filipino history experienced as a remnant of colonial subjugation in a racialized landscape. But as the scholarship of Filipino experiences expanded since the days of the Fred Cordovas of the community, more and more has been recaptured, remembered, and reinterpreted. Does this mean that the overarching narrative to contextualize Filipino experiences is deliberately fabricated in such a way as to establish a sense of identity or closeness to other Filipinos that might be predicated on false premises? Not necessarily, as this seems to be an ongoing discussion between academic and familial social circles. Even if it does, that does

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15 Mabalon, 11.
not mean that was is there isn’t without some analytical value as one kind of perspective, keeping in mind that there are many others that did not or have yet to be enshrined in the field. The first Filipino-Americans may be gone, but there are still those who remember them and those who remember their stories. The fact alone that their descendants exist is enough to prove that they once lived. Through this patchwork of shared oral stories and scrapbooks of personal histories passed on from children to grandchildren, from uncles and aunts to nieces and nephews, the legacy of Filipino History is still very much alive. One does not have to look very hard to uncover the impact of Filipinos in America.

**First Contact**

Situated on the road leading out to “The Rock,” nowadays an ever-popular tourist destination in Morro Bay California, there is another rock with a plaque on it commemorating the first time that people native to the islands called The Philippines supposedly stepped foot onto continental North America. This monument describes an event from October 1587: an ill-fated attempt by Pedro de Unamuno, a Spanish explorer arriving on the *Nuestra Señora de Esperanza* who stopped there along the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade, to establish a foothold for New Spain further north up along the coast of the empire’s California territory.¹⁶ The Spanish Empire found interest in the Philippine Islands due to its access to the markets of Asia and its role as a stopping point for the journey of its ships between these markets and its ruling territory over the New World in Mexico.¹⁷ The first galleon to leave the Philippines and initiate the Manila Galleon Trade left from Cebu on June 1, 1565, beginning a 250-year period of transpacific trade during which the Spanish used the labor of Philippine Natives to access lucrative markets at the port of Manila.¹⁸ As such, some of these “Luzon Indians” were among Unamuno’s crew as part of the landing party sent to make contact with

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¹⁷ Crouchett, 2.

¹⁸ Cordova, 9.
the Chumash peoples on the coast: an encounter that ended with the North American natives attacking the party and the deaths of a Spaniard and one of the Filipinos in the crew. The galleon disembarked two days later, and no attempts would be made to land along the California coast from Manila until 1595.\textsuperscript{19}

Other histories detail further exploits of people native to the Philippines settling in the “New World” over the course of the next several centuries. There are the “Manilamen” who jumped ship from the Spanish galleons and established small communities in modern-day Louisiana in 1763, the settlers who stayed and integrated into Mexican society upon arrival as a way to escape the brutality of colonial exploitation in the Philippines, or any number of “seafaring exiles and working sojourners” that ended up in territories stretching from Vancouver to Southern California, to Hawaii and Alaska, throughout the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{20} While these stories are sparse, they reveal a much deeper transnational history of Filipino people spurred on by encounters with imperial, colonialist powers. The purpose of the plaque in Morro Bay, dedicated in 1995, and the historicization of these other Filipino arrivals to North America that are recounted in Cordova’s book, exist as part of this larger effort in the late twentieth century to reclaim or reaffirm the existence and importance of Filipinos in American history. It is a cry by Filipino Americans to proclaim that, chronologically, bodies from their shared nation of geographic origin preceded the arrival of the Anglo settlers that would come to dominate the economy, culture, and society of North America. This idea of how Filipinos have thought about themselves and their place in the construction of American society, especially in the latter half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, is something that will be touched on again later. To begin mapping the shape of these interactions throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the starting point for the clash between Filipinos and American society began with canon fire off the port of Manila during the Spanish-American War in 1898, and in the bloodshed

\textsuperscript{19} Crouchett, 11-12.
\textsuperscript{20} Cordova, 9-10.
that followed in its aftermath.

**War, Resistance, and New Imperial Bonds**

The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1898, ended the Spanish-American War and ceded the Philippines to the United States for 25 million dollars.\(^{21}\) When Commodore George Dewey arrived in Manila Bay to put pressure on Spain by opening a second front in the war, he did so in the context of stepping into an already open conflict that had been brewing for several years between Spain and the *Katipunan*: a revolutionary secret society led by Andres Bonifacio and made up of members across class lines and the Philippines’ many regional-linguistic groups who were united by the shared goal of gaining complete political independence to avail the economic and social ills wrought by colonialism.\(^{22}\) On March 22, 1897, the *Katipunan* was replaced by a revolutionary government at a convention, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, who would lead a landing force of Filipino revolutionaries armed with American guns and fire support from Dewey and his gunboats, eventually leading to the siege of Manila in June of 1898.\(^{23}\) Aguinaldo declared independence from Spain on June 12, 1898, and conventions to draft a republican constitution took place throughout the summer.\(^{24}\) Fighting would not end until August, culminating in a staged battle where the Spanish surrendered to the *Americans*, not the Filipinos, to break the three-way stalemate between Dewey’s naval forces, Filipino Revolutionary forces dug into trenches surrounding Manila, and Spanish forces trapped in the walls of the city.\(^{25}\) By December, when the treaty was signed, America’s military presence had not left the Philippines,


\(^{23}\) Crouchett, 21-24.

\(^{24}\) Pido, *Pilipinos in America*, 46.

initiating the conversation of what to do with the Philippines.

From the start, Congress based its debates on America’s role in the Philippines on racial terms. Both expansionist and anti-imperialist camps argued over the purpose and direction of what to do with the Filipino *people* as the focus of debate; make no doubt that the value of the islands as a critical strategic outpost for establishing Pacific naval bases as “coaling stations” and as a permanent foothold in proximity to China’s lucrative markets were prime factors that motivated President McKinley’s refusal to recognize Aguinaldo’s provisional government and his decision to instigate US military rule over the islands in December 1898.\textsuperscript{26} As a moral justification of overseas expansionism, McKinley invoked language of “racial paternalism” and assimilation, positioning the United States’ control over the Philippines as a civilizing mission not unlike its moral justifications towards policies of assimilation directed at Native Americans throughout the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{27} McKinley claimed that after praying in the White House one night the idea came to him:

“...we could not leave [the Filipinos] to themselves—they were unfit for self-government, and they would soon have anarchy and misrule worse than Spain’s was; and that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them and by God’s grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died.”\textsuperscript{28}

Never mind, of course, that under the Spanish Empire the Philippine Islands had adopted Catholicism as its chief religion for over two centuries and that the self-governance movement made considerable progress opposing the Spanish military and drafting its constitution by the time the United States instigated its rule.

Anti-imperialists argued that extensions of overseas colonialism stood in

\textsuperscript{26} Herring, 321-322.
\textsuperscript{27} Baldoz, 27.
contrast to the republican ideals of the American experiment and might violate the constitution if new territories were not offered an opportunity at statehood.\textsuperscript{29} This option was clearly off the table for all the territories that the United States gained control over in the late nineteenth century. Others still turned to color lines and racial and class confrontations that would inevitably arise from the “collective naturalization of eight to ten million ‘dark-skinned’ Filipinos who would be incorporated into the national polity as fully enfranchised members,” pointing to recent examples of the failure of “carpetbagger” reconstruction governments in the South and the influx of Chinese laborers on the West Coast to prove that America was ill-equipped to meaningfully contend with race-based political involvement.\textsuperscript{30} In a sense, the United States already had a tumultuous history of navigating policies pertaining to this idea of race and upholding embedded establishments against this determinate threat of including non-white people in its processes. The Philippines represented another entrant into this contentious debate. Surveys sent to analyze the economic and social conditions of the Philippines deemed its peoples not only unfit for self-governance, but also divided the many tribes and ethnic localities into different tiers of proximity to \textit{civilization} to assess fitness for assimilation into American culture.\textsuperscript{31} This sort of interest in pursuing pseudo-scientific methods of race to construct policy would inform arguments for both expansionist and Anti-imperialist rhetoric and serve as the basis for Filipino stereotypes.

There is one other moment of note that preempts the arrival of Filipino immigrants to the United States: the “Philippine Insurrection.”\textsuperscript{32} It goes without saying that Aguinaldo and his camp of revolutionary fighters were not so eager to turn the Philippines over to the United States. They had just won their war for independence and had effectively been handed over to new imperial leadership

\textsuperscript{29} Herring, 322-323.
\textsuperscript{30} Baldoz, 27-30.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, 33-38.
\textsuperscript{32} Herring, 327.
per the terms of the Treaty of Paris. The Philippine War broke out on February 4, 1899, and saw the deaths of thousands of Filipino soldiers in its earliest battles dug in around Manila, under equipped and outmatched by American artillery in what some referred to as a “quail shoot.”33 As the Philippine army retreated into Central Luzon, Aguinaldo turned to guerilla tactics of ambushes and cut-and-run attacks against an increasingly dispersed American fighting force aided with supplies from local villages along the way.34 The war took on a new meaning for American troops upon the realization that locals were aiding the resistance efforts, and soldiers began to reframe the conflict as a clash of civilizations among Philippine peoples. Americans began throwing around racial epithets for their adversaries and employing the “water cure”: a form of waterboarding, to drive information out of residents of captured villages.35 Here, color lines between Filipinos and Black people or Native Americans and the use of wanton violence fed into the confirmation and creation of America as a white nation. Black newspapers in the United States decried the onset of war and violence as another version of unresolved issues of subjugation against colored minorities on the mainland.36 As the fighting dragged on, the Americans turned to exceptionally brutal strategies of counterinsurgency: slash and burn tactics, free-fire zones, and killing members of entire villages, not unlike counterinsurgency strategies seen in guerilla conflicts throughout the Cold War nearly half a century later, were par for the course and lauded as humane by McKinley’s generals.37 With the surrender of General Malvar, the last “respectable military element” in 1902, President Roosevelt declared that the war was over on July 4 of that same year.38

33 Francisco, 5-6.
34 Ibid, 7-8.
35 Herring, 328.
37 Francisco, 9-16.
38 Ibid, 18-19.
For the Filipinos, fighting did not cease with this declaration. Some estimates place the conflict continuing until as late as 1915.\(^{39}\) Although the number of 250,000 civilian deaths is often used to recount the cost in human lives of the war, other estimates that consider that this number might have been produced before the more brutal campaigns in Samar and Batangas, not to mention the continued fighting after the “official” end of the war and deaths as a result of disease and malnourishment, place the total number much higher at upwards of one million, conservatively.\(^{40}\)

Relating this context to the political society of the United States, Filipinos were colonial subjects, dominated into submission by the full might of America’s industrialized military force. This is by no means to suggest that this is the sole position that Filipino people ought to be relegated to in historical imagination of the end of the nineteenth century. However, from the perspective of America’s civilizing mission and experiments in colonialism, the survey projects of the islands and rhetoric that denigrated the Filipino people as tribal “savages” unfit for civilization in conjunction with racialized policies of segregation and exclusion aimed at other minority groups on the mainland of the United States preprogrammed an image of differentiation, non-understanding, and non-acceptance into the economic, political, and social apparatuses of American society. This projection was one that Filipinos experienced consistently across time and place throughout the waves of migration and demographic shifts of the 20th century.

**Early Migration and the Manong/Manang Generation**

The impetus for Filipino migration to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s following “pacification” of the Philippines was twofold. To take a general cue from the “push-pull” framework of migration studies, cultural and economic changes brought on by the “Americanization” of civil society in the Philippines

\(^{39}\) Mabalon, 33.

\(^{40}\) Francisco, 18-19.
pushed Filipinos towards the United States. American economic incentives to find a source of cheap labor to bolster lucrative agri-business enterprises growing on the west coast “pulled” them there.

McKinley’s initiative to “educate” the Filipino people and bring them closer to “civilization” can be situated as a vital turning point that began to orient Filipinos towards the United States. Concurrent to the war efforts of “pacification” in the countryside, William Howard Taft was appointed as the Civil Governor of the Philippines in 1901 and oversaw the development of an expansive education system designed to lead Filipinos towards self-governance, which had the effect of reshaping Philippine society. Almost 7,000 students were enrolled in American public schools in Manila as early as 1899, with the more significant development in this endeavor being the arrival of over 500 young professional teachers aboard the US transport ship, the Thomas, in 1901 dubbed the “Thomasites.” By 1915, there were thousands of these elite-educated American citizen teachers conducting classes for over half a million enrolled Filipino students. Classes were taught in English, curriculum was based out of American textbooks, and students learned about historical figures like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. In this way, students were extolled the values of the United States as a free and Democratic society by the American schooling system and even saluted the American flag in their classrooms. Carlos Bulosan recounted how, as he was learning English as a boy to emigrate more easily to the United States, “I was fascinated by the story of this boy who was born in a log cabin and became president of the United States.” In this marketed vision of America,

41 Baldoz, 44.
42 Pido, Pilipinos in America, 56-57.
43 Pido, Pilipinos in America, 48-49.
44 Mabalon, 32.
46 Baldoz, 46-47.
47 Carlos Bulosan, America is in the Heart (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press, 1973), 69.
anyone could have the opportunity to better themselves. If Abraham Lincoln, who was born a peasant could become a “great man,” then anyone born a peasant, like Carlos, could have the opportunity to improve their station in America. Another effect of acculturation by American education in the Philippines was, as Antonio J.A. Pido puts it, “Aside from the basics, the thrust was inculcating Filipinos with American values and the Coca-Cola culture.” Opportunity was the allure of America, and as education programs and a flood of new consumer products began to reorient Filipinos towards American commercial and cultural values, “it was perceived the only way to live like Americans was to be in America.” Reflexive of this attitude, born in Ilocos Norte in 1907, A.B. Santos recounted his experience in an interview with Yen Espirit:

“I did not know much about the United States, but I had heard from the Americans and the other Filipinos that there were many opportunities there. I had an American teacher who used to tell our class that in the United States, so long as you are willing to work and not weak, you can survive very well. So I was impressed with this.”

Another immigrant from those early days recounted in 1984, “Our American instructor said before that Filipinos would be treated nicely in the United States because we (in the Philippines) belong to the United States and there is equality and no prejudice.” Though only a sample of Filipinos recollecting their imagination of America from the Philippines, these statements capture these changes in attitude as an effect of American civil society in the Philippines. The economic landscape continued to be an important overarching context. At this point, elites in the

50 Ibid.
51 AB Santos and Juanita Santos, “Chapter 1: We Have to Show the Americans that We Can Be as Good as Anybody,” interview by Yen Le Espiritu in Filipino American Lives, (Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 1995), 37-38.
52 Interview in Voices, 7.
Philippines still owned most of the land in the form of an agricultural plantation system which Americans looked the other way from as a problem that the Filipinos needed to solve internally, whilst reaping economic benefit from deals with these landowners.\(^{53}\) Bulosan wrote about these social conditions extensively as a chief component of his childhood: “I hated absentee-landlordism, not only because it had driven my family from our home and scattered us, but also because it had shattered the life and future of my generation.”\(^{54}\) Elaborating on Buloson's experience of his family “scattering,” he and each of his parents and siblings were separated from one another and their family farm out of necessity to find work and pay back the landholder of their estate, which eventually pushed the young man to America as another avenue for economic independence.\(^{55}\) Additionally, educational opportunities proved another important locus for immigration to the United States, likely to that same tune of personal improvement and access to opportunities not available in the Philippines afforded by imaginations of the United States. This was the case for Segunda C. Reyes, who was 19 years old and a home economics teacher at the time that she immigrated to the United States with her husband in 1930. She wrote, “...we left for the United States of America where my husband was going to school in the University of California Berkely [sic] to take his master’s degree.”\(^{56}\) In another case, an older immigrant recalled their justification for traveling to America was, “I am going there for two purposes: to educate myself and at least try to find good employment for myself. My brother was here already so I told my family that I’m going to follow him and perhaps, he could support me through school.”\(^{57}\) All told, the product of changes to Philippine society was a vision of America as an equitable place where one

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56 Segunda C. Reyes, “In No One’s Footsteps,” Unpublished autobiography project in typescript and handwriting, date unknown, c. 1992, TD Reyes Personal Collection, 16.
57 Interview in *Voices*, 6.
could go to make some money and receive a better education: a place that, for some, offered better opportunities than those in the Philippines.

This orientation towards American society, interest in pursuing education, and potential of economic opportunity to counteract the growing disparity of land-value systems and the industrial export economy all preempted colonial border-crossings from the Philippines to America from the span of 1900-1935. In America, burgeoning industries on the West Coast were eager to accept Filipinos for their labor. To take a step back for just a moment, it is important to note that the importation of Philippine labor to the West Coast of the United States can be situated as part of a larger trend at the conjunction of race and labor in America at the turn of the twentieth century. Booming agricultural and industrial endeavors necessitated the importation of an exploitable labor force, so to fulfill these requirements, recruiters turned to Asian immigrants across the Pacific. An increasing Chinese presence in places like Hawaii and California led to race riots and moral fears about the sanctity of white labor and ownership, which resulted in the shuttering of all immigration by “persons of the Chinese race” per an 1888 addendum to the Chinese Exclusion Act, not just the laborers the act had originally singled out.58 Japanese laborers imported alongside and after Chinese laborers to fill in the gap left by exclusion similarly faced legal barriers to immigration. President Roosevelt responded to Japanese immigrants who purchased land and settled in California and Hawaii by restricting Japanese immigration from Hawaii to the mainland. Shortly thereafter, he negotiated the Gentlemen’s Agreement with Japan to cease issuing passports to Japanese people bound for the United States before practically restricting entrances outright under the quotas of an immigration law in 1924.59 Because the Philippines had become a colony of the United States by 1901, Filipino people did not meet the threshold of

59 Takaki, 203-209.
“foreign nationals” used to bar immigration and paths to naturalized citizenship. Combined with the effects of reorientation towards American culture, this led to a flood of Filipino migration which growers and industrial owners were happy to accept to make up for labor lost by immigration restrictions.\(^{60}\) Additionally, there was the opportunity cost of utilizing an eager new source of labor to drive down wages and pit Chinese and Japanese against Filipino laborers with threats of replacing them with this new resource.\(^{61}\)

The nearly 150,000 Filipinos who left the Philippines for Hawaii and California between 1907 and 1929 entered a highly racialized society that did not amount to the vision of upward mobility that they had been sold in the Philippines.\(^{62}\) Despite the aspirations of prosperity promised by imaginations of America passed down from the school systems and tales of other Filipinos who had regaled their relatives about the money they were making and how well they had it in America through letters back home, the only jobs available for Filipinos were menial labor in Hawaii’s sugar plantations, canneries in Seattle and Alaska, California’s lush agricultural fields, and as servants and busboys in hotels and restaurants.\(^{63}\) Educational and economic background did not preclude any sense of where these early immigrants would be relegated in America’s racialized social strata. One Filipino immigrant recalled,

> “I noticed that all the low class jobs were filled by foreigners, mostly Filipino or Chinese. I didn’t feel any job discrimination. But it seems that even college graduates you know, could never get a good job like the others. Even if you were a college graduate you could still be a dishwasher during those times.”\(^{64}\)

This was certainly the case for Segunda Reyes’ husband, a school principal

\(^{60}\) Baldoz, 48-54.
\(^{61}\) Ibid, 61-68.
\(^{62}\) Mabalon, 62.
\(^{63}\) Takaki, 316-320.
\(^{64}\) Interview in Voices, 14.
who traveled to America to pursue a master’s degree. She remembered, “while going to school he found a job in a restaurant washing pots and pans,” and that, “during that time was depression, the wages were only 10¢ an hour. Making $1.00 a day was not enough to support us because we have a child. So he has to stop school and we went to the farm to work.”65 What followed for the Reyes family was a stint of moving from town to town around California, chasing seasonal agricultural jobs cutting asparagus, picking pears, onions, tomatoes, and grapes, each for only a few weeks to a month at a time throughout that first year they lived in America.66 This story of grueling seasonal labor jobs to stave off an ever-present threat of economic insecurity is consistent throughout accounts of the 1920s and 1930s. Back breaking “stoop labor” cutting lettuce and asparagus with short hoes, cramped cots in labor camps, and already low wages siphoned off to pay for “room and board” are some of the kinds of dismal stories of exploitative conditions in those Depression-era days repeatedly in the oral histories of laborers.67

Sick of the poor conditions and bad pay, Filipinos banded together to form organized labor groups. Filipinos had a propensity for militant organized labor, dating back to Pablo Manlapit’s mobilization of thousands of Filipino sugar plantation workers in Hawaii in January 1920, and again in April 1924, which came to a head when the police killed 16 strikers: 60 more were arrested, and others were barred from working in Hawaiian plantations, ultimately pushing them to California.68 By the early 1930s, tight-knit units of Filipino laborers in Stockton would walk off the job together in loosely coordinated “gang strikes,” leaving a crop untenable and resulting in various degrees of success for demanding better wages.69 In more organized moments, The Filipino Labor Union (FLU) struck against the lettuce growers in Salinas in 1934, and the Filipino Agricultural

65 Segunda C. Reyes, “In No One’s Footsteps.”
66 Ibid, 6-17.
67 Multiple contributors, interviews in Voices, 17-20.
68 Cordova, 74.
69 Mabalon, 88-89.
Laborer’s Association (FALA) in Stockton mobilized 6,000 asparagus workers to raise the prices for cutting asparagus in 1939. Filipino labor organizations would continue to be a prominent force in California’s agricultural sector for decades. Philip Vera Cruz, at one time a vice president of the United Farm Workers (UFW), reflected on how Delano’s Agricultural Worker’s Organizing Committee (AWOC) was comprised of mostly Filipino laborers, and attributed the success of the strike to the fact that the Filipinos had a strong “worker’s consciousness” to be able to coordinate with one another—a consciousness that stemmed from their shared experiences working in California’s agricultural centers for over 40 years. The eventual merger between AWOC and the predominantly Mexican NFWA into the UFW maintained vital support from Filipino members, illustrating a mostly practical dimension of interracial collaboration.

Though wages were low, Filipino laborers still got paid. In the metropolitan centers dotting the agricultural fields where racial and ethnic minorities congregated, in places like Stockton and Delano, Filipinos took the money that they had earned and used it to hit the town. Pool halls and Taxi Dance Halls were popular spots where Filipino laborers came for leisure and to socialize. An old manong recounting the since-closed halls in Stockton in the 80s recounted how:

“They used to work asparagus, come to town, all dressed up. Dressed to kill, with a necktie, knickerbocker, whatever. Muffler and topcoats. The people, especially the warmongers, they’d yell at us, ‘where’d we get the money?’, all dressed up to kill, just making ten cents an hour working in the asparagus. They’d call us names, goo-goos, monkeys, idiots, whatever. No-brain.”

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70 Cordova, 75.
71 Philip Vera Cruz, in *Philip Vera Cruz: A Personal History of Filipino Immigrants and the Farmworkers Movement* (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Labor Center, 1992), 28-34.
72 Takaki, 337-339.
These places were not free from racialized discrimination and differentiation and are especially important in understanding the historical experience of young Filipino bachelors because it was here that they encountered white women. These interactions are important on two fronts. First are the ways that white women were used to extort the few remaining dollars from already exploited Filipino bachelors and keep them in a denigrated economic class on the pretense of companionship owing to the disproportionately lacking Filipina presence in California.

Additionally, the moral purity of white women was used to leverage the moral licentiousness of these Brown men as a threat to the social hierarchy of white masculinity and as a gateway to interracial relationships. Witnessing Filipino workers paying for dances in a crowded dance hall in Seattle, Carlos Bulosan described how “the girl was supposed to tear off one ticket every three minutes, but I noticed that she tore off a ticket for every minute. That was ten cents a minute. Marcelo was unaware of what she was doing; he was spending the whole season’s earnings on his first day in America.” It is important to note that the white women are not the culprits in this sexualized differentiation and exploitation of Filipino men. As Philip Vera Cruz recalled, white women “hustlers” were themselves oftentimes poor and desperate: they might not have seen profits from the money Filipinos spent on dance tickets or in their “schemes” towards Filipino men, and that to deride all of them that way was disingenuous because there were certainly plenty of cases where Filipino men and white women couples did enter loving relationships and marriages with one another. That said, it was not easy to obtain legal interracial marriages at this time. In California, marriage licenses between a white person and a “Mongolian” were prohibited, though these marriages would be recognized if they were performed in a jurisdiction

74 Baldoz, 120-135.
75 Bulosan, 105.
76 Philip Vera Cruz, in Philip Vera Cruz, 9-11.
where they were allowed. Situated within this context, white women become an accessory to or a tool in creating this sense of a white, masculine, construct of social power and superiority.

Filipina women were not completely absent from this early generation of immigrants from the Philippines, though young men far exceeded them in number. Some estimates place the Filipino population by 1930 as 95 percent male. Segunda Reyes’ story is somewhat of a special case in this regard, since she was already married and had a child when her small family unit immigrated to the United States—an unusual but not unheard-of situation. Families were a vitally important part of traditional cultural values, and thus identity, in the Philippines.

Young men’s inability to establish families in this period due to the absence of Filipina women and miscegenation laws barring interracial marriages in California ultimately perpetuated the bachelor laborer archetypal construction that appears relatively consistently throughout narratives and recorded collections of this period. Without access to family networks of their own, these men turned to other members of the community for support. In one testimony, Connie Tirona, who was born in Selma, California, in 1929, recalled how the manongs that she and her family would visit in the camps in the Sacramento-San Joaquin region as a child ostensibly considered her their adopted niece. These instances broadened the depths of connections between Filipinos in America through dimensions of shared connections and familiarity with one another as a part of the Filipino community even if they were not directly related to one another.

The lack of a pathway to naturalized citizenship was an immense barrier.

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78 Espiritu, Home Bound, 64.
for this early generation of Filipinos to overcome and gain access to the equal rights and protections they were offered by American education in the Philippines. “Citizenship, then, is the basis of all this misunderstanding?” Carlos Bulosan mused when his brother was denied a civil service job in Los Angeles.\(^\text{81}\) For some, voluntary service in the U.S. military was a pathway to obtaining that citizenship. U.S. naval bases in the Philippines, established as part of that colonial domination and strategic positioning of the islands, served a dual role as recruiting stations for thousands of Filipino foreign nationals to serve in the U.S. Navy.\(^\text{82}\)

Often times, however, the only positions that Filipinos were allowed to serve were as stewards, infuriatingly relegated to serving as the personal servants for officers stationed in the Philippines.\(^\text{83}\) World War II expanded Filipino participation in the armed forces. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the fall of Bataan in 1942, Filipino men from communities all over the United States enlisted or were drafted into all branches of the U.S. military to participate in the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese occupation.\(^\text{84}\) The First Filipino Infantry Battalion, consisting of three thousand Filipinos, was activated in April 1942 at Camp San Luis Obispo, and trained in camps throughout California.\(^\text{85}\) Participation in the war effort earned Filipino veterans respect as capable comrades in arms, but the goals of citizenship from service would not last. An overlapping period of Japanese rule of the Philippines and changes to the Nationality Act of 1940 in 1946 rendered thousands of Filipino Veterans who served in the Philippine Commonwealth Army as a mobilized arm of the U.S. army ineligible

\(^\text{81}\) Bulosan, 202.
\(^\text{84}\) Cordova, 217.
\(^\text{85}\) Ibid, 217-218.
for U.S. citizenship. In conjunction with changing immigration laws and the changing status of the Philippines, this act of limiting veteran citizenship served as another route to limit Filipino access to the American nation.

**New Immigrants, Families, and the Post-1965 World**

In 1946, the Philippines became an independent nation per the ten-year transition from commonwealth status to independence laid out in the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934. Devised on racialized terms in the same vein as the limits to immigration placed on “Asiatics” from China and Japan in the preceding decades as a reaction to the social presence of Filipinos in America, this new law changed the status of Filipinos from “noncitizen U.S. nationals” to “foreign nationals” practically overnight, with immigration quotas placing limits on further movements altogether once the Philippines became independent.

Restrictions on immigration were not eased until the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The act lifted the national-origin quota, and stipulations under the conditions of “family reunification” and “occupational characteristics” led to a new demographic to migrate from the Philippines that differed in composition and motivation from the first wave that migrated through the 1930s. Between 1960 and 1975, women constituted over 50 percent of immigrants from the Philippines and the percentage of educated professionals almost doubled, leading to the development of more permanent family units. Racial discrimination and differentiation remained an obstacle for these immigrants. However, immigrants were also “more aware that they were not coming to the land of equal opportunity, at least between races.”

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87 Ibid, 94-95.


89 Pido, *Pilipinos in America*, 78-82.

Gamboa, a San Diego physician who immigrated with his wife in 1976, cited how he was subject to additional medical exams and had to restart his residency program from scratch as in what he called, “a more subtle form of racism, where people feel that an individual who does not carry the right genes, whose skin is a tad darker, or who comes from an unfamiliar university, could not possibly be as qualified and talented and educated.”

In many locations in scholarship about the relationship between The Philippines, Filipinos, and the United States, this wave of migration constituted a proverbial “brain drain.” Some constructions go so far as to codify this relationship as a neoliberal shift in colonial exploitation of labor and the potential of the Philippines by the United States and other Western powers by siphoning away its educated professionals and intellectuals with the lure of better salaries elsewhere on the globe, leaving the nation in a state of under-development.

That being said, economic opportunity cost was not the only reason Filipinos began to immigrate in large numbers. Family ties accounted for a much larger percentage of migrations in this period, with studies surveying immigrants in 1975 and 1990 reporting that rejoining family members who had become situated with a job and income in America and could assist the migration of their relatives accounted for a considerable factor of the over 500,000 Filipinos who immigrated in the 1980s.

One element of post-1965 demographic shifts that Yen Espiritu is particularly concerned with is an inversion of gender norms and profession that belie the impetus of immigrations. She notes that in this landscape of women and professionals, the onset of Women Professionals, often nurses, afforded upward mobility not typical to male-led married migrations and at times required men to take on more caretaker-like roles in the family dynamic to compensate for the women’s work schedules.

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92 E. San Juan Jr., From Exile to Diaspora, 7-8.
93 Okamura, 42-44.
94 Espiritu, Home Bound, 148-152.
social dynamics were reflective of and contributed to larger changes among the Filipino community that would beget the development of a new kind of Filipino identity.

As a continued thread of colonialism over the Philippines, the “Military Bases Agreement” of 1947 allowed the US Navy to not only continue to operate its bases in the Philippines, but to continue recruiting Philippine citizens as well.\footnote{Quinsaat, “An Exercise on How to Join the Navy and Still Not See the World,” 102-103.} It would not be until 1994 that the last Naval base would be turned over to the Philippines.\footnote{Espiritu, \textit{Home Bound}, 28.} Because of this continuity, many Filipino career veterans of the US Navy elected to settle in the United States upon completion of their service, often in the communities that cropped up alongside naval towns up and along the California coast.\footnote{Quinsaat, 109.} Often times, they would move to these communities with wives they had met and young children they had in the Philippines, again citing those same values of better education and better economic opportunity in the United States than could be afforded back home.\footnote{Ibid.} Alongside middle class professionals and nurses, navy veterans and their families constituted a considerable influx in the changing Filipino demographic and the growth of Filipino communities across the state.

Interpersonal dynamics among settled family units reflected some larger changes in the community that preempted the move towards a different kind of Filipino identity. For one, the fact that there even were Filipino families in contrast to the lack of Filipinas and miscegenation laws of the 1930s were a marked shift in the Filipino community. It is worth taking a moment to note that the Philippines is not a monolith and consists of a wide variety of ethnolinguistic groups in addition to different kinds of class developments as noted above. As an example of the way that these regional differences manifested in the early waves of migration, TD Reyes described in an interview that regional differences...
between Ilocanos and Visayans, two of the most prominent ethnic groups that ended up in Stockton, maintained rivalries and prejudices towards one another and rarely married members outside of their group. He noted too, that these regional differences still sometimes cropped up in the attitudes of old Filipinos in the Stockton area today.\(^9\) The shift in question in the community by growing younger generations in this period was that other aspects began to circumvent these regional identities, at least in part, as the children of Filipino immigrants interacted with and participated in American society. Children spoke English at home and went to schools around other children who were not Filipino. In a departure from traditional family norms in the Philippines, children who acted independently of their parents by talking back to them or by refusing to listen to their opinions contributed in part to a “culture shock” of acculturation.\(^1\) As one example, Nemesia Cortez, who immigrated first to Hawaii in 1965 then to Oceanside, California in 1974, reflected on her daughters’ Americanized attitudes in an interview in the 1990s. She didn’t like how her daughters didn’t attend church, nor how her oldest married a white man when she would have preferred them both to marry Filipinos. She also felt remorse that her children could not speak Ilocano and favored English.\(^1\) Thus, consistent with several narratives in Yen Espiritu’s volume, many Filipino immigrants felt negatively toward the differences between the way they and their children were raised.

**Remembering History and Constructing Filipino Identity**

By 1970s and early 1980s, Filipino families had established their lives in America.\(^1\) This is where a distinctly separate conception of what it means to

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99 TD Reyes, interview conducted with author, November 25, 2021.
be Filipino started to come from, both among younger generations of children from family units that had immigrated and the slightly older second and third-generation children of members from the earlier manong/manang generation. What separates these U.S.-born Filipinos is just that fact; they had been born in the United States and were more “demonstrative about [their] rights as ‘True Americans,’ in addition to being assertive about [their] racial, ethnic, and cultural roots.”

Educational materials produced by students and emerging young scholars at this time called on other Filipinos to develop a critical consciousness; to become aware of the issues that had historically plagued the Filipino community and to contest the myths of the “American melting pot” in a way that their parents and grandparents had not been able to due to threats of violence and lack of legal recourse. The theme that cropped up here among the younger generation is a sense of pride in having a heritage that traces back to the Philippines. This feeling developed despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that younger peoples’ own connection to the language, customs, and memories of the islands was not as strong as those of their immigrant parents. In a poster about this idea of “Filipino” as its own distinct identity, a young Alberto Yamay Balingit pondered, “Why the confusion and why not just Philipinos as Philipinos is beyond me. But the quest for self-determination and recognition will soon dispell [sic] the categorization of Philipinos in other races or in ‘others.’”

In addition to the arrival of new immigrant families, the children of the first generation of immigrants grew up and questioned the absence of Filipinos in American history. Because of miscegenation laws and the comparative lack of Filipina women, many of those early laborers remained unmarried in their old

104 Alex Canillo, “Filipino Consciousness,” in *Pinoy, Know Yourself: An Introduction to the Filipino American Experience*, ed. Alex Canillo, Fred Cordova, et. al (Santa Cruz, CA: Third World Teaching Resource Center, Merrill College, University of California, 1975), 8-10.
105 Alberto Yamay Balingit, flyer titled “Pilipino” with photo of three young men and quote underneath, date unknown, location unknown, TD Reyes Personal Collection.
106 Joan May Cordova and Alex Canillo, *Voices*, 58.
age as couples and families immigrated in the latter decades of the 20th century. Without families of their own, they turned to social and community networks for support. Reflecting on his life growing up in Stockton and Manteca in the 1960s and 1970s, TD Reyes recalled how, “If there were a thousand Filipino men, they were all my uncle. There were ten to fifteen thousand guys, and they were all your uncle. They made you feel appreciated, like you belonged somewhere.”

For TD, this personal connection to members of the community drove his interest in preserving their wisdom and experiences. Similar interests by other members of the community are likely what led to the proliferation of attempts to preserve and remember. As a result, an influx of recorded history and documentation of this period arose in order to preserve the lives and experiences of those now elderly Filipinos who had been a part of the early wave of migration while they were still alive to recall their stories firsthand. Projects like Fred Cordova’s Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans, and Joan May Cordova’s Voices: A Filipino American Oral History were published in 1983 and 1984 respectively, no doubt products of several years of community-driven research. A research project by the “Filipino Multi-Service Center” based in the San Joaquin Delta region in 1979 which set out to document the lives and experiences of that early generation of agricultural laborers described,

“Today, the once young and strong Filipino can still be found in the same migratory pattern and, after 50 years, still living in relative isolation from the rest of society in substandard conditions such as small hotel rooms or labor camps around the small delta towns of Holt, Walnut Grove, Isleton, the surrounding areas of Stockton and the area along Lafayette and El Dorado Streets.”

Interest in Filipinos had to be predicated on the idea that they had a history worth preserving. This is precisely the purpose of the Filipino American movement:

107 TD Reyes, interview conducted with author, March 10, 2022.
108 Ted Reyes, Overview/Project Proposal for “The History of Filipinos in Northern California,” date unknown, c.1979, TD Reyes Personal Collection, 2.
to make sense of the kinds of things that Filipinos had experienced in America and preempt creating this new kind of identity that Filipinos could belong to by engaging with that history.¹⁰⁹

Engaging with history as a point to build a Filipino-American identity around coincided with interests in the Philippines. Attempts to build towards a critical consciousness and active participation in decolonizing frameworks led young people to begin to take an interest in Philippine languages, arts, and culture to reconcile who they were.¹¹⁰ “Pilipino Cultural Nights,” or PCNs, are large-scale productions collectively put on by Filipino students at colleges around the U.S. showcasing “various suites of Philippine folk dance accompanied by live or recorded music interspersed with a script that deals specifically with Filipino American experiences.”¹¹¹ In an expansion of Filipino-American discourses, Theo Gonzalves, a professor of Asian arts and culture who participated in PCN’s as a graduate student, described how he and some of his peers began to readapt the format of these shows that had become sort of played-out since their inception, choosing instead to focus on the act of working together with other Filipinos to put on the show rather than as a tradition for tradition’s sake¹¹² This just goes to show that even as third and fourth generation Filipinos begin to emerge into academic and social spaces, identity-construction continues to be a constantly evolving process. In another advent of identity-building, balikbayan trips, or “returns to the homeland,” represented a literal translocation to the Philippines to reconnect to one’s cultural roots. This can be undergone by Filipinos returning

from America either for the first time in a long time or periodically. These trips complicate ideas of Filipino or Filipino-American identity-construction for American-born college students “returning” to the Philippines for the first time. While the utility or effect of these trips is debated in scholarly circles as a valid way to construct meaning or a version of “Filipino,” it stands to reason that the individual’s experience taking it can be a crucial decolonizing tool in that tradition of establishing a shared culture or history to belong to in a very tangible sense that remains relevant to that individual’s self-identification. A letter from 1989 by Ted Reyes, at one time an assistant coordinator for a Filipino youth group that took part in one of these trips, sought to reunite participants of the “student exchange during that long ago summer of 1976.” Even thirteen years later, the experience of participating in these balikbayan maintained a level of significance in the memories of these Filipinos that had traveled to the Philippines together. A participant in the 1976 trip, TD Reyes recalled how those three months “changed my life,” in the ways that the experience gave him a new perspective and context for the kinds of struggles that other Filipinos faced and continued to face in the Philippines. Taken altogether, demographic normalization between men and women, settled family units with various degrees of acculturation to both US society and Filipino customs, and renewed interests in reconnecting or maintaining ties to the Philippines, set for a wide swath of understanding of what it meant to self-identify and connect to other Filipinos for Filipinos in America throughout this latter period of the 20th century.

Later scholarship around the turn of the 21st century contested the idea of the Filipino-American archetypal construction that had begun to develop

115 TD Reyes, interview conducted with author, March 10, 2022.
in the 1960s and 1970s. The cultural critic E. San Juan Jr. rebuked what he considered uncritical reorientation and the purpose of further Americanization in identity politics in the ways that histories of Filipinos attempt to reconcile with the violent imposition of American imperialism. These collections and images, he stipulates, attempt to rewrite or re-represent the exploits of Filipino people in a context that is wholly ignorant or avoidant of the devastating effects of America’s imperial subjugation of the Philippines and its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{116} Dylan Rodríguez takes an even harsher critique by framing the development of the Filipino-American movement and Filipino-American studies through the language of the civilizing mission of the Philippine War, postulating that the direction of Filipino-American discourse verges on its own hegemonic narrative that occludes the deep complexities of class, ethnicity, and linguistic traditions amongst people from the Philippines, relying on active mis-remembrance of the wide-scale annihilation and rejection of those selfsame people by military and political apparatus to acculturate on the terms of the imperial hegemon.\textsuperscript{117} That all said, these early advents in documenting Filipino History do not fail to acknowledge differentiation and exclusion experienced by those early Filipinos. Nor do educational tools like \textit{Pinoy Know Yourself} and \textit{Letters in Exile} produced with the express purpose of building a Filipino consciousness shy away positioning those hardships as a critique of American society, as these projects situate some of the most overtly racializing rhetoric about Filipinos directly next to discourses and firsthand accounts that deal with the effects of those methods of exclusion. That research project documenting elderly farm laborers in the late 1970s describes how “Today, there are approximately 500-600,000 Filipinos in the United States. Their life is not so hard, the cultural barriers have been brought down somewhat

\textsuperscript{116} San Juan Jr., 77-93.
and it is all because of these now old and forgotten men who were “THE FIRST” [emphasis mine].

This description evokes a sense of remorse not just about American history at large, but within the growing Filipino community that the immeasurable hardships and confrontations that the older generation faced had gone on misremembered. Not only that, but a sense that those old bachelor laborers represented a literal dying breed that was slowly disappearing as families and middle-class new immigrant families began to crop up in other metropolitan and suburban centers across California. This lamentation about the changing state of the world is recounted in the researcher’s notes, that, “Their futures may have been less in terms of material success but they have succeeded in being attached to the land and have remained human in the process; a trait that most of us have lost or forgotten long ago.”

There is a sense of nostalgia and reverence for these old community members to have been able to live their lives in spite of immense currents of violence and exclusion and the feeling that the author and people like him would not even exist had they not done so. The goal of this project, and ostensibly other visual experiential projects like it, is not to erase what had happened but to recapture and remember what survives to resist erasure and build an identity through a shared history. Lest it be gone for good, and the imperializing mission persist unchallenged as a success.

What Does It All Mean?

“If you want to know who we are, we’re just farmers from Hawaii, then California. You had an uncle who got Shanghaied, literally Shanghaied, in 1896. It’s all in the family tree, I can show you.” These were the words that my uncle, whose support and personal collections made the research for this paper possible, imparted to me when he learned that his nephew was interested in learning about Filipino history. This story about a distant uncle and the conversation that

118 Ted Reyes, Overview/Proposal for “The History of Filipinos in Northern California,” 2.
120 TD Reyes, interview conducted with author, November 25, 2021.
followed it uncovering and revealing family history is only one small component of one Filipino family’s experience in America. But by historicizing that story in the context of imperial confrontations, it acts a microcosm of the kinds of conditions and experiences that underscored the migration of Filipino people who came to live in the United States throughout the twentieth century. The informal nature of the discussion between family members about a shared past, acts as a gateway to reveal the depth of personal and familial connections between Filipinos situated in the United States. Engagement with those tools of identity-construction can lead to a deeper understanding of the historical dimensions of interactions between Filipino people and the political and cultural landscape of the United States of America.

To take a reading from the critical transnational works of San Juan after situating them next to the very arguments that he criticizes, the takeaway from all these personal narratives and stories about interactions with the forces of history might reveal that it does not matter who or what Filipino people identified as in terms of class or ethnic origin before they came to America (or as Yen Espiritu more accurately places it, before America came to the Philippines). Rather, these people became something else as a result of victimizing realizations of the United States’ imperial ambitions and racializing rhetoric that changed society and the ways they saw themselves and one another. Through this lens the overarching narrative of Filipino History is not necessarily one of proud resilience or making it in America, but rather fighting like hell to carve out a space in contrast to the domineering power of an imperial hegemon—something that members of the Filipino community have proven they are more than capable of in multiple contexts. San Juan might disagree that the underlying rhetoric of collected narratives and attempts at pan-ethnicity among other Asian American groups at the heart of the works of the Cordovas, Yen Espiritu, and Ronald Takaki undermine attempts at real resistance to hegemony in the ways that they

orient themselves towards America by identifying the “-American” aspect of Filipino-Americans and Asian-Americans historically and spatially. In his view a more meaningful kind of counter-hegemonic resistance might look something more like expanded democracy and political and economic sovereignty of the Philippines and its people free from the structural aims of global capitalism. But neither this shift in scope nor criticism of the method necessarily invalidates the end results that these research experiments have produced, or the efforts of the people who wanted to produce them. Knowing is half of that fight, and the capacity to piece together what happened from a bottom-up perspective can reveal the brevity of this ideological conflict of nation-building, differential race-making, and apparatuses of social and economic power through the very real effects it has and has had on the lived experiences of real people. And there has been plenty of resistance. Look at the impact that Labor Unions had for the collective power of farm laborers in the 1930s and again in the 1960s. Or the way that interest in Filipinos and the Philippines spurred on the creation of education curriculum and indigenous reconnection to the proverbial homeland to create solidarity for those younger generations of families in America. The old manongs and manangs interviewed for those early attempts at preservation did not shy away from wanting to share their experiences, allowing those stories to be captured and serve as a connecting point for future generations. Even the conjunction of family history with the larger historicization of imperial hegemony leads to ways of contextualizing and reconnecting with this contentious and tumultuous past. Building critical consciousness must come from somewhere, and the purpose of decolonizing narratives does not have to be synonymous with assimilation. Rather, it can be a step towards counter-cultural resistance; discourses like Rodríguez’s probably wouldn’t exist if this, in part, was not the case.

Who are the Filipinos in California? They are people who can trace their ethnicity to a cluster of Islands in the Pacific Ocean called “the Philippines.”

122 San Juan Jr., _After Postcolonialism_, 54-56.
They were the people in the early days of the twentieth century who were unwittingly thrust into economic and cultural circumstances wrought by US colonial ambitions. Those early immigrants struggled with violence, hardship, and differentiation, and eventually built families and communities with stronger connections to one another in a world that has repeatedly been caught in a hypocritical paradigm of needing them but not wanting them. As Filipino families grew in America and new demographics of Filipinos began to arrive from the Philippines, the meaning of what it is to “be” Filipino was molded by individual experiences and those connections to one another at the conjunction of cultures. And still they remain. These transitory patterns connecting people across time and a vast ocean maintain the development of Filipino identity today. It is hard to imagine some of the places that Filipinos used to frequent if you visit them now. Stockton’s historic “Little Manila” district has been reduced to three buildings on one street block facing the crosstown freeway. San Luis Obispo’s historic “Chinatown” is similarly only two buildings, now situated next to a luxury hotel. Yet as I found myself wandering these places with a newfound appreciation for their history, I could not help but feel a sense of reverence for what all those that came before had done and offered the world. I was proud to be a part of it.
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Jessica Smith is a third-year History major. She wrote her article on *La Volez Passagera* for Dr. Matthew Hopper's class titled “The Transatlantic Slave Trade.” Her research interests include the slave trade in colonial Latin America and early United States history. After completing her undergraduate education, Jessica plans to attend graduate school to study African American history.
Fighting for La Volez Passagera: Abolition and the Spanish Slave Trade

Jessica Smith

On the morning of September 7, 1830, Lieutenant Edward Harris Butterfield stood on the deck of the Spanish slave ship La Volez Passagera. Butterfield surveyed the scene around him, taking in the carnage that lay at his feet. He made note of the damage done not only to the crew and cargo of the slaving brig, but also his own naval vessel, His Majesty’s Ship Primrose. The bloody battle cost the lives of three members of Primrose’s crew and injured many more during battle, including the captain. La Volez Passagera lost forty-six members of its crew and its captain was injured during the conflict. It is clear that the crew of La Volez Passagera was attempting to avoid capture by the British Royal Navy vessel in an effort to prevent the navy from discovering the ship’s illegal cargo. Lieutenant Butterfield and his crew fought their way onto the slave ship to search for a sign that the vessel was engaged in the illegal traffic of slaves. Once

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1 Correspondence with British Coms. at Sierra Leone, Havana, Rio De Janeiro and Surinam, and with Foreign Powers on Slave Trade, 1831 (Class A&B), Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, XLVII, 576-577.
on board, they discovered nearly 600 enslaved Africans chained below the ship’s
deck. The ship’s captain, Don Jose Antonio de la Vega, put the lives of his entire
crew and cargo of African captives at risk by choosing to engage in battle instead
of surrendering to Primrose.

La Veloz Passagera was one of thousands of ships that participated in the
largest forced migration in modern history: the Transatlantic Slave Trade. At least
12 million Africans fell victim to the slave trade from 1492 to 1866.2 Powers such
as Great Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain purchased enslaved Africans on the
coast of Africa and shipped them across the Atlantic and Indian Ocean to be used
as slaves across the globe. Despite the difference in nationality of slave traders, the
brutality with which the powers treated the enslaved Africans aboard their ships
was indistinguishable. According to James Field Stanfield—a sailor on a slave ship
in the 1770s—once aboard slave ships, the crew forced African captives below
the decks where they spent most of the voyage chained not only to the ship but
to each other. When they were allowed onto the deck of the ship, the captives
remained in chains and the ship’s crew would sometimes use the opportunity to
beat enslaved Africans for any minor inadvertencies.3 Despite its brutality, due to
economic dependence on the forced labor of enslaved Africans, the slave trade
flourished for years.

It was not until the late 18th century that European powers spoke out
against the slave trade on a broad scale. In March of 1807, Great Britain, once
one of the Transatlantic Slave Trade’s most prominent supporters, signed the
Abolition Act, effectively outlawing British subjects’ participation in the trade.4
Through the use of the Royal Navy, Britain became one of the most influential
adversaries of the trade. Britain deployed its Royal Navy in conjunction with
treaties signed with other world powers in an attempt to bring the slave trade to

2 Toby Green, A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the Rise of the Slave Trade to the Age of
an end. These treaties gave the British Royal Navy the right to search and seize ships suspected of engaging in the trade.

Through the examination of La Veloz Passagera’s case and Spanish involvement in the slave trade from the late 1700s to mid 1800s, this paper will argue that, following the opening of the slave trade in Spain, Spanish slavers were more concerned with financial prosperity than they were the safety of their captives and crew. As the bustling plantation economy of the Spanish Empire grew, Spanish slave traders favored quantity of captives over quality of life on their ships in effort to bring as many captives as possible back to Spanish ports. The story of La Veloz Passagera reveals the horrors of the slave trade and demonstrates how Spanish slave traders were poised and ready to attack British Royal Navy vessels set on taking their cargo. This paper also examines the mistreatment of African captives during their time aboard slave ships and after liberation. Although abolitionists envisioned freeing enslaved Africans and resettling them in freetowns, the towns that “freed” Africans were forced to live in were far from picturesque.

Today, one might describe the slave trade as notorious due to the utter disregard for the wellbeing of Africans throughout this period. However, the notoriety attached to the slave trade is something that developed over time and may not have been present at the time. There is, however, the case of one Spanish slave ship that stood out, even during the time of the slave trade. Alexander Findlay, the Lieutenant Governor of Sierra Leone calls it, in a letter to his Britannic Majesty, “the notorious Spanish slave ship Veloz Passagera.”

The Capture of La Veloz Passagera

On August 21, 1828, the Spanish slave brig La Veloz Passagera sat anchored on the coast of Havana, Cuba, furnished with papers claiming a

5 Alexander Findlay & W. Smith to His Majesty (18 Oct. 1830), The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), HCA 35/19, 134-136.
commercial voyage to the coast of Africa. The ship’s crew consisted of four officers and roughly 108 mariners that boarded the ship at Havana. Armed with guns and a hefty crew, *La Veloz Passagera* set sail on August 25. The captain and owner of the ship, Don Jose Antonio de la Vega, later joined his crew when they arrived in Cadiz, Spain. According to a crew member, Alexandro Nocetty, the ship sailed under Spanish colors, but they had “French and American colors on board” if they needed to deceive other vessels. *La Veloz Passagera* and its crew arrived on the coast of Africa three months after its departure from Havana on the November 7, 1828. On November 19, she embarked at Whydah and spent time between the coast and the Portuguese islands for two years before setting sail back to Havana on September 4, 1830. The ship left the coast of Africa having picked up 556 Africans set to be sold at Havana.

As *La Veloz Passagera* began its voyage back to Havana, the British Royal Navy ship *Primrose* was sailing to Badagry, Nigeria. At around five o’clock in the evening on September 6, 1830, Lieutenant Edward Harris Butterfield spotted the slave vessel off the coast while on his ship, *Primrose*. The *Primrose* sailed after *La Veloz Passagera*, unable to catch up with the ship until eleven o’clock that same day. William Broughton, commander of the *Primrose*, fired two shots in an effort to hail the slave vessel before sending Lieutenant Butterfield to search the vessel. According to the Lieutenant, upon boarding the vessel, the crew seemed prepared to fight with guns on board the ship aimed directly at the *Primrose*. Lieutenant Butterfield explained to the captain and crew of *La Veloz Passagera* that he intended to search their vessel to which the captain declined. Despite Lieutenant Butterfield’s insistence on searching the vessel, the captain refused his

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6 The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), HCA 35/19,134-136.
8 Sierra Leone (Spain and Holland): Commissioners Evan, Smith, Findlay and Fraser (18 Oct. 1830), The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), FO 84/104, 154-158.
9 “Spanish Ship La Veloz Passagera - Register of Slaves” (1830), The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), FO 315/33, 33-47.
10 Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, XLVII, 578-581.
requests and Butterfield returned to the Primrose to report the captain’s resistance to a search.\textsuperscript{11}

The Primrose remained with La Veloz Passagera through the night without incident until six o’clock the following morning. At this time, Commander William Broughton of the Primrose hailed the slave ship once again to allow a search of their vessel, informing the brig that they had five minutes to send or receive a boat, or he would begin fire. Five minutes passed. Captain Broughton put his hand to his hat, signaling his crew to fire a broadside at La Veloz Passagera. It is unclear who fired first, but Lieutenant Butterfield claims that shots were fired simultaneously, beginning the bloody conflict between the two vessels. According to George Bentham, a midshipman on the Primrose, Commander Broughton ordered the crew to board the slave vessel after the exchange of broadsides. Bentham claimed that La Veloz Passagera, being taller than the Primrose, gave the slave ship’s crew a tactical advantage that allowed them to hold off the Primrose crew’s advances for some time. It took nearly an hour for the Primrose’s crew to take hold of La Veloz Passagera.\textsuperscript{12}

In that hour, as many as 52 crew members aboard La Veloz Passagera were killed.\textsuperscript{13} Five male captives stationed at the vessel’s guns during the conflict lost their lives, another was badly wounded.\textsuperscript{14} On board the Primrose, surgeon Alexander Lane tended to twelve wounded crew members. The injured included Commander Broughton who, according to other crew members’ accounts, was wounded by a boarding pike thrown from the Veloz Passagera just after the broadsides were fired. The Primrose also lost three of its crew during the conflict: marines John Allen and William Bunker and seaman James Graham.\textsuperscript{15}

Once La Veloz Passagera was successfully captured, it was taken to Sierra

\textsuperscript{11} Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, XLVII, 578-581.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, XLVII, 548.
\textsuperscript{14} The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), HCA 35/19, 134-136.
\textsuperscript{15} Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, XLVII, 578-581.
Leone by *Primrose* where its case would be tried in the British and Spanish Court of Mixed Commission.\(^6\) The vessel arrived at Sierra Leone on October 8, 1830, and the case went to trial just a week later on October 16. Sixteen of the enslaved Africans on board died on the voyage to Sierra Leone and five more passed in the time between their arrival and the trial. The court convicted *La Veloz Passagera* as engaging in the illegal trafficking of slaves, in violation of the Treaty between Spain and Britain. At this time, the court also emancipated the surviving enslaved Africans from the vessel. Of the 556 enslaved Africans originally boarded on the vessel, only 529 survived to emancipation. The 205 men, 54 women, 145 boys, and 125 girls who survived were to be employed as servants and free laborers in Sierra Leone.\(^7\)

**The Slave Trade in Ouidah**

*La Veloz Passagera* received its human cargo in the Bight of Benin located off the coast of West Africa along what the English referred to as the “Slave Coast.”\(^8\) The Slave Coast was a primary place of purchase for transatlantic slave traders. Located just east of the Gold Coast, the Slave Coast consisted of about eight trading ports that mainly focused on the trade of enslaved Africans but also provided traders with the opportunity to exchange goods such as beads, gun power, and alcohol. According to the first mate of *La Veloz Passagera*, Alexandro Nocetty, the entirety of the vessel’s human cargo was shipped from a port on the Slave Coast known as Jakin. The gunner of the vessel, Juan Bermudez, specified that the captain purchased the cargo from the Chacha and shipped it from a shore near Ouidah, presumably Jakin.\(^9\) This specification is significant to where the

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6 Sierra Leone (Spain and Holland): Commissioners Evan, Smith, Findlay and Fraser (18 Oct. 1830), The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), FO 84/104, 149.
7 Thomas Stilwell & Sons to Treasury (7 Jan. 1831), The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), HCA 35/19, pp. 115-116; Shee to His Majesty’s Principal Secretary (10 Feb. 1831), The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), HCA 35/19, 139-142.
captain of *La Véloz Passagera* purchased the cargo, due to the role that the Chacha played on the Slave Coast.

The Chacha was a Brazilian trader named Felix de Souza who was considered to be one of the key slave traders in Ouidah. The specific duties of the Chacha are disputed, but it seems that, until the 1840s, the Chacha essentially monopolized the slave trade in Ouidah, and was considered to be a sort of liaison between the King at the time and European traders.\(^\text{20}\) Felix de Souza was given the title of Chacha around 1818 and, although monopolizing the slave trade may not have been in his job description, began to dominate the trade at Ouidah.\(^\text{21}\) Chacha de Souza held his position during the time that *La Véloz Passagera* was obtaining their captives. Juan Bermudez’s claim that the cargo was purchased from Chacha suggests that *La Véloz Passagera* bought the enslaved Africans at Ouidah and dispatched them from the port of Jakin nearby. The distinction between place of purchase and place of shipment may seem insignificant, however, this distinction is a key factor in comprehending what the slave trade was like in the area which *La Véloz Passagera*’s cargo was purchased.

By the mid-eighteenth century, both Jakin and Ouidah were a part of the kingdom of Dahomey.\(^\text{22}\) Dahomey conquered Jakin in 1724 and Ouidah just three years later in 1727, allowing the kingdom to take control of trade at both ports.\(^\text{23}\) However, in 1732, Dahomey destroyed the port of Jakin in response to rumors of a rebellion. Subsequently, Ouidah became the primary center for Dahomey’s engagement in the slave trade, and, by the late 17th century, Ouidah became the


\(^{21}\) Law, “Royal Monopoly,” 555-577.


center of the slave trade along the Slave Coast.\textsuperscript{24} Ouidah was the second largest exporting city in terms of volume and importance during the Transatlantic Slave Trade next to Luanda.\textsuperscript{25} According to historian Robin Law, by the late 1690s, “as many as 50 [slave] ships in a year, and [was] capable of supplying 1,000 slaves every month” visited Ouidah.\textsuperscript{26} The port was of vital importance to the English, French, and Portuguese, who had established permanent forts in the town for better access to trading. Despite the forts being occupied by these three nations during the bulk of the transatlantic slave trade, when the slave trade was outlawed in 1807 the forts were abandoned, but Ouidah’s participation in the trade did not cease. Ouidah continued to be the main source of slave exports for both Brazil and the Spanish colony Cuba.\textsuperscript{27}

**Slavery in Spain, 1780-1807**

Before the 1790s, the slave trade to the Spanish colonies essentially remained closed to Spanish subjects. Only private, authorized groups were allowed to organize expeditions to purchase Africans and have them brought to the Spanish colonies. There were also restrictions placed on foreign participation in the slave trade to the colonies.\textsuperscript{28} Prior to 1790, the slave trade to the Spanish colonies was centralized in major port cities like Havana. These areas utilized enslaved African labor to a greater extent than the surrounding areas. African labor helped Havana grow into a major shipping port for a myriad of commodities, including enslaved Africans.\textsuperscript{29} 1789 marked the first year of the open slave trade in

\textsuperscript{26} Law, “Dahomey and the Slave Trade,” 240.
\textsuperscript{27} Canizares-Esguerra, Childs, and Sidbury, 43-44.
\textsuperscript{28} Joseph M. Fradera and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain’s Atlantic Empire* (Berghahn Books, 2013), 34.
Spain with the introduction of a Royal Cedula on February 28.\textsuperscript{30} The Cedula, also known as the free slave trade law, allowed any subject of Spain to participate in the slave trade to the colonies, giving them permission to outfit voyages on their own terms to the Slave Coast.\textsuperscript{31}

The opening of the slave trade to the Spanish colonies allowed an influx of Africans to be brought into the colonies, most notably, Cuba. Theresa A. Singleton claims in her article on slavery in relation to Cuban coffee plantations that from the time the trade opened in 1790 to the official end of the trade in 1867, 780,000 enslaved Africans were brought into Cuba.\textsuperscript{32} Many of the Africans brought to Cuba were used to cultivate sugar and coffee plantations that supported the Cuban economy. The profits involved in the production of these crops kept the need for African labor high, and it seems that Spanish subjects were eager to be involved in the trade. As the price for slaves continued to drop and Spaniards became more eager to participate in the lucrative trade, Cuba became the largest slaveholding colony in Spain. At the time of \textit{La Veloz Passagera}'s voyage, sugar was produced at a higher rate than any other plantation crop.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{Slavery in the Spanish Empire, 1807-1867}

While Cuba's sugar economies were continuing to grow, Great Britain was heading towards the abolition of the slave trade. After their own declaration of abolition in 1807, they pressured other powers to sign treaties to end the slave trade. This was no simple task for the British Government, especially when it came to dealing with Spain. Britain’s Abolition Act of 1807 came at a time in which Spanish economies relied on the supply of African labor, and less than twenty years after the Royal Cedula opened the slave trade to Spanish subjects. Spain was

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Fradera and Schmidt-Nowara, 34.\textsuperscript{30}
\item Theresa A. Singleton, “Slavery and Spatial Dialects on Cuban Coffee Plantations,” \textit{World Archaeology} 33, no. 1 (2001): 1.\textsuperscript{32}
\item Seymour Drescher, \textit{Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery} (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 333.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{enumerate}
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not ready to give up participation in the trade because the lack of continuously supplied labor may have affected the prosperity of the growing sugar plantations. Spain officials publicly agreed with Britain in 1815 that the slave trade was inhumane but would not agree to the abolition of the trade until two years later.34

In Madrid on September 23, Spain and Britain signed a joint treaty for the abolition of the slave trade. The treaty declared that the Spanish government would cooperate with Great Britain by “adopting in concert with His said Majesty, efficacious means for bringing about the abolition of the slave trade; for effectually suppressing illicit traffic in slaves, on the part of their respective subjects.”35 The treaty went on to solidify that beginning May 30, 1820 it would be illegal for Spanish subjects to “purchase slaves, or to carry on the slave trade on any part of the coast of Africa.”36 The 1817 treaty included clauses specifying that the treaty only outlawed participation in the slave trade North of the equator, and that the British Royal Navy had the right to search Spanish vessels, but could only detain them if slaves were actually found on board.37

The 1817 Spain-Britain treaty meant that Spanish subjects had only three years left to participate in the trade legally. Author Ada Ferrer argues that this time crunch did not slow the importation of Africans to Cuba but rather caused Spanish slave traders to move faster in an attempt to purchase as many enslaved Africans as possible in those three years. According to Ferrer, from 1817 to 1820 Cuba’s imports were higher than they had ever been previously. It seems that during this time slave traders exchanged safety for speed. Although conditions on board slave ships for a standard voyage were a far cry from livable, the conditions became even worse during this three-year period. The traders favored the quantity

36 Ibid.
37 Hertslet.
of slaves over quality of life as they pushed past the capacities of their ships to force as many Africans on board as possible.\(^{38}\) During this three-year period, slave traders allowed for ship conditions to worsen in order to bring as many captives as they could to Spain before the navy began enforcing the abolition treaty. Even after the slave trade was officially outlawed in 1820, the slave trade to Cuba continued to grow. In his article, D.R. Murray draws on the statistics of the slave trade to Cuba to claim that about half of the Africans brought to Cuba over the entire history of its involvement in the trade, were brought after slavery had been outlawed in Spain, from 1821 to 1867.\(^ {39}\) Despite the daunting quantity of these figures, the British Royal Navy was able to seize some of the Spanish vessels illegally engaged in the slave trade.

**La Veloz Passagera’s Crew**

While the captain and crew of a captured slaving vessel often suffered few to no consequences, this was not the case for the crew of *La Veloz Passagera*. As a result of the conflict on September 7, 1830 between the slave vessel and the HMS *Primrose*, three crew members of the *Primrose* lost their lives. The conflict took place due to the *Veloz Passagera’s* refusal to allow a search of their ship: a violation of the 1817 Spanish-British treaty. Therefore, in the eyes of the British government, the crew of *La Veloz Passagera* was responsible for the deaths of the crew members aboard the *Primrose*.

The morning of September 7, 1830—the day the *Primrose* captured *La Veloz Passagera*—24 of the slave ship’s crew were arrested for the murders of the navy vessel’s crew members John Allen, James Graham, and William Bunker.\(^ {40}\) The 24 men were taken prisoner and sent to England from Sierra Leone, where they were imprisoned on board the Culedonia at Plymouth.\(^ {41}\) The men were not,


\(^{40}\) The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), FO 84/104, 151.

\(^{41}\) *Parliamentary Papers*, 1831-32, XLVII, 547.
however, tried in a British court. Instead, they were sent to Spain, the defendants’ home country, to stand trial under Spanish laws for the murders. British officials concerned in the matter trusted Spanish officials to handle the trial due to the nature of the case. Commissioners at Sierra Leone, Alexander Findlay and W.M. Smith believed that the Spanish government would “not fail to inflict full penalty of the law of Spain upon those men.” At the time, similar cases to that of *La Veloz Passagera* were happening among Spanish vessels engaged in the trade. Findlay and Smith argued in a letter to Viscount Palmerston that because of the frequency of these cases “an example is required to be made, to operate as a warning,” to other Spanish vessels.

This aspect of *La Veloz Passagera*’s story demonstrates how invested in the slave trade Spanish slave traders were. Spanish slave traders were so desperate to bring enslaved Africans back to Cuba to support plantations that they engaged in battles with British Royal Navy ships. The reactions of Findlay and Smith illuminate that *La Veloz Passagera* was not an isolated incident. They had clearly seen other cases of Spanish vessels resisting capture by the Royal Navy. While perhaps not to the brutal extent of *La Veloz Passagera*, cases of slave ships resisting capture happened with enough frequency that the governments needed to send a strong message. By the 1820s, Cuba was one of the world’s leading producers of sugar and, as demonstrated by *La Veloz Passagera*, they would not allow the threat of the Royal Navy to prevent them from participating in the trade. Resistance to the British campaign for abolition, however, was not unique to Spain and began at the start of the campaign.

**British Antislavery and the HMS Primrose**

Great Britain’s Abolition Act of 1807 was the beginning of a century long campaign against the slave trade. Prior to 1807 British abolitionists began voicing outrage toward the slave trade and the inhumanity of its methods. In part,
pressure from abolitionists helped push Britain to outlaw British participation in the trade.

Once Britain outlawed the slave trade for their own subjects, they set their sights on persuading other world powers to join their campaign against the trade. Their efforts were met with resistance on multiple fronts. The goal for Britain was to get countries to sign a treaty agreeing to the abolition of the slave trade and allowing the Royal Navy to enforce the treaty at sea. The first issue was persuading countries to agree to the gradual abolition of the trade. Countries like Spain and Brazil thrived from the labor of enslaved Africans on their plantations and were reluctant to give up their ability to engage in the trade. Even after convincing powers to agree to abolition, a second issue arose when it came to the Royal Navy’s right of search and seizure.

Britain wanted to mobilize its Royal Navy to subdue the slave trade to any country that signed a bilateral abolition treaty. Britain recognized that a treaty was not enough to effectively abolish the slave trade and that the power of the Royal Navy was needed to patrol the Slave Coast to present a larger obstacle for those engaged in the illegal traffic of slaves.\(^44\) However, countries were skeptical of Britain’s motivations for mobilizing the Royal Navy. Britain wanted to give its Royal Navy the power to board ships in search of slaves, essentially allowing the Royal Navy to board any ship hoisting the flag of a country who had signed a treaty of abolition.\(^45\) World powers were wary of allowing the British Navy to board their ships at leisure. The Royal Navy boarding ships had already been a source of outrage for Spain. Before the Spanish government legalized the slave trade in 1820, countries which had already outlawed slavery hoisted Spanish flags to engage in the trade without suspicion. The British government quickly caught on and began to search and seize any vessel flying a Spanish flag to prevent this

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45 Mason, “Keeping Up Appearances,” 813.
practice. By 1830, Britain overcame these challenges and persuaded powers such as Spain, Brazil, and Portugal to sign treaties agreeing to the abolition of the slave trade and allowing the Royal Navy the right to search and seize ships engaged in the trade.

Once Britain negotiated treaties for abolition, the problem became enforcing these treaties at sea. It was all too easy for slave traders to find ways to participate in the trade illegally and pressure was on the Royal Navy to capture slave ships along the West Coast of Africa. However, the agility of slave ships put the Royal Navy squadron at a disadvantage. According to historians Peter Grindal and Adam Lambert, the vessels outfitted in the beginning years of the trade lacked “the sailing qualities to compete with swift and agile slaving schooners,” specifically those headed for Cuba. Navy vessels also faced a disadvantage until the 1830s, as they could only seize slave vessels if they had slaves on board. Thus, even if British Royal Navy officers boarded a ship and found it to be outfitted with the proper equipment to engage in the trade, they could not detain the vessel. In some cases, this caveat led to incidents of suspected slave vessels throwing captives overboard to avoid punishment. With the introduction of the equipment clauses in the 1830s, slave ships could be detained without slaves on board if they were outfitted with the proper equipment and provisions for a slave voyage.

His Majesty’s Ship Primrose commanded by Commodore Collier, was one of the Royal Navy vessels patrolling the coast in the early years of the campaign against the slave trade, but it was not known for making significant arrests on the coast. Ships like HMS Sybille and Black Joke, also commanded

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46 Ada Ferrer, "Cuban Slavery and Atlantic Antislavery," 149.
47 Mary Wills, Envoys of Abolition: British Naval Officers and the Campaign Against the Slave Trade (Liverpool University Press, 2019), 19.
by Commodore Collier, frequently overshadowed Primrose.*,† HMS Primrose found some success on the Windward Coast prior to 1830, but its biggest success capture was La Véloz Passagera. Originally, Primrose was not expected to capture the slave ship. Prior to its capture, La Véloz Passagera had been spotted at Ouidah along with eight other Spanish ships by Commodore Collier in June of 1829. At the time, Collier was captaining HMS Sybille and planned not to leave the coast until he had captured La Véloz Passagera. However, an epidemic that broke out on the ship caused Sybille to leave the port and La Véloz Passagera was unable to be captured. Nearly a year had passed before La Véloz Passagera was spotted again. During this time, the Primrose pursued but was unable to capture several large slave ships. La Véloz Passagera was once again spotted at the coast of Ouidah in June and the commander of Black Joke waited patiently to intercept the vessel. However, on September 3, just four days before the capture of La Véloz Passagera, the commander had to return home and the slave vessel was intercepted by Primrose.‡

Liberated Africans in Sierra Leone

After capturing La Véloz Passagera, HMS Primrose brought the vessel’s surviving crew and cargo to Sierra Leone to be brought to trial under the British and Spanish Mixed Commission Court.§ The successful capture of a slave ship did not mean that the enslaved Africans on board were now necessarily out of harm’s way. They still had to make the voyage back to Sierra Leone or a similar freetown and await emancipation. The period from capture to condemnation of the ship was not a speedy process, and over the course of this time Africans on board the slave vessels did lose their lives waiting for emancipation. In the case of La Véloz Passagera, 21 Africans died between the time of capture and

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* Grindal and Lambert, 328-383; Commodore Collier was the commander of a squadron of Royal Navy ships on the West Coast of Africa including HMS Sybille, Clinker, and the famous Black Joke.
† Ibid, 328-383.
‡ The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), HCA 35/19, 115-116.
emancipation, leaving 529 of the original 556 emancipated at Sierra Leone.\footnote{The National Archives of the U.K. (TNA), HCA 35/19, 115-116.}

British abolitionists envisioned Sierra Leone as a place for emancipated Africans to live together whilst growing accustomed to life free of slavery. Between 1808 and 1863, navy vessels brought roughly 99,000 Africans to Sierra Leone.\footnote{Richard Anderson, “The Diaspora of Sierra Leone’s Liberated Africans: Enlistment, Forced Migration, and “Liberation” at Freetown, 1808-1863,” \textit{African Economic History} 41 (2013): 101.}

However, liberated Africans were not given the choice of where they wished to relocate. Africans were forced to live in the freetown of the British government’s choosing. British officials at Sierra Leone also governed liberated Africans by their own whims and ideals. Despite the population consisting mainly of Africans, European culture dominated Sierra Leone. Africans became accustomed to the religious practices and ways of living that were comfortable to Europeans, much like the experiences of Africans who completed the voyage across the Middle Passage.

Although Africans at Sierra Leone had not completed their journey across the Middle Passage, they still lived with the traumas that came with being transported on a slave vessel. At the time of the slave ship’s capture, they had already experienced long hours confined below deck, mistreatment from the crew of the ship, and many other horrors that came with being on a slave vessel. Even after the slave vessel’s capture, many Africans remained on board in the same conditions during the voyage back to Sierra Leone. If they survived the journey, Africans found themselves forced into a way of life in Sierra Leone. David Northrup explains that “faced similar cultural challenges in recreating themselves, if under less traumatic circumstances than in the Americas.”\footnote{Canizares-Esguerra, Childs, and Sidbury, 24.}

Some liberated Africans were forced to apprentice or enlist, while others were shipped off to other British colonies to support the need for labor.\footnote{Jake Christopher Richards, “Anti-Slave-Trade Law, ‘Liberated Africans’ and the State in the South Atlantic World, c.1839-1852,” \textit{Past and Present} 241, no. 1, (2018): 197.}
In some cases, those tasked with laboring at Sierra Leone were paid miniscule wages, but most African laborers worked as free laborers, growing crops like sugar and cotton much like those enslaved. Local colonial authority in Sierra Leone used Africans to support the village system and help maintain the colony’s infrastructure. According to historian Padraic Scanlan, the Africans were tasked with clearing forests to allow the villages to expand into the nearby mountains. Liberated Africans helped cultivate villages at their own expense. The Liberated African Department moved Africans into the housing structures they built and left them to maintain their homes and find a way to survive with little to no government support. The Liberated African Department also used the village system to make it easier to exploit liberated Africans as unskilled laborers. The colonial government in Sierra Leone operated under the guise of freedom and emancipation when, in reality, it undermined liberated Africans as sources of labor and forced them to assimilate to British culture.

Conclusion

The story of the capture of Spanish slave ship *La Veloz Passagera* lays the foundation for understanding the treatment of African captives from the time of the ship’s capture to their experience in Sierra Leone. Demonstrating how Spanish slave traders chose to engage with British Royal Navy vessels in combat, the actions of *La Veloz Passagera’s* crew demonstrate how Spanish slave traders were more concerned with financial prosperity than they were with the lives of those aboard their ships. Even after the Spain-Britain treaty abolishing the slave trade in Spain, Spanish slave traders found ways to bring thousands of captives back to Spain to work on sugar and coffee plantations. In fact, conditions on slave ships worsened after the abolition of the slave trade. While abolitionists’ efforts were valiant, emancipation did not mean true freedom for African captives.

58 Ibid, 1099.
Liberated Africans endured similar labor and conditions to those who made it across the Middle Passage.

On the morning of September 7, 1830, La Veloz Passagera put roughly 700 lives in danger by choosing to go to battle with Primrose rather than surrendering their cargo. This decision demonstrates not only the importance of the slave trade in Spain but also the lengths that Spanish slavers were willing to go to participate in the trade. From the beginning of open trade to the year of the trade’s abolition in Spain, Spanish slave traders rushed to bring a multitude of Africans to the Spanish colonies. For the captain of La Veloz Passagera, the potential reward that would come from bringing 556 slaves to Cuba was of more importance than the lives of his own crew. Captain Don Jose Antonio de la Vega’s decision cost him his cargo of Africans and the lives of nearly half of his crew.
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From Paternalism to Superiority: Colonial Ideologies of the New Norcia Mission, 1847-1974

Evie Levin

In 1974, the final Indigenous reserve and residential school in Australia shut down, more than a century after it first opened its doors. As the last of these institutions to close, the end of the New Norcia Mission appeared to indicate shifting public consciousness away from historical ideas about race and Indigeneity, the lifeblood of the European colonialism that created modern Australia. Founded by Benedictine missionaries Bishop Rosendo Salvado and Joseph Benedict Serra in Western Australia in 1847, New Norcia was an institution established for the express purpose of Christianizing the Nyoongar people who lived there. Most reports and policies within the Mission during the 1840s to 1860s heavily emphasized the paternalistic desire to “enlighten,” “save,” and “civilize” Indigenous people.

However, as European scientific ideas about racial hierarchy solidified by the mid-1860s, discussion and policy surrounding New Norcia shifted focus from natives’ religious inferiority to their genetic, biological inadequacy. Perhaps the most significant development in the implementation of systemic racism at
this time was the Half-Caste Act of 1886 and the advent of racial categorization based on blood ratios. By the 1900s, the pseudoscientific conception of race had firmly embedded itself in colonizers’ consciousness, manifesting in the violent bioessentialism of Eugenics theory, and enforced at New Norcia by Chief Protector of Aborigines, A. O. Neville. This shift was not unique to New Norcia, nor was it unique to Australia. It encompassed European colonial powers all over the world as new scientific theories were utilized to reinforce old power structures. European colonialism’s legacy still reverberates to this day, impacting survivors of the Eugenics policies and the generations that came after. However, due to the New Norcia Mission’s long history and extensive public documentation in newspapers and journals, it is an ideal case study to trace the broader development of colonialisit ideology from one of religious paternalism to racial superiority.

**Colonialism as Christian Paternalism (1847-1860s)**

To fully realize the ways that missionaries—like those who established the New Norcia Mission—weaponized religion to further the colonial enterprise, it is vital to first understand what colonialism is and how it operates. For this reason, I will modify the definition given by modern historian and professor Wolfgang Reinhard in his 2011 book *A Short History of Colonialism*. Reinhard characterizes colonialism as “one people’s control over another people through the economic, political and ideological exploitation of a development gap between the two.”¹ This research diverges from Reinhard’s term “development gap.” In his text, he expresses that the phrase should be interpreted as entirely free of value judgment for either side.² While I do not disagree in content, I am hesitant to accept the statement’s neutrality, as distinguishing a “gap” in development may indicate the underdevelopment of one society, and the developmental superiority of the other. Thus, I will refer to this principle as simply “developmental differences,”

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² Ibid, 2.
to connote that both societies are equally developed but have just developed differently. Essentially, I will define colonialism as the process of a foreign nation gaining economic, political, and ideological control over a different nation, by way of exploiting the neutral but irreconcilable differences in sociopolitical systems, methods of war/weaponry, and resources between colonizer and colonized societies.⁵

Reinhard also discusses motivations behind European colonialism, citing socio-economic, political, and, most pertinent for the purposes of this argument, religious motives. He states, “At stake was often a desire to bring true faith to the heathens, true culture to barbarians. Such missionary aspirations were ideologically instrumentalized, but they must nevertheless be taken seriously and cannot be dismissed as mere smokescreens.”⁴ I would like to highlight this statement to clarify the way in which this paper understands missionary Christianity. While, in large part, these missions were employed to achieve secular colonial motivations like economic and political domination, this does not mean that those who carried out missions were doing so in bad faith. On the contrary, as illuminated by award winning Western Australian historian Anna Haebich, most missionaries believed in their divine duty to save colonial subjects from religious customs that they deemed false, even as they may have also had more secular influences.⁵

This religious factor is the key to defining the ideology of the earlier stages of colonialism, an ideology that would dominate much of the colonial world until the mid-1860s: religious paternalism. I have come to identify religious paternalism, within the scope of colonialism, by three distinct factors. Colonizers must believe in the essential, “universal truth” of their own religion, and, by extension, the falsity of the religion of the colonized. They must then deem non-

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³ Reinhard, 2.
⁴ Ibid, 6-7.
believers to need aid and enlightenment, oftentimes through infantilization and dehumanization. These values must then coalesce into institutions and policies with the intent of “educating” the non-believers in the “real truth” of the world which ultimately constitute the structures of the assimilationist machine of colonialism.

The nature of religious paternalism and the ways that it enforced colonial systems are thoroughly exemplified by the founding and early structure of the New Norcia Mission as well as the ways print publications discussed the Mission from the 1840s to the early 1860s. In fact, the institution itself was founded by Spanish Benedictine Bishop Rosendo Salvado in 1847 for the explicit purpose of converting the native Nyoongar people to Christianity. After spending several months in Western Australia and living with the native people, Salvado narrated in his memoirs, “We made it our business to tame their wild hearts as far as possible, and to prepare them to receive some notions of the Christian Faith and its mysteries.” The bishop’s expressed motivation fell firmly in line with the paternalistic belief that native people's religions were false, and the Nyoongar people needed the guidance of missionaries. Additionally, the rhetoric of “taming”—as one would a wild animal—infantilized and dehumanized the natives he referred to, further exposing his paternalistic belief that they needed to be saved.

Expanding on this theme, Salvado explained, “It is not surprising that the Benedictines, who civilized an old world, should be entrusted with the care of the new one... this task was very appropriate for the family of St. Benedict...whose zeal, charity and educational methods changed the face of Europe in the darkest days of history.” The sense of righteousness and religious supremacy in this proclamation implied that the Indigenous people residing there were inherently

7 Salvado, 51.
unable to “care” for themselves and thus in need of “charity” from an outside, colonial force.

The operation of the New Norcia Mission embodied the paternalistic belief that local Indigenous people were incapable of taking care of themselves. Early in his memoirs, Salvado set the rule that people be fully clothed, despite the Nyoongar practice of going without clothes during the summer. The missionaries enforced this policy by handing out food to those “properly” covered on both the top and bottom and denying food to those who were not.9 An attempt to “lift them above their wretched condition,”10 not only did Salvado’s rule force any Indigenous person who wanted a warm meal to abandon their way of living, it also placed a negative moral judgment on this way of living. In conjunction to smaller-scale rules, the most prominent means by which religious paternalism manifested itself in the structure of New Norcia was through its heavy emphasis on teaching sedentary agriculture as the foundation to a “real” civilization. Salvado again wrote “The only answer is to... teach these work-shy nomads to settle down to a community life in one spot. From this arises the necessity of an establishment directed by... missionaries who... devote themselves entirely to the moral and civil education of their neighbors and the glory of God.”11 Here, Salvado not only implied that the natives were lazy and needed to be taught proper work ethic, but also deemed his missionaries the only people up to the task. By educating the Nyoongar people on how to be sedentary and labor in the “right” way, he believed he would bring them closer to God—the driving goal behind many missionary actions at this point in time.

Furthermore, Elicia Taylor, a historian on Indigenous child removal, discusses the Mission’s structure in relation to native people in “Benevolent Benedictines? Vulnerable missions and aboriginal policy in the time of A.O.

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9 Salvado, 70.
10 Ibid.
11 Salvado, 55.
Neville.”12 This work tracks the shifting relationship between New Norcia and
the secular Australian government, and the influence it had over policy at the
Mission. Addressing Salvado and the beginnings of Norcia, Taylor illustrates
how, due to the theological motivations of the missionaries, they were initially
respectful of Indigenous family units. While still compelled to live on and perform
agricultural work for the Mission, families were allowed to stay together: a fact
that will become a focal point in later sections.13 Early in the span of Norcia’s
existence, missionaries also encouraged native people to practice hunting and
spend time outside “if they appeared to become unmotivated.”14 These practices
indicated the potential faith that Salvado and the other Benedictines had in their
aim: they didn’t necessarily want to destroy native societies, and at the very least
were more focused on trying to “civilize” them and teach them the “proper” way
to live. However, regardless of the sincerity that these missionaries had in their
paternalism, the specifics of their policies regarding native peoples were still
colonialist and violent.

Much of Salvado’s dehumanizing language in his memoirs was mirrored
extensively in the newspaper coverage of New Norcia Mission, demonstrating
a broad cultural acceptance of paternalistic rhetoric to justify their colonialist
practices. The 1862 article “Progress of Catholicity Among the Natives of
Western Australia” from the Freeman’s Journal is a vital example of distinctly
religious paternalistic language, common before the mid-1860s. The author,
pseudonymously “Believe,” recounted their visit to New Norcia, and describes
the conversations they had with the Superior. Believe illustrated, “the truths
of Christianity,” and praised Norcia’s attempts “to render [Indigenous people]

12 Elicia Taylor, “Benevolent Benedictines? Vulnerable missions and Aboriginal policy in the
time of A.O. Neville,” Aboriginal History 42 (2018), 103.
13 Ibid.
14 Taylor, 103.
intelligent and civilized creatures.”\textsuperscript{15} They also referred to native people as “neophytes” and expressed disgust at the “peculiar and unpleasant odour which is emitted from the bodies of the aboriginals—even after they had been subjected to a thorough cleansing.”\textsuperscript{16} This documentation is significant in two ways. First, the article displayed the nature of public discourse surrounding Indigenous people as foolish children who needed Christianity to save them from a “primitive” and “ignorant” status. Second, this column, and other similar papers written between the 1850s and 1860s, reveals that there was little to no discussion of biology or race. Instead, newspapers infantilized native people on intellectual and religious bases.

**Transition towards Social Darwinism (mid-1860s-1900)**

By the mid-1860s, the purely religious ideology behind colonialism began to shift toward a more scientific, biological view of human nature due to the increasingly popular philosophy in Europe known as Social Darwinism. Based on the scientific theories in Charles Darwin’s 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*, Social Darwinism extended Darwinian principles of natural selection and struggle for existence to the social structures created by human beings. To define the fundamental doctrines of this bourgeoning ideology, I will refer to Mike Hawkins’s book *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945: Nature as a Model and Nature as a Threat*. In this book, Hawkins defines natural selection as the process by which intraspecies variation is passed onto offspring—if advantageous to the survival of the organism—with the ultimate result being the extinction of “less evolved” forms of the species.\textsuperscript{17} In conjunction, Hawkins defines struggle for existence as the idea of competition, with intraspecies competition always being the most brutal. These facets, combined with the

\textsuperscript{15} Believe, “Progress of Catholicity Among the Natives of Western Australia,” *Freeman’s Journal* (Sydney, New South Wales), June 21, 1862.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

“assumption...that this determinism extends to not just the physical properties of humans but also to their social existence,” create the basis of Social Darwinism.\(^\text{18}\)

Here, I would like to note that ideas about biological differences among humans were not invented at this time and existed in various disparate forms since the first wave of colonialism in the fifteenth century. However, it was not until the 1860s that the influenced of colonialism led mainstream European thought to coalesce these separate scientific theories into one cohesive ideology.\(^\text{19}\) Anna Haebich illustrates this shift in “Neoliberalism, Settler Colonialism and the History of Indigenous Child Removal in Australia,” citing, “In the 1830s, post-abolitionist Britain basked in the glow of evangelical humanitarianism and missionary endeavor...to transform Indigenous people to become ‘industrious, sober and useful’...By the 1860s, British humanitarian optimism had hardened along with racism.”\(^\text{20}\) Colonialism opened Europeans up to a wide range of belief and behavior among different groups of people and introduced them to completely different worldviews, casting doubt upon the Christian social order they had always held to be the sole universal Truth.\(^\text{21}\) Presented with challenges to their strong socioreligious values, Europeans adopted ideas about racial hierarchies and Social Darwinism as they were able to provide a replacement for the now-unstable belief in \textit{divine} social hierarchy. Through this more empirical—but still stratified—structure, Europeans could uphold their pre-existing conviction of superiority, while accommodating for the influx in competing belief systems.

Social Darwinism’s solidification of racial categorization had drastic tangible impacts on the way that white colonialists viewed Indigenous Australians on a national scale, and therefore influenced policies enforced at and reporting about the New Norcia Mission. One of the most prominent, enduring concepts of Australian natives that arose out of this Darwinist climate was the myth that

\(^{18}\) Hawkins, 30.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid.  
\(^{20}\) Haebich, 22.  
\(^{21}\) Hawkins, 23.
Indigeneity was dying out and being “purified” from the bloodline, a concept I will refer to as the Extinction Myth. Ripped straight from struggle for existence, white Australians theorized that due to the inherent superiority of whiteness, “less evolved” native genes simply could not compete. While strictly pseudoscience and demonstrably fallacious, colonialism had detrimental impacts on Indigenous populations as settlers encroached further on their land, which white people observed and attributed to Darwinist theories nature. Hand-in-hand with the Extinction Myth came new racial categories to divide and assign social value to native people, rooted in Indigenous-to-white blood ratios. Labels like “half-caste”—having one Black parent and one white parent—and “octoroon”—one-eighth Black ancestry—were utilized by officials to signify proximity to whiteness and assign racialized traits like intelligence, cleanliness, and civility based on the category’s closeness to “white.” Undoubtedly, this began to have definite impacts on Australian Indigenous policy.

These impacts were made manifest in what is arguably Western Australia’s most notable policy change of the era: the Aborigines Protection Act of 1886, colloquially known as the Half-Caste Act. Under the guise of “protection”—distinctly paternalistic rhetoric—this act was detrimental to the self-determination of Indigenous people in Western Australia and effectively changed New Norcia’s role from a strictly religious institution to a partner in the secular government’s more science-based doctrine. This policy directly involved the government in the lives of native people and defined “Aborigines” as “Every Aboriginal Native of Australia, and every Aboriginal half-caste or child of a half-caste, such half-caste or child habitually associating and living with Aboriginals, shall be deemed to be an Aboriginal within the meaning of this Act.” This officially set parameters as to how much “white blood” one could have without

23 Ibid.
thus being considered white. While it is unclear whether people with higher white-to-native blood ratios were considered white, “half-castes” were decidedly not. Most important, though, was the creation of a new government department, the Aborigines Protection Board, and a leadership position in the form of Chief Protector of Aborigines.\textsuperscript{25} The Australian government granted this new board the rights to interfere in child caretaking, distribute “welfare” to Indigenous adults, and force native children into apprenticeships until the age of 21. The legacy of the Board of Aborigines and its power over individual Indigenous lives will be explored more in the next section.

The advent of biological and racial categories is also very clearly reflected in the evolution of reporting on the New Norcia Mission starting in the mid-1860s. A striking evolution, up to this point there had been little to no scientific rhetoric in newspapers and reports. As early as 1868, there was discussion of distinctly racial divisions between children at the Mission, frank mentions of the Extinction Myth, and even advocating for the “eradication” of Indigeneity. This is made clear in a \textit{Herald} article from Fremantle, WA on January 4, 1868, entitled “The Native Mission of New Norcia, Victoria Plains.” The column read, “Black children soon grow tired of mental application...I doubt that they can be compared to the white boys of the same age in quickness of apprehension and retentiveness of memory. Half-caste children show better intelligence.”\textsuperscript{26}

Here, the author demonstrated the practice of distinguishing groups of New Norcia children by race and applying non-biological traits to each group. Fully Indigenous children were rendered unintelligent and lacking memory retention, while white children were considered the pinnacle of academic accomplishment. Biracial children fell somewhere in between. Perhaps more alarming was the espousal of exterminatory rhetoric as the article reads, “To attempt eradicating at once the deeply rooted customs of the race, even in the rising generation, is not

\textsuperscript{25} “Aborigines Protection Act 1886 (1886-1906).”

deemed expedient.” 27  This statement alone displays a clear progression of colonial intent, expressing the desire to not only “enlighten” and “civilize” native people but annihilate their race and culture. The only problem standing in their way was that it was “not expedient” with the implication that if it were, it would be done.

On a different note, it is important to discuss the ways that religious paternalism of the early decades persisted. The author of this column makes frequent reference to “Divine Providence,” stating, “The lessons of piety, laborious life and self-denial...is [sic] supposed to be the most efficient means of impressing the imitative native mind with respect and love for religious truth.” 28  These arguments reveal that while religion was still a strong motivator, ideas of colonial superiority in New Norcia and Australia as a whole were beginning to be enforced by science and biology, solidifying a racialized power structure.

Further manifesting a racial rhetoric, newspapers also expressed the Extinction Myth, indicating its widespread influence in Western Australia and settlers’ consequential treatment toward natives. In a critical letter to the editor of the Adelaide Observer from March 27, 1869, W. W. Thwaites lamented the poor treatment of Indigenous people at New Norcia. Laden with his own religious paternalism, Thwaites mourned, “Their lands have been taken from them, and they are fast dwindling away, and no effort seems to be made to arrest their apparent fate” and “we wept for the sufferings of the octoroon, when poor half-castes—with white blood coursing through their veins—are more degraded than the slave, and receive no sympathy.” 29  While on the surface this perspective seems sympathetic to the plight of Indigenous people at New Norcia, Thwaites only perpetuated the same problematic ideology. The belief that Indigenous people were dying out rapidly and would soon become extinct was attributed to the fundamental inferiority of native peoples’ genes and their inherent inability

27  “The Native Mission of New Norcia, Victoria Plains.”
28  Ibid.
29  W. W. Thwaites, “Treatment of Aborigines,” Adelaide Observer (Adelaide, South Australia), March 27, 1869.
to thrive as well as white people. The innate inferiority of Indigenous genes is additionally expressed as Thwaites referenced Indigenous-to-white blood ratios, the hallmark of Social Darwinist racial hierarchies. He raged against New Norcia, not because of the intrinsic injustice of forced assimilation, but because those native children closest to whiteness, the “half-castes” and “octoroons,” were treated the same way or worse than those of full Indigenous ancestry. Rather than outliers, the messages in these articles were the norm for the entirety of reporting on Norcia from the 1860s to the 1900s, illustrating the pervasiveness of this newly cemented doctrine of race science.

**Domination of Race Science and Eugenics (1900s)**

The biological essentialism of Social Darwinism would be taken to its logical extreme by the Eugenics movement of the 1900s, which employed the principles of Natural Selection and Struggle for Existence in a material attempt to speed up the evolutionary process and exterminate “unfavorable” populations. Much current discussion of Eugenics focuses on a more holistic perspective, looking at all its impacts and the reasons why it was adopted by societies all over the world. In this vein, Eugenics is not strictly racial in nature and, thus, is not entirely synonymous with race science. The ideology has also had calamitous impacts on people sharing non-racialized traits like homo/bisexuality and mental/physical disability. However, as this paper addresses race and colonialism specifically, I will narrow the theory to its fundamentals: the ways the theory grew out of Social Darwinism and how it furthered racial colonial projects like those in Australia. Broadly, The National Human Genome Research Institute defines Eugenics theory as a “pseudoscientific theory that claims it is possible to perfect people and groups through genetics and the scientific laws of inheritance. Eugenicists used an incorrect and prejudiced understanding of the work of Charles Darwin and

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31 Ibid.
Gregor Mendel to support the idea of ‘racial improvement.’”³² In essence, Eugenics is commonly conceived of as the physical manifestation of Social Darwinism through deliberate actions and policies to “perfect” humans by identifying “bad” kinds of genes and “breeding” them out. To supplement this understanding, I will employ the work of acclaimed Dutch historian Frank Dikötter and his article “Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics.” He argues, “Eugenics was not so much a clear set of scientific principles as a ‘modern’ way of talking about social problems in biologizing terms...Eugenics gave scientific authority to social fears and...lent respectability to racial doctrines...It allowed modernizing elites to represent their prescriptive claims about social order as... irrevocably grounded in the laws of nature.”³³ Eugenics theory had its heyday at the turn of the 20th century and remained highly popular during the period between World Wars I and II, with a legacy extending decades after it initially declined in the 1950s.

The Eugenics movement in Western Australia and its government’s resulting policies regarding the New Norcia Mission were a direct result of the Social Darwinist doctrine of the previous era. One of the most crucial pieces of legislation to ultimately enable Eugenics to thrive was the Aborigines Act of 1905. This policy granted the government legal guardianship to all Indigenous and “half-caste” children under 16 years old, and effectively allowed for the kidnapping of children from their families and relocation into residential schools.³⁴ Furthermore, the Aborigines Act of 1905—in conjunction with the establishment of the Aborigines Protection Board by the Aborigines Protection Act of 1886—enabled the appointment of infamous Eugenicist A.O. Neville in 1915 to Chief Protector of Aborigines. This position granted Neville immense

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³⁴ Taylor, 104.
legal power over Indigenous people and allowed him to spearhead policies like half-caste child removal, in an unambiguous move toward white homogeneity.

Referring again to the vital work, “Benevolent Benedictines,” Elicia Taylor provides a detailed history of Neville’s appointment and policies that would permanently alter both Indigenous societies in Western Australia, and New Norcia itself. Initially employed at the Department of Immigration and Tourism, Neville was reluctant to change his post, but the Aborigines Department was insistent due to his administrative capabilities. Once made Chief Protector, Neville constructed a three-step plan to enforce Indigenous assimilation. Crucially, this plan stemmed from a firm belief in the fictitious Extinction Myth cultivated by Social Darwinism. First, he aimed to enforce segregation of natives from the general Australian population at reserves like New Norcia. Second, he theorized that all the older natives would die out in two or three generations, and he could begin to integrate the assimilated younger generations into the general populace. Third, in the meantime, all Indigenous people would be forced under the direct rule of the Aborigines Protection Board and moved to settlements. This plan, however, would prove to be ineffectual because it was so pivotally founded on a false belief that all Indigenous people were dying out. Taylor explains, “Throughout his term, Neville was confronted by…the false assumption of the Aboriginal population’s inevitable extinction. In fact, the rapidly increasing ‘half-caste’ population had raised significant challenges for Neville in his attempts to accommodate prevailing societal attitudes within his policy decisions.” It is for this reason that “half-castes” became the biggest worry among white officials for several decades: they simply did not know what to do with them.

In response to the “half-caste problem,” Neville adopted and implemented extreme Eugenics throughout his time as Chief Protector, most

35 Taylor, 100.
36 Ibid, 104-105.
37 Taylor, 112-113.
notably the forced relocation of “half-caste” children to New Norcia Mission. He reported on his beliefs and treatment of Indigenous people in his post-retirement 1947 book *Australia’s Coloured Minority: Its Place in the Community*. Famously, Neville’s book contains extensive photographic and illustrative documentation of different categories of native people, and diagrams of how he intended to “breed” the Indigeneity out.

Figure 1. A. O. Neville, *Three Generations, Australia’s Coloured Minority: Its Place in the Community*, 1947.

Neville’s image of three generations of people of Indigenous descent provides a visual reference for the way that Neville and his constituents hoped to eradicate native genes (see fig. 1). When examined from right to left, as instructed on the diagram, is it clear that with the introduction of more white genes into the bloodline, the children of each subsequent generation appear to approximate whiteness much more closely. It also serves as a demonstration of the different categories Indigenous people were forced into: “half-caste,” “quadroon” and “octoroon.” In this way, Neville aimed for a tactic of “dilution,” decreasing the ratio of “white blood” to “Indigenous blood” with each generation.
until the Indigenous percentage was so small as to be rendered nonexistent, so
too rendering Indigeneity extinct. These policies, particularly the kidnapping
of children and removing them to missions to be assimilated, had detrimental
impacts on the children taken—known today as the Stolen Generations—and all
successive generations of Indigenous people. Forced assimilation was an important
weapon of Eugenics and extermination as it “drove ongoing dispossession, cut
transmission of knowledge and culture down the generations, and contributed
to elimination of local populations by preventing their reproduction,” according
to Haebich.\footnote{Haebich, 21.} As the tangible manifestation of the kinds of Eugenic race science
espoused by Neville in his time as Chief Protector and in his book, the practice
of the native child removal actively contributed to the ongoing destruction of
Indigenous cultures, societies, and populations to the benefit of colonialism.

Neville’s strategies were not looked on favorably by many authorities
at the New Norcia Mission as they felt their own religious power waning under
strict governmental guidelines. However, they still actively participated in the
forced rehousing and education of the Stolen Generations.\footnote{Taylor, 98.} The increasing
encroachment of secular government rules onto what had been founded as a
purely religious institution to “help” Indigenous people caused tension between
Neville and the Abbot at the time, Catalan. Taylor notes three major areas of
tension. First, the Mission felt increasingly uncomfortable with the influence of
a predominantly Protestant government and turned heavily toward sectarianism.
Second, Abbot Catalan’s responsibility as agent of the Eugenicist government,
taking in members of the Stolen Generations, fundamentally contradicted
his purported duty to care for the Indigenous population who he lived with.
Third, the government’s crackdown on biracial marriages caused conflict among
residents, despite its initial purpose as a tool of Christianization.\footnote{Ibid, 102.} This conflict
could be considered symbolic of the way that, by this point in history, science, biology, and Eugenics had essentially overtaken religion as the key justification for colonialism. However, Taylor writes that “despite significant tensions...historians point to a symbiotic relationship in which missions were dependent upon state support for their existence, and state bureaucrats were reliant on mission compliance with policies related to Aboriginal child removal, institutionalisation and assimilation.”\textsuperscript{41} Regardless of Abbot Catalan’s objections towards Neville and his policies—which Taylor suggests were more religiously based than racially based—ultimately, they still worked together to enforce violently racist policies, tear apart families, and promote Eugenicist ideas that Indigeneity could and should be expediently exterminated.

\textbf{Conclusion (2010s)}

Nearly 50 years after the New Norcia Mission shut its doors, on October 21, 2017, Australia’s Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse issued a press release revealing that, from 1950 to 2010, 7\% of all Catholic priests in Australia had been accused of child sexual assault.\textsuperscript{42} Perhaps even more shocking to some was the revelation that at New Norcia, the number of child sexual assault accusations was 21.5\%, a striking triple of the nationwide percentage.\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Bringing Them Home WA}, a website and newspaper dedicated to “truth, healing, justice, and reconciliation” for the Stolen Generations reported that while the Norcia authorities had apologized, they were unwilling to take further action to aid Stolen Generation survivors.\textsuperscript{44} Stolen Generation spokesperson Margaret Drayton stated, “the Benedictine community...[doesn't] appear to be prepared to explore more strategic opportunities to improve the future for survivors...A visit to the Museum at New Norcia attempts to portray

\textsuperscript{41} Taylor, 99.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Laalia.
a picture of happy healthy children being well fed and looked after, but this was far from the reality.”\textsuperscript{45} As indicated by the alarming rates of child sexual assault within the final 20 years of New Norcia’s 127 years of existence, the violence of colonialism and racism ran deep within the Mission environment. A mere apology with no follow-up was little reparation for the generations of trauma, loss of culture, and structural inequality inflicted on Indigenous people by New Norcia Mission. As such, the WA Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation demanded more be done. Executive Director of the Corporation, Jim Morrison urged, “the Commonwealth and State Governments to support these Survivors to expose the awful Truth of what happened to these children and to acknowledge the need for some form of Justice through compensation and comprehensive support to enable the Survivors and their families to Heal and move on.”\textsuperscript{46} Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, these requirements were not met in 2017 when the devastating numbers were first made public.

The failure of New Norcia to address the material impacts of their violent colonial past and provide reparations was made abundantly clear when in 2021, Nyoognar survivors were still demanding to know what happened to the children who did not make it out of New Norcia’s schooling system. On October 30, 2021, Claire Moodie reported on Australia’s ABC News that while over 2,000 children were forced into New Norcia’s schools from the mid-1860s to the 1970s, only 275 children were officially reported on the Mission’s burial register.\textsuperscript{47} Essentially, over 1,500 Indigenous children died in the “care” of New Norcia authority figures throughout its century of schooling and were never logged nor buried properly. According to Moodie, there are over 300 graves at New Norcia’s cemetery, but the true number is unknown due to the large swaths of land with an “unknown”

\textsuperscript{45} Laalia.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Claire Moodie, “Plea to find children’s burial sites at New Norcia, where the town cemetery contains unmarked graves.”
number of unmarked burial sites. Dallas Phillips, a Ballardong-Nyoongar woman, told the press, “I’d like to see the graves maintained, with proper signs... Find out what they died from, how they died, when they died... Let’s help them, they deserve the respect and acknowledgment.” The legacy of colonialism and the violent, racist ideologies it cultivated are felt all over the world, as people from Indigenous societies worldwide are fighting for justice for the genocidal acts that they, their families, and their ancestors have experienced for centuries. As Phillips remarked, not even respect or acknowledgment have been adequately paid to the survivors of such a brutal, bloody history. The same power structures that allowed for Bishop Rosendo Salvado to create an institution in a foreign country based on religious paternalism, embedded race science into societies all over the world, and justified the kidnapping and forced assimilation of Indigenous children are still acting to prevent Nyoongar people from receiving the fundamental respect they deserve to this day.

48 Moodie.
49 Ibid.
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Jonathan Bea is a fifth-year Business major with minors in History and Spanish. He wrote his paper for Dr. Lewis Call's Research and Writing Seminar in History. His research interests include American legal and political histories and the Spanish Civil War. After graduating, Jonathan plans to travel and eventually pursue a career in corporate law.
Awdry v. British Rail: The Politicization of Thomas the Tank Engine

Jonathan Bea

Many science fiction stories pose that as humans move forward, they lose perspective on the importance of the outdated technologies that allowed them to make such progress. In the mid-1940s, Reverend Wilbert Awdry began writing a series of science fiction books that would make him one of the most prolific writers of the genre. Consistently producing one book a year for over thirty years, Awdry's stories outlined an idealized world, grounded in technological accuracy and realism. His stories also contained biting social and political commentary, frequently critiquing the policies of the British government. Though originally these stories began as simple rhymes that Awdry told his ill son, Christopher, he eventually published them as The Railway Series. The series later became more famously known as Thomas the Tank Engine, taking on the moniker of Awdry’s most famous character. While it is easy to dismiss The Railway Series as simplistic children’s stories, the book draws heavily from science fiction tradition.

As defined in Adam Roberts’ book The History of Science Fiction, The Railway Series was known as “hard science fiction”: a form which focuses
on technology. Roberts explores the impact that technology has on science, presenting a case that science is a function of technology rather than technology as an application of science: “There is not theory on the one side and its practical implementation on the other. Rather science is one manifestation of the technological stance towards entities.” Therefore, it can reasonably extrapolated that literature focused on the workings of technology is, in fact, science fiction, as science itself is intrinsically linked to technology. In the most literal sense, *The Railway Series* was chiefly driven by anthropomorphized technology. Through language which young readers could understand, *The Railway Series* aimed to explore the functions of technology. In fact, anthropomorphizing machines were crucial to how the stories registered in the minds of the young readers, as it is likely that humanizing the locomotives improved readers’ abilities to remember Awdry’s lessons. Therefore, this research reflects on Awdry’s books as science fiction literature.

Several odd themes began to develop in Awdry’s stories beginning in the late 1950s. The first, and most important of these new thematic elements was the conflict between steam engines and diesel engines. During this period, British Rail, or B.R., the largest nationalized railway in England undertook a costly and ineffective modernization effort that involved decommissioning their fleet of steam engines and replacing them with Diesels. Parallel to this, Awdry began more frequently referencing a place known as “The Other Railway,” often using it as a foil to his utopian Island of Sodor and treating it akin to a steam engine hell. “The Other Railway” represented B.R. and their callous scrapping of countless steam engines. While B.R. transitioned from steam to diesel engines as part of its modernization plans, the Island of Sodor opts to continue using steam engines exclusively. As Awdry wrote more political stories and conflicts, the setting became increasingly anachronistic. Finally, Awdry included characters and locations directly inspired by real life preservation railways and the steam

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1 Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 12.
engines which worked on them. While this may seem insignificant, it marked a change in the world of Sodor as Awdry shifted from writing about characters of his own creation to those taken directly from real life. During this time in his writing career, Awdry criticized and rebuked the modernization efforts of B.R., characterizing diesel engines as untrustworthy, arrogant and antagonistic while simultaneously developing the Island of Sodor as a utopia which preserved the history and legacy of the steam engines that B.R. sought to destroy. Awdry’s stories which best achieve his goals of critiquing modernization and dieselization while developing a steam engine utopia were *Duck and the Diesel Engine* (1958), *The Twin Engines* (1960), *Stepney the “Bluebell” Engine* (1963), and *Enterprising Engines* (1968). What caused these drastic shifts in his writing? In order to fully understand these changes, it is important to first explain the real life “debate” surrounding the modernization of British Rail—the largest nationalized British railway—which occurred while Awdry wrote many of his books.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, B.R., one of the largest railway companies in England, undertook a massive modernization effort that became one of the most disastrous political and economic projects in modern British history. Over a period of about 15 years, B.R. not only replaced its fleet of steam engines with a new fleet of diesel engines but also closed down lines of track as well as stations and entire routes. According to the architects of these plans, in some ways, the modernization attempts were necessary and successful. The two key figures behind the modernization efforts were Sir Brian Robertson, a retired serviceman whom Winston Churchill personally asked assume the role as chairman of the British Transport Commission, and Richard Beeching, a businessman succeeded Robinson’s failure. In 1955, B.R. recorded an operating loss, alarming the conservative U.K. government. As a result, the government sought to cut costs and improve the efficiency of the railway, and the first step in doing this would be decommissioning the fleet of steam engines. The second part of the modernization efforts began during Beeching’s tenure with what became
known as the “Beeching Cuts,” which decommissioned thousands of miles of track, hundreds of stations, and countless branch lines. The scholarly consensus surrounding these efforts to modernize B.R. is that the dieselization and Beeching Cuts were misguided at best and outright disastrous at worst.\(^2\) Although it seemed that the diesels were a cheaper alternative to the steam engines, B.R. focused only on production costs, and did not consider intangible expenses which made diesels more expensive than steam engines. Diesels were expected to operate during 85% of a 24-hour day but only clocked in at 50-60% at best, making them much more inefficient and costly than the steam engines they replaced.\(^3\) One particularly unreliable diesel notoriously broke down every 8,000 miles.\(^4\) This lack of reliability came from major design flaws stemming from rushed manufacturers and non-standard and mismatched fleet.\(^5\) As for the “Beeching Cuts,” although the cuts were a successful short-term financial decision, they had long lasting social and economic consequences that resulted in Beeching becoming one of the most hated men in England.

By cutting the railway lines, rural areas throughout England became cut off from the rest of the country, with their citizens losing the ability to travel and easily transport goods. As recently as 2021, British politicians worked to remedy the consequences of the cuts by investing in projects to restore the lost lines: “[Secretary of State for Transport of the United Kingdom] Grant Shapps told the conference he wanted to reverse the ‘butchery’ of the cuts by Dr Beeching which saw thousands of miles of track closed.”\(^6\) The final argument of those against the modernization efforts was one of the most crucial points to understanding the works of Wilbert Awdry: the cultural loss caused by cuts and dieselization.


\(^3\) Henshaw, 100.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Gourvish, 286-90; Loft, “Chapter 4.”

For hundreds of years, the steam locomotives worked thanklessly to make Great Britain a global superpower, even becoming a major sponsor Britain’s war effort during World War II. However, barely any steam engines were preserved, with over 16,000 British steam engines sent away to be scrapped over the course of less than 20 years.\(^7\) With the mass dieselization of B.R. and the Beeching cuts, Britain lost an important part of its history and cultural identity: a trade-off that Awdry would go on to argue was not worth it.

In his book *Demand the Impossible*, Tom Moylan introduces his concept of utopian science fiction with an explanation of what he believes is its source, espousing that “[utopian fiction] is rooted in the unfulfilled needs and wants of specific classes, groups, and individuals in their unique historical contexts ... forging visions of what is not realized either in theory or practice.”\(^8\) This exposition on the origins of utopian fiction is especially helpful in understanding the works of Awdry. Wilbert Awdry grew up in a difficult family situation as the son of his father’s second wife. However, in spite of the awkward nature, Wilbert, his brother George, and his father Vere were drawn together by a shared love of steam trains.\(^9\) This mutual love of trains would grow into an obsession for Wilbert as he became more exposed to them, mainly through railway magazines—the only reading material Wilbert was allowed to peruse as a child.\(^{10}\) Wilbert would eventually pass this love of trains on to his son, Christopher, telling him short stories about anthropomorphized trains and their daily lives, building on the plot and characters as Christopher requested.\(^{11}\) Needless to say, steam locomotives were a crucial part of Wilbert Awdry’s life, not only because they allowed him to bond with his father but also because they served as a way for him to bond with his own son. Therefore, when B.R. began their modernization efforts and went about


\(^{8}\) Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible*, ed. Raffaella Baccolini (Bern: Peter Lang, 1986), 524.


\(^{10}\) Sibley, 62.

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 134-136.
scrapping so many engines it’s likely that Wilbert became frustrated and wanted the steam engines to remain in service. Unfortunately, as a simple clergyman, Awdry never had the power to do so. According to Moylan’s theory on the origins of Utopian fiction, it was this unfulfilled desire to save these locomotives that Awdry loved so dearly that probably motivated the development of the fictional Island of Sodor throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Because of this, Sodor was transformed from a simple railway into an imagined safe haven for steam engines.

Awdry introduced the idea of Sodor as a refuge for endangered steam engines in his 1960 book *The Twin Engines*. The book revolved around two twin steam engines named Donald and Douglas visiting from Scotland, and chronicled their adventures as they underwent a trial period which would determine whether they were allowed to come to work on the fat controller’s railway. Although the premise seems innocent, there were surprisingly dark implications of these stories. In the book, the fat controller saves the two twins from being scrapped, but he can only afford to keep one engine. To avoid losing one another, the twins engage in reckless trickery and disobedience, from switching their tenders to trick the fat controller, to convincing the other engines to go on strike on their behalf. Their efforts are eventually rewarded, and the two are allowed to stay on the Island, but the desperation the two exhibits paints a thoroughly grim picture of what life outside of the Island of Sodor is like for steam engines.

Awdry began using Douglas, the twin which came closest to being scrapped, in stories featuring other engines who had either escaped or attempted to escape a similar fate. Douglas made his second speaking appearance in the book *Stepney the “Bluebell” Engine* in the story “Bluebells of England.” During this story, while conversing with another engine, Douglas learns that the eponymous Stepney was another engine who managed to avoid being scrapped. Douglas also learns from the other steam engine that the situation on “The Other Railway” is quite dire: “The engines on The Other Railway aren’t safe now. Their controllers

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are cruel. They don’t like engines any more. They put them on cold damp sidings and then ... they c-c-cut them up.”13 This description of “The Other Railway” was accompanied by a thoroughly haunting picture showing two rusted engines with fearful expressions being approached by a man with a welding mask and a blow torch. “The Other Railway” is a reflection of what had happened in England ten years prior, as countless steam engines had been unceremoniously destroyed and sold off for scrap. Although the situation outside of Sodor is grim, the two engines take comfort in the fact that there are railways that are willing to save the decommissioned steam engines from being scrapped: “The Bluebells are kind people who want to save engines. They’ve made a place called ‘the Bluebell Railway.’ Engines can escape there and be safe.”14 The Bluebell Railway is a real preservation railway operating in England that Awdry visited before writing this book about Stepney, one of the engines in service on the preservation line. The reverence with which Awdry treated the preservation line in this book speaks to the impact his trip had on him, and how it likely inspired him to turn Sodor into a fictional preservation railway. The final example of Sodor as a Utopian setting comes from a book written in 1968, when an engine set to be scrapped escapes to the Island of Sodor and finds refuge from “The Other Railway.”

In general, Enterprising Engines had a far darker tone than Awdry’s previous works. For example, the book contains references to an “anti-rail league” in the story “Bulgy,” which alludes to the real-world conflict between the British Railways and the road lobbies. However, the darkest story in the book is simply titled “Escape.” In this story, Douglas finds himself on “The Other Railway” late at night after delivering a goods train, and comes across a tank engine named Oliver who is looking to escape to the Island of Sodor. The two eventually do escape; however, Oliver’s journey plays out more like a story of a World War II soldier behind enemy lines than a story meant for children. Before meeting Douglas,

13 Awdry, 278.
14 Ibid, 279.
Oliver travels across England at night, relying on the kindness of signalmen and hiding in a quarry to escape pursuers.\(^{15}\) Things start to look up when he meets Douglas, however the two encounter more trouble when a foreman and a guard stop them, forcing Douglas’ driver to present fake papers saying that they own Oliver.\(^{16}\) At the end of the story, Oliver is welcomed onto the Island of Sodor with open arms, repainted in his original liveries, and given his own branch line: a happy ending. These stories help highlight the metaphor of the Island of Sodor as a Utopia for steam engines and show how it became a place that would not only take in decommissioned steam engines, but restore them to their former glory as well. By the end of “Escape,” the Island of Sodor is realized as a utopia that is much more willing to rescue old steam engines than to take on a diesel. However, this does not indicate that diesel engines did not appear on the Island.

The first diesel introduced in *The Railway Series* is probably the most important, in that the diesel would set the standard for the portrayal of other diesel engines moving forward in future stories. This character, simply referred to as Diesel, appears as a visitor to the Island of Sodor in the 1959 book *Duck and the Diesel Engine*, during which he and a Great Western saddle tank steam engine who goes by Duck engage in a serious conflict. Everything about Diesel is alien and unpleasant. Instead of sounding like a normal steam engine, he is described as “purring smoothly” towards the engines, and speaking in an “oily voice.”\(^{17}\) At first, Diesel immediately attempts to ingratiate himself with the other engines, singing their praises and proclaiming how he is so excited to meet the famous engines of Sodor; however, when he is finally alone with Duck, he reveals his true colors, telling him that “[y]our worthy Sir Topham Hatt thinks I need to learn. He is mistaken. We Diesels don’t need to learn. We come into a yard and improve it. We are revolutionary.”\(^{18}\) Diesel’s introduction paints him as an

\(^{15}\) Awdry, 357.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Awdry, 206.

\(^{18}\) Ibid, 206.
arrogant alien invader, an “other” to the steam engines to whom he intends to
invade and prove his superiority. The introduction of Diesel is also the first time
that an engine representing B.R. appeared in one of The Railway Series books.
Diesel was directly based on a B.R. Class 08: a general-purpose shunting engine
of which almost 1000 were produced and could be found at different stations all
across England. By basing Diesel on such a prolific and widely used real life B.R.
engine, Awdry used Diesel as a proxy for B.R. in this book, with the character’s
attitudes and beliefs reflecting those of the real-life railroad.

When given a chance to prove himself to Duck, Diesel ultimately
lets his arrogance get the better of him. Diesel ends up humiliating himself in
front of several freight cars, leading the cars to tease him relentlessly. Instead
of internalizing his mistake and growing as a character, Diesel does something
incredibly bizarre in the context of the railway series—he seeks revenge. Up until
this story, every one of Awdry’s books featured a moment in which one of the
primary characters was given a chance to learn from their mistakes and mature;
however, when presented with this opportunity, Diesel consciously chooses
to continue being petty, deciding that he wants Duck to be sent away. Diesel
eventually gets his wish, and the story ends with a picture of Diesel laughing as
Duck is sent away by the fat controller. Diesel not only gets his revenge against
Duck, but also goes as far as to take Duck’s place in the shed. With this final
page, Awdry implied that Diesels did not replace steam engines due to their own
merit, but through deceit and politicking, a sentiment echoed by scholars such
as Charles Loft. Although modernization and efficiency were key concerns
of the British Transportation Commission, a bigger contributing factor to the
publication of the government white papers that led to the dieselization of B.R.
was the desire to avoid a strike from, and gain favor with, the National Union of

19 “EWS 08737 (D3905): Class 08: 0-6-0,” The One to One Collection.
20 Awdry, 209.
21 Ibid, 211.
22 Loft.
Railwaymen. The British government approved a proposal for modernization not based on the merits of the actual plan and the usefulness of Diesels compared to steam engines, but instead approved the proposal on political grounds in order to gain favor with a valuable labor union for votes and political favors. In the same way that Diesel gained a place on the Island of Sodor through deceit, many real-life diesels were initially commissioned because of corrupt political favors.

The final story in *Duck and the Diesel Engine* has very little to do with Diesel at all, aside from a final line revealing that he had been personally sent away by Sir Thopham Hatt. Although this seems unimportant, it was actually the first time—but not the only time—Awdry portrayed an engine sent away from the Island of Sodor in *The Railway Series*. In a metaphorical sense, the sendoff of Diesel is a reflection of the Island of Sodor rejecting the ideals of B.R., given that the fat controller sent away the most widely used B.R. diesel shunter.

The next villainous diesel to arrive on the Island of Sodor appeared in the 1963 book *Stepney the “Bluebell” Engine*, which also happened to also be a B.R. diesel engine: a Class 40. One story starring Stepney titled “Bowled Out” played out almost exactly the same as the stories in *Duck and the Diesel Engine*. An arrogant diesel engine arrives on the island, antagonizes the steam engines, and is eventually humiliated. However, there are two key differences between this Class 40 and Diesel. The first is that this new diesel is much crueler, stating that he believes that all the steam engines should be scrapped and replaced with diesels within the first lines of the story. The second major difference is how this diesel is sent off. This unnamed Class 40 is humiliated after stalling due to sucking up an engine inspector’s hat through his fuel intake, causing him to stall and necessitating his train to be pulled by the very steam engines he derided. Again, Awdry used the B.R. diesel engine as a proxy for B.R. at large and portrayed them as arrogant. However, this time, the railway is not only portrayed as outright cruel,

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23 Loft.
24 Awdry, 287.
but incompetent and unreliable as well. Though Awdry never directly addressed the increased animosity towards B.R. in this particular book, the publishing date provides a key insight into this shift in attitude. The book was published in November of 1963, only eight months after Dr. Richard Beeching’s monolithic *The Reshaping of British Rail* was published: the same paper that called for the mass closures of railways, stations, and branch lines. These actions made Beeching one of the most hated men in England. Therefore, it is fair to assert that the book’s increased criticism toward B.R. was motivated by Beeching’s ghoulish uprooting of the British railway system.

The final, and most militant example of Awdry’s anti-diesel sentiment can be found in the 1968 story from *Enterprising Engines*, “Super Rescue.” Awdry was never as blunt with his messaging about the superiority of steam engines as he was in “Super Rescue.” In this story, Awdry declaratively asserts the superiority of steam engines over diesels. The story begins with two visiting B.R. diesels—a Class 46 and a Class 35—announcing their intentions to replace the steam engines to an audience of well-established steam engine characters. The Class 46 announces that it is “time we took this railway over” before being shushed by the Class 35 who points out that “[i]t’s *their* railway,” but the Class 46 ultimately dismisses this and proclaims “[n]ot for long...our controller says, ‘Steam engines spoil our image.’” In response to this, Awdry used the character of Duck as a vehicle to voice his own personal beliefs, stating through duck that “[o]f course [steam engines make you look bad]...We show what frauds you are. Call yourselves engines? If anything happens, you care nothing for your train. You just moan for a Fitter. *We* bring it home, if only on one cylinder.” The two diesels eventually break down, and when the fitter can’t arrive on time it falls on Henry, an older engine who had gone through more repairs than any other engine on the Island, to save them. Henry must ensure the trains arrive on time by not only pushing and pulling two

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25 Awdry, 352.
26 Ibid.
separate loads, but also the two broken-down diesels. With this act, Awdry not only demonstrated that steam engines were superior to diesel engines in terms of power and efficiency but also rebuked the arrogance of B.R. in their eagerness to get rid of steam engines in the pursuit of cutting costs. This would not be the last story where a new diesel appeared in *The Railway Series*; however, it would be the final story Awdry wrote that actively criticized B.R.

In the preface to *Duck and the Diesel Engine*, Awdry himself admitted that he didn't find all diesel engines troublesome, and occasionally introduced diesel characters to the island of Sodor who would presumably become permanent fixtures. In fact, one of the diesels from “Super Rescue” appeared in another story from *Enterprising Engines* working alongside the other steam engines. However, Awdry showed clear bitterness toward the B.R. diesels in these stories. Possibly the best summation of Awdry’s true feelings is found in *Stepney the “Bluebell” Engine*, where, while using the character of Douglas as a mouthpiece, Awdry declared that “[The Diesels are] all devils.” Through this, Awdry revealed his disdain for diesel engines, as he sees them as on the same level as the Devil—an ultimate evil that terrorizes and subjugates others.

So why did Awdry use children’s books to develop such a high-minded position in the first place? Most people reading Awdry’s books would likely write them off as silly bedtime stories, but the audience was the most important part of Awdry’s vision. In Awdry’s biography, Brian Sibley quotes Jeffery Richards, a professor of history at Lancaster University, who discusses how trains are easily anthropomorphized due to their appearance. As it turns out, it is possible that anthropomorphizing characters in children’s media positively affects information retention: “anthropomorphic language and pictures in storybooks did not interfere with factual learning about real animals. Even though children did retell anthropomorphic stories using anthropomorphic language, they were

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27 Awdry, 278.
28 Sibley, 136.
nonetheless better at providing factual, biological explanations after being read
an anthropomorphic storybook.” Awdry’s stories exemplify the powerful effect
real-life politics has on fiction. His stories about anthropomorphic trains may
have served to fight back against B.R. and preserve these characterizations in the
minds of his readers more than he could have ever imagined. Young readers would
no doubt remember the horrors of “The Other Railway” and the deceit and
arrogance of the diesels. As these readers grew older, perhaps they were inspired
to work towards undoing the social damage caused by the previous generations.
They would not only work to reverse the shortsighted destruction of important
culture and history but also realize the importance of preserving the past and the
technologies that created the present.

29 Megan S. Geerdts, Gretchen A. Van de Walle, and Vanessa LoBue, “Learning About Real
Animals From Anthropomorphic Media,” Imagination, Cognition and Personality 36, no. 1
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Author Biography

Jess O’Leary

Jess O’Leary is a second-year history major. She wrote her paper, “Enlightening the ‘Dark Ages’” for Dr. Call's Historiography class. Some of her research interests include religious and intellectual histories and the history of the California Central Coast.
In December of 2021, columnist Petula Dvorak published an article in the *Washington Post* headlined “America Is Living in the Dark Ages and It’s Time for the Enlightenment.”¹ The article reflects popular cultural perceptions of the Early Middle Ages and the Enlightenment to evoke an image of America languishing in filth, death, and disease, hoping for a revolution of culture and intellect and a return to the light. In her article, Dvorak writes that, for the past few years, America has been “a medieval potage of religious extremism, anti-science sneering, conspiracy theories, and ill-conceived, ragtag, spear-and-pole crusades.”² Why did Dvorak unequivocally characterize the medieval period as a low point of history, failing to mention the era of intellectual innovation brought about by the invention of the university, the agricultural boom that took place during the Middle Ages due to innovative new farming technology, or the

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² Dvorak.
Carolingian Renaissance, during which manuscripts and artwork were preserved under a concentrated effort of Charlemagne.\(^3\)

The Early Middle Ages have been portrayed as “dark” since the 14\(^{th}\) century, when Petrarch invented the notion of medieval “darkness” and his fellow Renaissance humanists perpetuated the idea.\(^4\) For centuries, common perception has held that the so-called “Dark Ages” were a time of little social, cultural, or intellectual advancement.\(^5\) In her comparison, Dvorak draws upon this image of darkness, which is pervasive in both popular culture and academic scholarship.\(^6\) Due to popular conceptions about the “Dark Ages,” for many readers, the headline of this article likely conjures up images of plague-ridden rats scuttering across cold, damp, stone floors. Similar to many other scholars and journalists, Dvorak seems to have been deceived by a reductive and inaccurate representation of the Early Middle Ages. Using the historiographical lens of genealogy, as developed by Nietzsche and Foucault, this paper will examine how the characterization of the Middle Ages as a period of “darkness” has been perpetuated to portray subsequent societies as comparatively advanced civilizations.

The historiographical theory of genealogy was developed in Friedrich Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morals* and later expanded upon by Michel Foucault. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche suggests a model of historiographical inquiry that examines the cultural circumstances under which an idea or institution was developed. In this book, Nietzsche searches for the historical origins of morality, attempting to identify the social conditions and


\(^5\) Mommsen, 226.

values that moral concepts evolved under. Unlike Marx’s teleological narrative, Nietzsche’s theory of genealogy proposes that history is arbitrarily dependent on underlying variables and has no ultimate destination. In Nietzsche’s view, there is no such thing as absolute truth: Every idea is created under a set of mutable variables, and therefore every idea is liable to change. From Nietzsche’s genealogical perspective, ideas are not eternal or unchanging, nor are they the result of any natural course of history. Instead, he claims, our concept of morality arose from and pivots on evolving power relations. The key argument of Nietzsche’s project of genealogy is his claim that identifying the origin of an idea reveals the values and social structures that the idea is based upon, allowing for a fuller and more nuanced understanding of our system of morality.

The term “Dark Ages,” which is typically used to refer to the Early Middle Ages (roughly 500-1000 C.E.) in Europe, has been the subject of serious historiographical debate since at least the mid-1800s. From the 14th to the 19th century, historians commonly held that the Early Middle Ages, which followed the fall of Rome, was a period characterized by brutality and backwardness, devoid of significant cultural or intellectual achievements. Over the past two centuries, scholars have challenged the narrative describing the Early Middle Ages as culturally and intellectually inferior, representing the era in a more equitable and complex way. Published expressions of this new and revised historical viewpoint can be found as early as 1844: English historian Samuel Maitland’s essay collection *The Dark Ages*. While Maitland concedes that the “dark” characterization of the “Dark Ages” is accurate in describing the knowledge of

9 Ibid, 58.
12 Maitland, 1-4.
the era compared to the knowledge of his own time period, he argues in favor of a more multifaceted understanding of the Early Middle Ages, citing a variety of intellectual and cultural advances as proof of “lightness.”

By 1904, literary scholar W.P. Ker adopted and altered Maitland’s argument, claiming that the term “Dark Ages” is wholly misleading and impedes a serious and unbiased study of the era. Over the course of the 20th century, more historians began arguing against previous characterizations of the Early Middle Ages. During the mid-1900s, scholars such as Theodore Mommsen and Wallace Ferguson traced the origin of the “Dark Ages” nomenclature back to Renaissance humanists who wanted to distinguish themselves from the previous time period and portray their own intellectual achievements and culture as comparatively “bright.” A majority of present-day historians acknowledge that the long-standing condemnation of the Middle Ages was biased and largely ahistorical.

This perspective is exemplified in *The Bright Ages: A New History of Medieval Europe*, a book published in 2021 by medieval historians David Gabriele and Matthew M. Perry. Gabriele and Perry claim that the common understanding of the Middle Ages as a dark and bloody time period is reductive and has served a variety of agendas throughout history, most of which are based on the desire to make one’s own group or time period appear culturally and intellectually superior.

The perception of the Early Middle Ages as being unequivocally “dark” exists because a lack of written records left this time period as an expanse of history that could be conveniently filled with myths and rhetoric to serve the agendas of historians and societies subsequent to the “Dark Ages.” The concept of the “Dark Ages” exists in two domains: popular culture and academic study. To alter popular

13 Maitland, 1-9.
16 Gabriele and Perry.
17 Ibid.
perceptions of the medieval period and improve public historical understanding, scholars should further consider both the achievements and pitfalls of the Middle Ages and keep in mind the values and context underlying previous scholarship, as is dictated in Nietzsche’s genealogical approach to historiography.

Michel Foucault’s “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” expands on Nietzsche’s concept of genealogy. In this essay, Foucault encourages historians to consider the seemingly minute details that influence the development of ideas and institutions, drawing attention to forces that may appear to be “without history,” such as “sentiments, love, conscience, [and] instincts.” According to Foucault, a genealogy must consider the “details and accidents” that led to the creation and maintenance of an idea. Foucault defines “origin” in the context of genealogy not as a singular event but as a perpetually ongoing process. This means that a genealogist must examine not only the inception of an idea, but the factors that have caused the idea to be changed, eliminated, or perpetuated over time. By moving away from a definition of “origin” that denotes a precise beginning, Foucault emphasizes that ideas are not the result of some predetermined course of history. Rather, he argues that ideas and institutions arise from a chance set of circumstances. This perspective differentiates genealogy from the historiographical theories of Hegel or Marx, who view history as teleological.

Applying genealogy to the concept of liberty as an example, Foucault writes that, “genealogical analysis shows that the concept of liberty is [according to Nietzsche in The Wanderer and His Shadow] an ‘invention of the ruling classes’ and not fundamental to man’s nature or at the root of his attachment to being and truth.” This perspective expresses the idea that history could have

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19 Ibid, 80.
20 Foucault, 76.
22 Foucault, 78.
followed any number of courses: Accepted ideas are developed and maintained by chance.

Foucault argues that ideas that are deemed to be inherently “true,” such as Nietzsche’s example of morality, should be especially subject to this genealogical method of historiography. He writes that “truth is undoubtedly the sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking process of history.”

Ideas that are held as “true” are no less dependent on the random course of history than any other idea. “True” ideas are just more deeply cemented into the collective consciousness. The prevalent conceptualization of the Middle Ages as a time of “darkness” was, for the most part, not challenged by historians until the 19th century at the earliest. This is not because this interpretation was the only reasonable or logical way to characterize the time period. Rather, the notion of the “Dark Ages” has been pervasive for so long in academic and popular historical perception because it went unchallenged. A cycle of unchallenged acceptance of the “Dark Ages” concept cemented the idea as “truth.”

Contemporary historians analyze the works of Nietzsche and Foucault to guide their practice of the historiographical method of genealogy. In an article published in 2014, David Garland writes that genealogy “traces how contemporary practices and institutions emerged out of specific struggles, conflicts, alliances, and exercises of power, many of which are nowadays forgotten.”

This definition summarizes the methodology of Nietzsche and Foucault, providing a technique for contemporary genealogists to follow.

In *A Companion to Foucault*, Christopher Falzon identifies two major implications of the genealogical approach to history. First, Falzon argues that once historians no longer impose structures and principles that are considered

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23 Foucault, 96.
to be “universal, necessary, and timeless” upon their study of history, it becomes possible to acknowledge and understand the role of these structures and principles in the historical development of ideas and institutions. The second implication of genealogical historiography is that the examination and evaluation of presupposed concepts and structures allow these so-called “intrinsic” ideas to be changed through human agency. When a historian practices genealogy, they can detach themselves from ideas and structures that are rarely questioned, making their historical inquiry more rigorous.

Falzon places genealogy as a historiographical method in opposition to Hegelian historicism, Marxism, and empiricism. Marx and Hegel both conceptualize history as teleological, which Falzon argues is contradictory to the genealogical idea that history is composed of random events leading to a random end. Falzon claims that historiographical empiricism, which is typically defined as a search for objective, observable facts amidst historical sources, is “epistemologically naive.” In reference to empiricism, Falzon echoes Foucault’s argument that “true” ideas are invented and depend on random turns of history. Falzon posits that historiographical empiricism, particularly the form of empiricism shaped by Leopold von Ranke, is a futile effort, as interpretation always plays a role in the study of history. Genealogy is antithetical to both determinist and empiricist views of history, as genealogy argues that history does not progress toward an ultimate purpose, nor can it exist outside of human influence and interpretation.

In “Nietzsche’s Genealogical Histories and His Project of Revaluation, philosophy scholar Christoph Schuringa argues that the process of genealogy itself is not critical, and cannot possibly be critical; genealogy, by definition,
is intended to be an unbiased search for the origins of an idea. Schuringa’s reasoning is understandable, but he misinterprets the function of genealogy in the writing of both Nietzsche and Foucault. Although it is true that genealogy strives to be an unbiased search for an idea’s origins, tracing the lineage of an idea is not done without a purpose: genealogists attempt to undo the constraints of presupposed ideas by identifying their origins and destabilizing them. In this way, genealogy is necessarily critical. If practiced in the method of Nietzsche and Foucault, genealogy deconstructs truths that are frequently seen as inherent or natural, and a historian must approach their subject with a critical lens in order to do this.

The intention of genealogy, as established by Nietzsche and Foucault, is to question the usefulness of an idea by reevaluating its origins and the values under which it was formed and perpetuated. Genealogy emphasizes that ideas are not conceived of in a linear fashion, and it requires critical thought to identify the seemingly random turns of history that contribute to the development of an idea. Following the genealogical perspective, the characterization of the Middle Ages as being a time of squalor and backwardness was not an inevitable conclusion but arose based on the values of the historians who developed the idea.

The basic principles of genealogy are frequently embraced in historical inquiry, even by historians who may not necessarily view themselves as genealogists. In Nietzsche: Life as Literature, Alexander Nehamas claims that “genealogy simply is history correctly practiced.” Nehamas argues that Nietzsche and Foucault did not coin a new way of thinking about history with their ideas of genealogy, rather they described the way that historians who had been doing their work “correctly” approached history. Similarly, Christopher Schuringa characterizes genealogy as

“the telling of a historical narrative that aims to be true.”

Genealogy is the most useful historiographical approach in understanding the periodization of the “Dark Ages.” Though they may not necessarily identify themselves as genealogists, many medieval historians have employed an approach to studying the medieval period that is paradigmatic of historiographical genealogy. An article written by Theodore E. Mommsen in 1942 entitled “Petrarch’s Conception of the Dark Ages” thoroughly traces the coinage and use of the term “Dark Ages.” In this article, Mommsen seeks to identify Petrarch’s general “historical conceptions” and the way that these conceptions led to his interpretation of the Middle Ages as being “dark.” As his main point of inquiry, Mommsen asks whether Petrarch characterized the Middle Ages as a time of “darkness” due to the lack of historical sources from the era or if Petrarch was making a value judgment on the overall character of the Middle Ages. After examining the writing of Petrarch, Mommsen concludes the latter. Mommsen identifies two primary ideas behind Petrarch’s assessment of the Middle Ages. He argues that Petrarch conceptualized the medieval era as a time of “darkness” because it followed the Roman Empire, which Petrarch believed to be the pinnacle of history.

This belief is clearly expressed in Petrarch’s own words, as he asks, “What else, then, is all history, if not the praise of Rome?” Mommsen also claims that Renaissance humanists, such as Petrarch, condemned the medieval era as being “dark” because they wanted to distinguish themselves from the preceding time period and portray their own intellectual achievements and culture as comparatively “bright.” Petrarch’s conceptualization of the Middle Ages was laden with value judgment and reflected his high esteem for the Roman Empire and his ambitions of cultural sophistication for his own time period. In identifying

31 Christoph Schuringa, 256.
32 Mommsen, 228.
33 Ibid, 236.
Petrarch and his fellow Renaissance humanists as the source of the “Dark Ages” concept and attributing the concept’s inception to the values and beliefs under which it was formed, Mommsen’s reasoning exemplifies an effective use of the genealogical method.

The interpreted or intended meaning of “Dark Ages” differs between historians: some interpret the term to mean a period of little cultural and intellectual advancement, while others take it to mean a period for which we have very few available sources. Petrarch conceptualized the term as the former, but some contemporary historians intended to convey the latter.\textsuperscript{34} Even this seemingly neutral second meaning, however, carries a value-loaded history. Following the genealogical perspective, we must ask \textit{why} some scholars have written off the so-called “Dark Ages” as being devoid of historical sources.

In “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’: How the Slave Trade Fueled the Carolingian Economy,” medieval historian Michael McCormick uses the methods of genealogy to provide an answer to this question. McCormick characterizes the perpetuation of the “Dark Ages” idea as a cycle: Few scholars research this time period because of its dim reputation, rendering the era unable to shake its reputation as intellectually and culturally devoid.\textsuperscript{35} The use of genealogical methods allows McCormick to understand why historians hold that the Middle Ages lack valuable sources: He identifies the tradition of looking down upon the medieval period as the origin of the notion that little to no useful evidence from the “Dark Ages” is available to historians.

Many would concede that there are fewer written sources from the Middle Ages than there are from the European periods immediately preceding and following. Europeans during the medieval period tended toward oral traditions of knowledge, parchment was expensive, and papyrus, which had been

used in antiquity, was no longer readily available. However, historians who write off the Middle Ages as a black hole of historical knowledge fail to consider the abundance of archaeological records from the Middle Ages as a valuable source. By genealogically examining the origin of this notion, one can see how the idea that the “Dark Ages” are devoid of historical sources is a convenient rhetoric that fits nicely with the characterization of the Early Middle Ages as a time of cultural backwardness. Sources from the medieval period are available, but scholars will only seek them out and spread them if they believe that the time period is worthy of serious historical inquiry.

The development of any idea or structure is rarely contingent on one historical factor, and the “Dark Ages” are no exception. Contemporary historians have expanded on Mommsen’s proposed origin of the “Dark Ages” concept, and many have traced the origin of the term in a genealogical fashion. Like Mommsen, historian Rabia Umar Ali concluded that the Western world has historically used the term “Dark Ages” to distance itself from the Middle Ages. However, Ali expanded upon Mommsen’s interpretation by identifying a value motivating this desire to be distanced from the Middle Ages that Mommsen did not consider.

At the time that Europe underwent the so-called “Dark Ages,” the Islamic world was flourishing. What historians term the “Islamic Golden Age” lasted from the 8th century to the 14th century, coinciding with the Middle Ages. In the Islamic world, this was a period of great cultural, economic, and scientific advancement. In “Medieval Europe: The Myth of Dark Ages and the Impact of Islam,” Ali posits that post-medieval European scholars wanted to downplay the achievements and innovations of the Muslim world during the Middle Ages and did so by broadly representing the medieval era as an age of darkness. She writes, “The western notion of unbridled superiority thus makes its own past a victim consigned to, in this case, deliberate obscurity.”36 Rather than acknowledging

that a significant amount of intellectual and cultural progress during the Middle Ages came from the Islamic world, Ali argues that European scholars decided to obscure the medieval period in myths of darkness and emptiness.

Ali’s historical inquiry is a clear and effective example of the genealogical method. She defines the goal of her article as an attempt to uncover “the reasons and factors responsible for the attempt to relegate the entire era as unworthy of notice and credit,”37 which sounds like the exact definition of genealogy. Mommsen and Ali both effectively practice genealogy, but both historians uncover slightly different potential motivations and values underlying the concept of the “Dark Ages.” Genealogy seeks to show the plurality, complexity, and contingency of the values and ideas that underlie a concept such as the “Dark Ages,”38 so the slightly different conclusions of Mommsen and Ali can coexist without conflict.

The genealogies of Mommsen and Ali inquire into the inception of the “Dark Ages” concept and its support from Renaissance humanists, but the search for the genealogy of an idea does not end at the idea’s formulation. In “The Middle Ages: “Dark Ages” or the Dawn of Technology?,” Giancarlo Genta and Paolo Riberi examine how myths about the “darkness” of the medieval period continued to permeate popular and academic culture after Renaissance humanists were no longer around to uphold them. More than 300 years after the death of Petrarch, influential Enlightenment historian Voltaire wrote of the Middle Ages that “barbarism, superstition and ignorance covered the face of the earth.”39 What drove scholars, more than 600 years removed from the Middle Ages, to perpetuate the concept of the “Dark Ages”?

Genta and Riberi argue that Enlightenment historians and Renaissance

37 Ali, 60.
38 Foucault, 81.
scholars upheld the myth of the “Dark Ages” for the same reason: Both groups wanted to signal that their own time period was one of modernity, so they contrasted their own civility against the “barbaric” Middle Ages to do so. The Middle Ages, though not inherently more “backwards” than previous time periods, has been unable to shake the reputation it inherited from Petrarch. Tracing this development from a genealogical perspective, one finds that the “Dark Ages” concept originated from and has been perpetuated by societies that valued their status of sophistication.

In *Medievalism, Politics, and Mass Media: Appropriating the Middle Ages in the Twenty-First Century*, Andrew B.R. Elliott argues that the myth of the “Dark Ages” is upheld over time because it provides a conveniently obscured expanse of history upon which any person or group can superimpose their own agenda or ideas. Elliott argues that perceptions of the medieval era in popular culture are almost completely disconnected from any historical basis. Terms like “medieval” or “Dark Ages” no longer come to directly signify the time period that they originally represented. Instead, they represent the general set of characteristics associated with the Middle Ages: backwardness, brutality, primitiveness, and a general air of gloom. Elliott claims that references to the medieval era are used in order to establish a strict differentiation between the present, which we want to view as comparatively sophisticated and civilized, and the barbaric past. This was true for Petrarch, who wanted to set his own time period apart from the preceding era, and it is still true today. While Renaissance humanists pejoratively characterized the “Dark Ages” to distance themselves from the actual period of history lasting from 500-1000 C.E., Elliott argues that negative references to the medieval era no longer refer directly to these years. Instead, phrases like “Let’s not go back to the Middle Ages”40 signal that something is the antithesis of modernity,


dee40 Andrew B.R. Elliott, “‘Let’s not go back to the Middle Ages’: Medievalism, the Dark Ages, and the Myth of Progress,” in *Medievalism, Politics, and Mass Media: Appropriating the Middle Ages in the Twenty-First Century* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 55.
whether or not it has any connection to the period of time that we call the Middle Ages.

When politicians or mass media sources use references to the medieval period to describe, for example, Islamic extremism, Elliott writes, “they are both drawing on and simultaneously perpetuating the negative associations of the term.” From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment to the present day, scholars have used allusions to the “darkness” of the Middle Ages to paint their own society in a more sophisticated and civilized light. What has changed in recent times, however, is what the concept of the “Dark Ages” signifies. Through a genealogical analysis of the values underlying the present-day use of medieval references, Elliott accurately concludes that, although originally meant to communicate the “darkness” of the medieval era, medieval references have now come to signify a more general sense of “darkness” with no chronological attachment to the Middle Ages.

Marxism would not be an effective theory to evaluate the history of the term “Dark Ages” because, as historians Anna Green and Kathleen Troup explain, Marxists approach historical narratives from a teleological perspective, looking to fit a historical narrative into a specific model rather than deconstructing said narrative without preconceived biases. Psychoanalysis, similarly, would be an ineffective method of understanding historical views of the Middle Ages. Psychoanalysts, like Marxists, approach history through a theory that assumes inherent truths. In using Marxist theory, one presupposes that history serves to realize an ultimate goal. Psychoanalytic history, in the eyes of Freud, operates on the assumption that the individual and society are at odds. Both of these presuppositions would render a historian biased in their attempt to understand the historical progression of the concept of the “Dark Ages.” Freud and Marx

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41 Elliott, 56.
42 Green and Troup, 49.
both make assumptions about inherent truth and human nature, and although psychoanalysis and Marxism may be effective lenses in other historiographical circumstances, the origin of an idea can only be evaluated in a truly objective way through the lens of genealogy.

Using the genealogical method of historiography, historians have discovered that, from the Renaissance to today, scholars and popular culture used the concept of the “Dark Ages” to establish themselves as living in a comparatively more advanced and desirable time period. This motivation holds true whether “Dark Ages” is meant to refer to the chronological Middle Ages, as Petrarch intended, or a more nebulous notion of a barbaric time, as is often intended in present-day popular culture. In light of recent scholarship refuting the broad characterization of the Middle Ages as brutal and archaic, some historians such as Janet L. Nelson, argue that the term “Dark Ages” should be retired from use, as the term only serves to continue a false narrative.44 Identifying the values and structures that culturally entrenched ideas such as the “Dark Ages” are contingent upon enables historians to more easily evaluate these ideas for their cultural significance and value. Genealogical historiography can deconstruct ideas that are assumed to be intrinsic truths, making it possible for such ideas to change.

44 Nelson, 198.
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Author Biography

Sean Senn

Sean Senn is a fourth-year History major. He wrote his article for Dr. Thomas Trice’s Research and Writing Seminar. The paper reflects his interest in the history of United States imperialist ventures abroad. After Sean graduates from Cal Poly, he hopes to continue his education, and, eventually, write books on United States imperialism both at home and abroad.
Voicing his opinion to the House of Representatives on February 3, 1947, Montana representative Mike Mansfield spoke to the United States’ colonial interests in the Pacific: “I would prefer to have the United States assume complete and undisputed control of the mandates...We have no concealed motives because we want these islands for one purpose only and that is national security.” After the U.S. overcoming Japanese control of the Pacific during World War II, the U.S. wanted to keep the Pacific and its islands as a buffer and staging ground to better prepare for any future advances from East Asia.

The U.S. imperial interests included the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshal Islands, and the Republic of Palau. Nevertheless, being a self-proclaimed defender of democracy and popular sovereignty, the U.S. could not just annex the Pacific territories it occupied. Thus, to ensure its national security while avoiding
a tarnish to its reputation, the United States went through the newly established United Nations to devise, approve, and implement a stopgap measure which placed the geographic area known as Micronesia under U.S. jurisdiction as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) until a permanent solution could be found.

From 1947 to 1960, the U.S. was very complacent in its policy towards the TTPI. However, developments on the international stage compelled the U.S. to change its relaxed attitude. In the next decades, the U.S. radically increased its “development” of Micronesia and poured funds into centralized institutions that replaced the power and influence of local societies. Using U.S. federal government documents, economic development reports, published interviews, and leaked government papers to explain why and how the U.S. changed its policy, this paper argues that the U.S. presented the Micronesian population with a Faustian bargain whereby the Micronesian population gained the fruits of modernity but had to become increasingly reliant on U.S. funded jobs, welfare programs, and infrastructure. Although the U.S. claimed the development of Micronesia came from a benevolent place, U.S. representatives also used its reliance as leverage to ensure the Micronesian delegation conceded to maintain U.S. control of their land through a Compact of Free Association, or CFA.

The United States’ policy following the United Nation’s 1961 Visiting Mission report was one of massive expenditure and subsidization as it sought to quickly transform the Micronesian economy and society into a shape it could control implicitly. However, prior to this United Nations report, with its interests in the region secure, the U.S. saw no need to do anything more than what previous imperial powers had done in the past. From 1952 to 1960, the U.S. only had a 7.5 million dollar per year appropriation limit for the Trust Territory, and it never spent more than seven.²

Prior to 1960, the United Nations’ missions into Micronesia and the

reports of the United Nations Trusteeship Council were unobjectionable to U.S. policy. However, during decolonization, more third-world countries entered the General Assembly, leading non-imperialist countries to gain more influence in this international body. The “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” passed in 1960 and the United Nations Visiting Mission to the TTPI in February of 1961 pressed hard for the self-determination of peoples across the globe. The 1961 Mission report was much harsher than previous ones and criticized the U.S. for failing to prepare Micronesia for independence and for the “considerable dissatisfaction and discontent” among its inhabitants. Suddenly faced with international embarrassment and the possibility of losing Micronesia, the U.S. knew it had to act quickly to remedy the situation.\(^3\)

Declassified documents from September 19, 1961, to February 20, 1963, reveal the Executive Branch was working on a plan of action to remedy the situation. The Departments of State, Defense, and Interior approved one such document sent to President Kennedy’s Executive Secretary, McGeorge Bundy. This memo, written in April of 1962, called for the TTPI to move under the United States’ tutelage in a new, lasting relationship within the United States’ political framework. The memo claimed it was in the interest of the people of the TTPI and in the security interest of the United States for the two to become associated indefinitely. To accomplish this, the memo explained, “the people of the Trust Territory must become an educated people, prepared to exercise an informed choice, which means a choice by people capable of weighing realistic alternatives. There is an urgent need for the initiation of programs leading to the improvement of education, as a first step toward the improvement of other public sectors and the economic development of the Trust Territory.”\(^4\)

One way the TTPI educated the Micronesian people was through

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3 Nevin, 102-104.
the official government magazine, first published as the *Micronesian Monthly* in November 1951 and later renamed the *Micronesian Reporter* in 1956. However, this magazine published a treasure trove of primary sources including transcriptions of interviews with Micronesians, official reports from economic experts, relevant comments from important Micronesian and American politicians, and the stated plans of the TTPI government. The magazine claimed to maintain a simple goal throughout its lifetime, “to reflect the life and developments—the big and little happenings—of Micronesia and the people who live there.”5 The magazine was accessible at an annual subscription rate of $2.50, published every other month of 1962. Notably, the magazine was always published from the same location as the seat of the TTPI government. When the TTPI government headquarters was in Guam, subscriptions were mailed there, when the TTPI headquarters was moved to Saipan, the mailing location of the subscriptions shifted there as well. Due to its proximity to the U.S. central governing apparatus in the Trust Territory and the reality that its funding came from the TTPI budget, the *Micronesian Reporter* certainly suffered from bias. Therefore, what it chose to publish should be observed under a critical lens and what it chose to leave out should be investigated further.

In its May edition of 1962, the Micronesian Reporter released the economic goals of the TTPI to its audience. The first goal was to produce enough food to sustain their population and eventually export surplus produce. Additional goals included improving education, healthcare, the tourist industry, road infrastructure and ensuring island residents could “live comfortably.”6 Later that year on July 4, the U.S. established the provincial capital of the TTPI on the island of Saipan. This provided a place from which Micronesia’s limited self-government could work with the TTPI administration. It was no coincidence that the same day the TTPI got its first official self-governing structure was also

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the United States’ independence day. Senator Henry Jackson explained why July 4 was chosen that very day, “The establishment of the provisional capital on the anniversary of the independence of the United States is symbolic of the determination to achieve their fullest possible development.” On July 19, President Kennedy signed bill S. 2775 which increased yearly appropriations to Micronesia from 7.5 million to 17.5 million dollars. During a White House press release the next day, the President voiced his support for the bill, explaining that the bill provided the funds needed to fulfill the United States’ responsibility as stewards and developers of the TTPI. The President stated that the highest priority was education; He specifically mentioned that Micronesian schools would be upgraded to a level comparable to that of American schools and finished by proclaiming, “The people of the Trust Territory, I am sure, will mark this day as the beginning of a new era of progress for the Trust Territory and its inhabitants.”

At the 1963 meeting of the United Nations Trusteeship Council, the members were overwhelmingly positive about the increased development of Micronesia. The only exception was the Soviet Union, whose delegate questioned whether the U.S. was sincere in its stated goal to grant the TTPI independence. He pointed out the irony that only the United States-run Council of Micronesia would decide when an independence referendum would occur and not the Micronesian people themselves, which ran contrary to the United States’ public stance on self-determination. Having control of the date of the plebiscite meant the U.S. could wait until they could guarantee a favorable outcome. As part of achieving that outcome, the U.S. continued to assess the situation in Micronesia and draft a solid plan of action.

In its July 1963 press release, the Micronesian Reporter discussed the six week Solomon Mission undertaken at the behest of the President to produce a

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“study of its problems and potentials; from these findings will be proposals and recommendations for a more rapid development of the Territory’s economic, social, and political resources.”10 The general recommendation that Anthony Solomon shared with the Reporter was that the Trust Territory government should continue to increase its expenditures so that all the necessary aspects of the Micronesian economy could be improved. Solomon’s list included more educational and public health facilities, improved economic infrastructure including roads, docks, and airstrips, additional communication nodes, and more supply depots.11 The Micronesian Reporter did not delve any deeper into Solomon’s mission or his resulting report to the President even though the results of the mission were going to help determine the direction of the TTPI. This lack of investigation may be because of the bias Reporter was prone to as noted earlier.

By contrast, the Friends of Micronesia was an anti-imperialist news source not reliant on the TTPI. In 1971, they published the “Solomon Report” which they claimed was a leaked government document that Solomon gave to the U.S. President. Dated October 9, 1963, the document outlined a plan to ensure Micronesia stayed permanently associated with the U.S. and allowed the U.S. to fulfill its security interests in the region. In order to achieve this without suffering excessive international backlash, the plan sought to ensure Micronesians would choose to stay associated with the U.S. by voting for the new relationship through a plebiscite.

The main method through which the U.S. sought to accomplish this was through economic policy. The report explained that the U.S. should be prepared to heavily subsidize Micronesia and recognize it as a “strategic rental.” Ninety-five percent of the TTPI’s budget was funded by the U.S. in 1963 and the report stressed the necessity of maintaining such a significant percentage to maintain leverage. However, it cautioned that the U.S. must also recognize the concerns

11 Ibid.
of the local chiefs and new Micronesian elites about relinquishing sovereignty, becoming economically stagnant, and losing ownership of land. The TTPI administration thus had to relax these concerns while maintaining the “strategic rental” as a new imperialistic policy. Solomon added that education had to be an early priority, echoing Kennedy. Furthermore, he stated that employee salaries should be increased to levels similar to that in the U.S.; the immigration process for Micronesians entering the U.S. should be made easier; and Social Security should be extended to Micronesians. Later on in the report, Solomon emphasized the importance of Micronesians receiving a modern, secondary education as an instrument of demoralization. This “demoralizing” effect was founded on the assumption that young Micronesians would be very resistant to return to their “primitive” lifestyle because they would have to give up the progress they had just tasted in school. The goal behind this tactic was to drive Micronesians to either migrate to the U.S. or continue their education to become qualified for positions in the TTPI. The end result would be a substantial portion of Micronesia’s future generations relying on the U.S. for their livelihoods. As part of its “strategic rental” plan, the U.S. continued to increase the ceiling for its appropriations to the TTPI and the TTPI continued to increase its spending.

The massive increase in spending by the TTPI increased its GDP. However, it only simulated economic growth. This is proved by comparing the GDP increase with the amount of U.S. grant money subsidizing the TTPI. According to a report by economist Elizabeth Udui, “it is estimated that the Trust Territory’s GDP increased from 1970 to 1975 at about 12% a year. But during this time, expenses of the government financed by the U.S. grant increased at almost the same rate (11%).” Therefore, the increase in Micronesia’s economy was only about 1%. The increase in GDP can thus almost be fully accounted for by the

13 Nevin, 136.
increase in money available to spend by the TTPI and its population.14

There was an indubitable link between the United States’ economic “development” and their growing domination over the Micronesian government and people. It is common sense that a country cannot be politically independent if it is economically dependent. In addition, America’s economic development and centralization came with the degradation of local societal processes which in turn led to the destruction of the Indigenous societies as a whole. For example, status among Micronesians used to be more associated with the one’s caste rather than accomplishment. However, the American education and economic system dismissed hereditary power structures altogether. As more Micronesians became reliant on imports, public jobs, public infrastructure, and public services, support for American systems increased, while support for traditional systems decreased. A former Micronesian delegate to the 1956 South Pacific Conference, Edmund Gilmar, noted, “the cherished virtue of reliance on free services from people and friends in particular is fading out. People are beginning to expect a reward for their services. Even some of the high chiefs no longer can rely upon free services from low caste subjects.”15

A new, Western-educated class of Micronesians was formed and continued to grow throughout the 1960s. The growth was of such scale that some Micronesian government officials were worried about the lack of jobs and housing in the district centers to accommodate all the graduates, and that they would instead turn to crime and drunkenness.16 To solve this problem, the TTPI focused on providing government jobs and public services to this growing class of Micronesians. Although the jobs lowered unemployment and government subsidies built new housing, many of these jobs were bureaucratic in nature and thus produced nothing for the economy. The primary method the TTPI used to

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try and solve the problem of unemployment, high costs of living, and economic stagnation was to increase the wages of its workers. However, all this did was contribute to an inflationary spiral.\textsuperscript{17} With so much manpower and talent going into the public sector, there were not many Micronesians capable or willing to take up entrepreneurship and form their own businesses. In addition to this obstacle, the U.S. restricted all foreign investment. The TTPI was a strategic trust territory and was the only one created following World War II. One of the main differences between a strategic and non-strategic trust territory was Article 8 of the trusteeship agreement, also known as the “most favored nation” clause, which prevented outside investment into the Trust Territory except by the U.S. government and U.S. private companies. Some politicians from the TTPI complained that the clause inhibited economic growth and sustainment but the High Commissioner of the TTPI (an American) disagreed, and naturally, nothing changed.\textsuperscript{18}

All Micronesian-produced exports declined in value over time since the Japanese were ousted during and after World War II. The only sector that saw an increase in productivity was the tourism industry. Although Micronesia was rich in resources related to food, clothing, and shelter, they still became more and more dependent on foreign imports for these items. From July 1, 1970, to June 30, 1971, the Trust Territory’s imported goods were valued at just over $26.1 million dollars and exported goods were valued at just over $3 million dollars. This was a twenty-five percent increase in imports and a twenty-five percent decrease in exports from the year before. For example, soap, a product that could be easily made in Micronesia with high-quality, local ingredients, was mostly imported. The reasons were that most islanders were never taught how to make it and had little inclination to learn.\textsuperscript{19} Newspapers in the mainland U.S. also recognized the

lack of economic independence in Micronesia. The Santa Cruz Sentinel noted, “For every dollar it earns, Micronesia spends five. The difference is made up by U.S. aid.”

In addition to poor American policies, the Micronesian also had many “natural” hardships in creating a modern, self-sufficient economy. The population was spread out over a massive area making transportation expensive, there was little arable land, cultural inhibitions to free enterprise still lingered in the 60s and beyond, and private investment was stifled partially because of laws implemented by the Micronesians themselves due to their enormous resistance to foreigners owning their land.

Micronesia's majority reliance on U.S. capital resulted in their representatives having little choice but to sacrifice some of their sovereignty in exchange for the maintenance of the modern way of life the U.S. built for them. There was another way, but it required great sacrifice. To achieve true independence, the Micronesian economy had to better balance its exports and imports and ensure its government and social programs were not reliant on foreign subsidies. This would raise the cost of living a modern life, many would lose their government jobs, and all would no longer be able to take advantage of the American welfare programs. The Micronesian politicians and their constituents had to choose between impoverished independence or signing a treaty that would give away part of the sovereignty they so highly valued.

In the face of the United States’ control over their territory, Micronesian have attempted to achieve two goals since they voiced their opinions in earnest in the 1960s. They wanted their own sovereign nation and the independence that comes with that, but they also wanted the development necessary to become a modern state and to sustain said state. Although some Micronesians and all

22 “Economic Independence is Possible,” The Young Micronesian, Jan. 1971.
members of the Congress of Micronesia realized that these two goals were mutually exclusive, many still supported development. Being employed to the U.S., TTPI government provided a good amount of stability to the Micronesians, especially those who were young and educated. Entitlement programs such as sick leave and death benefits were extended to all Micronesians serving the TTPI government in January of 1964. In addition, a version of Social Security was passed by the Congress of Micronesia in October of 1967 and first implemented in 1968. However, this program was also dependent on American dollars as noted by future FSM Vice President Yosiwo George, “twenty-five percent of the administrative costs of the program for this current year is funded by the Congress of Micronesia and the remaining seventy-five percent is funded by the Trust Territory Retirement Fund. Beginning next fiscal year, the Trust Territory Social Security Board will fund the entire operational cost from the retirement fund as provided by the law.” The entitlements continued to add to the deficit of the TTPI while giving more comfort and stability to the Micronesian people.

Another driving factor in increased government employment was the cultural shift the new generations underwent. The growing difference in education and culture created a great deal of alienation between the students and their parents as students lost respect for the “old ways” and did not want to return to their family homes and live as their ancestors did. Kimlock Lamurlik, class of 1962 salutatorian for the Trust Territory School of Dental Nursing, gave a speech at this class’s graduation that praised modernity and the scientific progress it provided and thanked the Trust Territory administration for their help in providing such amazing opportunities. Another graduate, Elmo Matthew, revealed her enormous excitement for her career and future.

I must confess, and my classmates will no doubt agree, that our understanding of the purposes of the school was unclouded by the positive benefits that we as individuals would receive from it. The program offered a career where we would learn new things, satisfying our curiosity about certain areas of human knowledge. We would become self-supporting members of our communities. We would help to reduce suffering and improve the health of our neighbors. May I also confess we were swayed by the adventure that beckoned U.S., the social aspects that amuse all young girls.27

Due to the benefits of working for the government and the lack of opportunity and prestige elsewhere, the TTPI always employed an enormous percentage of the workforce. According to data from the Social Security Act, 13,642 Micronesians were employed in July of 1972. Of this number, 7,910 were employed by the government, or about 58% of the workforce.28

Entitlement programs were another major method by which the TTPI offered the Micronesians stability. One of the more controversial types of entitlement programs implemented in the TTPI were the “feeding” programs, of which the Needy Family Assistance Program was the primary program. These initiatives began small, by just providing food to islanders suffering from the effects of drought, population migration, tropical storms, and other disasters. However, it gradually expanded throughout the 1970s to include the populations of entire districts. For example, in 1978 the entire Truk District became eligible for United States Department of Agriculture commodities. However, some districts shot down attempts to bring this program into their area because they saw reliance on foreign food as contrary to their goal of self-sufficiency. Even so, the Congress of Micronesia took no action against the feeding programs because of how popular they were among the constituency. The total population of the TTPI in January of 1979 was about 120,000 and 65,400 of them were being fed under the Department of Agriculture’s Needy Family Feeding Program.29

As part of the United States’ plan to integrate Micronesia within its sphere and to improve the legitimacy of their political relationship, it sought to include Micronesians in as many steps of the process as possible. The Fifth South Pacific Conference was held in July of 1962 and was attended by two delegates of the Trust Territory, Thomas Remengesau and William Allen. “The general consensus of the Conference was the extension of an increase in economic and social advancement programs.” The conference also affirmed the plan to develop Micronesia with a heavy emphasis on education early on.\(^\text{30}\) Another international organization, the South Pacific Commission, saw the presence of more islanders in its 1962 annual meeting than ever before. The U.S. was particularly proud of Richard Taitano who served as a temporary Director of Territories of the Department of the Interior during this meeting.\(^\text{31}\) He and others from the TTPI were examples of the United States’ education policies’ success in progressing the Micronesian people.

However, some prominent Micronesians publicly voiced their concerns over the large American influence in their country. Hirosi Ismael, a Senator of the Congress of Micronesia, outlined his worries about who controlled the financial strings in the TTPI during an interview with the Micronesian Reporter in 1969. He mentioned that even the Senators of the Congress of Micronesia were being paid from the American purse. In addition, he was distressed that his people were far from ready to compete with the rest of the world. He told the reporter, “there won’t be a Micronesia as you see it today. You’ll get a piece of the United States with its international racial complex and dump it into Micronesia to replace this present Micronesia.”\(^\text{32}\) This sentiment continued into the negotiations between the U.S. and Micronesia representatives over the end of the TTPI. The delegation


explained that preserving the Micronesian identity people was one of their primary goals.

“Under our present quasi-colonial status, the identity, individuality, and dignity of the people of Micronesia are being suppressed. American power and influence are currently so dominant in Micronesia that Micronesia and its people are being “Americanized” at an ever increasing rate. This is having a tremendous effect upon all aspects of Micronesian life and society, and it will be impossible to control this influence until the people of Micronesia can establish their own government.”

When negotiations on the post-trusteeship status of Micronesia began in 1970, the U.S. immediately offered commonwealth status to the Congress of Micronesia and published the terms of the deal in the Micronesia Reporter. In its offer of annexation, the United States’ terms would have given Micronesians even more access to American government programs, economic investment, and education. However, the Micronesian Congress promptly refused this deal and denied every other attempt by the U.S. to annex them. The Micronesian delegates stressed the vitality of Micronesia to be fully self-governing as a means of preserving their people’s unique identity, their people’s legal right to the land, and that they simply did not want to become Americans.

Unrelenting, the U.S. delegation reaffirmed one of its earliest objectives in Micronesia when it released an official statement stating, “from the United States viewpoint, the security situation in the Pacific region, which was recognized in 1947 in the strategic trust arrangement, remains essentially unchanged.” The U.S. delegation made it clear that anything less than its terms under the proposed CFA would be unacceptable. Franklin Haydn Williams, the chief American negotiator, warned the Micronesians that the U.S. would never give up the trusteeship, “on terms which would in any way threaten stability in the area and which would in the opinion of the United States endanger international

34 Ibid.
35 “A Bridge of Lasting Partnership.”
peace and security.” Although the Micronesia Reporter did not publish an instance where the American negotiators threatened to pull their subsidies to coerce the Micronesians, the language Williams used sheds light on just how serious the U.S. was about getting a favorable deal. Therefore, the U.S. likely used Micronesia's dependence on its subsidies as a vital bargaining chip to establish a tight, permanent relationship between them, just like was planned in the Solomon Report.

Faced with a strong possibility of massive political and social upheaval at home if they lost the jobs and social programs funded by the U.S. and an American delegation that would not bend on ensuring their country’s strategic interests, the Congress of Micronesia eventually agreed to the terms of the CFA and presented it to the Micronesian people. A popular plebiscite held in July of 1983 resulted in the CFA being approved by the citizens of the new Federated States of Micronesia. The Trusteeship gave the U.S. complete direct authority over the civil administration of Micronesia, while the CFA ensured the U.S. maintained a great deal of influence while it worked behind the scenes. It established connections between U.S. institutions and their Micronesia counterparts, guaranteed the United States’ strategic monopoly over Micronesia’s territory, allowed the U.S. to deny strategic access to any other nation, and gave the U.S. the power to monitor the economic development it was funding in Micronesia.

The Trusteeship and the following Compact of Free Association (CFA) were both versions of colonialism under different names. However, according to the multiple American commissioners of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

36 “A Bridge of Lasting Partnership.”


and many members of Congress, the goals for the strategic trust territory were benevolent and righteous. They publicly called for economic, political, and social development and the independence for the people put under their charge by the United Nations through the strategic trusteeship.\textsuperscript{39} However, although a good deal of development was achieved, independence never was, and the unique character of Micronesia was diminished. In addition, even the good intentions of the Americans could be questioned since they time and again pushed for their security concerns first whenever debating the political future of Micronesia. Not to mention, multiple declassified, leaked, and publicly available U.S. government documents illustrated the priority for the U.S. was always its security.

Even as the U.S. claimed to be the champion of democracy and self-determination, the sovereignty of the Micronesian people was always on the negotiating table. In the end, the U.S. got the strategic access it wanted from the CFA and the FSM continues to consume U.S. subsidies and programs to this day without any serious backlash on the former. A wise man once said to judge someone by the results of their actions and not by the claims of their intentions. However, although the Americans did work hard and spend hundreds of millions of dollars to tempt the Micronesians, the Micronesian people still had the agency to either sacrifice what the U.S. provided or accept the Faustian bargain the U.S. presented. In the end, enough Micronesian citizens and politicians desired the U.S.-sponsored development and welfare enough and feared the alternative to accept it at the expense of their independence. Today, the FSM continues to have a CFA with the U.S. and is subsidized 110 million dollars a year in exchange for concessions to the United States’ security interests.\textsuperscript{40} The game of great power politics continues, and Micronesia remains one of the many pawns.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{39} Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, \textit{The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: An Analysis of Critical Issues}, 98\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 1st sess., Jan. 1983.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{40} U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Relations with the Federated States of Micronesia.”}
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Author Biography

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Gracie Edler is a fourth-year history major. She wrote her paper on the slave ship, Bom Caminho for Dr. Matthew Hopper’s Transatlantic Slave Trade class. Gracie is also the 2021-2022 president of the History honors society, Phi Alpha Theta.
Captured at the Cape: The Enslaved Africans Aboard Bom Caminho

Gracie Edler

The year was 1824. It was early spring and His Royal Majesty’s ship the *Bann* was victoriously taking three captured slave ships back to Sierra Leone for trial when, along the mouth of the Lagos River, her crew spotted another vessel along the Cape Coast. It was a Portuguese brig by the name of *Bom Caminho*, her size and location arousing suspicion as to what she could be transporting. In ships just as these, Portuguese slave-traders were infamous for taking hundreds of captives from the Bight of Benin to Brazil, where the slave trade legally flourished under the newly independent Brazilian empire. The *Bann* boarded the huge vessel, and upon investigation discovered over 350 Africans aboard, the majority being men and boys, all bound for enslavement in Bahia. The British ship seized the slave ship as its fourth victory along the West African Coast, authorized to take the ship by the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1815, which stated that a Portuguese ship

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1 D.M. Hamilton, *Sierra Leone: Commissioners Gregory and Hamilton, J. Rendell, etc.* (1824), The National Archives of the UK (TNA), FO 84/28, 170.

2 “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” Slave Voyages.
found along the Northern African Coast to have enslaved Africans aboard would be considered an illegal slave ship.\textsuperscript{3} With the hundreds of packed Africans and hundreds of prepared water casks, there was no doubt that this brig was engaging in the illegal trading of enslaved Africans, and due to the flag it was sailing under, the \textit{Bom Caminho} was sentenced in Sierra Leone’s British and Portuguese Court of Mixed Commission. The story of the ship may have ended there, but the lives of the captives did not.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Map of Bom Caminho Journey, Slave Voyages.}
\end{figure}

This paper will investigate the journey of the Portuguese \textit{Bom Caminho} and the events unfolding before, during, and after her capture. The \textit{Bom Caminho} was one of hundreds of slave ships captured during the struggle for abolition, however, its unique story highlights the 19\textsuperscript{th} century interactions between the Portuguese—the biggest proponent for enslaved labor—and the British—the biggest proponent for abolition. With the help of priceless sources, this voyage and its outcome bring truth and awareness to the slave trade and its elements through a specific ship’s unforgettable journey. Each ship in the slave trade had its own story and outcome, and the unfathomable number of ships and enslaved

\textsuperscript{3} Hertslet, \textit{Hertslet’s Commercial Treaties: Tratado De Commercio e Navegação}, (1840), 83-105.
Africans can muddle the details of the slave trade, making the “slave trade” an incomprehensible entity when, in reality, it included hundreds of years, ships, and enslaved people. In this essay, I will use the details of the *Bom Caminho* to help bring back the humanity of the slave trade by focusing on the story of a single ship and her voyagers. I will also emphasize the treaties and relations between two major world powers divided upon a profitable yet inhumane system to situate this microstudy into the broader history of human interaction.

The irony of Britain leading the abolition movement is that she was the very country to lead the slave trade towards its peak. The Transatlantic Slave Trade was established for economic profit and no other country profited off the slave trade to the same extent that Britain did. The British Empire created a monopoly of many markets using Africans as slaves. Furthermore, as historians have researched, Britain did so by using a triangular trade system that gained off the selling of captured Africans, the upkeep of the enslaved people, and the marketable products, produced by those enslaved, bringing surplus and wealth that no country could rival in the 18th century.\(^4\) With the boom of demand from a rising population and the capacity for constant trade, there would be little reason for Britain to end such a lucrative practice. This was the case at least until other countries gained control of similar trades and as humanitarian beliefs at home arose, causing anti-slavery sentiments in Britain.

Support for abolition increased in the late 18th Century in Britain for various reasons. There was an economic influence for the end of the slave-trade: two-thirds of British-transported captives were being sold to foreign powers, such as the U.S.A. and France, who had prosperous sugar plantations that were competing with British prices.\(^5\) Along with economic rivalry, the British politic had surges in support for abolition due to the rise of humanitarianism. With their


\(^5\) Ibid, 39.
emotional and usually religious plight, the humanitarians, who gained their name for their alleged selflessness, sought the complete destruction of the “inhuman and morally indefensible” practice. Groups such as the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade arose, and Quakers and Anglicans alike were those “who led the movement in Parliament” for political and economic changes. These groups focused on emotion to strike compassion into their fellow Englishmen, unveiling the brutality and immorality of the slave trade with imagery. Thus, Britain found its own motivation for ending the slave trade through both social and economic pressures, but the real challenge would be achieving this goal by pursuing global abolition.

The abolition of the slave trade started slowly in the early 1800’s and only progressed with English perseverance. Matthew Mason argues that “the British government drove the entire history of the international politics of abolition,” due to their system of treaties and naval implementation established before and (more importantly) after the Napoleonic Wars. Britain, during the war period, was able to hinder the slave trade by seizing “enemy ships” and taking prizes of war, such as the Africans aboard. However, this only lasted until the end of the war, leaving Britain with no legitimacy to seize other ships as the other countries were still legally practicing. With such profitable margins and resources, other countries were unwilling to part with the slave trade. Especially when a powerful rival country such as Great Britain was furiously fighting for abolition, likely with ulterior motives. Thus began the endless creation of treaties between Britain and its fellow powers, especially Portugal, in efforts to legally pursue abolition.

Portugal was reluctant to relinquish its labor force via enslaved Africans

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7 Miers, 4.
9 Miers, 9.
because it had sugar colonies in Brazil that demanded harsh labor yet lucrative profits that Portugal was in dire need of after the wars in the early 1800s. However, in 1810, Portugal and Britain signed a treaty to gradually establish abolition in Portuguese territories, such as Brazil, given that Britain would aid Portugal after the Napoleonic Wars. This treaty did little to enforce abolition, only asking unmotivated Portuguese government officials to stop their own slave ships. This changed with the Treaty of 1815 and its amendments in July of 1817, in which British ships were allowed to seize Portuguese slave ships that had African captives aboard, so long as the slave ship was north of the equator.

The Treaty of 1815 stated that slave trade South of the Equator in Portuguese territories was legal, and ships in travelling in this space could not be seized. However, if a slave ship travelled north of the equator, by chase or chance, and was found with captive Africans aboard, the vessel could be seized, examined for papers and evidence, and all cargo and materials would be lawful prize if condemned. Thus, Royal Navy could seize suspected slave vessels off the Bight of Benin: exactly where the British Bann was patrolling the day it encountered the Portuguese Bom Caminho.

The Bann and its fellow British vessels were sent to patrol the Atlantic Sea as Britain’s treaties promised eventual abolition, but it was up to the British Royal Navy to ensure that ships trafficking enslaved Africans were captured and condemned. The job was easier said than done. The Royal crafts, designed for naval warfare of the Napoleonic era, were heavy, small, and slow. They had a difficult time catching up to the high-tech clippers working for the slave trade and lacked sufficient space to hold the hundreds of captives aboard seized ships. Treaties with countries were constantly changing, limiting the Navy’s ability to capture other crafts, at times, leading members of the Navy release ships with chained Africans aboard. If a slave ship was captured, court systems before 1850

10 Mason, 813.
11 Hertslet, 91-99.
weren’t prepared or funded enough to handle complex issues brought up by the Royal Navy, and each case had to be handled individually. Thus, the Royal Navy, at least in the first half of the 19th century, faced many challenges while enforcing abolition. However, in the case of the *Bom Caminho* and the *Bann*, the Royal Navy had just enough power to seize ships with enslaved African aboard. As a result, the *Bann* was able to trial the trafficking vessel.

Regarding the judgement of the *Bom Caminho* and its crew’s fate, the ship had a convoluted case. When captured in March, she was sent to trial in Sierra Leone, where her captain and crew were cited in April 28 of 1824 to appear in court on May 15th of that year. Captain Joaquim Luis d’Araujo, working under the shipowner Thome Alfonco de Moura of Bahia, had papers documenting journeys and reasons for travel, a passport issued by the Provisional Government of Bahia (under the Brazilian Emperor) from November 1823. This passport allowed the *Bom Caminho* to travel from Molembo (Angola) to Rio de Janeiro with 506 Africans. The *Bom Caminho* left Bahia, Brazil in December of 1823 under the intent of following through with these papers’ instructions. In fact, on the way to Southern Africa to buy enslaved Africans in January, the *Bom Caminho* was stopped and investigated by *H.M.S. Owen Glendower*, led by none other than the future captain of the *Bann*, George Woolcombe. Captain Woolcombe endorsed these papers, warning the crew to stay south of the equator on their slave-trafficking travels, as per the agreements in the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1815. Two months later, Captain Woolcombe caught the brig illegally above the equator off the coast of the Bight of Benin and brought the ship in for trial under the British and Portuguese Court of Mixed Commission at Sierra Leone. Now

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13 E. Gregory and D.M. Hamilton, *Correspondence with the British commissioners, at Sierra Leone, the Havannah, Rio de Janeiro, and Surinam, Relating to the Slave Trade, 1824-1825 (Class A)*, Parliamentary Papers, 1825, XXVII, 47.
14 Extracted from the Registry of the British & Portuguese Court of Mixed Commision at Sierra Leone, TNA, HCA 35/5, 263.
in May of 1824, under Judge Edward Gregory Coquire and Commissioner of Abolition Daniel Molloy Hamilton, the papers and circumstances of the Bom Caminho were questioned. As no claimant for the vessel appeared at court, the ship was condemned, and the captives aboard were emancipated.\(^\text{15}\) The fate of the captain and crew are unknown as they did not appear at the trial.

Both the vessel and the equipment aboard were considered ‘lawful prizes’ of the British Empire once the ship was condemned and many items were sold immediately after the trial. The hull of the Bom Caminho was sold to a man recorded as Graves for £190—about $31,523.32 in current U.S. currency. The miscellaneous goods on the ship, like chests, planks, and palm oil casks, traded out for a gross total of £269: today, $42,889.74.\(^\text{16}\) Most of the income came from the ship itself and the hundreds of gallons of palm oil aboard, both useful and profitable for overseas trade. These pounds went toward costs for the trial, capture, and other expenses at about £220—$35,083.19 today.\(^\text{17}\) As per the standard, the captain and his crew of the Bann received payment per number of captive Africans aboard—£10 per slave before expenses—a small incentive for their work on the seas.\(^\text{18}\) The costs and methods of enforcing abolition were a necessary step towards ending the slave trade. Britain came one step closer to global abolition, a gradual process that progressed ship by ship, after condemning the Bom Caminho.

As for the story of the people unwillingly aboard the Bom Caminho, the enslaved Africans were purchased at Badagry, one of the hotspots in Africa for both captives and palm oil. As a commercial center with a transport-friendly lagoonside, Badagry was home to a mix of people, both European and African.

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\(^{15}\) E. Gregory and D.M. Hamilton, Names of Judge and Commissioner sourced from Extracted from the Registry, 263-264.

\(^{16}\) Portuguese Brig “Bom Caminho”: Account Sales of the Hull, Tackle, Apparel, Furniture, Cargo, TNA, HCA 35/5, 276-277.

\(^{17}\) Disbursement, TNA, HCA 35/5, 278.

\(^{18}\) Grindal, 205.
Many European countries, such as France, Britain, and Portugal, established factories, or trading ports, in this rich area. Like many trading capitals, Badagry was home to a variety of African peoples, as travel, trade, and the slave trade would bring a plethora of different cultures. Badagry was desirable due to its geography; the lagoon and waterways allowed for the capture of other African tribe members for enslavement from the inner reaches of the continent. With cheaper rates than other African towns due to the number of available captives, wealth, and business in Badagry exploded even in the face of Eastern and Western competitors. Because of this, tensions for political and economic control of this region were high and Badagry faced constant pressure from invading neighbors and internal governmental issues. Not to mention, European powers were very happy to encourage the wars to increase competition and decrease market prices. These issues persisted throughout the slave-trade’s era, as demand for laborers kept the competition and business profitable for slave traders.

Although the Africans on the *Bom Caminho* were purchased at Badagry, this wasn’t the homeland of all of them, which is the case of many other captives aboard ships in the slave trade. As mentioned before, commercial centers brought a range of people and the practice of selling enslaved neighboring tribes meant that Africans aboard ships often weren’t from the area of purchase or even from the same tribe. In 1824, when the *Bom Caminho* was picking up Africans for enslavement, the Badagry region was under control of the Oyo people. The neighboring Dahomey and Ijebu were two rivals that had been competing for the trade port control around Benin for years. Different tribes had their own unique markings, from scarification to tattoos. The various markings on each individual aboard the *Bom Caminho*, as recorded in the registry following their emancipation, showed their various origins. The Yorubaland, consisting of the

Oyo, Ijebu, and other tribes in modern-day Benin and Western Nigeria, had the long-standing practice of marking for beauty, identity, and religion. This included lines across the face horizontally and perpendicularly, with families and identities distinguished by these variations. \(^{21}\) Others had markings that could hint to a previous slave-owner and recapture, as many aboard the ship were scarred with a B across the left breast like the man named Hawodoo or with a BC on the right breast like tens of men such as Logona, Mojoby, Amira, Aboo. \(^{22}\) The practice of “branding” bought captives was common for merchants in the slave-trade era and showed the rates of recapture in Africa. Each of the 327 that landed in Freetown, Sierra Leone for liberation was documented with their identifying marks, signifying the diversity of backgrounds aboard the single slave ship.

Originally, the fate of those aboard the *Bom Caminho* would have been a life in Bahia, Brazil, home of the port city of the second-largest number of African captives in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. \(^{23}\) Sugar, cotton, and tobacco were the top crops sold for profits in Bahia and the area was exploited to only produce these cash crops, much to the distress of its civilians and the enslaved Africans forced to work these extreme harvests. \(^{24}\)

The majority of enslaved Africans were sent to work on plantations, but the size of the property affected working conditions. There would usually be an overseer, typically another enslaved individual, managing the enslaved on larger plantations, henceforth enslaved Africans had no contact to the slave-owner (see fig. 2). Large farms would work with timber and sugar, products that demanded short-term, brutal work with large amounts of casualties. An enslaved African in Brazil would be bought for 20-to-30-pound sterling (£2,252.33 or $3189.38

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22 *Bom Caminho Register* 2942, FO 315-331, 143-146.
24 Ibid, 346-347.
today) and work for an intense 7 years (replacement was needed for 2.5-10% of enslaved workers every year). A single worker’s maximum output averaged 45 arroba (1,457 pounds) of sugar, an amount two to three times the worth of his or her purchase.\(^{25}\) In some cases, the enslaved were given one day a week in the rainy season to plant their own crops for self-subsistence, a system that minimized the owner’s extra expenditure. This was known as the “Brazilian system” to the rest of the west.\(^{26}\) This brutal farm work was common for those taken across the Middle Passage, and those aboard the *Bom Caminho* were just miles away from this fatal future. However, with the Bann’s chance capture of the *Bom Caminho*, the captives aboard the brig would have a different fate in Sierra Leone.

Freetown, Sierra Leone, was meant to be a place of freedom for emancipated people of color. By 1829, over 81,745 captives, more than anywhere else in the British empire, were released here to produce cash crops and goods as freed people.\(^{27}\) In fact, until 1833, it was Britain’s largest post-emancipation

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26 Ibid, 271.
However, what followed many emancipated Africans were years of cheap labor and free apprenticeships in the name of education, profit, and capitalism. With the gradual end of the slave trade also came the expected replacement of free labor with a cheap, profitable alternative. The solution was a workforce that consisted of “freed” Africans, who were considered the “most numerous and least expensive workers”\(^{29}\) in the British colonies. The mentality that Africans had to “earn back” their freedom through apprenticeship justified a period of forced labor with low wages. This apprenticeship was further justified with racial ideology as Africans were seen as inferior and childish with need for Western European education. This racial superiority was supported by abolitionists, who agreed that freed Africans needed to learn a trade to be successful in the European-dominated world. As such, this arrangement pleased both the economists and the humanitarians, replacing slavery rather than ending it.

The mentality created a reality for the 327 captives of the *Bom Caminho* who were released at Freetown—seven of the original 334 died on the trip to Sierra Leone. Each African was registered with details regarding their “deposit” locations, their physical state and ethnic markings, and their biological information. Instructed by D.M. Hamilton operating under his colonial and court orders, the emancipated individuals were to be sold into apprenticeships and as servants. Of the 196 men, a few went to the hospital for unknown reasons, most likely of disease or malnourishment due to the conditions aboard slave ships. Many others went to British subjects to serve as apprentices, while the 50 women were split between the hospital and various employers. The 81 children met the same fate as the adults.\(^{30}\) It is presumed that those bought by private buyers worked as apprentices to “acclimate to society.”

Slavery wasn’t abolished but rather replaced with this system, and those

\(^{28}\) Scanlan, 19.
\(^{29}\) Ibid, 21.
\(^{30}\) *Bom Caminho Register*, SLR 173008-17634.
aboard the *Bom Caminho* were among the thousands subjected to the irony of liberation. The journeys of people who suffered under a system of slave-trafficking, the ships employed, and peoples’ fates are often lost in the long history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. However, a detailed investigation of *Bom Caminho* begins to illuminate the true experience of abolition: the stories encoded in statistics.
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Emma Lukin is a fourth-year History major. She wrote her article on the history of Venereal Disease during World War II as her senior project. Some of her research interests include 20th century subcultures and the history of women and members of the LGBTQ+ community throughout early modern periods in the United States and Europe. Emma is now entering her final year of her Masters in Social Work at the University of Washington and plans to pursue a career as a therapist for children and families.
“She May Look Clean, But—”: Venereal Disease in the U.S. Military During World War II

Emma Lukin

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States deployed hundreds of thousands of men to Europe and the Pacific to fight in the second World War. In both theaters, American soldiers experienced trauma, pain, and the death of their friends and brothers that took severe tolls on morale as months and years of war dragged on. Solace for many of these soldiers, was sex—fantasies of women back home as well as those in the countries in which they were stationed. According to Mary Louise Roberts, author of *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France*, this “veritable tsunami of male lust” resulted in infamous promiscuity in all theaters of the war.¹ In France, for example, GIs were known to engage in public sex at all hours, incapable of being abated by French officials.² Such behavior led to unprecedented rates of venereal disease, both abroad and at home.

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² Ibid, 9.
Venereal disease in the military carried a significant cost to the taxpayers in order to pay for medical treatments for soldiers. Worse yet, to the War Department, venereal disease had consequences for troop readiness. The numbers of cases were astronomical; according to the U.S. Army Medical Department, there were 242,625 cases of gonorrhea alone that led to days lost in the army in 1944.\(^3\) These huge rates of non-effectiveness are necessary facts in order to understand why the War Department took such a large stake in sex education during World War II.

The problem of venereal disease was not a new revelation to the United States government. It emerged as a serious public health crisis during the Civil War when doctors treated over 73,000 cases of syphilis and over 109,000 cases of gonorrhea among white Union soldiers.\(^4\) The military viewed sex workers as the perpetrators of the crisis and blamed them for poor military readiness. As for World War I, during the twelve weeks leading to December 7\(^{th}\), 1917, there were 21,742 new cases of venereal disease.\(^5\) Of this, Dr. Franklin Martin, Executive Secretary on the Committee for Civilian Cooperation in Combating Venereal Disease, wrote,

> The incapacitation of these men involves not only the loss of time; in addition, it has cost the Government to keep them during the period of hospital confinement (which varies from one to eight weeks) more money than is required to maintain the entire command at Camp Dix (the cantonment in New Jersey with 20,859 men) plus an additional sum for medical treatment.\(^6\)

Shortly after Congress declared a state of war in 1941, a group of respected leaders in social hygiene gathered to propose a policy for dealing with

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3 “A Summary of Venereal Disease Statistics During World War II,” U.S. Army Medical Department Office of Medical History.
4 “The Civil War: Sex and Soldiers,” Ditrick Medical History Center, Case Western Reserve University.
5 “Venereal Disease,” Washington on the Western Front, University Libraries at the University of Washington.
6 Ibid.
prostitution and venereal disease in wartime. The Council of National Defense adopted those policies within weeks of the declaration of war, primarily stating that “Venereal infections are among the most serious and disabling disease to which the soldier and sailor are liable; Whereas they constitute a grave menace to the civil population.”

They continued by recommending that the War and Navy Departments officially promote sexual abstinence, establish a perimeter barring sex workers from military base camps, provide suitable recreation for soldiers, and, importantly, limit alcohol use among the troops. The Council also recommended a special division within the military medical services.

One of the key messages disseminated in the military’s sex education campaign was the dangers of “unclean” women abroad and at home. The Taft Committee, who met in 1942 to discuss the closure of red-light districts and crackdown on sex workers, described women with venereal disease as “more dangerous to the community than a mad dog.” Meanwhile pamphlets established phrases about women, like, “Don’t forget that any girl who lets you use her, or who “consents” easily, is not safe.” Campaigns of posters and signage were widely distributed, portraying both ‘easy’ women—who should be avoided at all cost, and the pure wife and mother back home—who should be protected from sexually transmitted disease by faithful husbands. Worse yet, “semi-professional prostitutes”—in other words any woman deemed to be promiscuous by law enforcement—could be detained and forcefully quarantined under suspicion of having venereal disease. The proliferation in male soldiers across the globe

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8 Ibid.
11 “‘Red Light’ Areas Declared Ending.”
during World War II led to a drastic increase in casual sexual encounters and subsequently an extreme surge in venereal disease; the consequences of VD upon military success forced the U.S. government to conduct a vastly ambitious sexual education campaign in response to the public health crisis. This campaign was largely defined by the policing of women’s sexuality—a perceived overabundance that was seen as the cause of the venereal disease crisis.

The shift in American’s view on sex began in the 1920s, when the economy was thriving, and new forms of media emerged, exposing American middle-class youth to themes of sex and lust that they had not previously seen. This era of sexual expression and liberation lessened over the decades and ended after World War II as traditional gender roles were reaffirmed and young families flocked to the suburbs. Therefore, the scope of this project will be from the year 1920 to 1950.

Further still, this project will narrow the scope to domestic side of the war effort—at home and on military bases, with some insight into the European front. The Pacific theater was home to a significant portion of venereal disease transmission and promiscuity on behalf of male soldiers, but the unique nature of sex work in the Pacific theater is too complex to be included in the scope of this specific project. The focus instead lies in the propaganda media and print campaigns of the U.S. government, sex education measures, and the heightened policing of women in response to the crisis.

**Literature Review**

Most previous interpretations of venereal disease during World War II focus on the sex education campaign in terms of media, namely the unprecedented dissemination of public health literature, distinctive venereal disease propaganda posters, and novel scare films. While those interpretations are extremely vital in any discussion of World War II era sexuality and sexually transmitted disease, I

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will take a different approach as the main theme of my project. The government’s involvement during the World Wars changed the nature of sex education by creating a conversation about sex in the rapidly changing world of the 20th century. The progression of the public conversation about sex was hindered by deeply engrained misogyny, which led to misinformation about women’s role in sex, society, and the war. This negative perception of women’s sexuality is the pattern that permeated the mid-20th century as a result of the venereal disease crisis, and that perception has affected contemporary sexual education.

One recent scholar that informed this critical lens of the portrayal of women in World War II sex education propaganda is Amanda Littauer, author of *Bad Girls: Young Women, Sex, and Rebellion before the Sixties*. Dr. Littauer is a professor of gender, sexuality, and women’s studies, focusing on the 20th century United States. Her chapter on victory girls emphasizes promiscuity as a gender transgression and the rejection of earlier assumptions that promiscuous women in wartime were victims. She promotes that victory girls and “pickups” were an extension of the cultural patriotism and relatively new heterosocial interaction between young men and women. Littauer’s piece is a perfect example of contemporary trends in the study of sexuality (and therefore venereal disease) in the World War II era, as she adopts a feminist lens in her work that contrasts male dominated historical narratives of the time.

This topic is especially significant today because it speaks to the moral culture of the early-mid 20th century and the evolving role of the government in the private lives, and bedrooms, of American citizens. That role is still in question today, as major players in the U.S. government continue to make threats against Roe v. Wade, the distribution of contraception, and comprehensive sex education in public schools. It is important to understand when and why the government first made the push towards sex education, and to connect the dots between the

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20th century morality-based approach to sex and the prevalence of ‘abstinence-only’ education in today’s schools.

**A Culture of Prudery: American Victorianism Through the 1930s**

In “American Victorianism as a Culture,” author Daniel Walker Hower defends the term as a new way of understanding the cultural milieu of the period as opposed to the conventional pre-civil war, post-civil-war distinction. Victorianism in both the U.S. and Britain can be defined as the culture formed from economic and social modernization, a revival of evangelical Protestantism (especially in the United States), and fundamental bourgeois origins. This manifestation of Victorianism was so pervasive in the United States due to the size of the middle class and lack of aristocratic traditions that barred bourgeois Victorian ideals in many parts of England.

Victorianism was a new way of life for a new economic group—the urban middle class. A conservative movement, Victorianism praised strict adherence to Protestant values of hard work, forbearance, obedience, efficiency, and asceticism. Those values, not coincidentally, perfectly aligned with the new capitalist system. Under strict industrial capitalism, this urban middle class was incentivized to work hard and be obedient in service to capital and to God. This lifestyle defined by work and religion did not leave room for pleasure, and the lives of Victorian middle-class people were not flowing with milk and honey.

The Victorian domestic ideal was defined by the mother as the regulator of the needs of her husband, while upholding his position of dignity and supremacy in the household. This new ideal gave women a new position of honor in Western society and uplifted her—but only in reference to how far she could uplift her husband. If woman is defined as wife, relative to man, and if woman is defined as mother, relative to her family—then the idea of a woman as a sexual being was

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16 Ibid.
inconceivable. Sex was accepted as a marital procreative necessity but was not a matter to be discussed. Contrary to the growing double standard that would develop through the 20th century and into the 21st, male sexuality was far from embraced. Sexual austerity was required of both sexes under the stifling moral urgency of the Victorian period.

Given the culture of sexual prudery, it was dismaying when World War I revealed the debauched activities of American soldiers abroad. Traditional military culture had long encouraged “letting off some steam” in soldiers’ free time, but the culture at home had taken a drastic swing towards prudery, leading the prevalence of the media and modern venereal disease treatment to draw public attention to soldiers’ behavior overseas.\(^\text{17}\) While the German and French armies provided their soldiers with access to brothels and condoms, the U.S. army tried to stifle any eroticism in the troops. Commanding officers were charged with the impossible task of enforcing chastity, and, even under the threat of suspended pay or the stockade—soldiers kept having unprotected sex, often resulting in gonorrhea or syphilis.

**A Changing World**

An explicit example of the 1920s as an era of sexuality and indulgence is the phenomenon of petting parties. These parties were gatherings in which adolescent men and women would get together to explore kissing and touching in a sheltered environment.\(^\text{18}\) Paula S. Fass, professor of history at UC Berkeley, and the author of *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920’s*, says: “Petting parties varied quite a lot. But certainly, there were parties where young people did quite a lot of erotic exploration—kissing and fondling. These parties always stopped before intercourse. In that sense they had imposed limitations created by the group presence. They were not orgies and they were

\(^\text{17}\) Frederick Holmes, “Medicine in the First World War,” The University of Kansas Medical Center, July 26, 2018.

not promiscuous—one set of partners only.”19 This sexual experimentation was commonplace in these years, though authorities in schools and temperance groups desperately attempted to stifle the heat. The image below would have been shocking at the time to the older generations, who were both unfamiliar and horrified at the concept of men and women mingling in social settings.

Young women’s participation in petting parties was heretical to a prude society, in which elders reacted in horror to any pre-marital sexual exploration. However, as more women attended college, they were exposed to coeducational environments that weren’t previously available to them. In 1900, 2.8% of the American female population went to college, and that number more than doubled to 7.6% in

19 Weeks.
Seventy percent of all collegiate women were enrolled in coeducational colleges by 1890. However, black women and other women of color were still largely excluded from higher education. Colleges for African American women like Tillotson College and Bennett College opened in 1926. Collegiate women were the most likely to encounter unknown men in their daily lives, which was perceived as a danger to their safety and chastity. Sexual situations were inevitable, and petting parties were a peer-monitored, socially tolerated (but not accepted) outlet for tension and exploration. Youth in the 1920s were self-consciously defiant and salacious as they expressed their independence from their families and Victorian social standards.

The idea of marriage in popular American society was also changing rapidly, most drastically for the upper classes and intellectual elites. In the early 1930s, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre pushed polyamory into the spotlight of polite society, titillating the intelligentsia in Europe and, to a lesser degree, the United States. However, before that polyamorous power couple, sex psychologists and so-called sex radicals wrote about the shifting tides of marriage and sex. In his magnum opus, *America’s Sex and Marriage Problems*, Dr. William J. Robinson, an American doctor, sexologist, and early advocate of birth control, wrote.

The real radical solution of the marital problem will not be reached until

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20 Maggie Lowe, “Early College Women: Determined to be Educated,” Women of Courage, St. Lawrence County NY Branch of the American Association of University Women.
21 Veronica G., Thomas, and Janine A. Jackson, “The Education of African American Girls and Women: Past to Present.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 76, no. 3 (2007): 357-372; Tillotson opened in 1881 as a senior college for African Americans but became an African American’s college in 1926. It returned to a coeducational institute in 1934. Bennet College was established in 1873 as a coeducational historically black school for former slaves but was established as a college for primarily African American women. It remains a historically black college for women today.
22 Weeks.
23 Ibid.
we have radically changed our entire outlook on sex, until our ideas of sex morality have become healthier and saner, until we agree to admit that there is such a thing as sex, and until we have learned something of its physiology and psychology.\textsuperscript{25}

Dr. Robinson’s idea to solve the marital problem centers around the contemporarily popular concept of companionate marriage. Companionate marriage is a proposed form of childless marriage popularized by Judge Ben Lindsey, defined as “legal marriage, with legalized Birth Control, and with the right to divorce by mutual consent for childless couples, usually without payment of alimony.”\textsuperscript{26} In this relationship, both men and women work and live together in married unions, provided with the social freedom to form a lasting bond. Though not a “free love” advocate in the slightest, Judge Ben Lindsey supported sex as pleasurable, not limited to procreation, saying:

I suggest that the proper view for society to take of extra-marital sex is to recognize that some persons have an inclination toward varied sex experiences, and that some haven’t; and that it is no function of society to discriminate against those who have such inclinations provided they duly respect and consider the genuine rights of other people. Their conduct is as much a personal matter, to be personally determined, as the choice of one’s politics or religion.\textsuperscript{27}

Going in a different direction, Dr. Robinson also seems to encourage polyamory in his book, though more so for men than women. Interestingly, Robinson doesn’t oppose non-monogamy for women but says that women are less inclined to seek extramarital relationships due to inherent sexual differences in men and women.\textsuperscript{28} Polyamory was certainly not an idea entertained by the wider public, though there was a common expectation that men struggled with fidelity more

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\textsuperscript{25} William J. Robinson, \textit{America's Sex and marriage Problems; Based on Thirty Years Practice and Study, by William J. Robinson} (New York: Eugenics, 1928) 262.
\textsuperscript{26} Ben Lindsay and Wainright Evans, “Preface” in \textit{Companionate Marriage} (New York: Brentano’s LTD, 1927).
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, 108.
\textsuperscript{28} Robinson, 180.
\end{flushleft}
than women.

Dr Robinson repeatedly refers to the role of venereal disease in marital tragedies—husbands who, during the war “in la belle France he caught from a pretty Parisienne an ugly disease which would keep him disabled for many weeks,” hereditary insanity stemming from a syphilitic husband, embittered women stricken with gonorrhea, among others. However, despite the tragedy that Robinson waxes on about, he opposes those who claimed venereal disease to be divine punishment for sexual promiscuity and maintains that promiscuity and non-monogamy have nothing to do with the existence of venereal disease. He summarizes:

If a man had relations with one hundred women or a woman had relations with one hundred men and if they were all free from disease, no infection would take place. The man and the woman would remain free from disease in spite of their promiscuity. In other words, gonorrhea or syphilis can only result from a pre-existing gonorrhea or syphilis.30

The creation of Esquire magazine in the 1930s as a medium marketed towards middle-class men marked a turning point in the cultural ideal of marriage. Esquire railed against prim and proper Victorian ideals of love, its editorial policy specifically stating “this is a men’s magazine, it isn’t edited for the junior miss. It isn’t dedicated to the dissemination of sweetness and light.”31 Publications like Esquire extended familial love to romantic love—which now essentially encompassed sexual desire and eroticism. Esquire was also an explicitly misogynist magazine, specifically taking issue with the moral pedestal that the authors felt Victorian society had placed women upon. Esquire portrayed the modern woman as a gold digger, uncreative, uncontrollably emotional, a frivolous leech.

Perhaps most interestingly, Esquire portrayed women as sex-obsessed

29 Robinson, 150.
30 Ibid, 262.
deviants. The authors said that women thought about sex more than men did, women were likely to be unfaithful in marriage, and women enjoyed pornography more than men—often resulting in the need for psychiatric treatment. Women were liars and not to be trusted. “Women with their ill-timed joys and superficial sadness, never kept the promises given by their eyes. Even the rapture they yielded was transitory; after a while, it had a taste of corruption and death.”

Publications like *Esquire* defenestrated women from their virtuous pedestal in the eyes of many modern men in the early 20th century. If women could be sexual, if women could be deviant—then any previously conceived notion of them as a gentle force for good for men and families was a lie.

This definitively marked the end of the Victorian era of sexuality. Ideals of marital and familial love were replaced with concepts of romantic love as women began to emerge from the private sphere and develop autonomy. Cultural perceptions of women became more complex. The static ideal of a timid domestic Victorian wife eroded as men encountered more and more women outside of the home—petting parties, colleges, the workplace, and the entertainment industry. This erosion led to a wave of misogyny, as men felt betrayed by the broken promise of a demure Victorian sweetheart. Therefore, the male-dominated culture developed a dichotomy in order to understand the modern woman: there was indeed the rare sweetheart at home but there was a greater multitude of dangerous deviant women. One certainly may have sex with the latter in a moment of weakness, especially in the haze of wartime, but that was a moral failing to be avoided. This dichotomy was repeatedly echoed through the military’s sex education campaign that blamed the sexual indiscretions of American soldiers on women perceived to be deviant.

**Military Sex Education**

Though preaching abstinence among the troops, the U.S. War Department and other military officials were aware that soldiers would continue

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32 Stearns and Knapp.
to have sex with women whenever they could. Therefore, their coinciding strategy would be two-fold: disseminate educational pamphlets, posters, and films while distributing condoms and VD self-treatment kits. These pamphlets would be furnished to every soldier upon enlistment, with the goal of filling in educational gaps in regard to sex—information that the young men had not learned in school.

One particular pamphlet by the War Department entitled “Sex Hygiene and Venereal Disease” provided a comprehensive explanation of basic sexual health, heavily seasoned with misogyny and moralizing. The pamphlet begins innocuously enough: “a few facts about sex…” the first of which summarizes the importance of cleaning one’s penis. However, in the first paragraph of the document, there is already an indicator of the attitudes behind the creation of these pamphlets.

SEX is one of the most important things in your life, for it makes you a man. It’s something to be proud of. But, like everything else you prize, it must be well cared for.  

The pamphlet continues on for a few sections about wet dreams and masturbation—“self-abuse,” before saying that it is very normal for men to want to have sex with women, and that women want to have sex with men. The document attributes these desires to ‘the sex glands’ and clarifies that they are nothing to be ashamed of. This basic biological explanation of sex normalized human sexual desire, which had previously been seen as a weakness to hide. The application of that explanation to both men and women also marks a huge transformation in the ideas of women’s sexuality: women want to have sex with men because of biology, and that is acceptable. However, the author then says,

Just because you have this desire is no reason why you must give in to it. Sex relations should be kept for marriage. Between people who aren’t married they often lead to shame, sorrow, and disease. The public knows this so well that laws forbid sex relations between persons not married to

33 “Sex Hygiene and Venereal Disease—War Department,” National Research Council Division of Medical Sciences, Sept. 30, 1942.
each other. Good morals limit these sex relations to marriage. So, sexual desire is a normal biological reality, but sexual educators want to enforce the belief that acting on those desires is immoral outside of marriage. This attitude that attaches moral implications to sex leads predictably to misogyny. Multiple warnings that, “You wouldn’t like to think that the girl you marry had been used by other men,” proliferate this document. Above all, the message is that you cannot tell which women have venereal disease, so the best way to avoid it is to abstain from sex until marriage. Sex workers or women who hang around bars are the most dangerous, as they have been “used” and definitely aren’t the type of woman one would consider marrying.

Consent was a weighted word in this period—much of the language surrounding consent carried the implication that a woman’s readiness to engage in sex meant that she was promiscuous. The War Department’s 1942 sex education pamphlet states to the troops: “Don’t forget that any girl who lets you use her, or who ‘consents’ easily, is not safe.” First, the repeated choice of the phrase, to “use” women, as a synonym for sex is clearly dehumanizing. Though the document had established earlier that women also have a “perfectly normal” desire to have sex with men, the phrase to “use” a woman exposes the underlying belief that women’s worth is in their virginity and as their place as a sexual object. Once a woman has sex she has been “used” and her value has decreased. The quotations around “consents” implies a fundamental lack of concern over women’s consent. In fact, the focus of the public in the early-mid 20th century was not on rape but on false allegations of rape. The idea of rape was confined to violent stranger attacks, and even then, it was questionable as to whether the woman was at fault.

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35 “Sex Hygiene and Venereal Disease—War Department.”
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
Soldiers, and many men, in the 1930s, were not concerned about consent. A woman’s enthusiastic consent even had negative implications—it meant she was not ‘safe’ and had likely been used before.

In addition to these pamphlets, the U.S. government produced scare films about venereal disease in a shift of tactics that advertised to an audience of both soldiers and the general public—including women. This medium had the same elements as the pamphlets: promoting abstinence while educating about safe sex. Public health physician James A. Dolce was among the most avid proponents of film as an important medium for health education, arguing that well-written and produced films would gather a large audience and educate people more than other teaching aids would.39 These movies were indeed well produced and heavily funded, featuring popular actors of the time and depicting entertaining plots and characters.

In one 1942 film, “Sex Hygiene,” a physician on behalf of the War Department spoke directly to the camera: “For many years prudery or false modesty has caused the basic facts of sex to be withheld from large numbers of our young people...This ignorance of sex, and the possible effects of illicit sexual intercourse, have left a vast trail of human wreckage; countless numbers of blind, deformed and hopelessly insane.”40 This demonstrates a clear breakaway from previous ideas about sex education, public health, and Victorian ideals of modesty and restraint. In fact, physicians at this time attributed poor public health and rampant venereal disease to false modesty. Still, abstinence is highly recommended, and sex is framed by morality.

Venereal Disease propaganda posters, another prominent tactic in the sexual education campaign, most tangibly demonstrates the misogyny that underpinned the government’s attitudes towards the crisis. These posters always

40 Otto Brower and John Ford, Sex Hygiene (1942; Academy Film Archive, 2007).
framed women as the threat and the aggressor, luring men into vice and infecting them with diseases they would bring home to their virginal sweethearts. Further still, the posters associated women with the enemy, in this case the Axis. Because venereal disease took such a toll on the troops and the war effort, the public health strategy was engineered to appeal to patriotism. Figure 1 is typical for the period. A sex worker holds up a champagne glass in a toast. We, the audience, know she is a sex worker because of her heavy makeup, painted nails, and the alcohol she is consuming. The champagne represents venereal disease, and the woman represents all “bad women”—pick up girls, streetwalkers, prostitutes. However, what is interesting is the attachment to the Axis forces: “A toast to Hitler and Hirohito.” Good girls back home are patriots, and “bad,” promiscuous girls are not. Bad women are Axis agents—they are the enemy.

Figure 3 opposes the sex worker depicted in Figure 2. This woman is the sweetheart patiently waiting at home. She is virginal, doe-eyed, and coy—she is certainly faithful. This woman is attractive but modest, the ideal of what a
woman should be. The poster appeals to soldiers to stay abstinent for the sake of their devoted sweetheart. It reminds the soldier that back home they will have a family, a respectable girl, or a loving wife to return to, and that venereal disease could ruin that.

A final poster is particularly unique because it transgresses the binary Madonna and prostitution dichotomy of the previous two posters (see fig. 4). This woman does not have heavy makeup: In fact, she looks sweet and bashful. She could be any man’s wife or sweetheart at home. But in that lies the danger! She may look clean, but... Clean is synonymous for abstinent, sexually inexperienced, pure, safe. This woman is not clean. She is another pick-up, ‘good time’ girl, or prostitute like the first woman. Many of these posters warn soldiers that they

Figure 3. “She is True to You! Are You True to Her?” Posters Promoting Venereal Disease Prevention, National Archives, Record Group 112: Records of the Office of the Surgeon General (Army), c. 1942-1944.
might think a girl is safe and clean, but if she slept with them, she’s likely slept with everyone else making her dirty and diseased.

The clear enemy in the military’s war on venereal disease was sex workers. Therefore, while public health and military officials warned men to beware of these women, they cracked down on their very existence and attempted to shut down prostitution wherever they could. Obviously, this meant the closure of “red light” districts in the United States, especially in the areas surrounding military bases. One 1942 article in The New York Times reported, “‘Red Light’ Areas Declared Ending.” The article details how the National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection reported that their campaign had almost completely eliminated the ‘red light’ districts in the United States in less than
Charles P. Taft, head of the committee, claimed that it was easy to shut down official prostitution in these districts—the challenge was in “semi-professional prostitutes.” These “semi-professional prostitutes” were loosely defined as any woman perceived to be promiscuous, especially with soldiers. Taft described these women as “more dangerous to the community than a mad dog.” The committee’s recommendations were that the police cooperate with military venereal disease control officers in order to do contact tracing, consult with local business owners (bars, hotels, taxi companies) to root out prostitution, test women accused of prostitution for sexually transmitted disease, and patrol suspicious areas. Lastly, the article describes the committee’s assertion that a large percentage of venereal infections in the military could be traced to “girls in their early ‘teens” that were “motivated by a misguided sense of patriotism.”

This campaign against sex workers was deemed to be successful in many regards. The combined efforts of the police, public health officials, and the military led to huge amounts of arrests and detainments. The FBI Uniform Crime Reports reported that the percentage of girls arrested for sex-related offenses increased by 130% between 1941 and 1943. The May Act made prostitution near U.S. defense bases a federal crime. However, the problem of venereal disease persisted. Class and racial lines had a huge influence on who the police and military prosecuted. Police rarely prosecuted upper- or middle-class white girls for fraternizing with soldiers, but did punish poor women, especially black women and other women of color, for perceived transgressions. Young black girls would be arrested for suspected ‘semi-professional’ prostitution, detained, tested for venereal disease, and either arrested, released, or sent to quarantine wards for...

41 “'Red Light’ Areas Declared Ending.”
42 Ibid.
43 “'Red Light’ Areas Declared Ending.”
In a climate that persecuted women on the basis of promiscuity so much that it became policy, the pin-up girl phenomenon is certainly a paradox. This phenomenon included a distinction between women who expressed their sexuality for their own pleasure and women who expressed their sexuality for men’s entertainment: promiscuous women were dangerous and pin-up girls were a fantasy. Pin-up girls were glamour models whose photographs were mass-produced via posters. These posters were very popular with soldiers during World War II, with many men hanging them in their barracks. Hugh Hefner, the creator of *Playboy* magazine said, “After school, armed with my diploma, I joined the army. Just like any boy doing his military service, I had the minimum essentials in my case—a uniform, a helmet, and a pin-up.”

Protestant capitalist culture preached the virtue of a wife and mother, a moral guardian of the home to aid her husband in all manners and ensure the success of the home. Under this paradigm, woman attained worth through her status as a mother or a wife, in other words her fertility. Nor was this worth based on the illusion of fertility—sexual attractiveness—but in terms of her reproductive capacity. The pin-up girl defied that paradigm—the appeal was both in her raw visual sensuality and her elusiveness. However, what distinguished the pin-up girl from “good-time girls” that VD Propaganda posters warned of, was the voyeuristic aspect of pin-up posters. Pinup girls were generally posed to appear caught by surprise, in a moment of partial nudity and vulnerability. Her skirt is caught on a ladder or a desk drawer, she hasn’t quite finished knitting that sweater she’s working on, or she’s giving her dog a bath in her underwear.

Pin-up girls offered young soldiers an outlet for their sexual energy and reaffirmed their masculinity. They also served another purpose: to promote

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46 Strom.
48 Ibid.
American patriotism and the war effort. Posters showed scantily dressed women promoting war bonds and urging men to join the war effort. Some women wore versions of military uniforms, while others donned aprons or house dresses and played the role of the sweetheart at home. Betty Grable, among the most popular pin-up girls was described as a symbol of American womanhood. Pin up posters were products designed to appeal to soldiers and remind them of the women and the home they wanted to protect while simultaneously satisfying their sex drives—hopefully eliminating risky sex culminating in venereal disease. Though masturbation was outwardly discouraged as a moral failing, sex education materials clarified to soldiers that masturbation did not have ill effects on one’s health, as had been taught in the decades prior. The promotion of pin up magazines among the troops exposed true attitudes towards masturbation—it certainly wasn’t something to be supported but it was better than having sex. This demonstrates the unprecedented realism that the War Department adopted in their approach to sexual education; they understood that complete abstinence from all sexual activity was unrealistic. Masturbation to pin-up magazines was a safe enough comfort for soldiers, especially if it kept them away from ‘good-time’ women.

School Sex Education

While the audience for military sex education in the 20th century was male, subsequent sex education conducted in public schools held a co-educational audience. The former campaign emphasized the need for male soldiers to beware of promiscuous women, while the latter emphasized the need for young girls to adhere to chastity and beware of male influence. Leading up to the 1920s in the United States, sex education—then known as hygiene education—focused on morality and cleanliness. The focus was on the immorality of pre-marital sexual

49 Favre.
behavior, masturbation, and non-procreative sex. The American Federation for Sex Hygiene’s official recommendations for education stated that there should be “no study of external human anatomy and very limited study of internal anatomy.”

During and after World War II, faced with the realities of the venereal disease crisis, the traditional abstinence only education had to change. In the prefatory note of “Sex Education in Schools and Youth Organizations,” written by the England Board of Education in 1943, the authors cite the circumstance of war as the cause for the decay of social and sexual restraints that called for a new strategy of sexual education. The world had changed post-war and educators understood that youth had been exposed to an unprecedented level of sexual content through posters, pulp novels, music, and films. They had seen posters on venereal disease, and they had questions that, unanswered, would create ignorance that could only lead to poor judgement. Men and women mingled more than ever, and both sexes had more freedom to postpone marriage to pursue an education or other individual endeavors. A need for sex education began to be seen as the cause for all sorts of social ills. Newell Edson wrote for *The Journal of Educational Sociology* in 1935,

Sex education is of vital concern to the community. Its courts, jails, institutions, and hospitals are crowded with those who have failed in social adjustment from lack of such education. Its clinics are thronged with venereal patients who suffer because of wrong sex education. Its family courts attempt to make marital adjustments the foundations for which should have been laid in childhood and youth. Its social workers, ministers, doctors, and lawyers are wrestling with problems which wise sex education could have prevented. Its youth, keenly aware of sex in their lives, find it amazingly easy to acquire unsound information and practices but very difficult to get scientific facts and satisfying standards.

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52 Board of Education, Sex Education in Schools and Youth Organisations (London: 1943).
This demonstrates a clear shift from military sex education to school sex education. Edson recognizes that military sex education came too late in the lives of contemporary youth that had been aware of sex from a young age, causing advice about abstinence or prophylaxis to fall on deaf ears. Edson and others proposed a modern sexual education strategy for a modern, less innocent, era.

Contemporary school sexual education has shifted from abstinence-only to a more realistic approach—an echo of the trend that educators experienced in the first half of the 20th century. Modern abstinence-only sexual education was introduced to the United States in the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, a eugenic ambition under the guise of moral or health concerns.54 In this particular act, the underlying belief was that people on welfare, primarily black people and people of color, were having unprotected sex leading to unwanted pregnancies and perpetuating a cycle of poverty, crime, and—worst of all—government assistance.

Today’s evidence shows that abstinence-only education does not work. In fact, abstinence-only education correlates with higher rates of teen pregnancy.55 A narrow focus on abstinence is not realistic, proving Edson correct; youth are keenly aware of sex in their lives, and if they are not provided with a comprehensive honest sexual education, they will seek it from less than accurate sources, such as friends, television, pornography. Not only that, but comprehensive sexual education is crucial in the prevention of sexual assault. Only ten states mention consent, sexual assault, or healthy relationships in their sexual education curriculum.56 This irresponsible decision to omit sexual assault from educational vocabulary leads to generations of men who do not take a woman’s consent seriously. Abstinence-only education also places an enormous burden on young

56 Ibid.
girls to maintain chastity and protect their virginity. This misogynistic belief takes the ritualized form of virginity clubs and purity balls—teaching youth of both sexes that a woman’s worth is in her chastity. Instantly we revert to the World War II era dichotomy: bad, unclean girls have sex and good, safe girls are virgins, and men should beware of the former.
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