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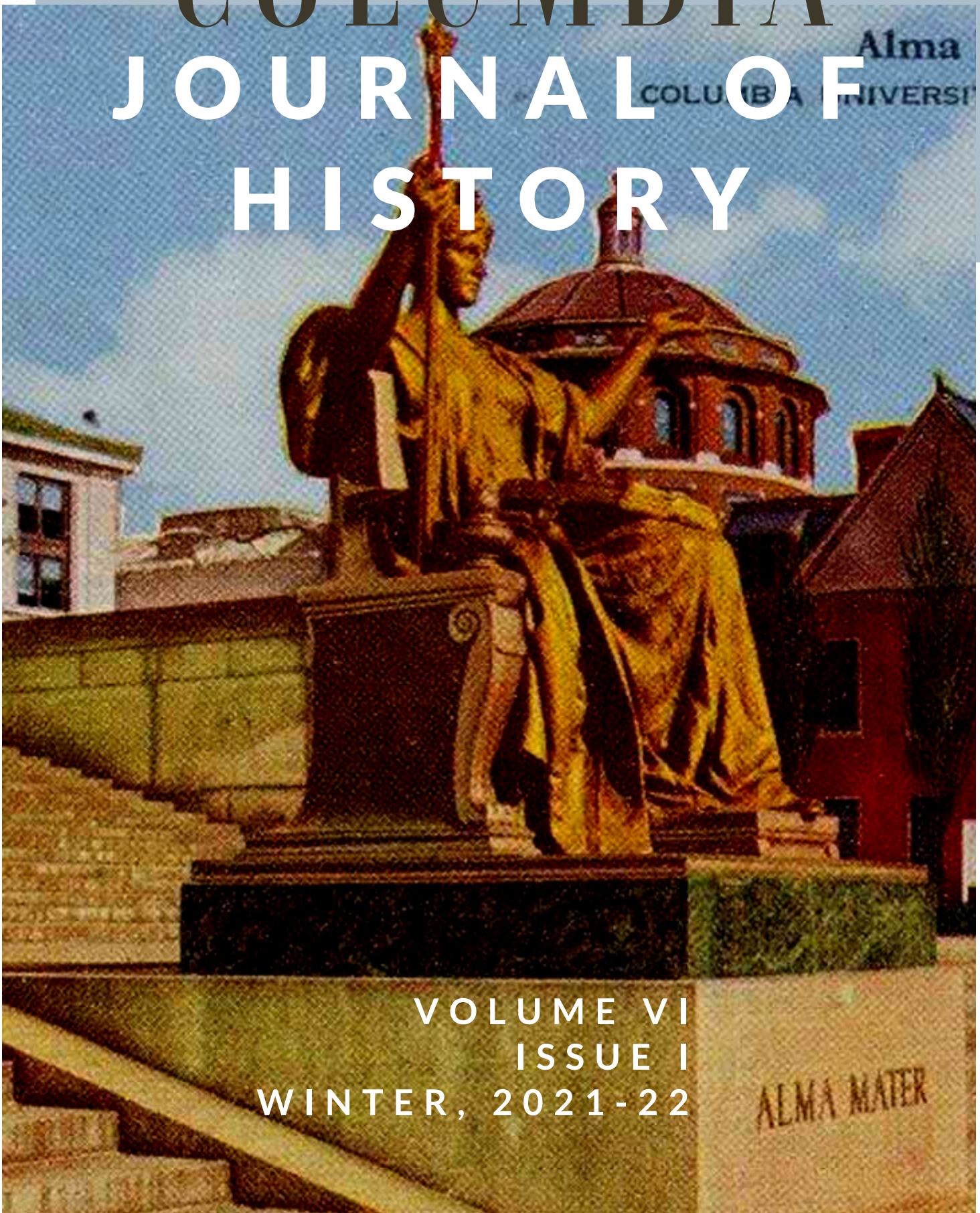

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About The Authors

Christopher Aranda, a senior at the University of Southern California, majors in History with a minor in Religion. Chris' research interest is in Borderlands history and its socio-cultural intersections, particularly within California. Utilizing his experience as a two-year research assistant, Chris has just completed his senior honors thesis in which he argued the existence of an active and organized social movement that sought to establish a racialized past of Southern California during the early twentieth century as a response to the Mexican Revolution. In the future, Chris plans on attending law school this coming Fall and practicing appellate law while exploring the intersection between law and history.

Kelly A. Harvell, a sophomore at Stanford University, majors in bioengineering with a special interest in Classics. She is particularly focused on the intersection of ancient history and human health. She wrote this piece for a disability studies course with its goal being to contrast historical and modern treatment of marginalized groups and evaluate to what extent cultural attitudes towards disability in antiquity are reflected in current inequalities. She believes studying ancient societies can help inform the movement towards a more accessible and equal medical field. She hopes to become a physician in the future and use her position to advocate for affordable care options for low-income and historically underserved communities as well as address health disparities of the past that still haunt the field today.

Wendi Zhou, a junior at the University of Washington, studies History and Philosophy. She is from Bellevue, Washington. Wendi's main area of research is the history of race, gender, and sexuality in post-1945 West Germany, and she is currently working on a thesis on Audre Lorde, women of color, and the politics of memory in 1980s-90s Berlin. Outside of history, Wendi is interested in political philosophy and applied ethics. She can be found reading, running, or writing speculative fiction in her free time.

Patrick Hegarty Morrish, University of Oxford, Class of 2020, first became interested in environmental history though studying a paper on 'The Global Middle Ages' in the second year of his BA, and this approach has since characterised his work. His BA thesis focused on the experience of landscape and environment for interwar Swedish cyclists, while as part of an MA at CEU in Vienna he is currently writing a thesis on the significance of changes to camel herding practices for understanding the end of nomadic pastoralism and processes of state-making in interwar Transjordan. He is also applying for PhD places, hoping to reorient focus to the medieval period by researching the entanglement between pastoralists and ecology in upland south France, 1100-1350.

Jack Stephens, a junior at Amherst College, majors in History and Environmental Studies. He is interested in underdevelopment, unequal exchange, propaganda and political consciousness, revolutionary movements and politics, anti-communist mythologies, the American Black radical tradition, and the distortion and ommission of colonialism from history. His historical background includes courses in global environmental history in both the 19th and 20th centuries, oceanic history, Black intellectual engagement with the Soviet Union, South African history, revolution and rebellion in Africa, and American imperialism in Latin America. He has also studied global indigenous politics, contemporary and historical American foreign policy, and documentary photography. After his undergraduate studies he hopes to either pursue a PHD and teach history or build a journalistic practice focusing on underrepresented and suppressed perspectives from the Global South.

Letter From The Editors

Dear Reader,

After a year of change and adaptation, we are privileged to present the *Columbia Journal of History*'s 2021 Winter Issue.

In a world increasingly dependent on the energy, dynamism, and hope of its future, many question why those future generations must continue to study, research, and write history. We study history because in the heart of dusty tomes and past reflections are *stories.* Stories of how we lived, what we suffered, why we loved and persevered define us and survive us as heritage and legacy. Telling these stories for the souls who were never heard, whose arguments and struggles they thought would never be honored, is ultimate justice. It is said the field of history is never a static entity. True, but we say, by telling these stories the field of history is *alive.*

From an impressive array of submissions, we selected five. From the fight of blind and disabled Romans for work and social recognition, to Jewish refugees asserting their agency and identity in starry Shanghai, to reconsidering the rationales of the Angolan War, to peasants' relationship with ecology and landscape in the largest Western European popular uprising before the French Revolution, to the creation of a romanticized cultural fantasy in Disneyland. We hope these pieces shed light on our diverse and complex negotiations with our past, and bring their stories to life.

The Editorial Board is immensely indebted to the excellence, intelligence, and hard work of each and every one of our editors. They have spent countless hours on each diction and syntax, refining citations and sourcing, and crafting narrative arguments. With the help of our spectacular new online team, these stories may be integrated to the interconnectivity and interactiveness of the web. All of this would have been impossible without the genius and dedication of our authors: Christopher, Kelly, Jack, Wendi, and Patrick. They put dazzling brilliance in prose, research, and analysis to paper, animating with passion the life and legacy of their stories.

Please enjoy.

Very Respectfully,

Kuang and Bilal
Editors in Chief

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Mickey's Army:

Frontierland in the Creation of the American Western Myth

Christopher Aranda

Abstract

The New Western school of historical thought seeks to untangle the narratives that have promulgated a romanticized ideal of the Western United States. This paper is directly concerned with California's place in this historical scholarship. Specifically, this research seeks to explicate the California fantasy narrative through a case study of Disneyland's Frontierland. The creation of Frontierland was an exercise in cultural memory and fashioning historical memory in order to combat the sociopolitical changes in the Greater Los Angeles area and the United States. This romanticized narrative reflected by Frontierland relied upon a two-pronged depiction of the West: (1) as a theater where the Anglo-Americans could assert their power and place in the future while relegating minorities to the past and (2) a land where the rugged individualism of the Western cowboy could become tangible with the past, present, and future. Through arguing this two-pronged theory and exploring the social changes that catalyzed such a narrative, it is my hope that such research can contribute to the ever-increasing importance of cultural memory within historical scholarship.

Introduction

On July 18, 1955, Fess Parker, star of the *Davy Crockett* television series, rode his horse down a dusty wagon trail with the chorus of "Davy Crockett, King of the Wild West Frontier" playing in the background. It was Disneyland's opening day, and many had come to Disneyland's Frontierland to meet the famed Western hero. Greeting excited guests with an old Western smile and a coonskin cap, Parker as Davy Crockett apologized for being late due to having a run-in with "redskins [who were] just itchin' to lift scalps."[1] Surrounded by children who had earlier told an ABC reporter that they wished to meet the star of *Davy Crockett*, Parker broke into song. Praising his gun, Ol' Betsy, for saving his life numerous times in the American West, Parker sang of the exceptionalism that embodies the common man.[2]

Admittedly, Disneyland Park's Frontierland is a less-than-common route of understanding the mythologization of the American West. Nonetheless, the research concerning this case study is excitedly complex and richly layered. It reveals a myriad of truths that enhance the understanding of the social changes occurring in the early to mid-twentieth century that catalyzed the romanticization of California. Frontierland was more than an amusement park; it was a retreat from the dizzying array of changes to social life and sexual norms that occurred in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. The establishment of Frontierland fed into the nostalgia for a simpler time, thus adding to the myth of the American West.

Entertainment, like Frontierland, has long propagated a mythologized American West in order to combat social changes. Christine Bold's *The Frontier Club: Popular Westerns and Cultural Power, 1880–1924* outlines how late-nineteenth century aristocratic families envisioned the American West as a playground to exercise a quickly declining social status:

> the old families of the urban northeast became preoccupied with strengthening their class boundaries in the face of shifting power structures … in a republic that had abolished entail and primogeniture, American aristocracy had to remake itself through rituals and social institutions.[3]

Through the establishment of elite social clubs such as the Boone and Crockett Club and the Cheyenne Club in the nineteenth century, American aristocrats could craft the image of the American West as a land of milk and honey reserved for the upper crust of society.[4] The West

[1] "1955 Disneyland Opening Day [Complete ABC Broadcast]," July 18, 1955, 00:28:00.
[2] Ibid., 00:29:00.
[3] Christine Bold, "Cowboys and Publishers," in *The Frontier Club: Popular Westerns and Cultural Power, 1880-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 65-66.
[4] Ibid.

became a region of homogeneity where the American dandy could reclaim his status. Essentially, the West became a golden land where the golden dream would never end.

The propagators of these constructed places of memory did so in order to assure themselves of their hold on power. Moreover, this memory construction was undertaken to place certain people in the future while exiling racial and political minorities to the past. As shall be shown, the twentieth century saw a proliferation of racial and political struggles, often not separate from one another. Consequently, racial groups sought to assert their collective power through fashion and political exercises. Such a development seriously undermined the idea of acquiescence that entailed the romantic narrative of California. The narrative held that Mexicans and Native Americans, the largest minority groups in California, were acquiescent and agrestic, prone to nothing more than simple village activities. By fleeing to the comforts of the past, the propagators of this constructed memory relegated marginalized communities to the sidelines of history, to be made as nothing more than delightful inferiors.

It is along this vein of historical thought that an explanation of the creation of Frontierland follows. Just as the American aristocrats of the early nineteenth-century sought refuge from social changes, so did American suburbanites of the mid-twentieth century seek refuge in the form of a long appreciated and familiar place in America: the amusement park. It is at the American amusement park where reality is left at the entrance and fantasy whisks guests away to a land they cherish. Importantly, Frontierland is not just a place for escapism; rather it became the articulation of an ideal where conquest was supreme and minorities existed in the margins. In this manner, racial superiority was central to the escapist component of Frontierland. The upheavals of the twentieth-century directly influenced the hand of Walt Disney to build a land where suburbanites could ignore urban change. Fundamentally, the development of Disneyland's Frontierland was a reaction to the social change of the mid-twentieth century and catered to American suburbia while adding to the mythologization of the American West as a magical place lost in time.

Historiography of the Mythologization of the American West

A rich area of historical scholarship studies how the western United States was crafted into a romantic place that fed into the ideals of a people who felt their hegemony and status was threatened. The argument presented here is deeply indebted to these works. The scholarly consensus validates the western United States and California as a laboratory of cultural memory and regional identity. Moreover, historical scholarship exposes how relations between

Anglo-Americans and racial minorities shaped the field of cultural memory. Lastly, existing scholarship places the West and California in a time of social changes that gave Anglo-Americans the opportunity to recede into the comforts of their version of history.

Arguably, such analysis begins with the writings of the early twentieth-century author Carey McWilliams. A trained historian and lawyer, McWilliams endeavored to understand the mythologization of the West in a time when such mythologization was occurring. In 1931, *The North American Review* published McWilliams' article entitled, "Myths of the West." McWilliams argues for the existence of not only a myth, but an *active* myth of the American West. In writing on the origins of the Western myth, McWilliams outlines the fact that "many Westerners conceded the existence of many Wests within the West."[5] There were disagreements as to where exactly the West began in light of the fact that the classic frontier had apparently disappeared with California's entry into the Union in 1849. How could Americans place themselves in the West if they did not even know where the West began and ended? McWilliams identifies the fact that Westerners pushed aside geographic considerations and, instead, relied upon ones that were grounded in emotional sentiments. By utilizing "this fiction it was possible to keep the boundaries of the West elastic and the mists of legend could still breed in the dark."[6]

Consequently, the West existed as long as it was alive in the minds of those who "experienced" the American West. In such fashion, the myth of the West "signifies a continuity of spirit, youthful zest, a braggadocio manner, and a certain spiritual resilience."[7] The mood of sacredness that many Westerners adopted, McWilliams argues, can be glimpsed in John Todd's *The Sunset Land* from 1870:

> You will see, now, why I look upon the Pacific slope as so important. Our gold is there! Our silver is there! Commerce is making herself a great place there! Noble men and beautiful children are there! Multitudes are gathering there! Free schools are there! Colleges are being planted there! And a great future *must* be there![8]

Although the mythologization of California's past became consolidated and organized in the early twentieth century, the existence of such mythologization for the entire West can be traced as early as the mid-nineteenth century.

[5] Carey McWilliams, "Myths of the West," *The North American Review* 232, no. 5 (1931): 427-428.
[6] Ibid., 427.
[7] Ibid., 428.
[8] John Todd, *The Sunset Land; or, The Great Pacific Slope* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1870), 297.

Patricia Nelson Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* analyzes the mythologization of the American West in the mid-nineteenth century, substantially adding to McWilliams' research. Indeed, Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest* helped establish the New Western History which seeks to understand frontier history through racial, class, and gender lenses among others. Limerick, in an effort to extend McWilliams' theory of Western mythologization, argues that the settling of the West was not simply romantic adventures with some shootouts in between. Rather, such conquest involved racial competition, economic loss, and political intrigue. Despite this fact, popular belief places figures and cities of this era on a pedestal of idolatry and grants the mood of sacredness that McWilliams outlined. Places such as the miner's shaft, the homestead, and the open plains are revered by society as true examples of Americanism.

Limerick's entire argument is based on analyzing the myths that cause the supposed sacredness to be attached to the conquest of the West. In doing so, Limerick observes a vitally important point: whereas the legacy of slavery has, rightly, been condemned, the legacy of western conquest is still romanticized. Limerick writes:

> Southern historians successfully fought through the aura of moonlight and magnolias, and established slavery, emancipation, and black/white relations as major issues in American history. Conquest took another route into national memory. In the popular imagination, the reality of conquest dissolved into stereotypes of noble savages and noble pioneers struggling quaintly in the wilderness.[9]

These portraits of the West often appear in novels, movies, and paintings. Where the noose of a lynch mob has been rightly condemned as barbaric, the lasso of the sheriff has been seen as heroic. While the pointed hoods of the Ku Klux Klan symbolize evil, the cowboy hat of a western vigilante connotes frontier justice. The lack of understanding surrounding the conquest of the American West has provided avenues for national escapism and the creation of a noble identity. The promulgation of this myth feeds into the construction of a comforting past that has been "offered as an escape from modern troubles."[10] Essentially, the myth of western expansion has become entrenched in ways that the Southern legacy has not. As Limerick aptly writes, "Children happily [play] 'cowboys and Indians' but stop short of 'masters and slaves.'"[11]

[9] Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 19.
[10] Ibid., 19.
[11] Ibid., 19.

Indeed, Limerick's observation of the lag in recognizing Western conquest as not inherently romantic is vital to any writing on the subject. While Limerick roots her argument in the nineteenth-century, she does foray into the twentieth-century. In stretching a part of her analysis to the early twentieth-century, Limerick writes that the future of Western cultural memory could be seen from the twentieth century shift from conflicts on battlefields to conflicts of memory and myth.[12] While Limerick identifies the presence of the myth in the twentieth-century, she does not explore how it was *actively* perpetuated in the century.

Answering Limerick's beacon, William Deverell joined the conversation about Western mythologization with his 2004 book, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past*. It is in this piece of scholarship that one begins to see not only the central role of California in western mythologization, but also how such mythologization marginalized certain ethnic groups–in this case Mexicans–to promote the supposed superiority of Anglo-Americans. Deverell writes that *Whitewashed Adobe* "is a book less about the resident Mexican population than about white perceptions of and behavior toward the ethnic Mexican population of Los Angeles."[13] Deverell argues that the romanticized narrative not only contributed to the transformation of Los Angeles from a sleepy little hamlet into a bustling metropolis, but also resulted from the city's "cultural and economic ties" to Mexico. These ties reach as far as the Mexican-American War and extend into the Second World War. By analyzing the shifting changes in ethnic representations and the efforts of a municipality to construct its past, Deverell writes that *Whitewashed Adobe* "picks up where McWilliams left off."[14]

Adding further to this richly layered scholarship, Deverell contends that in Los Angeles' emphasis on its past and representations of its Mexican population, the city sought to assert its future prospects. Deverell outlines multiple incidents where the future of Los Angeles was extolled as the city began to expand. Such adorations of the city's future were prominently displayed in poetry contests that utilized the words of "destiny," "faith," and "prophecy."[15] To the Anglo-American citizens of Los Angeles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, "the metropolis would *inherit* the future and other places would grow to resemble Los Angeles. The future belonged to Los Angeles, the future *was* Los Angeles."[16]

[12] Ibid., 332.
[13] William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 9.
[14] Ibid., 9.
[15] Ibid., 3.
[16] Ibid., 3.

While centering California in this historical discussion, Deverell focuses only on Los Angeles. Taking up the baton in this historical relay race, the historian Phoebe Kropp ventures into this historical scholarship of Californian cultural memory in *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place*. Instead of simply analyzing one city, Kropp studies the state of California. Utilizing a case study approach, Kropp analyzes how Los Angeles's Olvera Street, Rancho Santa Fe, El Camino Real, and the 1915 Panama-California Exposition demonstrate the romanticized narrative of California's past. Just as this research posits, Kropp contends that the manufacturing of a romanticized past was rooted in a feeling of loss and anxiety of change, articulating what past scholars have implicitly argued. Worried by the fast pace of social change, a fantasy was fashioned that allowed white Americans "to regain a sense of control over their cultural environment and retreat into a comforting past."[17]

Kropp, similar to Deverell and Limerick, never specifically mentions the associations that fashioned the narrative and only hints as to the exact reason why romanticization took place. The propagators of these constructed narratives and places of memory did so in order to assure themselves of their own hegemony, but such an exercise was not done without resistance. Consequently, racial groups sought to assert their collective power through fashion, such as zoot suits, and political exercises. Such a development seriously undermined the idea of Mexican acquiescence upon which the romantic narrative of California depended.

There exists a tendency throughout American history to reshape cultural memory in order to reassert one's power and place in history. As historian Phoebe Kropp notes, this is not just a West Coast curiosity nor is it simply isolated to the American West: "From blackface minstrelsy to a passion for Navajo blankets, white Americans's ability to disdain and yet desire, to reject and yet possess was a familiar exercise for dealing with non-white people and cultures."[18] However, there does also exist a tendency in the public sphere to overlook the memorialization of such narratives in the American Western context. Whereas manufactured narratives of the Old South have been rightly condemned, the existence of similar narratives in the American West continue to spread.

Moreover, Kropp theorizes that the romantic narrative of California was based upon the idea of resurrecting California's idyllic Spanish past as a response to social change. This is certainly a correct theory. However, Kropp neglects not only to explicitly detail what those social changes were, but also to define the second prong of the narrative: the making of a land where the rugged individualism of the Western cowboy could become tangible with the past,

[17] Phoebe Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 3.
[18] Ibid., 7.

present, and future. A large feature of the research presented shall endeavor to attach this second prong to the California fantasy narrative.

The Amusement Park in the American Popular Imagination

It is vitally important to understand how the utilization of the amusement park operated within the American psyche. In the age that preceded Disneyland, the United States had started to come into its own as an urban industrial powerhouse. At the turn of the century, modern industrial life began to transform workers and those who lived in urban settings into haggard automatons. In William T. Stead's *If Christ Came To Chicago!*, Stead tells of urban living's squalid conditions and how the streets are "choked with a crowded mass of humanity."[19] Other urbanized cities experienced similar concerns that bred a need for escapism. As a result, the amusement park was seen as the ideal route to leave behind the concerns of the city.

Much like the Carnival of sixteenth-century Europe, amusement parks of twentieth century America offered a haven to exercise an inversion of society. In the early twentieth-century, Coney Island was the preeminent place where the reversal of social norms was on display. Coney Island mirrored the wild cultural nature of the modern city by being easily accessed through newly-laid trolley lines and sustained "the influx of New York's myriad ethnic groups who sought release from the regimen of daily life."[20] Moreover, Coney Island was not an aristocratic getaway as the American West was at the time. Instead, many members of the working class lived in or near Coney Island as reflected in the 1920 United States Census which outlined that many of Coney Island's residents were house painters, laborers, shipyard workers, or unemployed.[21] Coney Island did possess a middle-class population, but working-class people reported that they visited Coney Island twice a summer.[22] As a result, Coney Island began to become a place open to a broader stratum of society.

In addition to granting breathing room to the working class, Coney Island afforded women and men a large degree of sexual freedom. With bars, dance halls, cabarets, and food vendors, the opportunities for romantic adventure abounded. With its secluded niches and the Wonder Wheel as the only source of nighttime illumination, Coney Island offered much opportunity for

[19] William T. Stead, *If Christ came to Chicago! A plea for the union of all who love in the service of all who suffer.* (Chicago: Laird & Lee, 1894), 211.
[20] Eric Avila, "A Rage For Order," in *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 107.
[21] "United States Census: 1920," Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Collection.
[22] Avila, "A Rage For Order," 108.

sexual experimentation. An anonymous journalist described how Coney Island was a magnet for sex and the working class as "any well seeming youngster may invite a girl to dance and do *more* at Coney Island, an arrangement long since sanctioned by the practice of proletarian jollity."[23] In a sense, Coney Island emulated the emerging sexual culture birthed as Victorian sexual norms were dying out.[24]

Not only did Coney Island sanction heterosexual relations, but also made homosexual conduct visible. Historian George Chauncey has found that Coney Island was an arena that cultivated a sexual identity for gay men. Jimmy Durante, the American entertainer, remembered working in Coney Island where "the entertainers were all boys who danced together and lipsed."[25] Furthermore, Coney Island possessed bathing houses popularly patronized by gay men, most notably the Washington Baths. At the Washington Baths, one could find men among men swimming together, eating, and competing in beauty pageants.[26]

Surprisingly, to understand Coney Island is to understand the creation of Frontierland. Although the two are at different ends of the United States, Walt Disney carefully observed Coney Island and its permitted behavior. After visiting Coney Island in the early 1940s, Disney made a clear distinction between Coney Island and his vision of Frontierland. Coney Island and its generation of American amusement parks, he remarked, "were dirty, phony places run by tough-looking people."[27] Gladwyn Hill affirmed Disney's remarks later on by writing that Disneyland is a stark departure from the traditional raucous and oftentimes shoddy amusement parks such as Coney Island, reporting in the *New York Times* that Disney had eliminated the "ballyhoo men [who] assault [the visitor's] ears with exhortations to test his strength, skill, courage, or digestion, or gawk at freaks or cootch dancers."[28]

Walt Disney's social conservatism was a byproduct of his upbringing in Marceline, Missouri. Walt Disney's father, Elias, was a devout Christian who preached stern sermons on Sundays in Marceline and demonstrated his social conservatism in being a teetotaler and openly scolding those who drink.[29] Quick to anger, Elias and Walt Disney did not have a strong bond. Walt Disney's artistic aspirations were never taken seriously by his father and the elder Disney instead valued "real jobs" as opposed to drawing.[30] Additionally, corporal punishment

[23] Ibid., 108.
[24] Ibid., 109.
[25] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 35
[26] *Washington Baths*. Circa 1950s. Coney Island History Project, New York.
[27] Avila, "A Rage For Order," 113.
[28] Gladwin Hill, "The Never-Neverland Khrushchev Never Saw," *The New York Times*, Oct. 4, 1959.
[29] Michael Barrier, *The Animated-Man-A Life of Walt Disney* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 13.
[30] Ibid., 12.

would be executed by Elias Disney often on Walt Disney and his brother Roy.[31] Elias Disney's impact on Walt is seen on a building on Disneyland's Main Street that is titled "Elias Disney, Contractor, est. 1895." The values Elias imparted on Walt contributed heavily to Walt Disney's perception of Coney Island and its society during his visit in the 1940s.

Disney wished to provide a similar refuge to Coney Island and, yet, its direct opposite. Just as Coney Island inverted society through its advertisement of interclass mingling and sex, Frontierland can be seen as a rest stop for those bothered by supposed societal inversions. Disney's rural upbringing, combined with his strict father's values, contributed heavily to his "long-standing prejudices against cities and cosmopolitan culture."[32] Such occurrences in cosmopolitan culture were not isolated to New York but stretched to the American West. These social changes directly influenced Frontierland's creation and, thus, the yearning for an American Western myth.

Urban Change, Suburban Fear

Twentieth-century Southern California is an example of the crossroads between distinct cultures in American Western history. Post-war America saw a bevy of social changes, yet it was in Southern California that these social changes met strong opposition. The advent of change forced many conservative Californians to seek out a refuge that mirrored their social vision. These shifts in racial, sexual, and political norms proved to be an underlying catalyst for Frontierland's construction.

In 1930s Los Angeles, the Chicano working-class youth had increasingly become estranged from the larger Los Angeles population. The zoot suit, a particular form of male dress, exemplified this estrangement. Originating during the Harlem Renaissance, the zoot suit found itself being worn in American Western cities such as Los Angeles by African and Mexican-American youths. Typified by a broad-brimmed hat, long brightly colored jacket, and baggy pants tapered at the ankle, the zoot suit fashioned Chicano youths as proud peacocks known as *pachucos*. The zoot suit was a "refusal: a subcultural gesture that refused to concede to the manners of subservience."[33] In this manner, the zoot suit was a direct defiance of the Anglo-American domination of the social order that ruled the Southwest. While many

[31] Ibid., 15.
[32] Avila, "A Rage For Order," 113.
[33] George Sanchez, "The Rise of the Second Generation," in *Becoming Mexican-American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 265.

Anglo-Americans understood the zoot suit as an affront to American propriety, the style was an example of when "too much becomes just enough."[34]

Animosity towards this style of dress increased dramatically during World War Two. Angry at the lack of assimilation among Chicano youths, Anglo authorities utilized the War Production Board. Regulations outlined for the making of suits demanded the use of less fabric.[35] In his 1943 *Report on Juvenile Delinquency in Wartime*, Los Angeles District Attorney Frederick N. Howser estimated that two-thirds of Chicano youth wore the zoot suit and proved to be a danger to society.[36] With authorities explicitly making their opposition to the *pachucos* known, confronting these perceived pests of society was only a matter of time. Such a time came in 1942 in the form of the Sleepy Lagoon Trial. This trial comprised of twenty-two Chicano youths on trial for the gang murder of a certain José Díaz.[37] In images that show the accused, almost all the youths are *pachucos* in zoot suit attire.[38] The question of guilt is less relevant than the anti-Mexican sentiment that dominated the trial. The press portrayed the accused as "Mexican hoodlums" while authorities declared Mexicans "inherently criminal and biologically prone to violence."[39] In a *Los Angeles Times* article dated June 2, 1943, the columnist Gene Sherman reflected on the Sleepy Lagoon murders. Sherman wrote that during the trial, "public indignation seethed as warfare among organized bands of marauders, prowling the streets at night, brought a wave of assaults, finally murders."[40]

Exactly a day after Sherman published his article, tensions between the Chicano community and Anglo-Americans exploded through the Zoot Suit Riots. Starting on June 3rd, 1943, Anglo service members and citizens stormed the traditionally Mexican neighborhoods of East Los Angeles and confronted Chicano youths.[41] Many Chicanos wearing the zoot suit were beaten and stripped naked in public. Just as was the case in the Sleepy Lagoon Trials, the press only stoked animosity. The press endorsed the actions of the Anglo servicemen. *The Los Angeles Times* titled an article about the riots as "Zoot Suiters Learn Lesson In Fights With Servicemen."[42] *The Washington Post* reported on the riots with distinct hostility towards the Mexican-American community:

[34] Christopher C. De Santis, "The Brilliant Rebel, Rebelling Against Everything: The Nonfictional Writings of Langston Hughes," *The Langston Hughes Review* 25, no. 1 (2019): 107.
[35] Sanchez, "The Rise of the Second Generation," 265.
[36] *Report on Juvenile Delinquency in Wartime*, as issued by Los Angeles District Attorney Howser, 1943.
[37] Sanchez, "The Rise of the Second Generation," 266.
[38] *Mass swearing-in at inquest hearing*, August 11, 1942, Los Angeles Public Library Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.
[39] Sanchez, "The Rise of the Second Generation," 266.
[40] Gene Sherman, "Youth Gangs Leading Cause of Delinquencies," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1943.
[41] Sanchez, "The Rise of the Second Generation," 267.
[42] "Zoot Suiters Learn Lesson In Fights With Serviceme," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1943.

> Disgusted with being robbed and beaten with tire irons, weighted ropes, belts and fists employed by overwhelming numbers of Mexican hoodlums, the uniformed men passed the word quietly among themselves and opened their campaign in force.[43]

In effect, *The Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post*, and other media mediums lauded the attacks as heroic men protecting the land. By essentially describing the riots as a cleansing of Mexican hoodlums from Los Angeles, the media acknowledged that the authorities had "checked" Chicano youth's emerging independence.

This "checking" of populations that dared to imagine a place for themselves extended to the sexual sphere of the American West. Just as Disney had described Coney Island in Sodom and Gomorrah-like terms, many living in the Los Angeles area became disconcerted at the purported sexual impropriety emerging in the region. Before Disneyland, one of the main recreational spaces of Los Angeles was Muscle Beach. When it first began in the 1930s, Muscle Beach could be found adjacent to the Santa Monica Pier.[44] Many acrobats and fitness gurus flocked to Muscle Beach to flex their muscles and entertain the crowds that would gather. A gathering place for scantily-clad men and women, Muscle Beach had begun to host "Miss Muscle Beach" and "Mr. Muscle Beach" contests by 1951. In a photograph from August 2nd, 1951 "Miss Muscle Beach" contender Donna Michaels stands, flexing, on a podium smiling at the adoring crowd of hundreds surrounding her.[45] In a June 1954 photograph, the winner of the "Miss Muscle Beach" Barbara Thompson sits on a podium while lifting two dumbbells high above her head.[46] Other photographs from this period show women in tight bikini suits while rubbing the men's bulging muscles. Simultaneously being overtly sexual and being unfeminine through the lifting of weights, such displays often blurred traditional gender roles of the time and confused and enraged conservative Santa Monica City Council Members.

[43] "Zoot Suiters Riot," *The Washington Post*, June 9, 1943.
[44] Hadley Meares, "How Muscle Beach Started in Santa Monica-But Ended Up in Venice," KCET.org, December 12, 2018.
[45] *Miss MuscleBeach Contest, 1951*, Los Angeles Examiner Photographs Collection, University of Southern California Libraries.
[46] *Miss Muscle Beach of 1954*, June 20, 1954 Los Angeles Examiner Photographs Collection, University of Southern California Libraries.

Fig. 1: Carole Royer feels the muscles of Albert Ruiz as Ken Cameron, Mr. Muscle Beach 1951, looks on. Courtesy of the USC Digital Library.[47]

Santa Monica City Council Members had long been considered "puritanical" and understood Muscle Beach to possess heterosexual interaction and homosexual activity.[48] Concerns of homosexual activity were not isolated to the City Council but extended to media formats. In a 1953 article, the fitness magazine *Strength and Health* reported that "rumors may have reached you that some queer proceedings transpired on the Beach. We have heard of some pretty odd goings-on ourselves, but we never actually caught anybody in *fragrant delicto*."[49] In a newsletter circulated to Santa Monica city leaders, Mayor Ben Barnard declared Muscle Beach to be "an immoral place … a favorite haven of athletes and queers of Southern California."[50]

[47] *Mr. Muscle Beach, 1951*, photograph, USC Digital Library, Los Angeles, July 4, 1951.
[48] Meares, "How Muscle Beach Started in Santa Monica-But Ended Up in Venice."
[49] "The Truth About Muscle Beach," in *Strength and Health Magazine*, December 1953.
[50] Marla Matzer Rose, "The Downfall of Muscle Beach," in *Muscle Beach: Where the Best Bodies in the World Started a Fitness Revolution* (Los Angeles: LA Weekly Books, 2001), 85.

This substantial amount of anathema towards homosexual conduct in Southern California was born mainly of the Lavender Scare. This moral panic, which reached its zenith in the mid-twentieth century, sought to identify homosexual men who worked in public sector jobs across the country. The Senate Investigations Committee or the Hoey Committee spearheaded the effort to discover homosexual government employees' existence. Demanding areas of government to investigate its employees, federal executive departments submitted reports to the Committee that identified homosexual employees. For example, the Commerce Department's report identified over four homosexual men who were forced to resign.[51] The Committee completed its investigation and published *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*. The report wrote in its conclusion that "there is no place in the United States Government for persons who violate the laws or the accepted standards of morality."[52]

The Lavender Scare coincided with the Second Red Scare, a panic of moral and political dimensions. Frontierland came into being during the era of the Cold War, a time that would breed nationalistic sentiments within certain citizens. Chaired by New Jersey Representative John Parnell Thomas from 1947-48, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigated allegations of private citizens and government employees possessing communist sympathies. In this period, an aversion to communism cultivated the psychological state of mind of many Americans, including those who lived in the West.

The direct stifling of opposing political opinions and propagation of "true blue" American values directly coincided with the development of Frontierland and Walt Disney himself. Disney found himself entrenched in the Red Scare of the post-war period. HUAC had subpoenaed many Hollywood celebrities to testify to communist subversions in the Los Angeles area. In fact, communist ideology had been prevalent in the Los Angeles region as early as the 1930s when a large communist riot occurred in front of the Los Angeles City Hall.[53] In his 1947 testimony to HUAC, Disney tells how communists attempted a strike at his studio.[54] While testifying to the committee, Disney did not appear intimidated. He spoke calmly but confidently with his hands politely folded in front of him. At one point, Chairman Parnell asks Disney what would have occurred if Disney had given into the strikers' demands. Disney responded that he would never give in to the demands because , "it was a matter of principle

[51] "Summary: Perversion Cases-Department of Commerce," Commerce Department Report, June 15, 1950.
[52] "Conclusion," in *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*. Subcommittee on Investigations, June 1950.
[53] "Communist Riot in Los Angeles," Circa 1930, L1979-37_180, Stetson Kennedy Papers, L1979-37, Southern Labor Archives, Atlanta: Georgia State University, Special Collections and Archives.
[54] "1947 Walt Disney Testifies at HUAC," October 1947, 00:01:45.

with me, and I fight for principles."[55] Such a statement strongly indicates that Disney's values governed his role as an entertainer and developer. These personal values thrived in the environment of Disney's Missouri childhood. Surrounded by quaint Americana and infused with family values, it is highly probable to understand why Disney sought to replicate these motifs through Frontierland's construction.

Indeed, California had long been a battleground between communists and conservatives. Many California business conservatives, including Disney, had been drafted into the war against change under the pretense of protecting capitalism. Capitalism in California had been "under attack" in the form of a flurry of farm strikes and unionizing efforts. As part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) passed in June of 1933 and guaranteed government protection for collective bargaining in Section 7(a).[56] However, the nomenclature of the NIRA was, ostensibly, broad enough to include *all types* of workers which alarmed California farm businessmen. As a result, the leaders of the New Deal became convinced to include a ruling that excluded agricultural workers from Section 7(a).[57] Nevertheless, this new development of the New Deal did not reach the farmworkers of California, for many Californian farm workers believed that the federal government would protect their efforts towards collective activism.[58]

As a result, 1933 California saw a number of strikes, notably the 1933 El Monte Berry Strike. Organized by the mostly Mexican workers and the radical Cannery and Agricultural International Union (CAWIU), the strike sought solutions to stagnating wages and declining working conditions. Conservative businessmen who had long had a vested financial interest in the agricultural economy of California feared that the strike would hinder their profits, and hired small groups of workers whom the local sheriff protected.[59] Moreover, accusations were further lodged that communist and socialist agitators were responsible for the strikes' organization. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on a California grower who believed that "a hundred men, reported to be Soviets and other aliens, tried to disembark from a truck onto a vegetable ranch" only to be turned away by the deputy sheriffs on guard. Another *Los Angeles Times* article contends that the communist and socialist agitators "stopped a truck and pulled Pedro Zuniga off. The gang beat him with their fists. A little later, another gang of communists

[55] "Walt Disney Studios Owner Walt Disney Testifies Against Communism at Hearings of ...HD Stock Footage," October 1947, 00:02:30 to 00:02:41.
[56] U.S. Congress, House, "Section 7(a)" of *National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of 1933*, HR 5755, 73rd Congr., 1st sess., introduced in House May 17th, 1933.
[57] Kathryn S. Olmsted, "The Great Strike," in *Right Out of California: The 1930s and The Big Business Roots of Modern Conservatism* (New York: The New Press, 2015), 40-41.
[58] Ibid.
[59] "El Monte Berry Crop Threatened By Strike," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7th 1933.

kidnapped eight asserted strikebreakers and locked them up in a building at Hicks Camp."[60] The proclivity of the *Los Angeles Times* to frame the Berry Strike as driven by violent leftists is no surprise when considering that Harry Chandler was the publisher of the newspaper. Chandler, who operated one of the strongest real estate empires in the American West, was a leading Californian who shaped conservative hatred for unions and radicals. A personal friend of Herbert Hoover, who shaped California conservatism in the 1930s in his own right, Chandler "used the [*Los Angeles Times*] to support the extreme right of the Republican Party and to destroy progressives."[61]

Chandler's actions to fend off the development of radical politics in California is one of many such conservative attempts. During the strikes of 1933, growers of the California Packing Corporation agreed to certain compromises concerning wage earnings.[62] Nevertheless, some growers such as H.C. Merritt refused to compromise with political radicals and were resolute in holding the line. For example, Merritt would often lead a motley crew of deputy sheriffs into striking camps, arrest Mexican workers for illegally entering the country, and physically fight with socialist agitators to collect the "ignition keys, which he had plucked from the trouble-makers' cars."[63] Merritt would also petition state authorities for National Guard troops, evict strikers from his land, and surround his ranch with private security guards in order to stop his workers from meeting with radical organizers.[64] Such actions proved useful to conservative growers not only because they allowed only marginal victories for strikers, but also granted the growers an ideological basis to stand upon.

This ideological foundation proved to be strongest in Walt Disney's choice of location for Disneyland's Frontierland. Walt Disney's choice of Orange County to construct his getaway from reality was not an accidental choice but a purposeful one. The passage of the New Deal relied heavily upon the support of Southern congressmen and senators. As a result, Southern whites felt that "their" politicians had, in effect, betrayed their homespun Jeffersonian values in supporting the increasing encroachment of the federal government. A migration, subsequently, occurred during this time.[65]A Southern white migration from the South to the California West, "when over six million southerners relocated from the South's small towns and farms to

[60] "Berry Strike Gets Violent...," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10th, 1933.
[61] Olmsted, "The Great Strike," 35.
[62] "Jobless Ranks Cut By 500,000: Report for California Made To N.R.A. Officials...," *Los Angeles Times*, October 31st, 1933.
[63] "Latest News of the San Joaquin Valley: Tulare Fruit Strike Fizzles," *Los Angeles Times*, August 14th, 1933.
[64] Olmsted, "The Great Strike," 42-43.
[65] Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2014), 21-22.

industrial centers" such as Los Angeles and Orange County.[66] While black migration has been seen, in biblical terms, as an exodus, Southern white migration can be seen as an exile. In effect, white Southerners had left the American South in search of a new Jeffersonian Jerusalem.

Having left their Southern homes due to Southern support of Roosevelt and arriving in California throughout the tumult of 1933-1934, these new Californians became ready soldiers in the fight against the federal government and to propagate a certain vision of America. In the mid-twentieth century, Orange County became a scene where one could realize *their* American dream. Having packed up their belongings and families, many swarmed the open fruit groves of Orange County in search of jobs, family, and stability. Lois Lundberg, a migrant who had arrived in Orange County in the 1940s, would remark, "[Orange County] was God's country … the dream of being able to get somewhere."[67] Disneyland's backyard was a birthing ground for idealism but an idealism cultivated by American conservatism.

Orange County was mostly desolate in 1940, with only an estimated 113,760 people living in the area.[68] However, by 1950, the United States military had settled multiple bases in Orange County, providing substantial income and sources of patriotism. The location of the military bases in Orange County attracted certain traits of life to settle in the area: self-exiles from the American South. These new settlers brought a distinct collection of social, political, and economic beliefs that contributed to the germination of a conservative culture.

The acres of orange and berry groves belonged to the local ranchers, farmers, shop owners, and other rural workers who embraced conservative individualism and puritan moralism.[69] These "old guards" of Orange County allied themselves with the newly arrived "cowboy capitalists."[70] These new cowboys were entrepreneurs who had facilitated contracts with the military and preached the virtues of privatization and a free-market ideology. Bonding belief in Protestantism, property rights, privacy, and individualism, the inhabitants of Orange County created an oasis. An oasis that harkened back to the days where a man could determine his own destiny without the pesky interference of government. This was the age of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal when conservative Republicans such as Senator Robert Taft and former

[66] Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt To Sun Belt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011), XV.
[67] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 21.
[68] Ibid., 24.
[69] Ibid., 30.
[70] Ibid., 30.

President Herbert Hoover railed against the New Deal as an exercise in communism.[71] It was in Orange County that Crockett Individualism became a response to New Deal Collectivism.

Orange County legitimized its advocacy for Crockett Individualism by electing its first United States House Representative James B. Utt in 1952. A graduate of the University of Southern California's Gould School of Law and raised by an Orange County rancher, Utt personified the conservative nature of the area in which he grew up. In his election campaign, Utt decried the "socialist" policies of his opponent, Lionel Van Deerlin. Utt denounced Van Deerlin's support for public housing, nationalizing specific properties, and controlled agriculture as policies that are "socialistic, pure and simple."[72] On election day, Utt would defeat Van Deerlin by a wide margin; Utt had garnered nearly 107,000 votes with Van Deerlin attaining 63,000 votes.[73] In the course of his Congressional career, Utt would prove to be a stringent economic conservative with controversial ideas. Utt advocated for complete nuclear war with North Korea, using explosives on a Vietnamese dam "to kill a million of them," and spreading the belief that "a military exercise in Georgia was part of a United Nations plot to take over the country."[74]

Utt would rail against other policies such as certain taxes as "socialism's most deadly weapon."[75] Persons who leaned towards the left on the political spectrum could often find themselves as targets of Utt's attacks as British author Jessica Mitford did. Commenting on Mitford's *The American Way of Death*, Utt called Mitford "a pro-Communist anti-American" and the book as a "blow at the Christian religion."[76]

Orange County's conservatism is not just shown in the people or politicians it produced but also in the organizations the county patronized. Leonard Read, an active Orange Countian at one point in his life, formed the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE). The FEE devoted itself to promoting free-market enterprise, private property, and moral principles. These were the same values that Orange County embraced. Another Orange Countian William C. Mullendore significantly contributed to the conservative John Birch Society along the California Coast.[77] Furthermore, there exists a direct link between Mullendore and Read, the

[71] See, Eric Rauchway, *Winter War: Hoover, Roosevelt, and the First Clash Over the New Deal* (New York: Basic Books, 2018) and Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).
[72] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, 33.
[73] "Santa Anan Leads in Congress Race," *Los Angeles Times*, November 5th, 1952.
[74] "Rep. James Utt Dies," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8th, 1970.
[75] "Congressman James B. Utt Defends 'Liberty Amendment,'" *La Habra Star*, March 1963.
[76] "Rep. James B. Utt of California," *The New York Times*, March 2, 1970.
[77] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, 34.

former had served as mentor to the latter.[78] Additionally, Mullendore had been one of the original warriors in the fight to preserve Crockett Individualism in the 1930s. Reflecting on the New Deal in the late 1960s, Mullendore said that Roosevelt "had used his high office to lift out of the gutter and onto the plane of respectability the basic ideas of socialism and communism."[79]

Walt Disney found a kindred patriotic spirit with Orange Countians. In his testimony before the HUAC Committee, an affirmation of Disney's principles displayed itself but this was not the first time Disney showed his values. One can find an exhibition of American patriotism in Walt Disney's early creations. During World War II, Disney created wartime propaganda cartoons, most notable were *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1943) and *Commando Duck* (1944). In *Der Fuehrer's Face*, Donald Duck experiences a day living under Nazi rule but wakes up in his bed, realizing it was all a dream. Relieved, Donald Duck hugs a golden statuette of the Statue of Liberty and exclaims, "Oh boy! Am I glad to be a citizen of the United States of America."[80] In *Commando Duck*, Donald Duck appears again as a soldier who parachutes onto the Pacific Island to fight the Imperial Japanese Army.[81] Caricatures of Japanese soldiers have left *Commando Duck* with a controversial legacy that many in today's age have deemed racist. Disney would vehemently affirm that his films during World War II sought to create pro-American attitudes in audiences. Articulated by Walt Disney's biographer, Neil Gabler, Disney's creations were centered around control, "creating a better reality than the one outside the studio."[82] In Orange County, a discovery of like-minded patriotic conservatives gave credence to the ambitions of Disney.

Eloquently articulated by American historian Lisa McGirr, it was at Orange County's "living room bridge clubs, at backyard barbecues, and at kitchen coffee klatches, that middle-class men and women of Orange County awakened to what they perceived as the threats of communism and liberalism."[83] While Orange County is famous for its early roots in cultivating Californian fruit, the county cultivated another widely consumed product. The product of conservatism was cared for and sold in Orange County, allowing many to embrace Crockett Individualism, an idea that gave agency to those who were deemed "right." Feeling besieged in metropolitan Los Angeles and regarding Coney Island-like urban areas with suspicion and fear, conservatives sought out a section of the West where they could build their ideas into institutions. A place where conservatives could reclaim what the New Deal unjustly ended for them; an era of

[78] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, 34.
[79] Olmsted, "The Great Strike," 191.
[80] "Donald Duck-Der Fuehrer's Face," January 1, 1943, 00:08:49.
[81] "Donald Duck: Commando Duck, 1944," June 2, 1944, 00:00:37.
[82] Neil Gabler, *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination* (New York: Vintage Press, 2006), 452.
[83] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, 21.

rugged individualism. This was fertile ground for Walt Disney to establish a symbiotic relationship with conservatives, in general. Disney could build his vision of "correct amusement" that coincided with conservatives' social views, with both profiting off an exercise in free-market capitalism.

Berries On The Battlefield

Prior to the advent of Disneyland's Frontierland, Knott's Berry Farm's Ghost Town existed as a memorial that sought to romanticize California's pioneering history. In 1940, Walter Knott of Buena Park began to construct Knott's Berry Farm's Ghost Town, an amusement park that would grant Southern Californians an escape from social change while giving "a salute to the pioneers."[84] Knott made his motivations for building Ghost Town transparent. In an interview with Helen Kooiman, his biographer, Knott stated, "The more complex the world becomes, the more people turn to the past and the simple things in life. Here at Ghost Town we have tried to give them some of these simple things."[85] Similar to Disney, Knott was reactive to changes in society that threatened a preferred way of life and a preferred past. Consequently, Knotts Berry Farm's Ghost Town would serve to memorialize the pioneers of California just as Disneyland's Frontierland would. In this manner, Ghost Town is the precedent to Frontierland that situates both amusement parks as exercises in claims of cultural memory.

Knott, a berry farmer in Orange County who had witnessed the agricultural strikes of the 1930s, endorsed the belief that it was the pioneers who had civilized the California West. Knott reasoned:

> that less than 100 years ago, 1,000 wagon trains carrying families had left homes and traveled west across our great plains, deserts and mountains. I grew up on stories of how these people had tamed the west. They had fought Indians, subdued a continent, and had done it without government aid. They had built the foundation upon which our economic structure rested.[86]

Repeating the idea that California, and the larger American West in general, had been uncivilized before the arrival of pioneers, Knott fashioned Ghost Town as a harbinger of conquest and individualism. In fact, Knott had specifically been reacting against the government collectivization of the 1930s. Commenting on the New Deal era and the Roosevelt Administration, Knott stated that the federal government had "tried all through the thirties,

[84] Helen Kooiman, *Walter Knott: Keeper of the Flame* (Fullerton: Plycon Press, 1973), 99.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 100.

with the WPA, the NRA and all kinds of make-work schemes to get us out of the Depression. I thought back to our pioneer ancestors who didn't need government alphabetical agencies to run our lives."[87] Knott had long been an opponent of federal aid, envisioning it as nothing but a "fancy version of socialism." In his view, the pioneers of 1849 were not only ancestors who should be revered, but beacons to a legacy of an unbroken white past.

With the motivation of "paying tribute to the pioneering spirit" and promoting the pioneer history of California, Knott opened Ghost Town in late 1940.[88] In its early days, Ghost Town was promoted as "a living segment of authentic Western Americana perhaps unequalled in the world. It is a monument to the indomitable courage of the pioneers who opened the opportunity of the West."[89] Explicitly, the goal of Ghost Town was to be as authentic as possible in order "to impart onto visitors their heritage as true Americans."[90] A manner in which Ghost Town sought to impart this heritage was through collecting and displaying relics of the pioneers. Knott had sent "scouts" throughout California "seeking relics of pioneer days, and the result represents the greatest treasure trove in the existence of the West's golden heritage."[91] In displaying relics at Ghost Town, Knott hoped to grant an air of legitimacy to Ghost Town and, therefore, a legitimate claim to the land.

[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.,101.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., 104.

Fig. 2: Walter and Cordelia Knott at a Ghost Town photo op. Courtesy of the Orange County Archives.[92]

What exactly greeted the common visitor when they entered Ghost Town? Walking through the worn wooden fence posts emblazoned with "Ghost Town," a visitor would be confronted with a remaking of a town from the common Western film. Almost all of the buildings are made from wood and given a look of antiquity. A blacksmith in traditional garb hammers away at his metalworking in his "General Blacksmith" shack. The shops that dot the small avenues of Ghost Town include an old post office, a general merchandise store, and the Calico Saloon. Its most extreme attractions included a gun and knife shop as well as a makeshift gold mine and a Calico mine ride.[93]

[92] *Walter and Cordelia Knott Pose at the Pitchur Gallery*, photograph, Orange County Archives, Buena Park, California, date unknown.
[93] "Daveland Photographs Knott's Berry Farm, Ghost Town," 1955.

Fig. 3: The Hangman's Tree in Ghost Town which venerates the vigilante lynching of bandits. Courtesy of Daveland Digital Photographs.[94]

Fig. 4: The Graveyard at Ghost Town depicts the graves of pioneers and revere them to be the civilizers of the California West. Courtesy of Daveland Digital Photographs.[95]

Reverence for the pioneer and California's Spanish past is on stark display in Ghost Town, but so is a hatred for the "violent Mexican." In touring Ghost Town and reliving the supposed grand heritage of old Southern California, the common visitor comes across a graveyard for pioneers and cowboys called Boot Hill Cemetery. Not actually containing the remains of people, the graveyard served as a sacred site for the memory of California's pioneers and supposed civilizers. A multitude of the gravesites bear comical epitaphs, but certain ones also turn the Bad John into the Good Sam, praising the pioneer for certain virtues. For example, one gravesite reads, "Honest Charlie of California: Left for Better Diggins."[96] California's Spanish past is romanticized in CFM fashion in that Knott made a mini El Camino Real within

[94] *The Hangman's Tree*, photograph, Daveland Digital Photographs, Buena Park, California, date unknown.
[95] *Graveyard at Ghost Town*, photograph, Daveland Digital Photographs, Buena Park, California, September 1955.
[96] Ibid.

Knott's Berry Farm.[97] Adjacent to Ghost Town, Knott's El Camino Real shows visitors miniature versions of all California missions with language of romanticization.

Finally, degradation of the "violent Mexican" becomes apparent in "The Hangman's Tree." Situated at the heart of Ghost Town, The Hangman's Tree represents a lynching of Mexican bandits by the "good law abiding citizens [who] formed a vigilante committee," according to its dedicatory plaque.[98] The monument-like structure is not simply a tree, but includes a shabby rope hanging from a dead branch that serves "as an ominous warning."[99] The plaque states Mexican bandits avoid Ghost Town at all costs, thus granting the imaginary residents and real visitors peace of mind that their ideal town is unperturbed. While not only revering the pioneers for civilization, Ghost Town also adds a reverence for frontier justice, an old concept that is still not justly condemned.

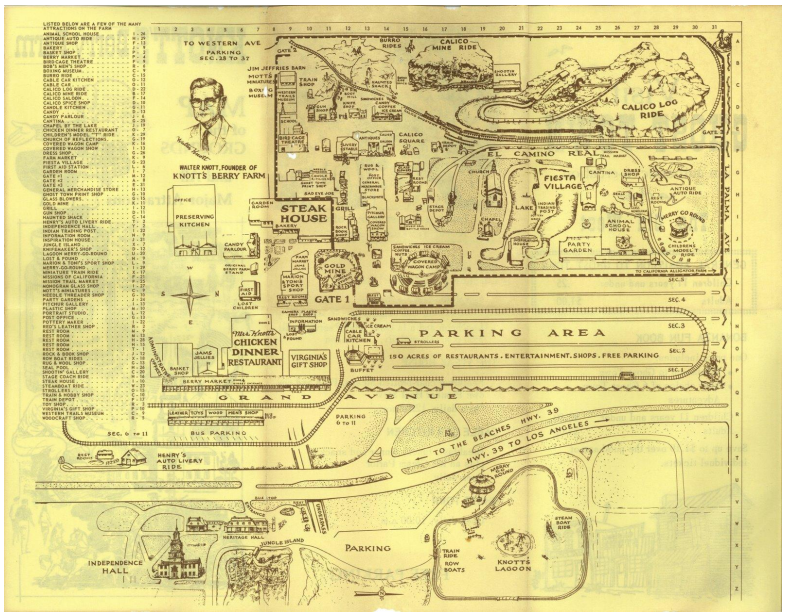

Fig. 5: 1969 map of Knott's Berry Far showing Ghost Town. Notice the inclusion of a makeshift "El Camino Real," the route that connects the 21 Spanish missions that was romanticiz by Anglo-Americans in California. Courtesy of Curtis Wright Maps.[100]

[97] El Camino Real, or The King's Highway, is a 600-mile commemorative route that displays California's 21 Spanish missions. Stretching from San Diego's Mission San Diego de Alcalá to San Francisco's Mission San Francisco Solano, El Camino Real was utilized by Californians to idealize the Spanish past of the state while working out a historical narrative that fashioned missions to be appealing to Anglo-American residents and tourists. See, Phoebe Kropp, "The Road: El Camino Real and Mission Nostalgia," in *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[98] *The Hangman's Tree*.

[99] Ibid. The lynching of Mexicans living in the Southwest frequently happened, yet, ostensibly, receives either little attention in history books or is regarded as simply emblematic of the so-called wild, wild West. The Porvenir Massacre of 1918 in Texas is a perfect example of Anglo-Americans violently oppressing the Mexican population. Carried out by Company B of the Texas Rangers and members of the Eighth U.S. Army Cavalry, fifteen ethnic Mexicans were executed at point-blank range on baseless charges of "banditry." In California, the first woman to by lynched, Josefa Segovia, was caricatured as a "simple Juanita" who had allegedly killed a white miner in Downieville, California in 1851. Other lynchings of Mexicans in the Southwest occured in Colorado, Nevada, and Arizona. See, Doug J. Swanson, "The Politics of Massacre" in *Cult of Glory: The Bold and Brutal History of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Viking Press, 2020) and Christopher Aranda, "To The Edge of Settlement: The Porvenir Massacre as a Case Study of Frontier Vigilantism," in *The Scroll: USC Undergraduate Historical Journal*, vol. I, Issue II, (October 2020): 61.

[100] *1969 Map of Knott's Berry Farm*, print, Curtis Wright Maps, 1960, https://curtiswrightmaps.com/product/map-knotts-berry-farm-and-ghost-town/.

With these attractions in Ghost Town, Knott believed that he had achieved a construction of heritage that the visitors of Knott's Berry Farm could enjoy. The romanticization of pioneers existed in Knott's Berry Farm and was explicitly meant to convey a type of emotion of belonging and refuge to the tourists. Speaking to an adoring crowd in 1942, Knott stated, "Here we look back to the lessons of history and try to build a better tomorrow."[101] Moreover, Knott stated his resoluteness in continuing to promote a myth of Southern California's past. Standing firm, Knott declared to the crowd that "we'll keep on building as fast as we can earn. Ghost Town represents roots in time, a stake in history."[102] By characterizing the moment as a "stake in history," Knott implicitly recognized the pugilistic atmosphere that existed within the arena of cultural memory. Furthermore, Knott also conceded that although the constructionists of this myth may fade from history, their monuments of manufactured memory would endure.

As the creator of Ghost Town, Walter Knott had made himself a large contributor to the CFM. In 1955, Knott was confronted with the arrival of Walt Disney in Orange County. However, Knott did not believe that Disney would prove to be irksome. In fact, the berry farmer believed the film director to be a partner. Having been revealed to Disney's motivation to build a place of escape for citizens who felt they had been sidelined by change, the Knott family stated that they believed Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland's Frontierland "can complement each other and that we will be good for each other. We are of the opinion that when the average tourist does come to Orange County, he will want to see both Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland."[103] Knott was cognizant of what Frontierland symbolized, therefore he did not see Disney simply as business competition, but a like-minded man who was already active in the perpetuation of the ideal of the civilizing pioneer and the myth of the California West.

The Magical *Ranchero*

Walt Disney's involvement in the mythologization of the California West is evident in his participation with a major association that propagated the myth, Los Rancheros Visitadores. Coming into existence in 1930 and enjoying widespread popularity until 1954, Los Rancheros Visitadores was a prominent association that perpetuated a romanticized narrative of California and the American West. Exhibiting fraternal behavior that consisted of drinking games, pranks, playing music, and barbecues, the Rancheros linked themselves and California exclusively to the Spanish California that consisted of wide open *ranchos* and majestic *caballos*.[104] Through

[101] Kooiman, *Walter Knott: Keeper of the Flame*, 105.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 160.
[104] *Ranchos* meaning "ranches," and *caballos* meaning "horses," my translation.

participating in highly masculine activities, the men became enamored with a certain sense of heritage and bonded themselves to that heritage. This sense of heritage lied in recreating the spirit of Spanish ranching life in Southern California from 1770-1860.[105] Through recreating the alleged trek of Spanish *rancheros* in the days of old, Los Rancheros Visitadores consciously placed themselves and other wealthy members of the CFM in order to affirm their place in the upper echelons of Southern California whilst providing a substantial heritage myth.

Los Rancheros Visitadores was founded by the wealthy John J. Mitchell, the chairman of the Illinois Merchants Trust Company and a scion of a wealthy New England shipping family.[106] Called *El Presidente*, Mitchell led the organization's first trek on May 9, 1930 at the Santa Barbara Mission, but it is from the second trek onwards that Mitchell and the Rancheros created a narrative of a preferred past. Thomas F. Collison, a longtime member of Los Rancheros Visitadores, reported that the 1931 ride included "stirring scenes of the roaring camps of '49" and cowboy sports such as driving cattle, roping, and riding contests.[107] Collison's writing demonstrates that Los Rancheros Visitadores had begun to identify themselves with the entrepreneurial spirit of the wealthy Spanish ranchers. As Collison writes, "The only people before us to share the beauties of this scene were venturesome scouts, seeking the heights from which to locate the enemy or to spot the victim for the hunt."[108] In fact, Los Rancheros make this contention even more explicit in their twenty-fifth-anniversary publication:

> There is a type of California cowboy––descendants of soldiers and settlers of all-Spanish blood. It is this *Californio* who later takes over the land once owned by the missions and who establishes the spacious, gracious, rollicking life of riding man and visitor to his neighbors––true forerunner of the Ranchero Visitador of A.D. 1955[109]

Los Rancheros Visitadores had begun to balance and harmonize romanticizing the Spanish past of California while cultivating a deep admiration for the rugged individualism of the masculine American cowboy.

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[105] William G. Domhoff, *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 61.
[106] Ibid., 60.
[107] The slogan refers to the year of 1849, the peak year for the California Gold Rush immigration. Implicitly, but no less factually, the slogan referenced the Anglo-American political dominance in the aftermath of the United States' victory in the 1848 Mexican-American War. Regarding the references that the slogan refers to, see, Natalia Molina, "'We Can No Longer Ignore the Problem of the Mexican': Depression-Era Public Health Policies in Los Angeles," in *Fit To Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 119. Regarding Collison's report, see, Thomas F. Collison, *El Diario del Viaje de los Rancheros Visitadores*, Santa Barbara: Los Rancheros Visitadores, 1935, University of California, Santa Barbara Special Collections, 10.
[108] Thomas F. Collison, *El Diario del Viaje de los Rancheros Visitadores*, Santa Barbara: Los Rancheros Visitadores, 1935, University of California, Santa Barbara Special Collections, 10.
[109] Los Rancheros Visitadores, *Ranchero Visitadores: Twenty-fifth Anniversary, 1930-1955* (Santa Barbara: Los Rancheros Visitadores, 1955), 8.

Fig. 6: Donald Duck as a Ranchero. Courtesy of Los Rancheros Visitadores.[110]

Fig. 7: Mickey Mouse as a Ranchero. Courtesy of Los Rancheros Visitadores.[111]

Los Rancheros Visitadores reveled in the fact that their mythmaking had attracted prominent members of the Southern California community. Amongst the most prominent members were Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Clark Gable, Ronald Reagan, and Walt Disney.[112] Mitchell and other Rancheros vehemently declared that "invitations were exclusively extended to men because of their qualifications to appreciate the ride and its participants. A position of social, economic, or political importance has no bearing" on becoming a Ranchero.[113]

Disney drew the logo for the Rancheros while also drawing images of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck as Rancheros Visitadores.[114] Additionally, Disney was an active member of Los Rancheros Visitadores who participated in the 1940 and 1946 treks.[115] Existing photos of Disney awaking from a mid-afternoon nap, drinking and eating with his fellow riders, and singing

[110] *Donald Duck*, print, in Los Rancheros Visitadores, *Ranchero Visitadores: Twenty-fifth Anniversary, 1930-1955* (Santa Barbara: Los Rancheros Visitadores, 1955), 57.
[111] *Mickey Mouse*, print, in Los Rancheros Visitadores, *Ranchero Visitadores: Twenty-fifth Anniversary, 1930-1955* (Santa Barbara: Los Rancheros Visitadores, 1955), 113.
[112] "Los Rancheros Visitadores: Celebrating Horsemanship and Ranching on the South Coast," *Santa Barbara Independent*, July 11, 2012.
[113] Los Rancheros Visitadores, *Ranchero Visitadores: Twenty-fifth Anniversary, 1930-1955*, 2.
[114] Ibid., 57, 113.
[115] *Walt Disney and the Rancheros Visitadores, 1940-1946*, Photo Archive.

campfire songs definitely prove Disney's involvement with an organization that endeavored to create a white heritage myth of California. Here, it is significant to note that Los Rancheros chose *rancheros* instead of *vaqueros* to refer to themselves. The scholar Oscar Lewis described the difference in his *California Heritage*: "The *ranchero* ruled over his thousands of acres with all the power of a feudal baron. He was the owner of immense herds of cattle, attended by scores of *vaqueros*, and at the home *hacienda* he had a retinue of Indian retainers to serve his needs."[116] The *ranchero* was the wealthy landowning horsemen who possessed a great deal of influence and, thus, provides an answer as to why Los Rancheros became keen to describe themselves as such. The *rancheros* of the old Spanish days could be seen as business equals, thus solidifying Los Rancheros' claim to be the heirs of heritage. The riding group was made up not only of men of industry, but also landowners. By 1940, 95 out of 300 members listed "rancher" as at least one occupation.[117] Los Rancheros Visitadores, centering themselves not only as propagators of myth, but also as an organization of wealthy businessmen, appealed to Disney's sentiments and beliefs.

Opening Day

Against the backdrop of Crockett Individualism and anxiety of socio-political change, Disneyland opened its gates on July 18, 1955. Crowds of men, women, and children swarmed the park, filled with excitement that they would be able to see another creation of the famed Walt Disney. Accompanying the crowds were multiple news reporters and cameras. Prominent among the reporters was the ABC news team who compiled a seventy-three minute broadcast of Disneyland's opening day.

One event that the ABC broadcast documented was the Opening Day Parade. Speaking to the crowds before the parade went underway, Mayor Charles A. Pearson of Anaheim starkly illustrated the conservatism that dominated the region and Disney himself: "I have known Walt Disney for many years and have long been aware of his spiritual motivations and the heart of this man who has dreamed this land into being."[118] With the introductory speech done, the parade was underway. Ronald Reagan, who had also testified to HUAC against purported communists in Hollywood, helped announce the parade's beginning.[119] With each character came a description from the announcers. Representatives of each realm of Disneyland, actors

[116] Oscar Lewis, *California Heritage* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1949), 43-44.
[117] Los Rancheros Visitadores, *1939 Roster* (Santa Barbara: Los Rancheros Visitadores, 1939), 63-80.
[118] "1955 Disneyland Opening Day [Complete ABC Broadcast]," 00:13:40.
[119] Ibid., 00:12:15.

and props, marched in the parade. Frontierland's introduction to the crowds was an overt reminiscence of the "lost" American Western past.

Fig. 8: Attendees of Disneyland's Opening Day enter Froniterland through a log stockade

Leading Frontierland's entourage was Fess Parker, dressed as his character Davy Crockett from the ABC *Davy Crockett* television series. On her horse next to Parker's was an actress dressed as Annie Oakley.[121] Both Crockett and Oakley were and remain prominent icons of the nineteenth-century American Frontier. Crockett embodies the image of a "man of the people'" who defends the honor of those who see themselves as politically inferior and societally sidelined by change.[122] Similarly, Oakley is a remembrance of fighting on the Frontier. Famous for her sharpshooting skill, Oakley is a reminder of the taming of the American Frontier into a civilized region.[123] Moreover, depictions of Oakley are of her trying to strike a balance between

[120] Untitled, Photograph, *The Atlantic*, Anaheim, California, July 1955.
[121] "1955 Disneyland Opening Day [Complete ABC Broadcast]," 00:21:00.
[122] Stuart A. Stiffler, "Davy Crockett: The Genesis of Heroic Myth," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1957): 134
[123] Susan Kollin, "On Savagery and Civilization: Buffalo Bill and the East," in *Captivating Westerns: The Middle East in the American West* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 91.

a "desire for a heterosexual mate and her skills as a sharpshooter and outdoorswoman, the latter elements threatening to unsettle post-World War II ideologies of white female domesticity."[124] With Crockett embodying his eponymous individualism of the common man and Oakley representing frontier taming and heterosexual norms, it is easy to understand how appealing these notions could have been to the crowds at Frontierland.

Alongside Davy Crockett and Annie Oakley, a curious individual also led the Frontierland parade. Governor Frank Clement of Tennessee, decked out in his finest suit with a black cowboy hat, was all smiles as he waved to the crowd. In true Disney fashion, Clement's appearance in the Frontierland procession is a well-orchestrated one with a purpose. Elected Governor of Tennessee in 1953 at the age of 32, Clement was the youngest governor in the state's history and remains as one of the youngest in United States history.[125] Clement's participation in the parade was a metaphor for the enduring youth that the American West attracted and the youth the American West itself possessed. As Clement himself articulated to Walt Disney upon his arrival, "After your Davy Crockett film, I feel like a part of this place."[126]

Frontierland was presented to the public with a distinct air of solemnity and sacredness for the American Western past. This solemn attitude and the imagining of the past was ever-so present in Frontierland's dedicatory plaque:

> Here we experience the story of our country's past … the colorful drama of the Frontier America in the exciting days of the covered wagon and the stagecoach...the advent of the railroad … and the romantic riverboat. Frontierland is a tribute to the faith, courage and ingenuity of the pioneers who blazed the trails across America.[127]

Adding to the tributes of hardship endured by the pioneers, the visitors to Frontierland would discover "gravesites" of pioneers who sought to settle in the American West. While the graves give agency to the fallen pioneers, they do not give agency to the Native American or any other "other." For example, a tombstone reads, "Lieut. Lawrence Clemmings, Fell Here Defending the Right."[128] In sharp contrast, another tombstone that lies a few feet away reads, "Unknown Hostile."[129]

Once visitors passed through the log stockade emblazoned with "Frontierland," a frontier fantasy welcomed the visitors through a variety of attractions. Families rode pack mules

[124] Ibid., 91.
[125] William L. Davis, "Frank Clement: The First Campaign," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1976): 83.
[126] "Governor, Film Stars, Kids Throng Fabulous Disneyland," *The Long Beach Independent*, July 18, 1955.
[127] Disneyland. "Frontierland Dedicatory Plaque," plaque, Anaheim, 1955.
[128] "Daveland Disneyland Fort Wilderness Photos," 2006.
[129] Ibid.

through a makeshift canyon that is bristling with desert flora and fauna.[130] Children chose their own coonskin caps along with toy guns from the Davy Crockett Antique Shop. One of the most popular attractions in the early days of Frontierland is the makeshift river that goes through Frontierland Island. This attraction called "The Rivers of America" is where the steampowered *Mark Twain* riverboat operates along with two keelboats that are said to belong to Davy Crockett.[131] The Rivers of America covers a majority of Frontierland and surrounds Tom Sawyer Island. On Tom Sawyer Island, an attraction made of log cabins and army barracks resides, Fort Wilderness. A 1956 brochure describes Fort Wilderness as "the last outpost of civilization."[132]

Within the fort, visitors can find wax mannequins of "Davy Crockett and U.S. Army Scouts reporting to Major General Andrew Jackson."[133] Native Americans are placed just beyond the fort's fortifications, purposefully at the edge of the settlement. The brochure describes the scene as "beyond the stockade are teepees...hostile Indians on the warpath. A settler's cabin burns in the distance with the settler's brutally killed. Mute evidence of a treacherous attack."[134] The park's placement of "hostile" Native Americans on the periphery of Frontierland coupled with the inclusion of "friendly" Native Americans *inside* "the last outpost of civilization" demonstrates the denial of agency. Just as in the case of the graves of the pioneers, a cherry-picking of historical narrative is taking place. All that threatened the structures of the American Western settlers are kept outside of the fort, a metaphor of the underlying reason suburbanites found comfort behind Disney's magical walls.

Frontierland's fashioning into a revered area where one could pay homage to the "true" American past was articulated further in Disneyland brochures and map guides. Another 1956 brochure describes Frontierland as a place that depicts "the story of a young and enterprising nation and a pioneer people moving Westward … the log stockade calls you to Frontierland, tribute to our pioneer past."[135] Similarly, a 1956 description booklet of the different areas of Disneyland outlines Frontierland's purpose to honor and recreate a past of the American West. The booklet tells its reader that in Frontierland, a person "can experience the high adventure of our forefathers who shaped our glorious history."[136]

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[130] Ibid.
[131] "Disneyland: A Complete Guide To Adventureland, Tomorrowland, Fantasyland, Frontierland, Main Street, USA," Disney Collector Archives, 1956, 18.
[132] "Yesterland: Fort Wilderness on Tom Sawyer's Island," yesterland.com
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] "Disneyland Informational Brochure," Disney Collector Archives, 1956.
[136] "Disneyland: A Complete Guide To Adventureland, Tomorrowland, Fantasyland, Frontierland, Main Street, USA," 18.

Conclusion

Frontierland delivered on the promise that Walt Disney outlined in his dedicatory speech on July 18, 1955. Disney promised that Frontierland would be a place where "age relives fond memories" and where the "hard facts that have created America" are presented.[137] At every twist and turn in Frontierland, one realizes that there is an effort to craft Frontierland into a playground of escapism. Frontierland was made into a refuge where one could live out a myth of the American West and escape the changing realities outside of Frontierland's log stockade. Frontierland was a statement that sought to reaffirm that an individual's worth and success could be brought about through faith, hard work, and endurance. Cartographer and historian Richard Francaviglia passionately explains the American Western myth that Frontierland and Walt Disney embraced:

> If Frontierland's essentially circular or kidney shape encloses a body of water and island at its center, these features are at once geographical and metaphorical: in the American West, especially in the West of popular imagination of the nineteenth century, water both beckoned settlers and entrepreneurs into the frontier and defined the perimeter of the known world. Water fascinated Disney as it has our culture for centuries. To Disney and generations of Americans preceding him, the western waters were alluring, even seductive. They both defined the physical world and hinted at the rejuvenation or regeneration of the American character that would be attained by following them to their sources, and then beyond... Frontierland's design reaffirms both the actual importance and symbolic importance to Disney's (and America's) imagination.[138]

Many of the attractions that the twentieth-century visitor would have seen are no longer able to be viewed by the modern one. Much of the pre-recorded voice narration describing "savage Indian war parties" wreaking havoc upon the pioneers are gone. Instead, a visitor will find restaurants serving Mexican food, shops that sell pins and lanyards, and an anachronistic Pirate's Lair.[139] Modern Frontierland does not possess the implicit purpose it once did; it no longer caters to a sector of society that feels as if it is voiceless. The conservative nature that dominated Disneyland and its operations are no longer vibrantly visible nor are its links between the park and conservative ideologues. It is as if a stringent scrubbing of the park's history has been accomplished in order to erase the history the park wished to emulate.

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[137] "1955 Disneyland Opening Day [Complete ABC Broadcast]," 00:12:55.
[138] Richard Francaviglia, "Walt Disney's Frontierland as an Allegorical Map of the American West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1999): 171.
[139] "Frontierland: Take a Step Back in Time...," Disneyland.disney.go.com.

It is difficult to assert that Walt Disney created Frontierland out of malice. At a time when conservative Americans found themselves in an array of change, Frontierland allowed them to carve out a place of infinite youth, albeit at the expense of certain racial and political minorities. At times, social stagnation and change can be disconcerting to many. For those who resided in New York, the rigid nature of society catalyzed many to seek out an area where one could live out their ideal world and lives. Frontierland provided a space in the same way, but to different ends: it became an escape for those who were disenchanted and frustrated by the changing makeup of the United States.

The acclaimed writer Joan Didion wrote of California "as a place in which the mind is troubled by some buried but ineradicable suspicion that things better work here, because here, beneath the immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent."[140] Walt Disney, Orange Countians, and all other characters involved in the creation of Frontierland would seemingly agree with Didion. The American West is a region that occupies a distinct position in the American psyche. It is a region that is untamed, yet one where many can find opportunities. Because of its vastness and enticing promises of success, the American West is the final laboratory where an idea can come to fruition. Such a place has been staked out by those who sense a diminishment of their agency. So was the case with American aristocrats of the nineteenth-century and so it was again with suburban conservatives of the twentieth-century.

The symbolization of guarding the "old order" took on a more modern feel in the 1950s in the form of the idolization of the silver-screen cowboy John Wayne. In 1943's *War of the Wildcats*, John Wayne appears topped with an unblemished cowboy hat with a gun attached to his hip. Seemingly dripping with a quiet self-confidence, Wayne tells his love interest that he will "build her a house, 'at the bend in the river where the cottonwoods grow.'"[141] Suburban Americans pined after such an image; confidently assuring the fertile land of the American West that the thorny brush of change will be cleared and a lasting ideal will be planted at the bend in the river where the cottonwoods grow.

[140] Joan Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (New York: Farrah, Strauss, and Giroux, 1968), 167.
[141] Ibid., 30.

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THE ROMAN PERSPECTIVE:

CULTURAL ATTITUDES AND SOCIETAL STIGMAS ON BLINDNESS AND DISABILITY IN ANTIQUITY

Kelly A. Harvell

Abstract

Over centuries, the cultural view of disability has been shaped and shifted by religious and political factors. Consequently, finding a metric to evaluate progress on improving accommodations, societal attitudes, and overall acceptance of the disabled community is incredibly complex. Reflected in modern issues of discrimination and ableism are the attitudes of deep-rooted societal views on physical imperfection. Rebuilding the lives of blind individuals of Ancient Rome through state records, historical accounts, legal writing, and archeological findings provides an understanding of how a physical impairment impacted daily functions, social standing, and access to opportunities in antiquity. Superstition, religion, and myth were inexplicably tied to blindness in this old world, as seen in religious texts and personal testimonies, and contributed to the discrimination faced by the blind community. By exploring multiple facets of life one by one—in common language, the workplace, socioeconomics, and the legal sector—the experience of a blind individual in Ancient Rome may be reconstructed. Cultural attitudes towards disability are reflected in these experiences and played a significant role in the life of a blind Roman.

Introduction To The History Of Blindness In Ancient Rome

An account of the Roman Emperor Hadrian's brush with death is recorded in the Scriptores Historiae Augustae (SHA)[1], a collection of the apocryphal biographies of the great emperors from 117–284 C.E. At a low point in his reign, a very ill Hadrian contemplates suicide. Outside the emperor's massive estate, a common woman of the city is told in a dream to go to Hadrian to prevent this from happening, but she refuses. The SHA states she was then struck blind where she stood by the will of the gods.

The prominence of such stories, and various estimates of population demographics and Roman public records demonstrate that blindness was not an unusual occurrence in antiquity.[2] Yet the attitudes and stigmas surrounding the disability remain largely unknown. Evaluating the role disability played in Ancient Roman society is difficult as few accounts of individuals with blindness, alongside other cataloged impairments, exist for analysis today. The mythological tales of old, historical accounts of great ancient scholars, public records, and legal documents provide some insight into how disability was perceived and how it affected disabled individuals' ability to navigate society, albeit not the full picture. These sources may provide answers to the lingering questions of cultural values ascribed to blindness in antiquity: How did blind citizens navigate their day-to-day tasks in Ancient Roman society and what sorts of accommodation were made for them unofficially or legally? What was the cultural attitude towards visual impairment at the time and how did it influence the treatment of blind individuals?

"Over the last thirty years … interest in disability in historical periods has steadily increased," writes Draycott.[3] She rebuts modern historians' negative picture of disability in antiquity as incomplete: "It is only over the last decade that this reductive approach has been gradually discredited, and the understanding of disability in antiquity has become increasingly nuanced."[4] This "reductive" thinking is rooted in present artifacts of Roman civilization. "Classicists and nonclassicists alike are quick to remember that the Greek Classical ideal included the notion of the perfectly proportioned human body and to conclude that all disabled people who varied significantly from this ideal must have been uniformly reviled" writes

[1] Ernst Hohl, Christa Samberger, and Wolfgang Seyfarth, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Lipsiae: in aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1965). The validity of this account is highly disputed as it cannot be confirmed to have been written by the rulers themselves or an author who created fictitious situations, but there is value in analyzing the attitudes towards blindness in this particular passage.
[2] Robert Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*, 2nd ed. (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2010), 12.
[3] Jane Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," *Greece and Rome* 62, no. 2 (October 2015): 189.
[4] Ibid.

Martha Rose.[5] While she does not directly reference Roman civilization, Greek works and accepted cultural norms heavily influenced those of the later Roman Republic.[6] Roman laws also reflected a similar distaste for physical "imperfection." The first line inscribed on Table IV of the Twelve Tables, the earliest attempt of a codified law system for the Roman Republic written in 451–450 B.C.E., reads "A notably deformed child shall be killed immediately [Monstrosos partus caedere licere]."[7] Christian Laes largely concurs with the majority agreement on the stigmatization of blindness: "We should nevertheless be careful to avoid being seduced into the overly optimistic perception of blind people as the chosen ones within society … ancient descriptions of the life of Homer leave no doubt: his success can be explained despite his disability, and certainly not because of it."[8] The reality is that our understanding of disability in antiquity is clouded by lack of information and is ever evolving with new evidence still being uncovered in this past century.[9]

The subject of blindness in antiquity is particularly intriguing due to the relative abundance of public records and historian testimonials on the topic compared to other disabilities in ancient writing, the stark contrast between the treatment of individuals between socioeconomic classes, and its prevalence in mythological literature. A diverse societal perspective on disability through multiple sectors may be discerned, at least partially, by drawing upon multiple accounts of Roman legal writing, public records, and historiography; through this method, one can construct a more complete picture of the experiences of blind individuals in antiquity. While blindness was not necessarily an obstacle to everyday life and did not explicitly prevent one from participating in the workplace, consistent discrimination, restrictive Roman laws, socioeconomic inequalities and coarse jokes about disability imply an overall negative societal experience for blind individuals and a close-minded culture, making day-to-day life more challenginig and inaccessible.

One of the main challenges disability scholars grapple with is the absence of first-hand sources from blind individuals in antiquity. Unfortunately "No first-hand account from a blind

[5] Martha L. Rose, *Staff of Oedipus: Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece (Corporealities)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 3.
[6] Hermann Aubin et al., "Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians," ed. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed December 13, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe/Greeks-Romans-and-barbarians.
[7] Allan Johnson, Paul Coleman-Norton, and Frank Bourne, "Document 8: The Twelve Tables, 451-449 B.C.," in *Ancient Roman Statutes: a Translation with Introduction, Commentary, Glossary, and Index*, ed. Clyde Pharr (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 10. The consensus surrounding what type of disability this law is referencing is contested, but it is thought to be about physical impairment.
[8] Christian Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death'?" in *Disabilities and the Disabled in the Roman World: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 85.
[9] Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 194.

Roman survives."[10]Dr. Lisa Trentin explores archeological and literary evidence for the treatment of blindness in Ancient Rome.[11] She begins by acknowledging that the sources of her information are largely those of the elite, high-class male Roman citizens who were likely able-bodied. For the most part, women were excluded from documenting their experience due to the emphasis on male superiority in the workplace and home.[12] Classics author Christian Laes also prefaces his work with a disclaimer regarding the absence of primary sources on this topic.[13] Draycott attempts to bring a new source into conversation in her case study of court documents of the disabled Roman citizen Gaius Gemellus Horigenes living in Karanis, Egypt, uncovered by excavations done by the University of Michigan in 1924[14]; however, she acknowledges that these documents still do not provide the full picture of living with a disability in antiquity due to their limited frame of reference relative to Horigenes's life.[15] Despite the ableist bias, as Trentin notes, when cross referenced with available historiography, legal documents and records, these sources reflect, to an extent, the general attitudes towards blind individuals in everyday life as told by an outsider.[16]

Visual Impairment in the Ancient Workplace

Classics and visual studies scholars have analyzed several prominent citizens with disabilities, including senators, generals, and prominent writers. Trentin finds, "blind and visually impaired (wo)men were visible and vital members of Roman society … Visual impairment alone did not bar an individual from entry to positions of government or religion."[17] The Roman workplace, particularly for the upper classes of society in sectors like government, religion, or the military, was populated with blind citizens.[18] Several military legends were recorded to have had impairments, often in the form of battle scars, including Marcus Serguis Silus, a general with an iron hand that Pliny the Elder reported as conquering "even Fortune [the goddess of luck] herself."[19] Government positions were not closed to blind citizens of Rome, as prominent Roman senators were reported to have had visual impairments.

[10] Lisa Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," in *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies A Capite ad Calcem*, ed. by Christian Laes, Chris Goodey, and Lynn M. Rose, *Mnemosyne, Supplements, History and Archaeology of Classical Antiquity* ed., vol. 356 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 92.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Mark Cartwright, "The Role of Women in the Roman World," Ancient History Encyclopedia, published February 22, 2014, accessed October 11, 2020, www.ancient.eu/article/659/the-role-of-women-in-the-roman-world/.
[13] Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 14.
[14] Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 194.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," 91–92.
[17] Ibid., 108.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History of Pliny the Elder*, trans. by John Bostock and H. T. Riley (London: Taylor and Francis, 1855), quoted in Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 192.

Trentin points to "The aged and blind praetor Gnaeus Aufidius [who] was perfectly competent in all matters of government and wrote extensively on Greek history."[20] How one acquired their blindness, however, seems to have an effect on how they were perceived in their station. The name of a person, a defining part of identity, could even be influenced by their disability. Citizens in certain occupations, such as the military, were glorified for their impairments, borne out of service to their country, while others had to fight for respect while navigating a work environment that held beliefs that they were somehow "at fault" for their blindness. One's profession was inextricably linked to societal views on their blindness and both topics can provide context for each other.

In the absence of first-hand accounts, terms used to describe blindness in Roman records are very useful in determining the ancient societal perception of disability. Roman cognomina, the third name for a male Roman often used as a colloquial nickname, include references to blind terminology.[21] They imply "mild forms of visual impairment were relatively common … individuals identified in this way bore such names without (much) stigmatization."[22] Some recorded cognominas included: Caecilius (blind), Cocles/Luscinus (one-eyed), and Strabo (cross-eyed). Cognomina were earned, bestowed, or sometimes passed down generationally on a citizen of Rome, and could be used to uniquely identify someone.[23] Trentin asserts, "a blind man could be ridiculed because of his physical impairment or venerated for his 'insight.'" Thus, a blind individual's attitude towards their cognomen may have relied on an individual's perception of their blindness within their identity, if they viewed it as an impairment alone, and on how they were treated in their sphere of influence, but it is difficult to determine if any of these possibilities were the case.[24] Cognomina reduce a person to their disability and mark it as their defining characteristic, disregarding their personality and accomplishments. "Even a man's name," Cicero tells us, "May be used to discredit him and give rise to suspicion."[25] The damage of assigning a cognomen for one's disability lies in the potential prejudice the individual may face based on societal values. Scholars are still attempting to unravel the meaning behind these names and what they meant to blind citizens.

A cognomen did not necessarily have to be assigned at birth; while many sons inherited their cognomen from their fathers, others were based upon societal perceptions of the person

[20] Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," 105.
[21] Cartwright, "The Role of Women in the Roman World." While men were given three names in Roman society, a praenomen, nomen, and cognomen, women were referred to only by the "feminine version of the family name."
[22] Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," 94.
[23] Benet Salway, "What's in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 B.C. to A.D. 700," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (November 1994): 127.
[24] Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," 94.
[25] A. E. Douglas, "Roman Cognomina," *Greece and Rome* 5, no. 1 (March 1958): 65.

and could have been thrust upon the individual.[26] The Roman military legend Horatius Cocles received his cognomen later in life and was "... given his surname of Cocles because he had lost one of his eyes in the wars."[27] In fact, many stories include one-eyed military heroes and antagonists, like Horatius Cocles, as well as Hannibal and Julius Civilus.[28] Visual impairment in the military sector may have played a role in the perception of a disabled soldier both on the battlefield and upon their return to society. Given the militaristic culture of the expansionary Roman society, eye injuries were likely sustained by many members of the army during vicious battles. Upon return to their hometowns following war, disabled veterans may have experienced a mixed welcome:

> However, he [Sertorius] did not remit the activities of a daring soldier after he had advanced to the dignity of a commander, but displayed astonishing deeds of prowess and exposed his person unsparingly in battle, in consequence of which he got a blow that cost him one of his eyes. But on this he actually prided himself at all times. Others, he said, could not always carry about with them the evidences of their brave deeds, but must lay aside their necklaces, spears, and wreaths; in his own case, on the contrary, the marks of his bravery remained with him, and when men saw what he had lost, they saw at the same time a proof of his valour. The people also paid him fitting honours. For, when he came into the theatre, they received him with clapping of hands and shouts of welcome, testimonials which even those who were far advanced in years and honours could not easily obtain.[29]

Acquired battle scars were marks of war, as acknowledged in this excerpt, and could have been seen in a different light than congenital or acquired blindness, since judgment against veterans' disabilities appeared to be different than impairments "in general," as Lommel asserts.[30] For example, of the idea of *dehonestamentum corporis,* or dishonoring one's body with a blemish or deformity, veterans could have been considered somewhat exempt:[31]

> Yet many achievements carried out under his [Sertorious'] command were left unrecorded, principally because he was not a noble, thus arousing the spite of historians.

[26] Benet Salway, "What's in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 B.C. to A.D. 700," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (November 1994): 127.
[27] Plutarch, "Publicola," in *Lives, Volume I: Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola*, trans. by Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), Loeb Classical Library 46, 544–545, 16.5.
[28] Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," 93.
[29] Plutarch, "Sertorius," in *Lives, Volume VIII: Sertorius and Eumenes. Phocion and Cato the Younger*, trans. by Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), Loeb Classical Library 100, 10–11, 4.2-4.
[30] Korneel Van Lommel, "Heroes and Outcasts: Ambiguous Attitudes towards Impaired and Disfigured Roman Veterans," *The Classical World* 109, no. 1 (2015): 94.
[31] Ibid.

> However, during his lifetime his face bore the record of such deeds in numerous battle scars and an empty eye socket. Far from being worried about them, he took the greatest delight in these disfigurements in so far as he was keeping, to his greater glory, the rest of his body intact.[32]

Perhaps, while Sertorius himself did not consider *dehonestamentum corporis* as somehow "wrong" in his case, others did and harbored judgments about him based partly on his social class. However, respect for disabled veterans was apparent as their impairment provided evidence of their service to the republic.

Aristotle's comments in *Nicomachean Ethics* further support the idea that how one acquired their visual impairment may have influenced the way their disability was perceived:

> … though nobody would reproach, but rather pity, a person blind from birth, or owing to disease or accident, yet all would blame one who had lost his sight from tippling or debauchery. We see then that bodily defects for which we are ourselves responsible are blamed, while those for which we are not responsible are not.[33]

His analysis asserts that if a person is blind from birth, or acquires the impairment through factors beyond their control, they deserve pity rather than ridicule. Yet the definition of what it means to be "at fault" for one's visual impairment is clouded, as Romans sometimes pointed to disrespect of the gods as a reason for acquired blindness.[34] Applying the glorification of wounds, the reverse of Aristotle's statement could be inferred: those Romans who were themselves responsible for putting their eyes on the line for Rome were lauded.

Appius Claudius Caecus, an extremely influential statesman from 315 and 278 B.C.E. responsible for the construction of the first Roman road and aqueduct system, serves as a case study to the effects of acute blindness in old age as a Roman in the public eye. His children guided the seasoned politician down to the senate building, where he led the war effort against King Pyrrhus of Epirus.[35] Livy interprets Claudius's acquired blindness in Book 9 of *The History of Rome*.[36] After reallocating the duty of ministering at the Ava Maxima ("Great Altar") of Hercules from the Potitii family, who had presided over the grounds for decades, to some "common" temple servants, Claudius is said to have sealed his fate:

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[32] Sallust, *Sallust, the Histories*, trans. by Patrick McGushin, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 39, line 77.
[33] Aristotle, "Book III," in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 148–149.
[34] Titus Livius "Livy," "Book 9: The Second Samnite War - (321 - 304 B.C.)," in *The History of Rome*, trans. by Rev. Canon Roberts, vol. 2 (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1905), Chapter 29.
[35] Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 99; Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," 105.
[36] Livy, "Book 9: The Second Samnite War - (321 - 304 B.C.)," Chapter 29.

> It is said that … when the change was made … not one member [of the Potitii family], old or young, was alive twelve months later. Nor was the extinction of the Potitian name the only consequence; Appius himself some years afterwards was struck with blindness by the unforgetting wrath of the gods.[37]

Livy implicitly states that Claudius's blindness was a direct punishment from above, a reflection of his religious blithe, earning him the cognomen "Caecus" (derived from Caecilius, meaning "The Blind"). The statesman had allowed temple servants of lower religious status to manage the monument of Hercules, resulting in Appius's visual impairment.[38] While blindness may not have prevented one from participating in everyday functions in the workplace, or even rising to prominence in government, the societal view on why one developed that disability was often critical of the person, suggested to be owing to their own misdeeds. Social stigmatization played a role in a blind individual's treatment in their workplace and how they were able to navigate daily life.

Socioeconomic Classes and Their Effect on Quality of of Life for Blind Citizens

On the other side of the denarii, blind Romans living in abject poverty could have found their disability very limiting. Social class was an integral part of Roman society and affected several aspects of life, including who one was allowed to marry, where they could work, and their rights under the law. Two basic factions formed: the Patrician upper-class and the Plebeian working-class. However, these categories would be subdivided and grouped as (1) Patricians, (2) Equites, (3) Plebeians, (4) Freedmen, and (5) Slaves.[39] Within these strict divisions between the social classes, Plebeians were at a disadvantage in most regards; they were unable to marry Patricians, who were born into their station, the courts were not in their favor, and certain occupations, like public office, were closed to them.[40] Plebeians gained more rights with the publication of the Twelve Tables, a set of codified law that all citizens could read and be held accountable to. This was a significant push forward in equality among the classes.[41] However, there still existed a rigid dichotomy between classes. Consequently, class and status also affected blind citizens of Rome. Blindness could cause one to not be able to work at all, leading to significant disadvantage even within the Plebeian class. Being of a lower class

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Joshua J. Mark, "Ancient Roman Society," World History Encyclopedia, published October 23, 2019, https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1463/ancient-roman-society/.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Allan Johnson, Paul Coleman-Norton, and Frank Bourne, "Document 8: The Twelve Tables, 451-449 B.C.," 10.

amplified the inequality experienced by blind individuals and prevented them from being able to access accommodations that were otherwise afforded to the elites.

Accounts of poor Roman citizens with known visual impairments inform scholars on the inequitable opportunities afforded to such individuals in antiquity. Marcus Tullius Cicero comments on the influence of wealth and blindness in the *Tusculan Disputations*:

> It is related that Asclepiades … on being asked by someone what blindness had brought him, answered that he had one more boy in his retinue; for just as the most utter poverty would be endurable if we could bring ourselves to do as certain Greeks do daily, so blindness could readily be borne, should we be supplied with aids to our infirmities.[42]

This excerpt brings attention to the need for a certain sum of money for disability to be endurable or comfortable in ancient times—specifically for a guide—where blindness can "readily be borne" with the right "aids to our infirmities."[43] Access to these accommodations, however, was the great hurdle.

To this point of inequitable access, Plutarch writes on the life of Pelopidas, a Greek statesman and general, in his *Parallel Lives*.[44] In these set of biographies, he reveals society's flippant attitude towards blind and disabled citizens of antiquity:

> And when [Pelopidas's] friends admonished him and told him that the possession of money, which he scorned, was a necessary thing, "Yes indeed," he said, "necessary for this Nicodemus here," pointing to a man who was lame and blind.[45]

Pelopidas wards off his friends' insistent assertions on the importance of money by making a somewhat dry remark of who actually needs it to live a comfortable life. Pelopidas himself does not place particular value on extensive material wealth (although he has the freedom to do so as he reputedly came from a well-to-do family), preferring plain clothing and the rigid schedule of the military. Pelopidas also reportedly expressed sympathy for the poor residents of Thebes.[46] Nicodemus, here identified only as a lame and blind citizen in his proximity, may have been such a poor resident, as he might have been a beggar. Notably, Nicodemus requires some amount of wealth, apparently due to his disability. Moreover—given Pelopidas's inclination towards the low income citizens of the city—Nicodemus likely was unable to work with his

[42] Marcus Tullius Cicero, "Disputations V," in *Cicero: Tusculan disputations / with an English translation*, trans. by J. E. King (London: W. Heinemann, 1927), line 113.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Plutarch, "Pelopidas III," in *Lives, Volume V: Agesilaus and Pompey. Pelopidas and Marcellus*, trans. by Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), Loeb Classical Library 87, 347-349.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

disability and, as a result, was poor. While it is unknown whether Nicodemus was a beggar explicitly from text, there was a correlation between having a disability–commonly recorded as being deaf, blind, or lame–and the impoverished population of Rome that was forced to ask for money from passersby.

Examples of this correlation between blindness and begging are seen throughout history. Bartimaeus was a blind beggar healed by Jesus according to the Bible, found sitting on the roadside in Jericho.[47] Another parallel is seen in Thai history, where beggars were also recorded to sit outside of Buddhist temples to ask for alms from the monks that resided there.[48] In Jerusalem, another healing of an unnamed beggar, described as "blind from birth," is reported in John 9:1-8.[49] Medieval historians claimed there were even established centers for blind individuals to receive room and board in China:

> Between the second and third gates there is a place with rooms for occupation by the blind ... These receive food and clothing from pious foundations attached to the temple ... This temple was built by a King of China, who bequeathed this city and the villages and gardens attached, as a pious endowment, for this establishment.[50]

Groce et al. also assert that "blind boys were trained to beg in ancient Rome."[51] These examples from ancient history give context for Pelopidas's comment. Having a disability such as blindness and being of a lower socioeconomic status limited a Roman citizen's options for employment and social mobility. Laes identifies that blind beggars were often "objects of ancient ridicule and satire" and could not afford the same guides to assist with navigation, transcription, and other accommodations afforded to the upper class.[52] In the previous quote, Pelopidas is likely referencing the need for cash to pay for accommodations such as guides, which were not provided by any outside entity, in order to work. He also could be commenting on Nicodemus's inability to work, implying he needed money simply for his basic needs, like clothing and food, that he could not provide for himself without access to public welfare.

As to Rome's attempt at social welfare, little is recorded in legislation. However, interestingly, there existed a form of alms given to the impoverished populations of urban Rome through a relationship bought between Patricians and Plebeians:

[47] Mark 10:46-52 (ESV).
[48] Katherine A. Bowie, "The Alchemy of Charity: Of Class and Buddhism in Northern Thailand," *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 2 (June 1998): 472.
[49] John 9:1-8 (ESV).
[50] Odorico et al., *Cathay and the Way Thither Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China*, XLI, vol. IV (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1913), 121-122.
[51] Nora Groce, Marie Loeb, and Barbara Murray, "The Disabled Beggar – A Literature Review," Working Paper No. 1. Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch, International Labour Organization, September 2, 2014, 8.
[52] Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 102.

> Men of small means are only able to earn favours from our order or pay us back in one way and that is by helping us and following us about when we are candidates for office. It is not possible and it cannot be asked of us senators or of the Roman knights that they should attend for whole days their friends who are candidates. . . It is the poorer men with the time available who provide the constant attention that is habitually given to men of standing and to those who confer benefits ... There is no penalty that can prevent men of the lower class from showing their gratitude in this old-established way of fulfilling their obligations.[53]

It was a Roman "old-established" tradition for poor citizens of the city to receive food or money in return for supporting a candidate's run for public office.[54] This way of assisting the poor was privatized – involved in state politics while not directly resulting from governmental legislation. It was not a right protected by codified law, but rather a social system constructed out of the politicians' desire for support and the Plebeians' need for basic necessities.[55] Accepting a dinner invite could have also made Plebeians feel like they had a voice in government, while the reality was that candidates were likely just trying to 'buy' loyalty to be elected. There is no explicit mention of low income blind citizens participating in this relationship, but it is certainly not out of the question. Depending on if the Roman elite had enough supplies to go around or were interested in running for a political office at that given time, the unstable and precarious nature of Plebeian life is illustrated in this system as well. The welfare system, if one could call it that, was tenuous at best, leading many low income diasbled people of Rome to turn to begging as a source of income. Rigid social structure and employment status greatly affected quality of life for blind citizens of Rome and influenced how they navigated daily activities. The experiences of high-class versus working-class blind citizens were significantly different due to their social standing.

[53] Marcus Tullius Cicero, "Pro Murena," in *In Catilinam 1-4. Pro Murena. Pro Sulla. Pro Flacco*, trans. C. Macdonald, vol. X (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), Loeb Classical Library 324, 275–277.
[54] Frank C. Bourne, "The Origins of Roman Experiments in Social Welfare," *The Classical Weekly* 44, no. 3 (December 4, 1950): 35–36.
[55] Ibid.

Social Perceptions of Blindness: Representation in Literature and Society

From callous comments to downright disregard for human life, evidence demonstrates Roman society was not the most open-minded community to the blind individual. Literature depicts many blind characters as insightful prophets who were bestowed a gift from the gods. However, this assignment of supernatural power to a physical attribute likely contributed to community superstition toward blind members and unfounded harassment. Other societal experiences suggest that blind individuals faced discrimination for a variety of reasons and had limited protection from local authorities. Plutarch comments on the societal repercussions of insensitive jokes and ridicule of the blind and disabled community in *Table Talk II,* a section of his larger work *Moralia*, suggesting its common observation in society:

> The man who would make tactful use of joking must know the difference between a diseased and a normal habit … Teased about the former, men are annoyed; about the latter, they are pleased … Many such differences exist, too, where physical characteristics are concerned … Again, people support with equanimity being teased about baldness, but with asperity about impairment of sight.[56]

Plutarch goes on to provide an example of how making jokes about an individual's disability may not be tolerated if that person were in a position of power:

> Indeed, Antigonus, though it was his habit to make fun of himself about his one eye and once, when he received a petition written in big letters, he said, 'This is clear even to a blind man',—the same Antigonus nevertheless put to death Theocritus of Chios because, when someone said, 'Stand before the eyes of the king, and you will be saved,' Theocritus replied, 'The salvation you recommend me is impossible.'[57]

Antigonus I founded the Macedonian dynasty of the Antigonids and began his reign as king in 306 B.C.E. Having only one eye, he was sight-imapired and thus known as Antigonus I Monophthalmus, which translates to "One-Eyed," or Antigonus I Cyclops.[58] The power that Antigonus held put him in a position to silence those who mocked his visual impairment, like the sarcastic Theocritus. Other citizens, however, did not hold the same status, and they could

[56] Plutarch, *Plutarch's Moralia: In Sixteen Volumes*, trans. Paul A. Clement and Herbert Benno Hoffleit, vol. VII, table-talk, books 1-6 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 128-131, 633A-C.
[57] Ibid., 130-131, 633C.
[58] Hans Volkmann, "Antigonus I Monophthalmus," Encyclopædia Britannica, last modified November 12, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Antigonus-I-Monophthalmus.

have endured similar jokes made about their impairment. Even Homer, a renowned poet and talented storyteller, faced mocking from his peers.[59]

The Life of Homer, one of several biographies of the great poet, is attributed to Herodotus, but "is actually a work of literary fiction," as the so-called "father of historiography" Herodotus was not the author of the piece.[60] Hence, historians refer to the writer of the *Life of Homer* as pseudo-Herodotus and acknowledge that it is not completely reliable. In this excerpt, Homer [originally named Melesigenes] is just beginning his career as a performer and seeks state funding for his artistic ventures:

> Melesigenes took his stand and made the speech about his support … it is said that one of the law lords opposed his application, his chief argument being that if they decided to provide for *homēroi*, they would have a large, useless crowd on their hands. It was from then that the name Homer prevailed for Melesigenes, from his disability, for the Cymaeans call the blind *homēroi*; so that whereas he had previously been called Melesigenes, this became his name, Homer.[61]

Homer's request for state funds to support his endeavors is blocked in the council; the "law lord" asserts that if the councilors were to assist Homer monetarily there would be multitudes of blind individuals, called *homēroi* by the Cymaeans, coming to them for monetary government assistance and they would "have a large, useless crowd on their hands." While community members acknowledged Homer's talent, government officials treated him differently because of his impairment. If even a great poet faced prejudice, how could a blind citizen without an extraordinary talent have been treated by their city councilors, or more generally state authorities? The discrimination faced by Homer did not end in the statemens' refusal to provide funding for his endeavor; pseudo-Herodotus goes on to assert that this argument is what causes Melesigenes to become known as Homer, as it is derived from the word *homēroi*. The control that legislative officials held over patronage in Cyme is indicative of the connection between government and society, and therefore these officials' sentiments are useful in analyzing legal treatment of blind citizens.

Community superstition plagued blind individuals as unexplained events were often attributed to religious phenomena.[62] In both Greek and Roman mythology, blindness was often

[59] "2. (Pseudo-)Herodotus, on Homer's Origins, Date, and Life," in *Homeric hymns. Homeric apocrypha. Lives of Homer*, ed. by Martin L. West, trans. by Martin L. West (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), lines 12–14.
[60] Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 81.
[61] "2. (Pseudo-)Herodotus, on Homer's Origins, Date, and Life," in *Homeric hymns. Homeric apocrypha. Lives of Homer*, ed. by Martin L. West, trans. by Martin L. West (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), lines 12–14.
[62] Hohl, et al., *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*; Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 104.

used metaphorically to represent themes such as death and punishment and as a plot device to further action.[63] Roman theater was heavily influenced by their Greek predecessors; Roman writers took upon the Greek model of theater for their plays, with the use of masks to identify characters and the actors cast solely male.[64] In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus blinds himself as a self-punishment for his lust that resulted in a myriad of horrible actions, one being him marrying his own mother.[65]

However, in religious contexts, blindness was also sometimes considered as a gift of "insight." A blind person who served as a prophet was held in high regard not necessarily because of their skillset, but as a result of the society's perceived belief in prophetic power behind their disability; *Oedipus Rex* offers the example of Tiresias, a blind prophet who tells Oedipus of his inescapable fate:

> You who belittled me for being blind
>
> have eyes but do not see your evil state,
>
> your dwelling place, or those you're living with,
>
> nor even know from whom you came.[66]

Tiresias's response to being mocked for his visual impairment is used as a way to explore the metaphor of Oedipus being "blind" to the consequences of his decisions, of being unable to see what is right in front of him. Tiresias's words foreshadow the dramatic reveal, when Oedipus "sees" the truth, that is yet to come later in the play.[67] In this context, the truth is unveiled when one is no longer "blind" to it, or when the "blindness" is lifted. The impact of *Oedipus Rex* on audiences was substantial, and the subject of blindness as a metaphor in myth persevered in literature. There is a distinction to be made between metaphorical and physical blindness; the treatment of mythological blind characters cannot be directly compared to a person's lived experience navigating society.

Even through the lens of Roman legend, the visual impairment of an individual becomes their defining characteristic, their purpose in the mythological narrative. This sole focus on the disability robs the character of any other distinguishable human characteristic or purpose. A

[63] Kaley Jemison, "PUNISHMENT AND PROPHECY: Blindness in Oedipus Rex, King Lear, and Jane Eyre" (BA thesis, Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University, 2016), ; Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 5.
[64] Gregory Aldrete, "The Roman Empire: The Rise of the Roman Theater," The Great Courses Daily, published October 25, 2020, https://www.thegreatcoursesdaily.com/the-roman-empire-the-rise-of-the-roman-theater/.
[65] Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, trans. by David Mulroy (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), vv. 457–60.
[66] Ibid., vv. 411–414.
[67] Ibid.

lesser known individual with prophetic abilities is found in Book 7 of Pausanias's *Description of Greece*:

> At last a man of Erythrae (his name was Phormio) who gained a living by the sea and by catching fish, but had lost his sight through disease, saw a vision in a dream ... The women of the citizens absolutely refused to obey the dream; but the Thracian women ... offered themselves ... Accordingly no women except Thracian women are allowed within the sanctuary of Heracles ... The same people say that the fisherman recovered his sight and retained it for the rest of his life.[68]

In this tale, a fisherman who became blind through an illness was able to regain his sight by sharing and implementing his prophetic dream. The dream instructed the women to cut off their locks so that the men could weave a rope with their hair and tow their rafts to the shore.[69] The Thracian women who obeyed the commands of the fisherman's vision were given a religious reward, the ability to enter the sanctuary of Heracles. The fisherman in this narrative is only known for his visual impairment and prophetic abilities; his obedience to the demands of his dream grant back his sight. Phormio regaining his sight is described as being a gift, implying his blindness was a curse to be lifted. The role that these superstitions about blindness played in the treatment of blind individuals is unclear, but some recently recovered papyri can inform this question.[70]

The reconstructed narrative of Gaius Gemellus Horigenes, a blind Egyptian-born estate owner, provides some insight into how harassment and stereotypical beliefs affected the life of a visually impaired Roman.[71] In her case study of Horigenes, Jane Draycott provides analysis of legal petitions Horigenes filed against his neighbors, Iulius/Julius and Sotas, who are reported to have harassed him, trespassed on his property, and destroyed crops, his primary source of income:

> Julius and Sotas, both sons of Eudas, wrongfully, with violence and arrogance, entered my fields after I had sown them and hindered me therein through the power which they exercise in the locality, contemptuous of me on account of my weak vision...[72]

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[68] Pausanias, "Book 7," in *Description of Greece*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, Henry Arderne Ormerod, and R. E. Wycherley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), 7.5.7 – 7.5.8.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 194.
[71] Ibid. Gaius Gemellus Horigenes is thought to have Roman citizenship, even though he resided in Karanis, Egypt.
[72] P.Mich. VI 422.20–30, in Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 197. See the entry in *Papyrus Archives in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, <http://www.trismegistos.org/archive/90> , accessed November 2020.

> Then Sotas died and his brother Iulius also acting with the violence characteristic of them, entered the fields that I had sown and carried away a substantial quantity of hay; not only that, but he also cut dried olive shoots and heath plants from my olive grove near the village of Kerkesoucha.[73]

Horigenes asserts that the two brothers stole from him specifically because of his visual impairment, perhaps insinuating it makes him an easy target or out of plain cruelty (contemptuous as the excerpt writes). Due to Julius's theft of crops, Horigenes is unable to pay his taxes; the effect of the brothers' cruelty is not limited to verbal harassment, but also damages Horigenes's finances. In a petition to the regional governor, filed a year after the previous one regarding the brothers in AD 198, he complains of Kastor, a tax collector's assistant:

> This person, who held me in contempt because of my infirmity – for I have only one eye and I do not see with it although it appears to have sight, so that I am utterly worthless in both – victimized me, having first publicly abused me and my mother, after maltreating her with numerous blows and demolishing all four doors of mine with an axe so that our entire house is wide open and accessible to every malefactor. These were demolished and we were beaten although we owed nothing to the fiscus, and for this reason he dared not even produce a receipt lest he be convicted through it of injustice or of extortion.[74]

It was not unheard of for a tax collector to behave immorally in order to receive their payout, however, in this case Horigenes claims that he did not owe any more to the government; it is unclear if the tax collector was actually sent to collect money for the government or if he was attempting to extort Horigenes for personal gain.[75] This complaint again demonstrates the case of another individual, without good reason, harassing him and his family as well as destroying his home; once again, Horigenes writes that his "infirmity" was the primary cause of this harassment. Kastor did not provide a receipt, which Horigenes cites as evidence for his knowledge of this wrongdoing. The superstitions of the ancient Romans played out in Horigenes's life when Sotas died:

> In addition, not content, he [Iulius] again trespassed with his wife and a certain Zenas, having with them a *brephos*, intending to hem in my tenant farmer with malice so that

[73] P.Mich. VI 423–424, in Ari Z. Bryen and Andrzej Wypustek, "Gemellus' Evil Eyes (P.mich. VI 423–424)," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 49 (2009): 539.
[74] P.Mich. VI 425, in Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 198.
[75] Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 198.

> he should abandon his labor after having harvested in part from another allotment of mine, and they themselves gathered in the crops. When this happened, I went to Iulius in the company of officials, in order that these matters might be witnessed. Again, in the same manner, they threw the same *brephos* toward me, intending to hem me in also with malice…[76]

Julius returned to Horigenes's estate after his brother's death to frighten his tenant farmer with a *brephos,* or fetus.[77] When Horigenes comes to confront Julius, the man and his wife throw the *brephos* at him in front of the local officials, showing no remorse for their behavior. The brother also reportedly outlined Horigenes's property line with the Evil Eye, used in Egyptian culture to ward off evil and reflect it back onto the evildoer, while holding the *brephos*, implying that Julius believed that Horigenes played a part in his brother's passing.[78] The use of a *brephos* as a way to "encircle" the evil that Julius believed Horigenes used to kill his brother is very unusual; in Bryen and Wypustek's comment on this event, they claim that the strangeness of the "magical object" used by Julius was intentional, as it was believed to be more "potent."[79] Horigenes himself makes the connection between the fetus and *phthonos* [roughly translated as "malicious envy"].[80] Harassment by magic is brought into question in this particular complaint; it is unclear whether cursing someone would have been considered a form of harassment in this instance, but the shocking manner in which it is done shows the depth of belief Julius held in Horigenes's involvement in Sotas's death. It is clear that Horigenes faced mocking and harassment, some which was based upon unfounded superstitions about his blindness.

Community-held assumptions perpetuated the belief that blind citizens had supernatural powers, which was reinforced in ancient literature, further suggesting that blindness was sometimes perceived as a gift, but brought with it much superstition within society. Evidence from other stories from Roman culture show that blind citizens faced discrimination from local authories, even if they found support within their community. Even with great talent or religious reverence, blind citizens were at a disadvantage due to societal attitudes toward their disability and unfounded beliefs about it, further complicating their right to live peacefully in the Roman Republic.

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[76] P.Mich. VI 423–424, in Ari Z. Bryen and Andrzej Wypustek, "Gemellus' Evil Eyes (P.mich. VI 423–424)," 539.
[77] Ari Z. Bryen and Andrzej Wypustek, "Gemellus' Evil Eyes (P.mich. VI 423–424)," 535.
[78] Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 104; Quinn Hargitai, "The Strange Power of the 'Evil Eye,'" *BBC Culture*, February 19, 2018, accessed October 7, 2020.
[79] Ari Z. Bryen and Andrzej Wypustek, "Gemellus' Evil Eyes (P.mich. VI 423–424)," 537.
[80] Ibid.

Rights and Justice for Blind Citizens Within the Roman Legal System

Legal depictions of disability also suggest that disabilities like blindness were overall negatively stigmatized in Roman society. The documents of Horigenes provide evidence that discriminatory attitudes toward blind individuals impacted Roman society not only culturally and within communities but also legally and within codified systems of justice. Roman laws and court practices provide insight that literary sources—the overwhelming category of source used for studying blindness in the ancient world—cannot, and further inform how government entities treated blind individuals. By examining the Twelve Tables, Justianian law codes, and Cicero's commentary on courtroom etiquette, one can see that the discrimination recorded in social settings was mirriored and upheld by codefied law to a significant extent. While the law offered some rights to blind individuals, it did not erase the other clear discriminatory practices and limitations placed upon blind participants of the legal system.

The Twelve Tables, as referenced previously, impart a clear disregard for human life and their words imply that the value of a disabled person's life is somehow worth less than that of an abled citizen:

> "A notably deformed child shall be killed immediately [*Monstrosos partus caedere licere*]."[81] This ignorant sentiment is perhaps an echo of the alleged founder of Rome's words on disabled children. Though difficult to separate fantasy from reality under the apocryphal first seven kings of Rome, sources from the monarchy nevertheless provide glimpses into the cultural attitudes that prevailed at the time. Translated legal writings from Romulus's reign record the first king's words on children, "... he forbade them [his subjects] to put to death any child … unless it was a cripple or a monster from birth."[82] Clearly, worth was assigned according to a child's physical attributes, and it was legally permissible and even encouraged to abandon or kill a newborn designated as physically impaired, at least throughout the monarchy and leading up to the mid-400s B.C.E. when the Twelve Tables were written.

Despite the codification of cruelty toward disabled infants and children into law during the early Republic, evidence for the consideration of blind individuals by Roman law can be found within the legal system of Justinian. In the courthouse, blind citizens could represent

[81] Allan Johnson, Paul Coleman-Norton, and Frank Bourne, "Document 8: The Twelve Tables, 451-449 B.C.," 10.
[82] Ibid., 3.

themselves, and therefore did not require *curatores* [guardians].[83] They were able to marry, act as overseer on their own assets, adopt children and be adopted:

> PAUL, *Views, book 2*: The … blind are liable where dowries are concerned, because they are able to contract marriages.[84]
>
> ULPIAN, *Edict, book 39*: … blind persons can receive *bonorum possessio* [the right of possession of the property of a deceased person] if they understand the transaction.[85]
>
> ULPIAN, *Sabinus, book 1*: Even a blind man can adopt or be adopted.[86]

However, limitations on a visually impaired individual's ability to write their own will is seen in another Justinian law:

> A blind man cannot make a will, except by observing the forms introduced by a law of our imperial father Justin.[87]

Blind individuals could only draft a will if they jumped through tedious legalities, making will writing rather inaccessible to these citizens.[88] The reason for this restriction is unclear; it is possible that legislative entities did not think that blind individuals could act as witnesses to their own will, but this is speculative. While some freedoms did exist for blind citizens of Rome, they were not guaranteed assistance through the government via accommodations.

There were unofficial sources of accommodation, however, primarily for the upper class. The statesman Appius Claudius Caecus, referenced previously, had his children as guides to bring him to the senate building.[89] The legal petitions filed by Gaius Gemellus Horigenes were not written by his hand, but rather likely dictated to a third party. Horigenes would not have been able to document the discrimination that he encountered had he not had access to a person willing to put his words to paper.[90] However, given that Horigenes was a landowning male, he likely had easy access to people willing to write for him, an advantage which would not have been available to the low income citizens of Rome. Unequal access to writing accommodations is likely one of the reasons why a disparity exists between the availability of primary sources from elite and non-elite blind Romans.

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[83] Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 105.
[84] Justinian, *The Digest of Justinian*, trans. Alan Watson, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 23.3.73.
[85] Justinian, *The Digest of Justinian*, trans. Alan Watson, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 37.3.2.
[86] Justinian, *The Digest of Justinian*, trans. Alan Watson, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 1.7.9.
[87] Justinian, "Book 2," in *The Institutes of Justinian*, trans. John Baron Moyle, 5th ed. (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2.12.4.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 99; Trentin, "Exploring Visual Impairment in Ancient Rome," 105.
[90] Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 196.

While blind individuals might have had the right to represent themselves in court and could seek accommodations if doing so was in their financial grasp, an excerpt from Cicero's *Des Oratores* suggests that the courtroom—like many other sectors within Roman society—could be a site of mockery and discrimination for people with disabilities:[91]

> In deformity, also, and bodily defects, is found fair enough matter for ridicule; but we have to ask the same question here as is asked on other points, 'How far the ridicule may be carried?' In this respect it is not only directed that the orator should say nothing impertinently, but also that, even if he can say anything very ridiculously, he should avoid both errors, lest his jokes become either buffoonery or mimicry; qualities of which we shall better understand the nature when we come to consider the different types of *the ridiculous*.[92]

Cicero's commentary on the mockery of disabled participants in court is concerned with extent; he urges the orator to consider their rhetoric and does not admonish the act in the courtroom completely. His framing of disability in the courtroom suggests that even in a legal setting, a disabled individual seeking redress or facing a charge may be subject to mocking and discrimination. Horigenes found himself in a similar situation while filing his petitions, so it is not out of the question that he observed or experienced mockery within the court system himself.[93] If this practice was permissible in courtrooms to a certain extent, one might wonder how fairly the claims of a person with a disability were treated and how seriously their complaints were taken. While we cannot make a decisive conclusion from this one example, this evidence suggests that, when seeking restitution, disabled individuals could face discrimination within the very institutions that were supposed to serve justice.

Through laws from different stages in Roman history and Cicero's account of courtroom etiquette, one can discern that discimination toward blind individuals continued into the legal sector. The non-elite blind citizens of Rome were exposed to an unwelcoming environment that, for the most part, they had to learn to navigate themselves in the absence of accomodations. While certain rights were afforded, as seen throughout the Justinian age, the legal systems of the monarchy and Roman Republic sanctioned the infanticide of children with disabilities and courtrooms could be a site of mockery for disabled individuals in need of restitution. In many cases, the legal sector contributed to the overall restrictions and obstacles placed on blind citizens that complicated their daily life.

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[91] Ibid., 202.
[92] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero on Oratory and Orators: With His Letters to Quintus and Brutus*, trans. John Selby Watson (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), 290.
[93] Draycott, "Reconstructing The Lived Experience Of Disability In Antiquity: A Case Study From Roman Egypt," 195.

Blindness as Pathology

The categorization of a disability based on pathology mitigates the experiences of the members of that community to a medical term. Robert Garland, author of *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*, utilizes comparative medical data to come to a conclusion about relative birth defect statistics in the Greco-Roman world. Modern statistics indicate that approximately 3 percent of all newborns are born with congenital impairments needing medical attention; however, due to high prevalence of malnutrition and disease in antiquity, both of which are known to cause birth defects, Garland estimates that at least an equal percentage can be expected.[94] In fact, Garland argues that incidence of birth defects was higher in ancient society due to social practices such as inbreeding within families, which amplifies likelihood of hereditary deformities, "Although the incidence of congenital disability was probably considerably higher in antiquity than it is in modern society, a far smaller percentage of persons so afflicted would have survived infancy."[95]

The Greek physician Soranus, who practiced in Rome, authored *Soranus' gynecology* as a guide to pregnancy and childbirth for physicians of the ancient world; in section VI of Book 2, titled "How to Recognize the Newborn That is Worth Rearing," Soranus advises midwives to perform an evaluation on all newborns to ensure that the baby is "perfect in all its parts, members and senses… that the joints bend and stretch; that it has due size and shape and is properly sensitive in every respect."[96] Soranus lists requirements of his definition of a "viable" newborn, including their mother being in good health throughout the pregnancy, the baby being born at the right time, if they cry strongly from birth, and do not act sluggish, before concluding, "By conditions contrary to those mentioned, the infant not worth rearing is recognized."[97] He does not directly make a recommendation as to what course of action to take should the child have a deformity or visible impairment, but it can be implied that the consequence would be abandonment and/or murder based upon laws found in the Twelve Tables.[98] Medical practitioners like Soranus who made recommendations to identify children "not worth rearing" likely contributed to the limited number of infants with congenital disabilities that survived their first few years.[99] Soranus assesses the "worth" of a child based upon their physical perfection, or lack thereof. In *Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla*, a

[94] Robert Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*, 2nd ed. (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2010), 12.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Soranus of Ephesus, "Book II, Section VI, How to Recognize the Newborn That is Worth Rearing," in *Soranus' Gynecology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), ACLS Humanities E-Book (HEB), 79–80.
[97] Ibid., 80.
[98] Allan Johnson, Paul Coleman-Norton, and Frank Bourne, "Document 8: The Twelve Tables, 451-449 B.C.," 10.
[99] Soranus of Ephesus, "Book II, Section VI, How to Recognize the Newborn That is Worth Rearing," 80.

hagiography on Saint Thecla, reported follower of Paul the Apostle, written between 468 and 476 A.D., a wet nurse mourns over an eye imperfection of a child she delivered, "It made the poor child 'ugly, indecent and shameful in appearance and physique.'"[100] Birth to a child who did fit the ancient ideals of physical "perfection" could have even been considered "shameful" to the parents:

> ULPIAN, *Lex Julia et Papia, book 4*: Someone will ask, if a woman has given birth to someone unnatural, monstrous or weak or something which in appearance or voice is unprecedented … whether she should benefit, since she gave birth. And it is better that even a case like this should benefit the parents; for there are no grounds for penalizing them because they observed such statutes as they could, nor should loss be forced on the mother because things turned out ill.[101]

In this statute, there is an argument against the parents, or more specifically the mother, being at "fault" for the birth of a child with a disability. This insistence that the parents should not be "penalized" for having a child that is outside of what was considered "perfection" is demeaning to the child and dehumanizing. Given the estimated relative prevalence of birth defects, disability was likely not a rare occurrence in society. Even so, the medical realm did not seem to offer any opportunities for accomodation for a disabled individual, but rather condemned their right to lead a fruitful life.

Moving from congenital blindness to acquired blindness through illness requires that we again look to ancient physicians' work. "But there are grave and varied mishaps to which our eyes are exposed; and as these have so large a part both in the service and the amenity of life, they are to be looked after with the greatest care," writes Aulus Cornelius Celsus, a Roman encyclopaedist and author of perhaps one of the most detailed medical books recovered from Ancient Rome.[102] He provides meticulous description of many eye ailments and the consequences of their progression, including complete loss of sight. Excerpts of his work provide insight into how a Roman physician might approach an eye illness:

> If suppuration shows itself in the corner nearest the temple, the eyeball should be cut into, in order that by letting out the pus, both inflammation and pain may be ended, and the coats of the eyeball may recede, so that the patient's looks afterwards may be less

[100] Gilbert Dagron, ed., *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle [Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla]*, Subsidia Hagiographica 62 (Brussels: Society of Bollandists, 1978), quoted in Laes, "Chapter 3: Blindness, a 'Fate Worse Than Death,'" 104; Allan Johnson, Paul Coleman-Norton, and Frank Bourne, "Document 8: The Twelve Tables, 451-449 B.C.," 10; Linda Ann Honey, "Thekla: Text and Context with a First English Translation of the Miracles," (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2011), ii.
[101] Justinian, *The Digest of Justinian*, trans. Alan Watson, vol. 4 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 50.16.135.
[102] Celsus, *On Medicine, Volume II: Books 5-6,* trans. by W. G. Spencer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), Loeb Classical Library 304, 185.

> disfigured. There should then be applied either one of the above salves with milk or egg, or saffron, either by itself or mixed with white of egg. But if the eyeball has grown hard and is dead, but not converted into pus, so much of it is to be cut out as projects in an ugly fashion; for this purpose the sclerotic coat is seized with a hook, and the scalpel cuts under it; then the same medicaments are to be inserted until all pain has stopped.[103]

The emphasis of Celsus on preserving the patient's "looks afterward" to be "less disfigured" is an interesting point in which the physician is departing from solely focusing on ensuring function of the eye to conserving the original physical features of the patient.[104] Treatments of these ailments may have proved to be even more trying that the illness itself:

> According to Hippocrates, the oldest authority, the treatment of the eyes includes bloodletting, medicaments, the bath and wine; but he gave little explanation of the proper times and reasons for these remedies, things of the highest importance in the art of medicine ... From the first day, therefore, the patient should lie in bed in a dark room, and at the same time he should refrain even from talking; take no food at all, and if feasible not even water, or at any rate the least possible amount. If the pains are severe, it is better that he should be bled on the second day...[105]

The practice of bloodletting in ancient medicine makes an appearance in this section, and it is emphasized that Hippocrates recommended this "treatment" for eye ailments specifically. Fasting and abstention from water was also common practice, but wine, however, was deemed appropriate for the patient. Celsus goes as far to say "Such a dietetic regimen is exceedingly necessary."[106] The extreme "cures" of ancient medicine, based on their harmful effects, could have also contributed to a higher incidence of acquired blindness as a result of illness in antiquity.

The categorization as disabled from birth brought with it immediate disregard for one's life. Even though congenital blindness was likely not an uncommon occurrence, children with impairments were othered by discriminatory practices and cultural sentiments. The medical realm's lack of knowledge likely led to a higher incidence of acquired blindness as well, as legitimate treatment options were not available and physicians emphasized the importance of preserving aesthetics over function. Overall, medicine did not offer a distinctly different

[103] Ibid., 203.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 189.
[106] Ibid., 191.

approach to blindness as other sectors of society and contributed to stigmatization of impaired individuals.

Conclusion

By reviewing the sources available on blindness in Ancient Rome, one can roughly reconstruct the life of a blind individual in Roman antiquity. While this work is not exhaustive, evidence from several sectors of society, including socioeconomics, the workplace, and mythological literature, has been presented to provide a broad view of what a blind citizen may have experienced in Ancient Rome. The continued themes of discrimination, socioeconomic inequalities, and restricting archetypes reflect an overall difficult life for a visually impaired citizen; evidence suggesting that blind individuals had to find their own accommodations or resort to begging demonstrates the inaccessibility of Roman prosperity and well-being to the non-elite disabled citizens of Rome. Several factors seem to affect treatment and overall quality of life for blind citizens. Namely, the way one acquired their blindness, which occupation or title they held, their socioeconomic status, and community-held superstitions. Poor blind individuals had very limited access to any resources, with only a loose form of alms as "welfare," and therefore were at times forced to turn to professions such as begging. Higher class citizens could afford transcription aids and guides, leading to their narratives being more prevalent in historical literature. While some rights and freedoms were afforded under Justinian, laws regarding infanticide and practices in court implied a discriminatory justice system that placed unnecessary restrictions on blind participants and even threatened their lives. The medical realm also condemned imperfection for the most part, and excerpts imply that parents may even be shamed for giving birth to a disabed child. Blindness in antiquity did not prevent an individual from participating meaningfully in society and holding an occupation in Ancient Rome, but consistent discrimination across several sectors, legal limitations, class inequalities, superstitions, and uncivil language about disability point to an overall negative experience in society that was frought with challenges in everyday life.

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"Shouldering Their Responsibilities"

Critical Refugee Studies and European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1938-1945

Wendi Zhou

Abstract

In the years 1938-1939, approximately 16,000 Jewish refugees fled Nazi-dominated Germany and Austria for Shanghai. In this paper, I draw on sociologist Yen Le Espiritu's Critical Refugee Studies (CRS) paradigm in analyzing contemporary historical perspectives around these refugees. I hope that drawing on this paradigm will reveal historically concealed narratives of refugee agency created by and for the refugee communities I am researching. While Espiritu developed her conclusions from individual refugee testimonies, I instead use archival evidence to examine whether a CRS paradigm is consistent with the perspectives of European Jewish refugees in Shanghai. I conclude that the CRS model used by Espiritu in examining the experiences of Vietnamese refugees is in fact consistent with the perspective held by many German and Austrian Jewish refugees in Shanghai, and that this stands in opposition to the more traditional narrative of refugees as passive objects of aid espoused by those outside of this refugee community.

Introduction: The Reports of Laura Margolis

In May 1941, Laura Margolis arrived in Shanghai. A social worker who represented a prominent Jewish refugee aid organization, Margolis was working to guide relief efforts for the approximately 16,000 German and Austrian Jews who fled from Europe to Shanghai between 1938 and 1939 because of the city's lenient entry requirements.[1] Reading reports and statements attributed to Margolis offers an interesting insight into a contradiction that emerged in descriptions of Jewish refugees in Shanghai this era: often, the refugees were portrayed as helpless and passive recipients of aid. In other instances, however, they were characterized as possessing agency to shape their lives in a foreign land.

In her remarks at the January 1944 annual meeting of members and directors of the National Refugee Service (NRS)—a refugee aid organization founded in 1939 to assist those fleeing Nazi persecution—Margolis portrays European Jewish refugees in Shanghai as a practically helpless mass completely dependent on the Joint Distribution Committee, which she represented. She continually refers to these refugees as a "horde," claiming, for instance, that "Shanghai was totally unprepared to receive the invading horde" of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution.[2] Margolis makes the bold claim that "[i]f it had not been for the work of the [JDC] . . . half of the population [of the refugees] today would not be alive."[3] In short, Margolis concludes, the work of the JDC was crucial for this "stateless and helpless" group.[4]

[1] Laura L. Margolis, Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive, interview by Linda Kuzmack, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, July 11, 1990, pg 6; Steve Hochstadt, Exodus to Shanghai: Stories of Escape from the Third Reich (New York: Springer, 2012), 1.
[2] Laura L. Margolis, "Remarks by Laura Margolis at Annual Meeting of Members and Directors of NRS," (Annual Meeting of Members and Directors of the National Refugee Service, New York, NY, January 15, 1944), 2.
[3] Ibid., 4.
[4] Ibid., 5.

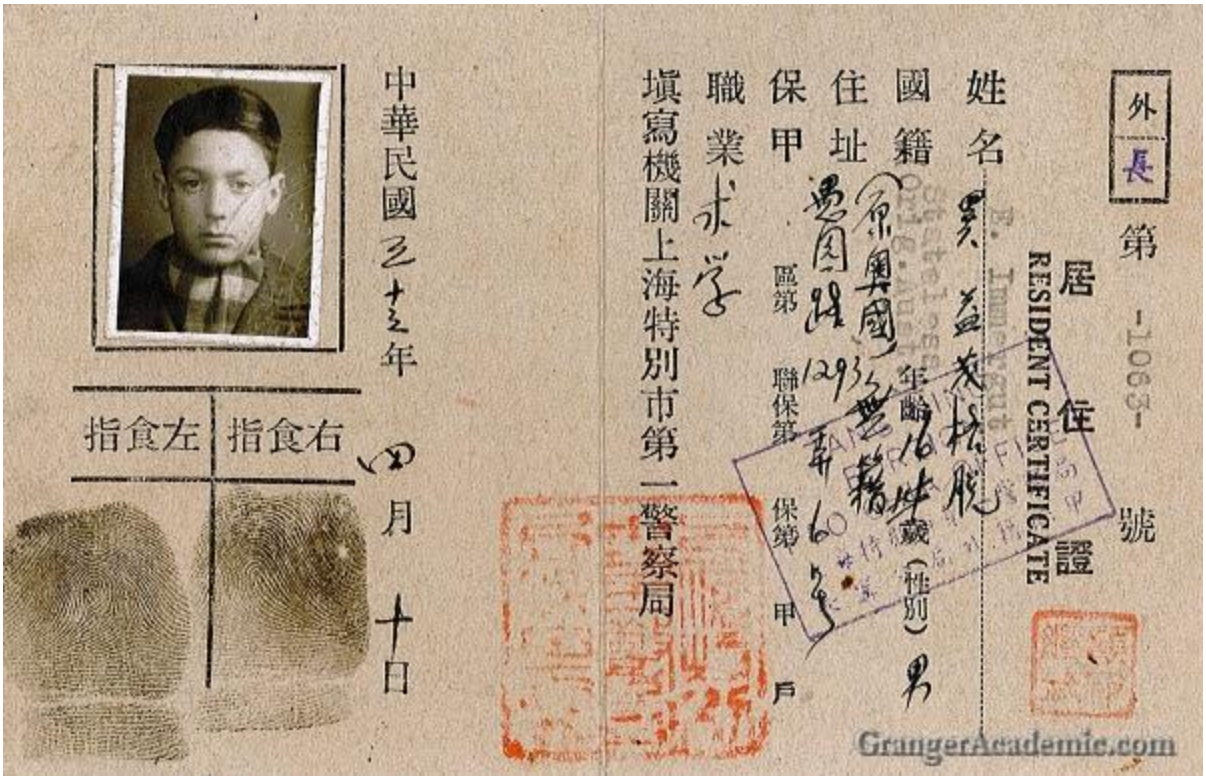

Fig. 1: Chinese Republic Resident Certificate for Stateless Jewish refugees permitted to settle in Shanghai during World War II, 1944, photograph, Pictures from History / Granger, NYC. All rights reserved.

She provides a different description, however, in a statement read by Congressman Arthur G. Klein in an April 1944 meeting of the U.S. House of Representatives. In her account, she describes Jewish refugees in Shanghai as actively creating their own refuge instead of being merely passive recipients of aid. Recounting once again her work as a JDC representative in Shanghai, Margolis makes clear her impression of Jewish refugees as actively working with JDC staff and "shouldering their responsibilities . . . rather than sitting idly by and passively accepting our aid."[5] To further highlight individual refugees' agency, Margolis cites an instance where a refugee member of the local aid committee approached Margolis with the idea of hosting a fundraiser party for other refugees with fewer means, and Margolis describes how "[t]hat first party led to others. The poor were helping the poorer."[6] Ultimately, she praises the refugees as people "who in danger and in difficulty have never lost faith, have never lost hope."[7] Thus, in her statement for Congress, Margolis presents a vision of the refugees as being able to take care of each other instead of completely depending on outside financial and organizing assistance.

[5] Laura L. Margolis, "Refugees in the Far East," Congressional Record, April 18, 1944, 2.
[6] Ibid., 2.
[7] Ibid.

After looking at Margolis's descriptions of European Jewish refugees in Shanghai, an interesting question emerges: how should historians reconcile these two seemingly opposite pictures of Jewish refugees? I argue that this contradiction can be resolved through the application of the Critical Refugee Studies paradigm. I also examine oral histories of Jewish refugees in Shanghai which reveal that refugees possessed more agency than has been attributed to them by non-refugees.

Historical Background

Prior to 1933—the year when Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Germany and Austria first arrived—Shanghai was home to a small but significant number of Jewish residents.[8] These included around a thousand Baghdadi Jews and six thousand Russian Jews.[9] Following armed clashes leading up to World War II, Shanghai was divided into three main areas.[10] These included the International Settlement (including the Japanese-controlled Hongkew District, later to be the home of the majority of these refugees), the French Concession (until 1943), and predominantly Chinese districts occupied by the Japanese military since the fall of 1937.[11]

After Hitler came to power in 1933, a small number of German Jews began leaving for Shanghai. The number soared in 1938, following Germany's annexation of Austria in March and "Kristallnacht" in November.[12] In the years of 1938 and 1939, approximately 16,000 German and Austrian Jews boarded ships to Shanghai. These refugees chose Shanghai because it was a city, according to historian Steve Hochstadt, where "nobody asked to see [the refugees'] papers." This was notable in an era when many nations had strict quotas for accepting Jewish immigrants.[13]

Jewish refugees in Shanghai often arrived with very few resources. Prior to October 1941—when the Nazi state officially banned emigration—the Nazi regime had a policy of encouraging Jewish emigration while obtaining the assets of emigrants via such laws as the Reich Flight Tax in 1934.[14] As historian Marion Kaplan describes, the Nazis ended up instituting a contradictory set of policies where "levying punitive taxes on emigres and prohibiting asset

[8] Avraham Altman and Irene Eber, "Flight to Shanghai, 1938-1940: The Larger Setting," *Yad-Vashem Studies* 28 (2000): 52-53.
[9] Ibid., 60.
[10] Ibid., 62.
[11] Ibid., 60.
[12] Ibid., 52-53.
[13] Hochstadt, *Exodus to Shanghai*, 1.
[14] Marion Kaplan, *Hitler's Jewish Refugees: Hope and Anxiety in Portugal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 11.

transfers to other countries . . . turned emigres into paupers."[15] As a result, most of the Jewish emigrants who became refugees in Shanghai clustered in one location—the cheap Hongkew district in Shanghai's International Settlement.[16] While the International Settlement was initially attractive to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Germany and Austria due to the leniency of entry requirements, all such refugees were forced by Japanese decree to relocate to a restricted area in the Hongkew District following Pearl Harbor.[17]

Fig. 2: Map of Shanghai showing the area of the Shanghai Ghetto or 'Restricted Sector for Jewish Refugees', 1939, photograph, Pictures from History / Granger, NYC. All rights reserved.

My goal in this paper is to draw on the Critical Refugee Studies (CRS) paradigm to analyze historical perceptions of Jewish refugees in Shanghai from 1938 to 1945. Drawing on this paradigm reveals historically concealed narratives of refugee agency created by and for the refugee communities I am researching, which are often overshadowed by more dominant narratives of refugee powerlessness. While sociologist Yen Le Espiritu, the creator of the CRS

[15] Ibid., 11.
[16] Guang Pan, "The Jewish Refugee Community in Shanghai," in *A Study of Jewish Refugees in China (1933-1945): History, Theories, and the Chinese Pattern* (Singapore: Springer, 2019): 29-50.
[17] Ibid.

paradigm, developed her conclusions by interviewing refugees, I am instead mainly using archival evidence such as news articles, published statements, oral histories, and literary works in order to examine whether a CRS paradigm is consistent with the self-perception of European Jewish refugees in Shanghai.

In this paper, I first examine the traditional refugee paradigm espoused by those outside of this particular refugee community. Next, I shift my focus to former refugees' own narratives of their life and community in Shanghai, and how this introduces a model of refugee agency emphasized by CRS. I conclude, throughout the course of this analysis, that the CRS model used by Espiritu in examining the experiences of Vietnamese refugees is in fact consistent with the perspective held by many German and Austrian Jewish refugees in Shanghai, and that this stands in opposition to the more traditional narrative of refugees as passive objects of aid propagated by non-refugees.

Fig. 3: A Third Reich Reisepass to Shanghai, 1939, photograph, Pictures from History / Granger, NYC. All rights reserved.

Critical Refugee Studies

In her book *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*, sociologist Yen Le Espiritu argues that traditionally, media and academic portrayals of refugees have devoted considerable attention to the suffering and neediness of this group. In contrast to this Western-dominated perspective which highlights refugees as passive and overly reliant on Western generosity, Espiritu introduces the interdisciplinary field of Critical Refugee Studies (CRS), which reconceptualizes refugees and their communities not just as a "problem" to be solved by wealthy and powerful agents, but rather as a site where social, political, and historical processes such as war, colonialism, and displacement can be critiqued and challenged.[18] In the first chapter of *Body Counts*, Espiritu challenges what she observes as refugees' associations with "highly charged images of Third World poverty, foreignness, and statelessness . . . [and with] representations of refugees as incapacitated objects of rescue, fleeing impoverished, war-torn, or corrupt states— an unwanted problem for asylum and resettlement countries."[19] She critiques these "one-dimensional" perceptions of refugees as "depleted, ruined, and hopeless" and "only lives to be saved," arguing for a new analytical framework where refugees are recognized as agents rather than passive recipients of aid.[20]

Espiritu's new paradigm for studying refugees is developed out of her work on Vietnamese refugees. She theorizes that the United States, having lost the Vietnam War, did not have a "rescue and liberation" myth centered around the Vietnamese people.[21] To address the "difficult memory" of the war—where U.S. militaristic intervention failed to deliver the nation the victory it sought—the U.S. government, academy, and media produced a narrative of the "freed and reformed" Vietnamese refugee as the symbol of American moral might.[22] However, Espiritu notes that "not all Vietnamese [refugees] came running through the door that the United States allegedly opened. Rather, many moved very slowly, with much confusion, ambivalence, and even misgivings . . . [a]nd a few . . . travelled in the opposite direction."[23] Thus, the U.S. refugee

[18] Yen Le Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 3.
[19] Ibid., 4.
[20] Ibid., 5, 10-11. Further critiques of traditional refugee studies have centered around the distinction between "refugees" and "migrants" in general, the lack of attention given to the children of refugees, and the inaccuracy of viewing refugee incorporation in terms of voluntary immigrant assimilation. The main critiques I want to emphasize in this paper, however, are the views that 1) refugees have often been stereotyped as lacking in agency despite their efforts to survive violent conflict and navigate the resettlement process and that 2) the refugees' own voices in communicating about their decisions have not been thoroughly examined and thus their role in a wider sociopolitical sphere has largely been ignored.
[21] Ibid., 1.
[22] Ibid., 1-2.
[23] Ibid., 2.

policy was not an unalloyed force of good, providing the "gift of freedom" to grateful Vietnamese refugees.[24] The flight and resettlement process for these refugees, she argues, was instead fraught with complexity: refugees were "neither damaged victims nor model minorities," *and* their stories "simultaneously trouble and affirm regimes of power" such as the United States.[25]

Fig. 4: Liu Shaoqi, Jacob Rosenfeld and Chen Yi with the New Fourth Army at Yancheng, Jiangsu, 1934, photograph, Pictures from History / Granger, NYC. All rights reserved.

Body Counts argues for greater complexity in the ways in which the academy and the media discuss refugees. To do this, Espiritu promotes the Critical Refugee Studies (CRS) framework which moves away from "damage-centered" research emphasizing the passivity and brokenness of refugee communities.[26] Instead, she focuses on how refugees have created "alternative memories and epistemologies that unsettle but at times also confirm the established public narratives" of refugee passivity.[27] She argues for an analysis that would grasp the full complexity

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 3.
[27] Ibid.

of refugees' experiences, especially their perspectives, ways of knowing, and ways of remembering the various worlds they lived in and situations they encountered. Espiritu offers up the ultimate argument for refugee agency: to view refugees not merely as "objects of investigation" but as sites of social critique.[28] To explain more clearly what this means, my paper intends to highlight the *contrast* that occurs when public narratives of refugees are juxtaposed with refugees' own transformative epistemologies of their own experience. I thus begin with an examination of narratives created and maintained by those outside of refugee communities.

External Portrayals of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai

Individuals outside of the post-1938 European Jewish refugee community frequently emphasized the poverty of and what they perceived to be the despair of this population. In a representative letter from an American soldier in Shanghai, the author describes how he "ran into a swell Jewish boy of about 18" and was subsequently shown around the Jewish refugee camps, writing: "He called them camps. I call them ghettoes."[29] The soldier was shown into the living quarters of a refugee family, which he described as a "little stinking room," and notes how he "saw 50 women living in another room so close that it reminded [him] of a herd of cattle."[30] After inquiring about the amount of relief funds these refugees were provided from organizations such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the American soldier seems to conclude that the Jewish refugees were practically helpless objects of pity who needed outside aid: "Dad I'm sure nobody know [sic] of the poverty that exist here and I wish you would arouse some of the people [implied to be American Jews] and let them know."[31] This letter clearly presents the refugees as a helpless and broken mass.

Prominent individuals in Shanghai, including wealthy descendants from preexisting Jewish families, also donated financial resources or engaged in charitable work to support these German and Austrian Jewish refugees. For example, Paul Komor, a Hungarian businessman and diplomat residing in Shanghai from 1938 to 1941, started a charitable fund in March 1939 in order to purchase milk for refugee children.[32] Komor's portrayal of his work in many

[28] Ibid.
[29] Letter by American soldier in Shanghai to his family back home, October 31, 1945, JDC Archives.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Paul Komor, "Milk Wanted: For Refugee Children," *The North-China Herald*, March 1, 1939.

English-language Chinese newspapers centers mostly around his reluctance to "appear . . . in print with such frequency" and how "the end [providing aid to refugees] justifies the means [appearing frequently in print]."[33] Although Komor provided valuable resources for refugee children in Shanghai, raising over $102,000 by September 1940, he centered the narrative of these refugees on the prominent local individuals who contributed to their wellbeing, rather than on the agency of refugee communities themselves.[34] Most articles about the refugees in English-language newspapers published in China during this period indeed focus mainly on the specific (and large) amounts raised or donated by prominent and/or wealthy local individuals.[35] While the refugees did benefit from these material contributions, their lives and communities were often left out of such news stories in favor of the charitable efforts of wealthy donors, with the result of portraying them as a mass of people in need of monetary aid.

A June 1946 document (significantly titled "12,000 Refugees in Shanghai Depend on J.D.C., UNRRA Aid, Jewish Army Chaplain Reports") released by the JDC's publicity director and featuring comments by U.S. Army Chaplain Alvin Fine—who was sent to Shanghai as the Army's liaison to the UNRRA—also exemplified the view that Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany and Austria were somehow passive recipients of aid from international relief organizations. The document notes that these refugees "were described yesterday by Army Chaplain Alvin Fine, of Portland, Oregon, as homeless, destitute, and almost completely dependent for their daily bread on the Joint Distribution Committee . . . and UNRRA."[36] Japanese authorities in Shanghai had classified all "stateless refugees" (meaning German and Austrian Jewish refugees arriving in Shanghai from 1937 onward) as enemy nationals from February 1943 on. The result was that these refugees were not allowed to operate their businesses or conduct their professions outside of the "designated area for stateless refugees" (also known as the Shanghai Ghetto) in the Hongkew district, in which they were placed. Fine describes the refugees as thus "look[ing] to emigration as their only hope."[37] Because World War II had ended and the goal for many of the European Jewish refugees in Shanghai at this time was emigration to either the United States, Britain, or Palestine, Fine observes that "there has been a noticeable growth of a feeling of hopelessness among them" due to the shrinking of such emigration opportunities immediately following the end of the war.[38] Overall, the picture he

[33] Paul Komor, "Refugee Milk Fund: A Welcome Donation," *The North-China Herald*, November 22, 1939
[34] "Help for Jewish Refugees," *The North-China Herald*, September 11, 1940.
[35] "Help for Jewish Refugees;" "Foreign Refugees: Sir Victor Sassoon Donates $150,000 to Funds, More Money Urgently Needed for Relief," *The North-China Herald*, January 25, 1939.
[36] Raphael Levy, "12,000 Refugees in Shanghai Depend on J.D.C., UNRRA Aid, Jewish Army Chaplain Reports," *Joint Distribution Committee Press Release* (New York, NY), June 21, 1946.
[37] Ibid., 2.
[38] Ibid., 1.

paints is one of a group of people stranded in a foreign land, homeless and hopeless about their prospects after the war. It is important to note that as a publicity statement released by the JDC, the purpose of the document was likely to gather public sympathy and popular support for the assistance of these refugees through monetary donations. Although it is true that many of these Shanghai refugees applied for resettlement following the end of the war, the statement ultimately reflects the popular non-refugee perception of European Jewish refugees in Shanghai as a downtrodden mass of people without hope and prospects.

Refugee Self-Portrayal

The perspective of the Shanghai refugees themselves notably tends to express a sense of dignity which was often lacking in contemporary non-refugee accounts. In order to explore the perspectives European Jewish refugees in Shanghai developed regarding themselves and their communities, I used multiple oral history refugee testimonies collected by historian Steve Hochstadt and by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). Most of these oral histories paint a picture of the refugees' own attempts to create refuge and community for themselves, and practically all centered on the efforts of individual refugees to provide for themselves and their families beyond just receiving aid from relief organizations or funds. Paula Parks, despite being offered monetary assistance from the JDC, was determined to support herself by obtaining a job in Shanghai: "I was offered a job in a lingerie store. . . . But the woman offered me a very low salary and I wanted to take this job, and I was happy and I was ready to work. I was very anxious to work, because . . . I felt . . . it was not very good to go to get the money [from the JDC]."[39]

In addition, some refugees tried to connect with the local Chinese population through learning the language, an aspect noticeably lacking in narratives of refugee passivity. Kurt Benger, who initially found a job at an American import-export company in Shanghai, recalls how he and some other European Jewish refugees learned to read and write a bit of Chinese in order to communicate with Chinese locals: "Just the most necessary things you had to know every day to get along with them and to . . . make yourself understanding [sic]."[40]

[39] Paula Parks, Shanghai Jewish Oral History Collection, interview by Steve Hochstadt, Bates College SCARAB, April 19, 1991.
[40] Kurt Benger, Shanghai Jewish Oral History Collection, interview by Steve Hochstadt, Bates College SCARAB, June 8, 1990.

Fig 5: The Beth Aharon Synagogue, Shanghai. Built in 1927, it stood at 42 Huqiu Road, Huangpu District, but was demolished in 1985, photograph, Pictures from History / Granger, NYC, date unknown. All rights reserved.

Other former Shanghai refugees observed the flourishing of Jewish religious life. Ernest Heppner, who was interviewed by the USHMM, remembers how the "[refugee] community became tighter knit" as a result of the shared difficulty in finding kosher food in China.[41] Heppner notes also that these refugees "had holiday services with [their] synagogues" and in general found community through religion, similar to how Espiritu describes Vietnamese refugees' effort to establish a physical record of their religious and cultural identities. Hepner recounts: "We had quite a few rabbis there, . . . it was a very integrated Jewish life there. Perhaps like a shtetl. . . . Very cohesive bible [sic] community; based on nothing, financially. But it worked."[42]

[41] Ernest Heppner, The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive, interview by Linda Kuzmack, May 10, 1989, transcript, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., 27.
[42] Ibid.

As a critique of traditional refugee studies draws attention to the fact that refugees' own voices in narrating their experiences have not been thoroughly examined, I have—in addition to collecting evidence from oral histories—attempted to find creative or literary works from the Shanghai refugees during this time period. One representative example is "Prologue" (1939), a poem written by Alfred Friedlaender featured in scholar Irene Eber's primary source collection V*oices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China*. The poem, accompanied by Eber's comments and analysis, was meant to commemorate a 1939 Hanukkah celebration at 992 Tongshan Road in Shanghai, a house in the Hongkew district owned by Sigmund and Adele Krebs (referred to as "Crabs" in the poem):

> Perform she must, our Mrs. Crab, / She swells and puffs with pride / As songs and whistles / issue forth by day as well as night. / . . . Family Gelb has drawn a red line, / In their battle with the mice population. / Not a mouse would ever dare cross it, / Thus we bring the Gelbs an ovation. / . . . He [the poet] wishes all a pleasant Hanukah / And naught but good for Jews.[43]

Throughout his poem, Friedlaender provides brief, humorous descriptions of family friends from the local refugee community and includes such details, as noted in the quoted segment, of Adele Krebs feeling proud of the Hanukkah celebration and a family resolving their problem with mice in their living space. The inclusion of such details—especially considering that fifteen (and then twenty-three after February 1943) people were forced to share the house depicted—provide a glimpse into Friedlaender and other refugees' attitude of optimism.[44] Indeed, Eber, while noting that it is "the effort of an amateur," argues that this humorous poem "stands as an abiding monument and witness to the Shanghai refugees' resilience."[45]

Finally, in recalling the emigration of most Shanghai refugees starting around 1946, Robert Langer emphasizes how the refugee community which he had grown familiar with gradually began to "close down" instead of "collapse"—a small but significant detail: "[T]he community closed down. . . . [I]t seems to me a good word to describe it. Shops began to close up, because people left, and the community . . . didn't collapse, it closed down."[46] Langer's framing is significant because it presents the refugee community as resilient in the face of an uncertain future, rather than as passively impacted by outside events.

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[43] Alfred Friedlaender, "Prologue," quoted in Irene Eber, *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 38-40.
[44] Ibid., 38.
[45] Ibid., 41.
[46] Robert Langer, Shanghai Jewish Oral History Collection, interview by Steve Hochstadt, Bates College SCARAB, October 17, 1999.

Conclusion

In her March 1944 article "Race Against Time in Shanghai," published in Survey Graphic, a journal of social work, Laura Margolis emphasizes the uncertain situation of the refugees in Shanghai but also their own initiative in supporting and asserting themselves. At first describing how, for the refugees, "the struggle to earn a living which confronted them is probably unparalleled anywhere in the world," she also elaborates on the fact that she and her colleague Manny Siegel wanted to establish a "strong local committee" which would undertake the majority of the work of providing and distributing aid to refugees instead of having all of this work be conducted by the JDC.[47] Margolis claims that "the objective always is to turn responsibility over to the community as rapidly as possible."[48] To that effect, she and Siegel describe how they "organized a new local committee, made up of French, Swiss, some German Jews long resident in Shanghai, and a few refugees" to manage the flow of funds from the JDC—a committee which later on became a central hub for democratic decision-making on the part of the more recently arrived refugees. She concludes that the refugees, who were assigned in February 1943 to reside in a segregated part of the Hongkew district of the International Settlement (an area which became known as the Shanghai Ghetto)—took the initiative in providing for themselves amid the gradual shrinking of outside relief funds, including from the JDC, from 1943 onward:

> It must not be forgotten that the refugees themselves had made every possible effort to reorganize their own lives in Shanghai on a self-supporting basis … They had reconstructed entire streets in shattered Hongkew, using the very rubble for building material. They had started small business of many kinds … They started delicatessen stores and opened sidewalk cafes.[49]

Recall the introduction to this paper, where two opposing views reflected by Margolis's various reports on German and Austrian Jewish refugees in Shanghai emerged. How should we account for the completely opposite pictures Margolis presents of the Shanghai refugees—passive and desperate objects of outside assistance on one hand and active creators of their own refuge on the other? Overall, the documents seem to paint a picture of Margolis as an experienced worker in refugee aid and resettlement who knew how to represent Jewish refugees to different audiences. While the oral history testimonies presented earlier tend to confirm her depiction of the Shanghai refugees as striving as much as they could toward self-sufficiency and

[47] Laura L. Margolis, "Race Against Time in Shanghai," *Survey Graphic* 33, no. 3 (1944): 168-169.
[48] Ibid., 169.
[49] Ibid., 168-169.

self-governance, it is also true that the JDC and other relief efforts contributed to the wellbeing of these refugees to a significant extent. Margolis' contradictory portrayals of these refugees in Shanghai is a case in point for the Critical Refugee Studies paradigm—her reports reflect an understanding of refugee lives as sites of complexity and epistemic agency.

In this paper, I have drawn on the Critical Refugee Studies (CRS) paradigm developed by sociologist Yen Le Espiritu to analyze contemporary historical perspectives surrounding these European Jewish refugees in Shanghai from 1938-1945. Applying this paradigm, I have found that the conceptions and narratives of the lives of these refugees in Shanghai are viewed differently for the refugee community and for non-refugee "outsider" groups, including international relief organizations and prominent local individuals. While the former tend to frame their experiences in terms of their own agency and attempts to preserve their dignity despite tough circumstances, the latter appear mainly to view the refugees as passive objects of relief through which efforts at refugee assistance could be highlighted all the more. My application of the CRS paradigm in the case of German and Austrian Jewish refugees in Shanghai thus reveals narratives of refugee agency, resilience, and strength.

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Peasants and Townsfolk in the German Peasants' War, 1525:

Perspectives from Environmental History

Patrick Hegarty Morrish

Abstract

As the German Peasants' War of 1525 nears its five-hundredth anniversary, this article revisits a crucial question that has preoccupied scholarship on this conflict, the largest popular uprising in Western Europe before the French Revolution: to what extent were peasants and townsfolk aligned in their interests and actions? While in 1975 Peter Blickle argued that all combatants were unified by evangelical fervor, Tom Scott in 1986 maintained that insurmountable socio-economic divisions between town and country caused the conflict. This article demonstrates how approaches from environmental history can enliven this debate, showing that peasants were united by a shared reliance on their ecology, a common perception of the landscape, and similar relationships with the officials that governed their environment.

Introduction

Entering Kempten in the Allgäu or Mühlhausen in Thuringia required visitors to pass through one of several gates in the town or city wall. Built on ramparts, topped by battlements and dotted with towers, such walls were an imposing sight when viewed either from the countryside or when entering the town or city. As well as a means of defense, walls functioned as barriers to enforce practical distinctions. For example, traders could move through the countryside surrounding Frankfurt freely, but were obliged to pay tax on their produce upon entering the city.[1] Male Frankfurt citizens were required to police the city wall as part of guard duty, strengthening the urban community through a behavior that simultaneously stressed its distinction from the surrounding countryside.[2] Ringing a town or city with a wall indicated symbolic and practical differences between town and country, collecting its inhabitants into a corporate urban entity. In this way, town and city walls defined identities: townsfolk lived within the geographical entity created by urban concentration and often ringed by a wall, and, defined against this, peasants lived in the countryside outside these areas.

The town or city wall was one of several structural barriers between town and countryside that made alignment between peasants and townsfolk in sixteenth-century Germany difficult. The fragmented nature of lordship in Germany presented further barriers to alignment. Landlords to whom serfs owed feudal dues prevented their serfs from moving into the jurisdiction of a town because town laws sometimes undermined their servile status. In 1509, for example, the town of Waldshut, on the edge of the Black Forest, forced the abbot of St Blasien to free serfs long resident in the town.[3] Here, Waldshut appears a free haven for bondmen, but townsmen, and particularly free imperial cities could also be serf owners. In this way, fragmented lordship could create opposition between the aims of peasants and townsfolk. The peasants owned by Memmingen sought not to be held as "your poor serfs, which is pitiable." But the Memmingen town council had "purchased [the peasants' serfdom] for a considerable sum," only granting manumission if they paid "a reasonable amount of protection money."[4]

This article focuses specifically on the relationship between peasants and townsfolk in the Peasants' War of 1525, the largest popular uprising in Western Europe before the French Revolution. Rebellion began in southwest Germany during the harvest of 1524, first in the Black Forest territory of Stühlingen.[5] Unrest spread rapidly, with local rebellions gradually coalescing into vast armies of peasants and townsfolk. The Twelve Articles written in Memmingen in March 1525, printed and widely circulated among the bands, quickly came to represent the

[1] "The Frankfurt Articles, 13 April 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents,* ed. by Tom Scott and Robert Scribner (New York: Humanity Books, 1991), 174.
[2] Ibid., 171.
[3] Tom Scott, "Reformation and Peasants' War in Waldshut and Environs: A Structural Analysis. Part I," *Archive for Reformation History*, 69 (1978): 84-87.
[4] "Articles of the Peasants of Memmingen, 24 February-3 March," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 78; "Reply of the Memmingen Town Council," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 78.
[5] "Articles of the Peasants of Stühlingen, before 6 April 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 65.

peasants' central agenda, and constituted a powerful fusion of Reformation concepts and specific peasant grievances, including the manumission of the serfs and the abolition of hunting restrictions.[6] The conflict reached its height in spring of 1525, but in a series of battles the peasants were brutally destroyed by the princely armies. The peasants were defeated most notably at the Battle of Frankenhausen, fought on 15 May 1525, where forces commanded by Philip of Hesse slaughtered a peasant army led by the evangelical preacher Thomas Müntzer; the blood of the 6,000 peasants slain was said to create a "Blutrinne," a blood-runnel, running from the battlefield down the hill.[7] At the conclusion of the Peasants' War, the lords meted out brutal punishments, as men like the infamously violent "Bloodhound," Kasimir of Brandenburg, let the bodies of executed peasants rot in the marketplace for the "punishment and horror" of onlookers.[8]

Whether peasants and townsfolk were genuinely allied in the German Peasants' War, and overcame the structural oppositions created by the town wall or serf ownership has occasioned contentious debate, first sparked by Peter Blickle in 1975. Blickle argued that the evangelical fervor which gripped parts of Germany in the tumultuous early years of the Reformation smoothed over differences in the aims of peasants and townsfolk.[9] Contrastingly, in a tightly argued 1986 monograph focusing on Freiburg and the Breisgau, Tom Scott noted that the ideological forces foregrounded by Blickle must be analyzed alongside the divergent socio-economic aims of peasants and townsfolk.[10] According to Scott, evangelical cooperation could not overcome mutual hostility. He emphasized the significance of the townsfolk's resentment towards rural crafts, and the peasants' animosity towards Freiburg's status as a landlord and their frustration with high tolls on market produce.[11] Looking back to the nineteenth century, Scott's interpretation bears interesting correspondence to Friedrich Engels' attempt to rationalize the Peasants' War into the materialist framework, borne out in his short book written in 1850, *The Peasant War in Germany*. Here, Engels differentiated the naïve peasants from the genuinely revolutionary townsfolk under Müntzer, "a representative of the budding proletariat," who constituted "a small minority of the insurgent masses."[12]

My intention is to show how this debate can be enriched by ways of thinking introduced by environmental history. This is the most significant historiographical development since Scott and Blickle's debate and has attracted increased interest as the catastrophic human impact on the environment has become palpable. Various new ways of thinking derived from this approach, which have not yet been used to analyze the Peasants' War specifically, will be explored here: multispecies studies, which shows the importance of human entanglement with the ecology; studies of what the landscape was perceived to mean and the significance of that

[6] Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet* (London: Vintage, 2016), 259.
[7] Lyndal Roper, "Emotions and the German Peasants' War of 1524-26," *History Workshop Journal*, 92 (2021), 69.
[8] Ibid., 71.
[9] Peter Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective*, trans. T. Brady and H. Midelfort (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), see e.g. 19, 92.
[10] Tom Scott, *Freiburg and the Breisgau: Town-country Relations in the Age of Reformation and Peasants' War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), for e.g. the growing power acquired by Freiburg over its hinterland, see 11..
[11] Ibid., 234-35.
[12] Roper, "Emotions and the German Peasants' War of 1524-26," 63; Friedrich Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (London: George Allen & Urwin, 1927), 62, 28.

perception; and the way that governing structures interacted with the landscape. These three methodologies offer fresh perspectives which show that, contrary to Scott, the aims of peasants and townsfolk were aligned in many cases. Moreover, the environment provides a mechanism for explaining this alignment, which is more fundamental than Blickle's focus on evangelical preaching. Learning from Anna Tsing, whose important book *The Mushroom at the End of the World* encourages us to look at the "unruly edges," each section of this essay takes as its focus a revealing moment or emblem of connection between townsfolk and peasants, and explores the complex nature of their alignment.[13]

Part I: Entanglement with the Environment

Peasants and townsfolk aligned because both groups were equally reliant on their environment, sharing the aim of creating a reliable food supply free from excessive interference by the authorities. This aim facilitated the moment of collaboration between peasants and townsfolk which created the Twelve Articles. This case focuses on Ulrich Schmid, a blacksmith from the village of Sulmingen; Sebastian Lotzer, a journeyman furrier from Memmingen; and Christoph Schappeler, originally from St Gallen and the Memmingen city preacher from 1513-25. The three came into contact in late February 1525, when Schmid led the Baltringen band to Memmingen to find a "learned, pious" man to aid their dispute with the Swabian League. With the help of Schappeler, Lotzer turned the Baltringen peasant grievances into the Twelve Articles.[14] Observing these events, the Upper Swabian authorities certainly thought that the aims of the Baltringen peasants and Memmingen townsfolk were aligned, worrying that the peasants would call upon the commons of the upper German towns, "with whom they [were] very friendly."[15]

Ostensibly, this moment of connection between peasants and townsfolk supports Blickle's argument that commitment to the gospel aligned the aims of peasants and townsfolk. As early as 28 February, Schmid's Baltringen band appealed to the town of Ehingen by promising to "negotiate solely according to the … Divine Word."[16] Schmid's associates in Memmingen were both renowned evangelicals. Schappeler, who had been in dispute with the city council from 1516, was a friend of Karlstadt and an adjudicator of the Second Zurich Disputation.[17] Lotzer was a lay pamphleteer who in 1524 stated that "the Word of God will clear the path, primarily, among the common men."[18] Yet reliance on food and natural resources was a just as important

[13] Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 20.
[14] "The Twelve Articles," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 252.
[15] "Urban Tactics in Dealing with the Peasants: Recess of the Assembly of Towns Held at Memmingen, 27 March 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 180-81.
[16] "The Baltringen Band to the Town of Ehingen on the Danube, 28 February 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 127.
[17] Adolf Laube, "Schappeler, Christoph," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, trans. by Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2: 454-55.
[18] Paul Russell, *Lay Theology in the Reformation: Popular Pamphleteers in Southwest Germany, 1521-1525* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 87-88, 91.

aspect of lived experience that united peasants and townsfolk: Blickle's emphasis on Reformation preaching must be balanced against these environmental factors.

Fig. 1: Peasant woman going to market, Jacob Binck after Hans Sebald Beham, 1520. Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Creating, selling, and eating foodstuffs or cooking and building with wood provided the framework for everyday life: such activities blurred the boundaries between peasants and townsfolk, making shared cultural practices more conspicuous than tensions between the two groups. Scott's argument for tensions deriving from competition over resources is encapsulated by an incident in 1495, when peasants from the Breisgau village of Ebringen attacked a group of Freiburg journeymen attending the village's church-ale in retaliation against increased tolls on produce brought to market. The peasants took the Freiburg journeymen to represent the whole city, as did seven hundred Freiburgers who later took random Ebringeners hostage as revenge.[19] However, the extent to which the practices of peasants and townsfolk interpenetrated encourages us to focus less on such moments of confrontation and instead look at the shared behaviors that allowed townsmen to attend a country church-ale.

Indeed, the city of Frankfurt shows that in ecological terms, the practices of "country" life were found inside the town, while townsfolk also worked the surrounding countryside. The Frankfurt articles of 13 April 1525 complained about fees imposed on sows reared inside the city walls.[20] They also asked the council to protect the right to the common land surrounding the city and on the Sachsenhausen bank of the Main; in the same way that vinedressers from

[19] Scott, *Freiburg and the Breisgau: Town-country Relations in the Age of Reformation and Peasants' War*, 110-13.
[20] "The Frankfurt Articles, 13 April 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 170-74.

Rothenberg worked outside the city in the Tauber valley, and miners from Joachimsthal dug the pits in the mountains, some Frankfurt citizens lived in the city but grazed cattle, sows, and sheep outside Frankfurt.[21] Women, as well as men, connected town and countryside, as the economic sphere of female workers linked both spheres. Figure one depicts a peasant woman traveling to town with the typical fruits of female agrarian labor: a jug of milk and a goose.[22] She is also carrying a purse, indicating that these were sold at the market. These examples of common behaviors linked to food production and the sharing of geographical and economic space, suggest that the categories "peasants" and "townsfolk" were more permeable than Scott thought.

These behaviors point to aims shared by Schmid's Baltringen peasants and the Memmingen townsfolk. Mutual concern for their ecological needs provoked a common grievance that the authorities were impinging on their rights to natural resources. Schmid told the embassy of the Swabian League that the authorities' impositions on the peasants' produce left them unable to sustain themselves, writing that, 'the assessments and burdens are so fierce and harsh that neither can be borne by their land or their soil.'[23] Usually these servile dues were not monetary exactions, but took the form of some material possession, which the peasant or townsperson would otherwise consume or sell. The same is true of the tithe, which ordinarily comprised the 'great tithe' on wheat, corn, barley and oats, and the 'small tithe' on vegetables and fruit, as well as the wine tithe and the 'blood tithe' on meat.[24] In 1524 Schappeler was accused of teaching that 'no one is obliged to give the tithe on pain of mortal sin,' and suggested, drawing on the vocabulary of subsistence food, that the poor were left starving by priests who 'preach a gruel of kitchen-Latin'.[25] In 1521 the city council sent the secretary to persuade Schappeler to end his dangerous sermons. The council likely feared Schappeler because his message gained traction among the poor of the city.[26] That Schappeler was a fiery evangelical might have attracted Schmid's attention, but he was also suited to aid their cause because the content of his preaching aligned with the complaints Schmid voiced. Mutual dependence on food meant the Baltringen peasants and the Memmingen townsfolk were similarly intertwined with the environment. Both groups were therefore equally upset by interference with their shared source of sustenance.[27]

Just as Schappeler and Schmid identified their respective authorities as the reason for destitution, other peasants and townsfolk railed against their elite - whether local landholders

[21] Ibid., 170-74; "The Joachimsthal Articles," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 221-24; Roy Vice, "Vineyards, Vinedressers, and the Peasants' War in Franconia," *Archive for Reformation History*, 79 (1988): 138-57.
[22] Sebald Beham, Peasant Woman Going to Market, engraving, National Gallery of Art, 1520; Jane Whittle, "Rural Economies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013), 312.
[23] "The Beginning of the Rebellion in Upper Swabia: Baltringen and Memmingen," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 123; "Report of Johannes Kessler of St. Galen," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 123.
[24] Scott and Scribner, "Introduction," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 14.
[25] "The Memmingen Preacher Christoph Schappler: Complaint of the Procurator Fiscal before the Episcopal Ordinate in Augsburg against the Memmingen Preacher Christoph Schappeler, Beginning of 1524," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 101.
[26] Russell, *Lay Theology in the Reformation: Popular Pamphleteers in Southwest Germany, 1521-1525*, 83.
[27] Peter Blickle, *From the Communal Reformation to the Revolution of the Common Man* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 47.

or town council - to demand control over the environment. The Memmingen peasant articles asked the city council that wood "which at one time belonged to the communes … should be returned to them."[28] Grievances over forest rights appeared in articles produced by towns too, as the town commons of Erfurt, Frankfurt, and Munnerstadt opposed the monopolization of natural resources by the town elite. The Erfurt articles, for example, complained about beechmast, chestnuts used to fatten swine and cattle, stating that when "the Lord God grants beechmast in the forest," the Erfurt forest wardens "sell [the mast] in the surrounding markets."[29]

Similarly, communities of peasants and townsfolk shared the aim of challenging authorities encroaching on grazing rights. The articles of the Alpine town of Merano criticized landowners within the city: "all commons … and meadows that each person has removed from the community … should be returned."[30] This was mirrored in the Stühlingen and Memmingen peasant articles, as the latter complained that "field, pasture, and meadow … once belonged to the commune."[31] Grievances regarding forest and grazing rights therefore show that town commons and peasants were aligned in challenging the elite's domination of environmental resources. In his *Chronik*, Jacob Murer showed how rebels acted on this shared aim by fishing out the pond of the Weissenau monastery. These examples also show that towns contained internal social divisions, which could cause poorer townsfolk to have more alignment with the peasantry than with the town elite.

These concerns were recorded in the Twelve Articles, which represented the aims of the Memmingen townsfolk and allied peasantry. Assented to in a meeting in the Memmingen Haberdasher's Guild and printed and disseminated immediately afterwards, the Articles attacked the control of woodcutting by "our lords," who "appropriated the woods to themselves alone," complained that peasants were "ruined" by rents, and suggested that the tithe should be distributed "to the needy poor."[32] This section's focus on the intermingling between environment and its human constituents evokes recent work in multispecies studies on the "interwoven patterns of living and dying" performed by the combined entity of "the organism-in-its-environment."[33] The resulting mutual reliance on the environment for sustenance entangled peasants and townsfolk within their ecology, causing alignment in their aims. Indeed, this makes the categories "peasants" and "townsfolk," which for Scott are firmly distinct, appear more permeable.

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[28] "Articles of the Peasants of Memmingen," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 80.
[29] "The Erfurt 'Peasant Articles' 9 May 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 174-76.
[30] "The Merano Articles, 30 May 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 90.
[31] "The Articles of the Peasants of Stühlingen, before 6 April 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 69; "Articles of the Peasants of Memmingen," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 80.
[32] "The Twelve Articles," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 252-57.
[33] Thom van Dorren, Eben Kirksey, and Ursula Münster, "Multispecies Studies: Cultivating Arts of Attentiveness," *Environmental Humanities* 8, no. 1 (2016): 2; see also, Laura Ogden, Billy Hall, and Kimiko Tanita, "Animals, Plants, People, and Things: A Review of Multispecies Ethnography," *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*, 4 (2013), 5–24.

Part II: Imagining the Landscape

The concern shown by peasants and townsfolk for their sustenance interacted with the way the landscape was imagined, as both groups possessed a mental model of space that challenged the elite's domination of the environment. This shared perception helps us to understand why Thomas Müntzer could unite peasants and townsfolk. Müntzer was an urbanite, who lived in small- and medium-sized towns, such as Braunschweig, Allstedt and Mühlhausen. Engels argued that the townsfolk were under Münzter's "direct influence," distinct from the "general storm" of the peasants.[34] Nevertheless, both groups were attracted to this enigmatic figure. Müntzer's sermons in Allstedt in 1523-24, attracted audiences of 2,000 peasants from the surrounding villages, and he corresponded with the peasants of Merxleben and the "poor country folk" from the district of Sangerhausen.[35]

In a recent article, Lyndal Roper describes the differing attitudes to the environment that nobles and commoners held. While lordly hunting encouraged viewing land as an "open stage for the excitement of movement," peasants viewed land as "parcels of bounded strips and fields for working in, with histories, tricky ecologies and complex ownerships."[36] In a similar vein, this section focuses on Münzter's power to attract a following from peasants and townsfolk through his ability to express a perception of the landscape shared by both groups. Imbuing the landscape with sacred significance, Münzter argued that the natural world was overrun by the lords and should be free for all. Blickle might argue that Müntzer's preaching points to a unifying evangelical fervor, but it was the content of Müntzer's message that aligned the aims of these two groups in the Peasants' War.[37]

In what way landscape was imbued with meaning was a divisive question in religious thought. Pre-Reformation devotion perceived the material world as a network of hallowed places.[38] Forests, hills, rivers and wells, menhirs, standing crosses, and shrines were regarded as points of access to God, visited by pilgrims who revered the supernatural power these places made manifest.[39] From 1517, Luther issued a devastating attack on this status quo. Defining an unbridgeable separation between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man, he denied that the material world had salvific power.[40] Despite this religious radicalism, this view led Luther to a conservative attitude regarding ownership of the landscape, and what type of person could shape the landscape to reflect evangelical aims. In *Admonition to Peace* of April 1525, for

[34] Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*, 9, 71.
[35] Tom Scott, "The 'Volksreformation' of Thomas Müntzer in Allstedt and Mühlhausen," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 34, no. 2 (1983): 195; Thomas Münzter, *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer*, ed. and trans. by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 140-50.
[36] Roper, "Emotions and the German Peasants' War of 1524-26," 55.
[37] Gordon Rupp, "Thomas Münzter, Hans Huth and the 'Gospel of all Creatures,'" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 43, no. 2 (1961): 496. Here, through an analysis of Münzter's natural theology, Rupp hints lightly at Münzter's ecological concerns. Interestingly, Rupp's ideas regarding Münzter's natural theology were rejected by most Münzter scholars.
[38] Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 49-50.
[39] Ibid, 50, 80-93.
[40] J. M. Porter, "Luther and Political Millenarianism: The Case of the Peasants' War," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 42, no. 3 (1981): 392.

example, Luther argued that it is never justified for subjects to intervene, on behalf of the gospel, with the landscape as it was found. To dispossess the authorities of their property and "occupy the city or place" would be attempting to create the kingdom of God in the world, conflating two different entities.[41] Thus, the belief that the landscape was not sacred led Luther both to the radical condemnation of idols and to affirm the authorities' absolute right to land ownership.

Peasants and townsfolk acted on this debate by modifying the landscape to accord to the evangelical agenda. A drawing by Augustin Hirschvogel shows shrines and crosses dotted the landscape at roadsides and junctions, usually built by ….[42] They often symbolized the precepts of faith: a 1508 woodcut by Hans Burgkamir (figure 2) shows a wayside symbol of the Passion, which reminded pilgrims of the intercessory culture which was the basis of their journey.[43] In an act which accepted Luther's radical religious injunction, but ignored his assertion that ordinary Christians should not interfere with the landscape, wayside shrines and crosses were targeted by iconoclasts. Apparently, in March 1525, Hans Fischer incited the residents of the region of Vipiteno to "uproot all the crucifixes that they found by the roadsides." Fischer was joined by "the drunkards and their women" as leaders, a comment which suggests this activity was socially diverse and that, in the view of the authorities reporting on events, commoners interfering with the landscape engendered social upheaval.[44] Similarly, returning from an attack on the abbey of St Blasien in autumn 1524, townsfolk from Waldshut destroyed all the wayside shrines on their path.[45] Townsfolk as well as peasants, then, remodeled the local environment to deny the Church's claim that it alone could sanctify space. This example of alignment in aims shows that for a preacher like Münzter, promulgating a common perception of their surroundings was an effective means of uniting these two groups.

[41] Martin Luther, *Admonition to Peace: A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia*, (1525), LW 46: 17-43.
[42] Augustin Hirschvogel, *Landscape with Tree and Monastery*, drawing, 10.5cm x 15.9 cm, British Museum, 1536.
[43] Hans Burgkmair, *Pilgrims at a Wayside Shrine*, woodcut in black on laid paper, 18.9 x 14 cm, National Gallery of Art, 1508.
[44] "Charges Laid against Hans Fischer, Preacher at Vipiteno [Sterzing], 27 April 1526," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 106-07.
[45] Tom Scott, 'Reformation and Peasants' War in Waldshut and Environs. A Structural Analysis. Part II," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 70 (1979): 142-44.

Fig. 2: Woodcut by Hans Burgkamir, 1508. Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Münzter shared Luther's condemnation of idols, but was sympathetic towards ordinary peasants and townsfolk and their refashioning of the sacred landscape. In the sermon he preached in Allstedt Castle on 13 July 1524 to the dukes of Saxony, Müntzer instructed the princes to "show no mercy to the idolatrous," and if they failed, "the sword should be taken from them."[46] In the *Testimony of Luke*, written after the *Sermon to the Princes*, and once Münzter gave up hope that rulers sympathetic to the gospel would ascend to power, Münzter clarified that "the godless" must be torn "from their judgment seats" in order to "raise up humble folk in their place."[47] Whether referred to as "poor," "wretched," or "coarse," Münzter favored the humble over their "dearest, most reverend rulers," for, in a judgment on the elite that would have appealed both to peasants and townsfolk, "the poor laity and peasants have a much sharper eye."[48]

This challenge to the authorities and preference towards the humble relates to the way Münzter imagined the landscape. He restated the holiness of the natural world and challenged lordly domination of the environment, in order to develop a theological position that reflected the reliance of peasants and townsfolk on their ecology discussed above. Following Paul, Münzter distinguished between the idolatrous built landscape erected by the Church in cahoots with tyrannous lords, and the sanctity of the natural landscape: God "made the world and everything" and "does not live in temples made by human hands" (Acts 17).[49] For Münzter, this appropriation of the environment was an injustice towards "the poor," who were "fleece[d]," by the lords.[50] These ideas infected Münzter's disciples. In his *On the New Transformation of the Christian Life,* Hans Hergot, Münzter's printer in Nuremberg, described an egalitarian utopia which would "restore to us the fruits of the earth," giving the equitable access to the environment that "people need for body and soul. … What they get out of the soil will be

[46] Münzter, *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer*, 250.
[47] Ibid., 287.
[48] Ibid., 235, 245.
[49] Ibid., 249.
[50] Ibid., 335.

theirs."[51] Münzter and his followers acted on this perception of the landscape; together with townsfolk from Mühlhausen and the peasants of the Eichsfeld, he "seized the corn in sheaves" and "fished [in] the ponds" in Ebeleben.[52] Münzter's image of space, therefore, imbued the natural landscape with sanctity and challenged lordly domination of this space in favor of its legitimate inhabitants, poor peasants, and townsfolk.

Demonstrating their alignment in aims, peasants and townsfolk outside of Müntzer's direct influence shared his perception of the natural landscape as free for all. Peasant grievance lists used religious language, mirroring the way the landscape was imagined by Münzter, to demand freedom to use uncultivated land. Complaining to the town council, the Memmingen peasants stated, "When Lord God created man he gave him power over the fish in the water, the birds in the air, and all the animals on earth."[53] Agreeing to "make free what Christ had made free: wood, water, meadow, hunting" was a requirement for the counts of Stolberg and of Schwarzburg to enter the Thuringian peasant army, explicitly demonstrating that peasants wanted to overturn lordly domination of the landscape.[54] Peasants, therefore, turned the way of imagining the environment they shared with Müntzer into an aim: by citing the religious significance of the natural world as the creation of God for all, peasant grievance lists denounced the lords' control of the landscape.

Mirroring Müntzer's dismay that "lords and princes" claimed to own "the fish in the water, the birds in the air, the plants on the face of the earth," townsfolk also believed that the plants and animals which populated the landscape should be free.[55] In September 1524, Michael Hetter of the Thuringian town of Schmalkalden displayed a banner in the town depicting "a fish, a bird, and trees," signifying "that all is to be free."[56] This symbol of the natural world being free to all was created and flown in a town, but in April 1525 Hetter also took it to the rebel camp in the village of Schweina, which was most likely composed of peasants from nearby villages. That peasants and townsfolk alike digested the banner's symbolism demonstrates how the perception of the landscape as free translated to an aim that these groups shared.

This points to how, in the case of Memmingen, the shared reliance on the environment for the needs of peasants and townsfolk contributed to a perception of the landscape in religious terms. The Twelve Articles stated "when the Lord God created man he gave him dominion over all creatures."[57] Ecological entanglement, therefore, and the perception of the landscape encapsulated by Münzter, were two characteristics shared by peasants and townsfolk that related to one common aim: to challenge excessive control of the environment by the authorities.

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[51] Hans Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," in *The Radical Reformation*, ed. and trans. by Michael Baylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 217.
[52] "Münzter and Pfeiffer's Military Campaign, April-May 1525: the Debate at Ebeleben, 30 April 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 147.
[53] "Articles of the Peasants of Memmingen," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 79
[54] "Thuringian Nobles as Common Members of Peasant Armies," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 200-1.
[55] Münzter, *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer*, 335.
[56] Ibid., 143.
[57] Ibid., 255.

Part III: Government and Rebellion in the Landscape

Given the resentment shared by peasants and townsfolk concerning interference with their natural resources, it is unsurprising that local officials who controlled interaction with the environment were involved in the Peasants' War. The anthropologist James Scott has developed an analysis of government structures by blending anarchist and environmental ideas, showing how stateless societies developed in the mountainous area of Zomia in the Southeast Asian Massif because the geography was difficult to govern.[58] Papers presented at the "Medieval Zomias" conference in 2019 expanded Scott's model to find ungoverned niches in more pervasively governed landscapes, and successful state models in Zomiatic geographies.[59] Applying these methods to the roles of local officeholders shows that everyday interaction with government structures added another layer to the alignment of peasants and townsfolk.

Administering the environment required local officeholders to possess knowledge of the surrounding countryside. Take the example of Schy Jäck from Altdorf, who on the night of the 4th March 1525 rode out towards the village of Berg to investigate shots heard in the surrounding fields as part of his obligation "as an official employed by the territorial bailiwick."[60] Jäck was riding at night and thus trusted his understanding of this town and country terrain. He was one of many men, bailiffs, castellans, foresters, clerks, and magistrates, tasked with administering the various landscapes within one lordship or across the different territories owned by princes. As middlemen – and they were always men – these officials moved deftly through country and town, embodying a connection between the communities.

The officials of Stühlingen were assigned to force the serfs to "cut the aftermath on the stable field," and put the eyes out of any serf who caught game. Peasants and townsfolk were united in the aim of targeting these officeholders, whom they perceived as the hated representatives of encroaching government.[61] The citizens of the town of Forchheim expelled their magistrate on 26 May 1525 because of his role in managing resources, as he prevented them from fishing dry the fishponds of the cathedral provost of Bamberg.[62] The following morning the surrounding villages also rallied to the cause, thus showing how the magistrate provoked a joint revolt among the peasants and townsfolk under his jurisdiction. Therefore, a shared need for food and sustenance manifested in another shared aim: attacking the middlemen who controlled natural resources.

Conversely, the detailed knowledge of the landscape that these middlemen possessed, together with their leadership experience, meant that, elsewhere, they united peasants and townsfolk as the ideal leaders of rebel movements. The dissemination of rebellion often owed

[58] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), see esp. 1-39.
[59] Takashi Kawato, "Wako (Japanese Pirates) as Maritime Zomiatic People in Late Medieval and Early Modern East Asia," (unpublished paper, delivered 8 February 2019, Medieval Zomias Workshop, Oxford).
[60] "Altdorf Allies with the Lake Constance Band: a Notorial Attestation, 12 March 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 137-39.
[61] "Articles of the Peasants of Stühlingen, before 6 April 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 69-80.
[62] "Articles of the Town of Forcheim and the Surrounding Villages, 27 May 1524," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 81.

much to these officeholder's movement through the landscape. Hermann von Hoff, a town councilor of Erfurt, spread the revolt to the nearby village of Kirchheim alongside the village bailiff: von Hoff "had been with the bailiff … and commanded the villagers … to rise and carry out what had happened in Erfurt."[63] Karms Gopffert, the magistrate of Hambach near Schweinfurt, spread rebellion by navigating the surrounding forested region in order to take a letter inciting revolt to the villages of Dittelbrunn and Üchtelhausen.[64] Perhaps middlemen also deployed their wide knowledge of the environment to inform rebels about niches in the landscape hostile to mounted knights, like "the boggy ground at Görmar" where the Mühlhausen troop led by Pfieffer and Müntzer met the Eichsfeld peasants.[65] Regardless, such officials could unite peasants and townsfolk because they represented the best chance of achieving their shared aims, by virtue of their activity in and understanding of the landscape.

In the aftermath of the Peasants' War, the significance of local officials in aligning the aims of peasants and townsfolk did not cease. In order to survive the consequences of rebellion, peasants and townsfolk both relied on these men, who were able to use their trusted position to ease the punishment of their communities. In a report of July 1525 intended to determine reparations for rebels, the Cellarer of Ebern described how Claus Hetterich was "rebellious," Hans Semelman was "elected as captain," and Hans Dillinger was "most vehement," but each had "a pious wife."[66] The polarity between the rebellious men and their peaceful wives placed blame on the male townsfolk. It seems that the Cellarer's report does not reflect the reality of female involvement, but instead reveals a strategy to limit the collective burden on the Ebern community. Already, the Cellarer described that one woman had relied on her friends to pay the reparations and avoid "beggary along with her children."[67] Harvest was only two or three months away, and in peasant as well as townsfolk communities, the suffering of the children and the elderly would increase if both male and female adult residents were exiled or killed. Hence, Wolf Füll, the bailiff of Herrenstein Castle, protected every "man, woman and child [who] could escape from [the village of] Dossenheim," from duke Anthony of Lorraine's army.[68] By virtue of their position in local government, these middlemen protected some peasants and townsfolk, facilitating their common aim of avoiding the worst excesses of the punishment they faced.

Therefore, through their governance of the landscape, middlemen officials aligned the aims of peasants and townsfolk, as both a common target, such as in Forchheim, and leaders of rebellion, for example in Erfurt and Hambach. In Ebern and Dossenheim, they were also agents for achieving the aim of limiting punishment, allowing the community to continue to sustain itself through winter. Interestingly, Münzter similarly viewed middlemen as targets,

[63] "History of the Peasant Attack on Erfurt, April 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 186.
[64] "Statements by Witnesses from the District of Mainberg [June 1525]," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 216-17.
[65] "Müntzer and Pfeiffer's Military Campaign, April-May 1525: the Debate at Ebeleben, 30 April 1525", in *The German Peasants" War: A History in Documents,* 147.
[66] "Report of the Cellarer of Ebern about the Offenses of Certain Refugee Citizens [July 1525]," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 218-20.
[67] Ibid.
[68] "The Behavior of Duke Anthony of Lorraine's Army," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 308.

participators, and leaders in rebellion. When he arrived at Frankenhausen in May 1525, Münzter oversaw the execution of emissaries sent by Ernst von Mansfeld.[69] Yet, Münzter was "dearest brother" to the electoral official of Allstedt, Hans Zeiss, who marched to Frankenhausen with peasants and townsfolk from the Allstedt region.[70] Writing to his influential godfather, Zeiss described Münzter as "simply" the preacher at Frankenhausen: by underplaying Münzter's role, Zeiss might be replicating the kind of loyalty felt by local officials towards their communities of peasants and townsfolk, attempting to protect him from the authorities.[71]

Remembering the Peasants' War

These middle-men wrote many of the sources we have of this historical moment. As such, it is in their records that the term "Peasants' War" appears to originate. The confession of Hans Hut, recorded in November 1527 by a town official of Augsburg, describes his activities "in the late Peasants' War."[72] Hans Sauer was accused in the Cellarer of Ebern's report of taking "enough money in the peasant's war … to go where he will."[73] Interrogated by the Freiburg council in August 1527, and recorded by the town scribe or clerk, Blesy Krieg was accused of violent anticlericalism "in the peasants' rebellion."[74] These individuals came from town and peasant communities: Hut was from the Thuringian village of Haina, Sauer lived in the town of Meiningen, and Krieg is recorded as having lived in the Breisgau village of Oberried. It is not clear why these officials adopted a term which appears to blame the peasantry for the war when they knew that the individuals they interrogated were both peasants and townsfolk. These three examples were written by officials operating in towns: perhaps, terming the uprising the "Peasants' War" or "peasant rebellion" represents a means to offload the blame and protect the town community, and also gives a symbolic indication that alignment between peasants and townsfolk had ended.

Regardless, we know that the term "Peasants' War" does not give an accurate indication of what happened. Even with structural barriers like town walls and the economic tensions described by Scott, peasants and townsfolk possessed shared characteristics which translated into alignment in aims. Both groups sought to increase control of natural resources and free the natural world from monopolization by the elite. These aims were expressed in terms of shared reliance on their ecology and a common perception of the landscape, which in turn provoked similar involvement with the officials that governed the environment. Yet, despite the misleading nature of "Peasants' War," it is difficult to replace this familiar term with something more accurate. Blickle's attempt was "The Revolution of the Common Man," but this wording

[69] Münzter, *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer*, 141; "Thomas Münzter, the Revolutionary Visionary of Thuringia," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 239.
[70] Ibid., 100-01; Scott, "The 'Volksreformation' of Thomas Müntzer in Allstedt and Mühlhausen," 208.
[71] "Thomas Münzter, the Revolutionary Visionary of Thuringia," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 238; Münzter, *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer,* 72, footnote 549.
[72] "The Battle of Frankenhausen, 15 May 1525," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 290.
[73] "Report of the Cellarer of Ebern about the Offenses of Certain Refugee Citizens [July 1525]," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 218-20.
[74] "Violent Anticlericalism and the Mocking of Catholic Beliefs. Confession of Blesy Krieg from Oberried, 28 August 1527," in *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, 108-09.

carries Marxist baggage and ignores the involvement of women, which is shown above in the examples of Vipiteno and Ebern.[75] Perhaps it is best to accept "The Peasants' War," while remembering that this name is shorthand and belies the complexity of the event.

Artwork commemorating the Peasants' War has reproduced this perspective. In his *Monument to Commemorate a Victory over the Rebellious Peasants* of 1525, Albrecht Dürer takes a male peasant, impaled with a sword, to stand for all those killed in the war. Similarly, in Käthe Kollwitz's 1908 *Ploughing*, the weight of a plough borne by a single peasant suggests that only peasants suffered the hardship that provoked revolt. Tubke's 1987 panorama does show townsfolk in the "early bourgeois revolution" of which the Peasants' War formed a part, but the townsfolk pictured some way to Münzter's left are foolish aesthetes, contrasting with the tragic portrayal of the peasants fighting at Frankenhausen.

While the artists who remembered the Peasants' War often neglect to depict the townsfolk involved, they recognize the profound importance of the environment for all rebels. Dürer's peasant sits on top of a column crafted from the life-sustaining fruits of labor, which we know involved peasants and townsfolk: livestock, butter, vegetables, milk, cheese and eggs.[76] Similarly, Kollwitz's 1908 *Raped* depicts an act of exploitation which extends to the environment, with destroyed flowers and cabbages surrounding the woman's body. While these depictions suggest the reliance on the environment shared by peasants and townsfolk, Dürer's *Dream Vision*, a watercolor illustration of a dream he had in May 1525, indicates the importance of perceptions of the landscape. This shows a flat plain devoid of people and "great masses of water" falling from the sky, which threatens to drown "the whole land."[77] The amber hue of the pasture evokes glowing embers, adding to the theme of destruction: this apocalyptic image reminds us of the importance of the way the environment was imagined, although offering a more negative portrayal than the hopes of peasants and townsfolk for a freely accessible landscape. Environmental history offers a way for scholars of the Peasants' War to learn from these striking artistic evocations of the significance of the natural world. Its methods have helped develop the discussion of townsfolk and peasants in the Peasants' War, showing how consideration of ecological needs, perceptions of the environment, and the interaction between government and the landscape foreground the complex roles played by the natural world.

[75] Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective*, 122-24.
[76] Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1990), 102-04.
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Turning Point, or Pointless Violence?

The Silencing of the Angolan War and the Destruction of Hope

Jack Stephens

Abstract

Two factors tempered the historical and material impacts of the Angolan War: the intentional destabilization of Angola by South Africa and the United States, and the narrative that the war was an unnecessary and unfortunate mistake. To the contrary, I argue, the war was a product of rational decision-making, and the history of the conflict, silenced by a variety of actors, is important for understanding current conditions in Angola and the character of Third World intervention by the United States during the Cold War. I use primary sources from American foreign policy journals and mainstream news media outlets that discussed the case for intervention in Angola. I also use the memoir of John Stockwell, the former chief of the CIA's Angola Task force, to argue that the way the war is popularly portrayed is ahistorical. Secondary sources include numerous inquiries into the history of the war, especially the role of Cuban internationalism in the conflict. I conclude by arguing that understanding this history is significant both for the future of the Angolan people and for a theory of how Global South internationalism can be harnessed to resist imperialism.

Radical Vision, or Serious Threat?

As the dust settled on the battlefield of Cuito Cuanavale on March 23, 1988, the military coalition of the People's Armed Forces of Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and the Cuban army had achieved what looked at the time to be a decisive turning point in the history of southern Africa. Located in the southeast of Angola (figure 1), the small town of Cuito Cuanavale played host to the Angolan and Cuban coalition's last stand against South African aggression, the largest battle in Africa since World War II. By the end of the battle, which resulted in at least 8,000 deaths, FAPLA and Cuban forces managed to win a tactical stalemate with the South African 'Defense' Force, pushing the South Africans to the negotiating table as they realized that total military victory in Angola was impossible.

In the period directly after the battle, a hopeful and radical vision for the future of southern Africa took center stage. The battle showed that South Africa, despite its "total strategy" which called for the utilization of preponderant military power and the development of nuclear capability to suppress communism and national liberation in southern Africa, could be defeated.[1] The SADF's inability to crush the Angolan resistance buoyed the prospects for leftist liberation movements across the region, from Namibia to Mozambique to which South Africa's "total strategy" posed a serious threat.[2] Possibilities seemed to abound for international cooperation in building a socialist southern Africa free from colonial and neocolonial domination and dedicated to dramatically expanding healthcare and education[3], a future that could have produced a model for the countless Third World nations struggling for true independence against the backdrop of the Cold War.[4]

But not all participants were as optimistic about the battle's implications and the Angolan War more broadly. Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who both drove Cuba's international mission to resist South African aggression in Angola and experienced first-hand the struggles of building socialism under the shadow of American imperialism, proclaimed that though Cuito Cuanavale was a "heroic battle of great importance," it was uncertain if the battle would "one day be written and talked about."[5] In questioning the ostensible inevitability of the war's remembrance,

[1] Anna-Mart van Wyk, "Apartheid's Bomb and Regional Liberation: Cold War Perspectives," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 21, no. 1 (April 2019): 159-60; John F. Burns, "Afrikaners Dig In Against Threat to Their Rule," *The New York Times*, April 4, 1977.
[2] William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (Charleston: BookSurge Publishing, 2008) 37-38.
[3] Ibid., 23.
[4] Ibid., 8.
[5] Fidel Castro, "Moncada Barracks Anniversary Speech" (speech, Havana, July 26, 1988), Latin American Network Information Center.

Castro displayed a deep skepticism of the war's transformational possibilities, recognizing the tendency of the West to erase the revolutionary content of the Third World's struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism.

Castro's skepticism proved to be prescient. The battle, despite its ramifications for Namibian independence and the fall of Apartheid South Africa, only came to be memorialized and understood as a significant historical moment within Cuba and portions of southern Africa, and it was largely obscured in the United States and Europe. I argue that two factors tempered the historical and material impacts of the Angolan War from 1976 to 1991: the intentional destruction and destabilization of Angola by South Africa and the U.S., and the narrative of the war, constructed by historians, news media, and participants alike, as unnecessary and as an unfortunate mistake. While American involvement in the war was largely covert at the time, producing little in the way of attempts to justify intervention to the American public, post-facto arguments supporting the American role in Angola by the likes of Henry Kissinger and Henry Crocker distorted the true politics of the American participation in the conflict. I will show that contrary to these narratives, the Angolan War was a product of rational decision-making on all sides, and that its history is important for understanding not only contemporary conditions in Angola, but also the political character of the United States' anticommunist Third-World intervention during the Cold War.

Historiography

The literature on the Angolan War focuses largely on three questions: Why did the conflict escalate to a devastating proxy war? Is it best explained using a global Cold War lens or by focused analysis of local conditions? What was the war's impact on shaping contemporary southern Africa?

In *Apartheid's Contras*, William Minter explores the root causes of the conflict by analyzing the origins of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in the war against Portuguese colonialism, as well as the geopolitical factors that escalated the war. Using theoretical conceptions of counterrevolution, which he defines as "an insurgency against an incumbent regime that itself was the result of a revolution,"[6] Minter analyzes the behavior of UNITA, which he argues acted not as a nationalist movement but as a counterrevolutionary proxy force due to its early collaboration with Portuguese security forces during the war of independence[7]

[6] Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*, 66.
[7] Ibid., 19.

and reliance on American funding. Minter places significant emphasis on the role of South Africa's white minority Apartheid government in both the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars, but also covers the involvement of the United States and politics internal to pre- and post-colonial Angola.

Minter concludes that in 1976, without external interference, the MPLA would have "gained military victory and international recognition" thanks to their hold on the capital and the fact that they maintained the "widest national outreach across ethnic lines."[8] UNITA, on the other hand, with few military prospects, would have "succumbed to marginalization and defections as did the FNLA."[9] In analyzing the course of the war with South Africa, Minter claims that despite internal ethnic divisions that may have led to violent conflict, the war's "rhythm and intensity" in the 1980s was driven by "Apartheid's death struggle and the end game of the Cold War,"[10] forcing levels of destruction far beyond Angolans' capacity to resist. This argument, supported by extensive primary source analysis, can be followed to the logical conclusion that the United States and South Africa's support of UNITA was the primary cause of the war and the consequent destruction of Angola's economy and defanging of its ruling party's revolutionary ideals.

Minter's claim contradicts the official American narrative that the MPLA had received Soviet assistance, which had been used to justify American intervention and the CIA's effort to prevent foreign interference and ensure a 'democratic' outcome by collaborating with UNITA.[11] In *Visions of Freedom*, Peiro Gleijeses presents this assertion as an example of how the United States rewrites the history of its operations abroad, both as they occur and in the historical record. The United States' policy towards Angola, Gleijeses argues, was "cloaked in morality,"[12] shown by how its official communications positioned the US as a benevolent force righting the wrong of Soviet intervention through a Cuban proxy. In reality, the United States' covert operation to assist UNITA began four months prior to Angolan independence, in July 1975.[13] The impending MPLA victory forced Pretoria to turn to direct military participation or risk the loss of Southwest Africa to a SWAPO insurgency, which could count on socialist Angola for assistance. Urged by the Ford administration, South Africa invaded Angola on October 14, 1975.

[8] Ibid., 284.
[9] Ibid., 284.
[10] Ibid., 285.
[11] "Ford Says Angola Acts Hurt Detente, Cuba Tie," *The New York Times*, December 21, 1975.
[12] Piero Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 511.
[13] Ibid., 511.

Castro ordered troops to Angola on November 4th, only in *response* to the invasion. Clearly the narrative of American intervention against nefarious communist aggression does not hold.[14]

Gleijeses shows how this manipulation of history had immediate and direct political applications for the United States. He details how Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs under Reagan and a key player in the Angola episode, repeated this lie multiple times in engagements with Angolan officials; Crocker claimed in 1988 that "it was not us, the United States, who began foreign intervention in Angola… The Cuban intervention began many months before Angola became independent… It was not until after Angolan independence that the United States developed a relationship with UNITA." Later the same year Crocker argued that the US "never had diplomatic relations with Angola because we thought the decolonization process became illegitimate… when foreign troops installed their favorite faction in power."[15] While rearranging the order in which events occurred in Angola had no impact on negotiations—Angolan and Cuban diplomats no doubt understood the true timeline—such tactics were meant to push the American public, who did not have access to an accurate chronology, towards supporting action to remove the 'illegitimate' MPLA in the name of democracy.

Instead of adding to an already robust scholarship of external geopolitical factors that impacted the war, Justin Pearce's work *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola* includes little to no context involving American, South African, or Cuban involvement, instead focusing on how the political identities of Angolans shifted over time and under different governing groups.[16] In his analysis of how UNITA built political power in the central highlands after 1976, he ignores communities that he acknowledges only experienced UNITA as a violent and predatory force. Instead, he focuses on processes of political engagement "where the military situation was sufficiently stable to engage in a peaceful manner with the population,"[17] thereby erasing one of the most significant aspects of how the CIA-funded rebel group was experienced by Angolans.

Pearce also presents interviews of people who lived under UNITA's control and ended up believing, for the most part, that UNITA was acting in their best interests, either by guaranteeing security or providing resources.[18] The treatment of UNITA as a legitimate political movement acting in the best interests of Angolans serves to weaken the MPLA's claim

[14] Ibid., 512.
[15] Ibid., 511.
[16] Justin Pearce, *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola, 1975-2002* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 8-9.
[17] Ibid., 93.
[18] Ibid., 176.

over Angolan nationalism. However, in applying international context and other information then-inaccessible to UNITA's civilian supporters, such as Jonas Savimbi's participation in the SADF's mission to destabilize the country,[19] it becomes nearly impossible to agree that UNITA was a liberation movement with the best interests of the Angolan people at heart. Pearce's narrowly national scope ends up ahistorically positioning the war as needless bloodshed between similar rival groups rather than a significant struggle between vastly different ideologies that had wide-reaching consequences for all of Southern Africa.

Two additional scholarly works on the war stand out. George Wright's *The Destruction of a Nation* argues that the Angolan war is a "rather typical case study" in post-WWII American foreign policy, in which the United States determined policy towards the Third World "solely on Cold War calculations."[20] Taking a Marxist approach, he posits the United States' primary foreign policy objective as the maintenance of global capitalist hegemony, Wright argues that toward that end, the "United States-sponsored proxy war in Angola carried out by South Africa and UNITA over two decades destroyed Angolan society," creating "overwhelming" human and material costs.[21] Wright goes on to detail exactly how this war of destabilization was carried out and justified across various presidential administrations while it left Angola with over a million civilian deaths, the highest number of amputees per-capita in the world, and an economy largely in tatters.

Rather than focus on the material impacts of the war, Isaac Saney's "African Stalingrad" seeks to explain the ideological objectives of Cuba, South Africa, and the United States in Angola, as well as the impact of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale on regional and global politics, which he points out is heavily underrepresented in the literature.[22] To do so, Saney defines and answers several crucial questions that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the conflict: what actually happened at Cuito Cuanavale? What was at stake, and why were Cuban and American troops involved?[23] Saney, more than any other author, directly confronts the interests behind contradictory narratives on Cuito Cuanavale and the Angolan War, centering not only the events of the conflict but the significance of how the parties involved remembered (or erased) the war.

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[19] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report," Volume 2, October 29, 1998, 56.
[20] George Wright, *The Destruction of a Nation: United States' Policy Towards Angola Since 1945* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), viii.
[21] Ibid., viii-ix.
[22] Isaac Saney, "African Stalingrad: The Cuban Revolution, Internationalism, and the End of Apartheid," *Latin American Perspectives* 33, no. 5 (2006).
[23] Ibid., 82.

Gleijeses and Minter, using extensive primary research that refutes many public claims from both South African and American officials, focus on uncovering why the Angolan War developed as it did, which actors bear primary responsibility, and what possible implications can be drawn from the historical record. Pearce, as demonstrated in a 2015 interview for the *Washington Post*, developed his scholarship through post-war interviews with Angolans, which revealed that for many who lived through and participated in the war "there was little meaning behind it."[24] This paper seeks to build on the existing scholarship by synthesizing it with primary accounts of the war, which I argue distort its true politics, and theory on the erasure of revolutionary politics. By combining such an array of sources and analyzing the Angolan War as a piece of the ongoing Western project to both physically and historically destroy the achievements of Third World revolutionary Marxism, I present an answer as to how and why the revolutionary potential for Angola and Southern Africa following the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale did not come to pass.

To do so, I draw on the Chief of the CIA's Angola Task Force John Stockwell's exposé *In Search of Enemies* and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation report. Stockwell's work provides a detailed description of how the CIA designed and disseminated propaganda on the war that ahistorically placed responsibility for the war on individuals in the intelligence and national security apparatuses rather than the United States. While some could argue that Stockwell absolves himself of personal responsibility by placing blame on the CIA's structure and leadership, his perspective throughout the text is still indicative of a wider project of exceptionalizing U.S. state-backed violence in Angola. Claiming that the CIA's "absurd" operations and misadventures were enabled by the agency's bureaucracy and lack of accountability can only be combated by exposing the American people to the truth in order to keep the CIA "honest,"[25] Stockwell argues for a world where the CIA should continue to enact an anti-communist vision, simply with more public accountability.

The Truth and Reconciliation Report, a product of countless interviews and investigations conducted as part of South Africa's post-Apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), provides valuable insight into the thought processes and strategy behind South Africa's involvement in the Angolan War. The TRC report is especially useful because it synthesizes a variety of declassified internal communications to produce a succinct summary of South Africa's motivations, including primary evidence of South Africa's intent to destabilize Angola to the fullest extent possible.

[24] Adam Taylor, "A 27-Year Civil War, for No Reason at All," *Washington Post*, October 14, 2015.
[25] Ibid., 15.

I use a variety of contemporary newspaper, magazine, and journal articles to analyze how media institutions viewed and described the conflict, including pieces from the *New York Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *International Security*. I utilize multiple primary sources quoted within Gleijeses' *Visions of Freedom*, which provides unique access to hundreds of declassified Cuban, American, and South African documents unable to be accessed otherwise. These sources are necessary to lay a historical foundation for what actually occurred during the war and to understand how facts came to be incorrectly represented by both news media and American public officials, stripping the conflict of its true political nature.

The Players

To comprehend the significance of the fighting at Cuito Cuanavale, a tiny town of little inherent strategic importance, one must first understand the context of the Angolan War.

Stemming from the Angolan War of Independence, in which the socialist MPLA took a decisive advantage over rival groups in the FNLA and UNITA in the vacuum left by the Portuguese colonial government, the Angolan War from 1976-1991 pitted the United States, South Africa, and UNITA against the MPLA's nascent government and the supporting Cuban military. Cuba's choice to join the war, at first incorrectly pegged by the likes of Henry Kissinger as the result of Soviet pressure,[26] was later acknowledged as a primarily internationalist mission driven by Cuba's ideological anti-imperialism and hatred of Apartheid South Africa, which Fidel Castro later called a collection of "dictators, terrorists, thieves, and confessed racists."[27] In fact, Cuban and Soviet diplomats, military advisors, and national leaders often butted heads on the topic of Angola, ultimately straining the diplomatic ties between the two nations. South Africa's involvement was more straightforward, if initially covert, as they sought to eradicate Namibia's growing rebel independence movement, headed by the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which was supported by the MPLA and that often took refuge in southern Angola.

The United States' decision making process to intervene in Angola closely resembled that of the war in Vietnam. According to the chief of the CIA Angola Task Force John Stockwell, Angola had "little plausible importance to American national security and little economic importance."[28] Furthermore, Stockwell claims that Kissinger's superficial arguments that Soviet control over Angola threatened vital shipping lanes were incorrect on two fronts: Angola had

[26] Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 307.
[27] Fidel Castro and Ignacio Ramonet, *Fidel Castro: My Life* (New York: Scribner, 2014), 316.
[28] John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 43.

no intention of becoming a Soviet puppet, and any move from the Soviets to disrupt American oil shipments would detonate "a reaction so vigorous that a Soviet base in Angola would be a trivial factor."[29] So if not for strategic or economic motives, why did the US decide to meddle in Angola's internal affairs? The answer lies in the Reagan Doctrine, which, despite its name, had in reality been foundational to American foreign policy since World War II. While many liberal accommodationists argued that the United States exaggerated the importance of the Third World and in fact exacerbated through intervention the very issues the United States hoped to avoid, right-wing political scientists and think-tank members correctly argued that "economic disaster to the United States and its allies is more likely to arise from developments in the Third World than anywhere else."[30] The Vietnam War, Operation Condor,[31] the US-sponsored killing of over one million communists in Indonesia,[32] and the violent overthrow of countless other left and left-leaning governments stretching from the end of World War II into the present were not irrational or unsuccessful ventures for the American ruling class. Instead, the various administrations that directed such violence understood that the greatest threat to the American-centric, capitalist world order that resulted after World War II was located in the Third World. Along those lines, the United States had to crush the MPLA by any means possible while simultaneously ensuring that such a campaign did not erode the American public's trust and support of their government.

Setting the Facts Straight on Cuito Cuanavale

What I term the Angolan War was a product of the MPLA's clash with two enemies "bent on its destruction:"[33] Apartheid South Africa and UNITA. On July 12, 1987, weary from years of destabilizing warfare during which the coalition of the SADF and UNITA targeted crucial infrastructure throughout Angola,[34] the MPLA's military branch, FAPLA, launched an offensive against the enemy's positions. Coined Operation Salute to October, the mission's purpose was to capture UNITA headquarters, which were located in the far southeastern corner of the country in a town called Jamba, just north of Namibia's Caprivi Strip[35]. Initially, the elite FAPLA force of 11,400 men spread across four brigades saw considerable success: the SADF history of their offensive noted that "the UNITA forces in the area appeared totally incapable of

[29] Ibid., 43.
[30] Steven R. David, "Why the Third World Matters," *International Security* 14, no. 1 (1989): 50.
[31] Giles Tremlett, "Operation Condor: The Cold War Conspiracy That Terrorised South America," *The Guardian*, September 3, 2020.
[32] Vincent Bevins, *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program That Shaped Our World* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2020), 197.
[33] Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991*, 10.
[34] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report," 56.
[35] Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991*, 393.

halting the offensive on their own."[36] Recognizing the severity of the situation, the SADF provided significant air and artillery support, forcing the FAPLA high command to issue an order on October 7 to retreat back to Cuito Cuanavale; to press onward would have been to risk annihilation.

If the SADF had pursued the FAPLA brigades on their march back to the more fortified Cuito Cuanavale, the town and the entire southern region of the country likely would have fallen into South African hands. Instead, South African generals decided to wait for reinforcements knowing that the town of Cuito Cuanavale was doomed to fall to a larger force. While South Africa was preparing for its advance, UNITA was "not pulling its weight," according to SADF Major W.A. Dorning.[37] The South Africans' strategy of covert operations for which UNITA and Savimbi were given the credit in the international press, while necessary to prevent severe international backlash, was causing resentment amongst South African troops and complacency among UNITA's.

A major and unlikely factor contributed to the result at Cuito Cuanavale: the Iran-Contra scandal. The discovery of the illegal sale of weapons to Iran, which were used to illegally fund anti-Marxist 'freedom fighters' in Nicaragua, and the resulting public and congressional outcry weakened the Reagan administration's ability to enact its foreign policy objectives. A top CIA official at the time wrote that the crisis "produced a dramatic change of senior officials and the constellation of power in the administration," with the last remaining hardliner in Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger resigning in November 1987.[38] Realizing that war against the Cuban homeland was no longer an imminent threat thanks to the defanging of the hawkish Reagan administration, Castro directed the most experienced pilots, heavy weapons, and the elite 50th division of the Cuban army to Angola, producing serious concern within the highest ranks of the SADF.[39] If not for the discovery of the Reagan administration's illegal weapons deal in service of the right-wing Contra movement, the course of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale would have transpired much differently, as Cuba would have been forced to devote more resources towards ensuring its immediate national security rather than engaging in an internationalist military campaign.

Thanks to Cuba's newfound air superiority in the region in combination with the arrival of heavy artillery, tanks, and tens of thousands of Cuban troops to reinforce Cuito Cuanavale, the

[36] Ibid., 395.
[37] Ibid., 399.
[38] Robert Michael Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 420-421.
[39] Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991*, 410.

coalition of FAPLA and the Cuban military were able to hold the line at the tiny rural town, halting the SADF's plans to push further into the country and install UNITA as the government of southern Angola. Despite the physical result of the battle, however, its impact on the war as a whole and wider historical legacy remain points of contention. South African sources often downplay its importance in the region's history[40] while Western scholarship sometimes ignores the battle entirely[41] or even transmutes the results into a win for the racist Apartheid regime.[42]

SADF and American intelligence documents, however, alongside numerous contemporary historical analyses, present the tactical stalemate produced by the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale as a result which favored the MPLA/Cuba alliance. Unable to go on the offensive, partly due to fears – later proven correct – that South Africa had acquired several nuclear weapons,[43] Cuba was kept in a waiting game. While the SADF externally demonstrated a confidence in their ability to halt any Cuban advance, US intelligence concluded that "Pretoria appears to be taken aback by the Cuban reaction to [the SADF's] involvement and may now realize that it cannot unilaterally force concessions from Luanda, renewing interest in negotiations."[44] Negotiation, of course, was the preferred outcome for the Cubans, who sought to achieve the demands of Resolutions 602 (the SADF's unconditional withdrawal from Angola) and 435 (the granting of independence to Namibia) without further troop losses. In Washington, military officials noted that "the war in Angola has taken a dramatic and, as far as the SADF is concerned, an undesirable turn."[45] According to one South African colonel, on March 23, 1988, the last South African advance on the town was "brought to a grinding and definite halt" by the joint Cuban and FAPLA defenses.[46] Gleijeses goes on to argue that it was not only the stalemate itself that turned the tides in the conflict, but the successful ground defense in combination with Cuba's subsequent acquisition of air superiority.[47] In a letter to MPLA president dos Santos on March 31, 1988, Castro wrote that "the enemy cannot ignore the magnitude and the seriousness of our immense military effort … I hope that this will contribute to fruitful negotiations. But if we

[40] Saney, "African Stalingrad: The Cuban Revolution, Internationalism, and the End of Apartheid," 83.
[41] See, Fran Lisa Buntman, *Robben Island and Prisoner Resistance to Apartheid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Linda M. Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000).
[42] Chester A. Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 360-361.
[43] Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991*, 428.
[44] Bentley to Curtis Kamman, April 28, 1988, via FOIA in Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991*, 430.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Jan Breytenbach, *The Buffalo Soldiers: The Story of South Africa's 32-Battalion, 1975-1993* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 2002), cited in Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991*, 425.
[47] Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976 - 1991*, 425.

have to fight, we will be stronger than ever."[48] In fact, rather than Cuito Cuanavale marking the end of military hostilities between the SADF and Cuba, the Cuban military would go on to complete an offensive campaign in the Southwest part of the country to expel South African forces, which was remarkable in its success given South Africa's nuclear capabilities.

Cuban presence at the negotiating table, a direct product of their military might displayed during and after Cuito Cuanavale, had immense influence on the war's ending. On July 22, 1988, during a meeting between Cuban, South African, and American officials in Cape Verde, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs James Woods "characterized the South Africans as cornered," the Americans acknowledging that without military superiority, South Africa negotiated from a vastly weaker position than the one they held before their failed offensive.[49] The Cuban delegation, instructed by Castro, stated that there would be no ceasefire without the SADF's complete withdrawal from Angola. While the leader of the Cuban group at the Cape Verde session, General Ulises Rosales, was worried that the South Africans were simply using the process to stall for time, Castro asked that he not make any concessions throughout the negotiating process.[50] The next day, the South Africans finally capitulated, agreeing that in return for a cease-fire, the SADF would completely withdraw from Angola by September of the same year. The results of the negotiations, achieved without requiring restrictions on the activities of SWAPO in Angola, were a complete success for Cuba, dealing significant blows to the South African government and making strides towards Namibian independence. In Angola, however, the proxy war waged by UNITA carried on, the funding of the group by the United States continuing to cause wanton destruction and weakening the MPLA's governance.

Destroying Hope

Despite the influence of the war on Southern African geopolitics, the impact of the war did not end up being widely understood, as it was mitigated by two factors: the destructive and destabilizing effect of external intervention and the false perception that the United States' involvement was a mistake. Though some like Stockwell and Gutah argue that the Angolan War was a product of individual actors such as Henry Kissinger, whose "insistence on countering any Soviet move around the globe to show American dominance in the post-Vietnam and Cold War contexts led to *unnecessary and damaging* CIA involvement in the Angolan civil war,"[51] in reality the war was not a mistake born out of any one statesman's

[48] Ibid., 430.
[49] Ibid., 474-475.
[50] Ibid., 475.
[51] Mariah Gutah, "Kissinger in Angola: The Influence of Personality on Foreign Policy," (2016).

personal politics, but a necessary act in maintaining American influence in Southern Africa and beyond. Wright argues that U.S. policy towards Angola from the end of World War II all the way through the administration of Bill Clinton was part of a broader effort to maintain hegemony over the Third World through the establishment of capitalist multi-party political systems and collaborator regimes.[52] However, Angola was not important enough economically nor geopolitically to the United States in order to warrant such significant intervention just to maintain capitalism in the region. Equally if not more important was the United States' need to prevent successful Marxist development outside the Eastern Bloc, which would set a dangerous precedent for other Third World states that sought viable paths towards achieving economic and political independence from the West.

Contrary to those who blame the Angolan War on the excesses of the Reagan administration alone, numerous pre-Reagan efforts sough to prevent the construction of a Marxist political system in Angola, such as the CIA's bankrolling of Holden Roberto from as early as 1961 in an attempt to influence Angola's independence movement.[53] In a meeting with State Department officials that same year, Roberto explicitly noted that violence was required to control extremists within the independence movement, requesting "direct economic and military aid to avoid losing power to Marxist rivals."[54]

Though the CIA's initial effort to thwart Marxist elements of Angola's liberation movement during the war of independence proved unsuccessful, partly due to a lack of available resources due to their focus on a similarly anti-communist war in Vietnam, the policy of destabilization later carried out in Angola by both South African and the U.S. through the funding of UNITA produced more concrete results. Located at the frontier of capitalist empire, socialist experiments throughout the continent were "by definition permanently subject to challenges by Western allies," resulting in a "permanent state of civil war, foreign military intervention, and social strife."[55] Angola was no exception. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission found that the Apartheid government intended to keep the situation in Angola "as unstable as possible" in order to prevent the MPLA from establishing itself fully throughout the country.[56] The TRC found that internal communications titled Opdrag en Take (Mission and Duties) listed three methods to accomplish this goal: to so disrupt the national infrastructure of Angola through clandestine operations, that an unstable situation in the country would be created; to

[52] Wright, *The Destruction of a Nation: United States' Policy Towards Angola Since 1945*, ix-x.
[53] Ibid., 36.
[54] Ibid., 36.
[55] Luiz A. Pereira da Silva and Andrés Solimano, "The Transition and the Political Economy of African Socialist Countries at War (Angola and Mozambique)," *African Economies in Transition* 2, no. 1 (1999): 16.
[56] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report," 55.

disrupt, through clandestine operations, the main export harbours and railways leading to the south of Angola; and to handle to the best advantage of South Africa all requests from the Angolan government in connection with electric power from Ruacana (the hydro-electric scheme on the Angola–Namibia border), as well as food supplies.[57]

The South African policy of using UNITA to destabilize MPLA rule was useful in furthering American political objectives, as evidenced by the strengthening of ties between the two countries during the 1980s despite a growing international anti-Apartheid movement. Though the MPLA retained power after 1991 elections and then again after the end of the war against UNITA in 2002, the United States' goal in the war, unlike South Africa, was not to completely overthrow the MPLA but instead to cripple Angola to the extent where the socialist approach to development of the MPLA became unfeasible.[58]

The United States' success towards this goal converted Angola from a resource-rich nation committed to nationalist economic policy which maintained the power to influence political outcomes across Southern Africa to a war-ravaged state with "enormous social and infrastructure problems."[59] Because the United States-dominated World Bank and IMF preconditioned loans for development on economic liberalization and privatization, a rebuilding Angola was left completely unable to "carry out independent economic policies."[60] The continuation of UNITA's war against the MPLA post-1991, widely perceived as a typical African resource war marked by ethnic tensions and governmental instability, further marginalized Angola from the American consciousness. Angola became just another corrupt, mismanaged hotbed of ethnic violence rather than a state whose struggle was vital to the destruction of Apartheid and which required American intervention to subdue and deradicalize. The origins of Angola's decline, South African and American military aggression through the sponsoring of UNITA, came to be irrelevant due to the fact that the country's trajectory confirmed a stereotypical perception of the inability of Africans to create prosperous societies through self-governance.

In addition to the physical consequences of the war on Angolan society, the way the war was treated by contemporary news media, participants in the war, and historians contributed to the erasure of the Angolan War's significance. While each major power in the war had logical motives for their involvement, intervention by the United States, and the thought processes behind it, was obscured behind covert action, propaganda campaigns, and the veneer of

[57] Ibid., 56.
[58] Michael McFaul, "Rethinking the 'Reagan Doctrine' in Angola," *International Security* 14, no. 3 (1989): 104.
[59] Wright, *The Destruction of a Nation: United States' Policy Towards Angola Since 1945,* 205.
[60] Ibid., 205.

democratic accountability. One important aspect of the war's legacy is how Western news media and scholarly material on the conflict affected perceptions of the war and the global role of the United States.

During the war, the primary, if not only, channel from which the American people received information about the Angolan War was mainstream news media, which regularly printed the claims of American intelligence agencies as fact. In a 1983 interview, Stockwell discussed that over 400 journalists, including "some of the biggest names in the business" consciously collaborated with the CIA to introduce false stories into the press.[61] In his memoir, Stockwell details how even ostensibly trustworthy local reporting was often completely false.

Propaganda experts in the CIA station in Kinshasa busily planted articles in the Kinshasa newspapers, Elimo and Salongo. These were recopied into agency cables and sent on to European, Asian, and South American stations, where they were secretly passed to recruited journalists representing major news services who saw to it that many were replayed in the world press. Similarly, the Lusaka station placed a steady flow of stories in Zambian newspapers and then relayed them to major European newspapers.[62]

One such propaganda campaign from 1976 was centered around the completely made-up execution of a group of Cuban soldiers charged with the rape of several Ovimbundu women.[63] Stockwell recalls that CIA-manufactured photos of the supposed victims executing the Cuban soldiers made it into nearly every major newspaper in the country to create an "illusion of communists eating babies for breakfast."[64] In fact, the focus of the press on pursuing an anti-communist agenda overtook what little reporting existed on the actual reality, leading some journalists to decry the fact that the only thing the American people seemed to know about Angola was the presence of Cuban troops.[65] The clever use of Red Scare tactics focused the American public's attention on the evil communists, while at the same time American officials would "brief the media on Savimbi's military 'victories' and his value as an anti-communist ally, while avoiding mention of his South African connections and denying allegations of his human rights abuses."[66]

While the misinformation propagated by the CIA during the war sought to reduce domestic resistance to the funding of UNITA, analysis of the war after the fact sought to absolve the

[61] John Stockwell, "Former CIA Agent John Stockwell Talks about How the CIA Worked in Vietnam and Elsewhere," YouTube Video, September 29, 2017.
[62] Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*, 194.
[63] "17 Cubans Reported Killed By Firing Squad in Angola," *The New York Times*, March 12, 1976.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Gerald J. Bender, "Angola, the Cubans, and American Anxieties," *Foreign Policy*, no. 31 (1978): 3.
[66] Elaine Windrich, "Media Coverage of the Angolan War," *Africa Today* 39, no. 1/2 (1992): 89.

United States of responsibility by arguing that American involvement in the conflict was the product of individual bad apples. John Stockwell's *In Search of Enemies*, an ostensibly critical exposé of the CIA's practices in Angola, does just that. Stockwell opens the memoir with an author's note describing the thought process behind his decision to go public (pursuing democratic accountability), rather than working "within the CIA for reforms."[67] Throughout the book, Stockwell argues that the CIA's decision to intervene in Angola, and much of his previous work for the agency, had "nothing to do with the security of the United States"[68], instead being the result of individual incompetence, ego, and betrayals of what he viewed to be the United States' objectives.

In portraying the covert action of the CIA within Angola as a mistake, driven largely by Kissinger and other bureaucrats reeling from a harsh loss in Vietnam, Stockwell disregards the rationality of the United States' global anti-communist crusade, positioning the violence he and his peers carried out as an unfortunate aberration in the United States' history rather than the norm. While the memoir prompted readers to question the power of the CIA, it positioned the Angolan war as ideologically and materially insignificant, a line of thinking which disregarded the objectives that FAPLA and Cuban soldiers lost their lives fighting for. The distancing of true 'American values' from the reality of the United States' repeated illegal foreign interventions is a key factor to what Haiphong and Sirvent describe as American exceptionalism and American innocence, which combine to pre-emptively absolve the United States and its people of any and all responsibility for the consequences of its foreign policy.[69]

This perspective was more broadly adopted by a group which came to be termed 'accommodationists,' who argued in the media at the time that United States intervention in Angola, and the Third World in its entirety, was counterproductive to American policy goals and caused unnecessary social strife and suffering.[70] The position wholly disregarded the fact that the United States, despite the fact that it hold liberal democratic elections, operates as an empire beholden to capital. In order for American capital to continue to accumulate, it requires new markets of consumers to purchase American goods and favorable trade relationships to acquire cheap raw materials to manufacture those products. Countries which successfully implemented socialist economic policies, especially the nationalization of resources to support domestic welfare programs, would go on to provide a blueprint for other Third World states

[67] Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*, 12.
[68] Ibid., 32.
[69] Danny Haiphong and Roberto Sirvent, *American Exceptionalism and American Innocence: A People's History of Fake News—From the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror* (New York: Skyhorse Press, 2019), 78.
[70] Tom J. Farer, "The United States and the Third World: A Basis for Accommodation," *Foreign Affairs*, 54, no.1 (Oct. 1975); George M Houser, "Communism and the War in Angola," *The New York Times*, December 14, 1975.

that was extremely unfavorable to U.S. corporate interests. The United States had to combat such a path of development wherever it emerged in the world.

Justin Pearce's work, while providing valuable insights into how Angolan individuals perceived and experienced the conflict between the MPLA and UNITA, also ends up positioning the war as a zero-sum gain for Angolans by omitting the war's broader international context. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola, 1975-2002* seeks to provide an interview-based account of the war's often-overlooked human element, highlighting internal ethnic tensions that Pearce claims motivated Jonas Savimbi to advance an agenda with "Ovimbundu nationalism at its heart."[71] Key evidence to support Pearce's argument includes numerous first-hand accounts of how those living in UNITA-controlled regions perceived the rival political factions as largely equivalent. One man described how rather than align with one movement or another, it was better to lean whichever way "like trees bending in the wind,"[72] while another woman, who eventually became a loyal MPLA supporter, spoke to the fact that when she "stayed with UNITA, we were UNITA. But when we came back here with the MPLA, we became MPLA."[73] Given this perspective from the ground, Pearce concludes that "most people in the central highlands saw the MPLA and UNITA as two entities of the same nature that had competed for popular allegiance. Neither one was, a priori, more worthy than the other."[74] In disregarding what he claims to be a Cold War framing of the conflict, however, Pearce completely leaves out the fact that the two political movements were not political equivalents. While first hand testimony is valuable to understanding how people perceived the environment around them at the time, Pearce draws broader conclusions about the overall impact of the conflict on the country without accounting for the historical and political forces at work which are not strongly represented in the testimony he collected. Would Angolans who supported UNITA at the time have done so if they were aware of the organization's status as a proxy of the SADF and CIA, and therefore its role towards maintaining white South African regional power? In this case, thanks to the covert nature behind the political movement Pearce attempts to analyze, first hand accounts are unable to capture the wider implications Pearce ascribes to them.

Pearce's analysis also contains insight into the MPLA's political program for the regions to which it had access, a program which differentiated it from UNITA. One man, given the pseudonym Bernardo, described how the MPLA had barely arrived before it started concerning itself with taking over the state administration ... schools, hospitals began to work and the

[71] Pearce, *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola, 1975-2002*, 4.
[72] Ibid., 88.
[73] Ibid., 85.
[74] Ibid., 9.

whole administration started to gain its previous force. They paid civil servants' salaries and tuition became free: everybody studying, everybody working, and everyone on the move. ... Children went to school and received books for free. There were the Pioneers [the MPLA children's brigade] who received clothes for free. Everything free. This was always the philosophy of the MPLA: keep struggling to the people to have a better life.[75]

In fact, between 1974 when the MPLA first gained power and 1981, its national literacy program reached over 700,000 adults, while between 1979 and 1983 the MPLA increased health posts staffed by nurses nearly tenfold, from 133 to 1,000.[76] These statistics alone produce doubt as to whether the testimony Pearce uses to argue that UNITA and the MPLA were viewed as equivalent by a portion of Angolan populace at the time reflected the broader political reality, in which the MPLA was engaged in state building while UNITA remained little more than a paramilitary organization.

While a movement's leadership does not necessarily represent its entire base, Minter and Gleijeses' conclusions that Savimbi was more terrorist than nationalist positions UNITA more as a counterrevolutionary proxy than a nationalist liberation movement. In arguing that the war after 1976 was primarily a domestic conflict rather than one driven by external powers like Minter, Wright, and Gleijeses demonstrate, Pearce obscures who and what the MPLA were really fighting against as they battled UNITA: American imperialism and South African Apartheid.

Modern Legacies of Erasure

In arguing that American intervention in Angola was a mistake, or an internal, ethnically-driven civil war, politicians and historians alike erase the broader geopolitical motives driving the conflict. However, when the totality of global 'Cold' War fatalities is taken into consideration, it is clear that the coordination which enabled such a destructive, violent, and far-reaching effort could only have resulted from a long-term, ideologically-driven project. Exceptionalizing the role of individual actors, according to Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsburg, allows Americans today to put trust into democratic institutions to use the military to protect the security of the United States rather than be an aggressive, imperialistic force,[77] while positioning the conflict as a fundamentally ethnic one plays into stereotypes which marginalize African history. Sirvent and Haiphong build on this concept, naming the

[75] Ibid., 66.
[76] Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*, 23.
[77] Daniel Ellsburg, Christian Appy, and Charles Sennott, "Chancellor's Welcome and Keynote Address by Daniel Ellsberg," YouTube Video, April 30, 2021.

ideologies of American exceptionalism and innocence, which they claim bestow upon the U.S. imperial project a sense of 'goodness' that Americans, especially white Americans, can be proud of. Because of the American way of life's essential "goodness," many Americans feel they do not have to concern themselves with the terror and havoc that their government has spread all around the globe. More than a few Americans even claim ignorance to the endless wars the U.S. wages worldwide … it is difficult to name such evils when these wars are popularly framed as 'humanitarian' interventions, 'revolutions,' or just plain 'forgotten.' You cannot fight what you cannot name.[78]

The scapegoating of statesmen such as Reagan or Kissinger for the United States' actions in Angola works to preserve the myth of the American project's fundamental innocence, instead locating blame on individuals who are largely beyond accountability after they've left office. Despite the fact that acknowledging the rationality and necessity of the United States' global export of violence is not able to alter or combat the forces of imperialism on its own, historians do have an obligation to the truth. Manipulating how history is viewed by omitting significant context or allocating responsibility incorrectly on individuals rather than political ideologies or systems aids in the protection of the status-quo.

Here it is relevant to call upon the theoretical framework developed by Michel-Rolph Trouillot in his writings on the Haitian Revolution. Trouillot argues that the revolutionary process of Haiti was silenced both through direct erasure, as evidenced by the revolution's absence from popular and public histories such as textbooks, and by emptying events of "their revolutionary content so that the entire string of facts… becomes trivialized."[79] This second form of erasure he attributes to academic specialists who, by focusing so much on individual details, separate the content of their work from its revolutionary nature. The historical treatment of the Angolan War fits both of these frameworks of erasure. Returning to the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, it is clear that both the battle itself and the United States' involvement do not occupy significant space in the American historical consciousness. The confluence of political factors which led to the confrontation, however, if utilized properly, can contribute to understanding the logics behind American intervention in the Third World and the challenges associated with national development in the "post-colonial" era. Furthermore, while one could argue that Angola's contemporary economic and social struggles represent a failure of the MPLA's socialist model for national liberation, Wright, Minter, and Gleijeses' histories of the

[78] Haiphong and Sirvent, *American Exceptionalism and American Innocence: A People's History of Fake News—From the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror*, 220.
[79] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 87.

conflict, bolstered by the findings of the TRC, show that the primary barriers to the country's national development after its independence from Portugal were externally driven.

Detail-oriented narratives such as the one constructed by Pearce that focus on the war through the lens of individual politics removes the war from its historical context and allows for the creation of false-equivalencies. Pearce's work, which leads to the natural conclusion that the MPLA and UNITA were most responsible for the violence Angolan society experienced, without any consideration for why those two forces existed in the forms they did, strips the war of ideology, which in fact drove the conflict from all sides of the international and domestic arenas.

Trouillot also argues that the silencing of Haiti's revolution was "strengthened by the fate of Haiti itself," which "deteriorated both economically and politically" through the nineteenth century after its revolution, partly due to its collective ostracization by the West. [80] As I've argued, the decline of Angola, caused by the destructive proxy war waged in the country by the United States and South Africa, did the same. It is necessary to recognize the human and political costs generated by external intervention. Especially crucial is the task of connecting the TRC's findings that the United States and SADF sought to use UNITA to destabilize Angola, inflicting massive casualties on the Angolan populace. These human costs, which continue into today due to the presence of over 15 million unexploded landmines in the country,[81] are also both political and economic costs. Angola's subsequent lack of power emerging from decades of immensely-destructive war produced the same silencing effect that Trouillot first theorized in relation to the Haitian Revolution.

In the case of both Haiti and Angola, the West was unable, or unwilling, to properly represent the history of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist revolutions by Black and African revolutionaries. Such historical erasure does not just affect the aforementioned nations which Trouillot and I detail in our respective arguments. This pattern of erasure is significant in that it contributes to the historical undervaluation of struggles by colonized and previously colonized peoples worldwide against the West, and marginalizes the significance of racism, colonialism, and imperialism as foundations of the West's policy toward the Third World. This has critical implications for the contemporary political, social, and economic divides between the West and the Global South whose roots are widely misunderstood and misrepresented today. Such erasure leads the previously unthinkable act of a small island country such as Cuba

[80] Ibid., 88.
[81] Wright, *The The Destruction of a Nation: United States' Policy Towards Angola Since 1945*, 205.

aiding an African nation in its struggle for self-determination and socialist development to be treated in the historical record as what Trouillot would describe as a 'non-event.'

The Legacy of Cuito Cuanaval's erasure

Historians cannot turn back time and reverse the events that led to the destruction of Angola, but they can ensure that the struggle waged by the Angolan and Cuban peoples was not for nothing. The significance of the monumental and still unreplicated feat of Cuba standing in internationalist solidarity with the MPLA as they were under attack from the Apartheid South African government has been left shamefully underanalyzed by historians and political scientists alike. What about Cuba's government made it equipped to embark on such an undertaking, even while under economic siege by the United States? Did Cuba's socialist ideology lead it to develop and practice such an idealistic foreign policy, or the unusual revolutionary spirit of its leadership? Though these questions have the potential to provide a blueprint for meaningful South-South collaboration against imperialist intervention, they have hardly been posed, much less answered, by contemporary scholars. One historian, in her dissertation on the historical memory of the Angolan War in Cuba, notes that "most books dedicated to African history mention Cuban involvement but as an aside about foreign involvement in Africa," while even "fewer monographs on Cuba or Latin American history discuss this exchange between Cuba and Africa."[82] The lack of scholarship on Cuba's internationalist politics throughout the Angolan War and into the present day can only be described as a failure. While it is understandable why corporate news media, fed disinformation by intelligence agencies and the UNITA lobby itself, acted in ways which obscured the truth about Cuban involvement in the Angolan War,[83] historians, claiming to be driven more by the pursuit of truth than of reinforcing ruling class and state-backed propaganda campaigns, should give more consideration to the implications of Cuba's role in the war.

One crucial modern political application of this history is the question of reparations. While much of the discourse on reparations in Africa is directed at European colonial powers, one could also make the case that reparations need to be paid by the United States for its role in the destruction of Angola through its funding of UNITA. The difficulties for such an effort are myriad, however, most significantly that the contra-style relationship that the United States maintained with UNITA makes it easy for the US to dodge accountability. Despite the

[82] Marisabel Almer, *Remembering Angola – Cuban Internationalism, Transnational Spaces, and the Politics of Memories* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 58.
[83] Gerald J. Bender, "Angola, the Cubans, and American Anxieties," *Foreign Policy*, no. 31 (1978): 3; Stockwell, "Former CIA Agent John Stockwell Talks about How the CIA Worked in Vietnam and Elsewhere"; Elaine Windrich, "Media Coverage of the Angolan War," *Africa Today* 39, vol. 1/2 (1992): 89–99.

destructive impact of the SADF-UNITA military alliance in the late 1980s, the war following 1991 in which UNITA took up arms again after refusing to recognize the MPLA's electoral victory produced hundreds of thousands of casualties of its own. Minter's argument that UNITA could not have survived past the late 1970s without external support from South Africa and the United States points to a shared responsibility between the two nations for the ensuing violence even after their operations had ceased. However, proving such a causal relationship within a legal framework would be an almost impossible task on its own, much less enforcing any sort of order for reparations on the world's foremost military and political power. To this day, the United States has not paid reparations to Vietnam despite its much larger presence in American and international collective memories and the even more indefensible use of chemical weapons to decimate the country's agricultural sector.[84] Working towards reparations for Angola would first require the revitalization of a history that has been thoroughly obscured.

Appendix

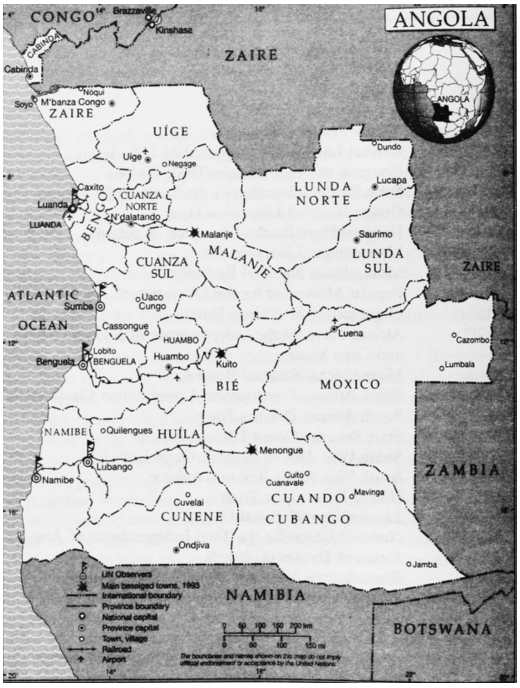

Figure 1.: A map of Angola showing the location Cuito Cuanavale in the southeast section of the country. Also note the town of Jamba in the far southeast corner of the map, the location of UNITA's headquarters and the target of the initial FAPLA offensive which launched from Cuito Cuanavale. From Minter, William. *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*. Repr. Charleston: BookSurge Publishing, 2008.

[84] Institute of Medicine (US) Committee to Review the Health Effects in Vietnam Veterans of Exposure to Herbicides, "The U.S. Military and the Herbicide Program in Vietnam," in *Veterans and Agent Orange: Health Effects of Herbicides Used in Vietnam*, 2141 (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 1994).

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