

ARCHIVE

AN UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF HISTORY

ARCHIVE An Undergraduate Journal of History

Volume 22, 2019



Volume 22, May 2019
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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VOLUME 22, MAY 2019

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COVER IMAGE

This photo depicts students outside UW's Afro-American Center in the 1970s.

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The 2019 *ARCHIVE* Editorial Board is proud to present Volume 22 of *ARCHIVE*. For nearly twenty-two years, *ARCHIVE* has highlighted exceptional undergraduate historical work, and this year is no exception. More important, *ARCHIVE* has helped undergraduates at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and across the globe uncover forgotten histories and address topics in underrepresented academic fields.

As with every edition of *ARCHIVE*, the debts and gratitude owed are innumerable. The editorial board would first like to thank Professor Susan Lee Johnson for her guidance, expertise in academic publishing, and unfailing support throughout the semester. Without her encouragement and genuine belief in each of the editors, this year's volume would simply not be possible. We would also like to thank the Chair of the History Department, Professor Laird Boswell, along with Scott Burkhardt, Christina Matta, and the rest of the History Department faculty and staff for their trust in and support of *ARCHIVE*.

In each volume of *ARCHIVE*, there is an overarching theme, a commonality that links the articles. Though diverse in geographic and temporal breadth, the articles in this volume discuss the interplay between political institutions and ideologies and social and cultural landscapes.

The journal begins in eighteenth-century France, when Napoleon I appointed Dominique-Vivant Denon as his Chief Artistic Advisor. In this article, Matt Stiles explores the ways in which Denon's work led to Paris's ascension as the world's new cosmopolitan center. Though separated by the Atlantic Ocean, Lucas Sczygelski's article, too, studies the ways that people in positions of power used art to further the development of national identity. Lucas draws a connection between American dime novels and American individualism, arguing that dime novels proselytized and reinforced a peculiarly American individualism to their audience. Similarly, Ian Rumball's article explores how Japan's twentieth-century *ero-guro-nansenu* (erotic, grotesque nonsense) literary genre both challenged and reaffirmed Japanese imperial and fascist doctrines.

Moving beyond how political institutions and ideologies were reinforced by the arts, the next articles focus on how authoritative rulers and their policies shaped the social landscape of their communities. Necdet Emre Kurultay's article provides a fresh perspective on Kemalism and early twentieth-century Turkish political history. It explores how Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's memoirs and political writings illuminate his grand vision of the Turkish Republic as a militocratic state. Taking a different approach, Sebastian van Bastelaer's article examines the personal relationship between Napoleon Bonaparte and Tsar Alexander I through the autocrats' personal correspondence. His article explores how the demise

of the once great friendship underpinned the eventual war between the French and Russian empires.

The next articles differ in that they look to reclaim the histories of marginalized groups whose stories have gone untold or been misrepresented. Daniel Ahrendt's article focuses on captive-taking practices of the 1840s and 1850s in the U.S. southwest borderlands. He shows how captive-taking served as a central component in long-standing social relationships of exchange and interdependence between peoples in the borderlands, and how the U.S. government failed to understand the area's politics and economies. Similarly, Isabella Martin's piece examines the ways in which Aboriginal autonomy in Australia first increased but then declined in the context of the nineteenth-century gold rush.

The final two articles introspectively look at both U.S. high schools and universities. In his article, Jacob Gonring explains how high school history textbooks have depicted the motivations of crusaders, increasingly identifying greed as a key motive. This year's edition concludes with an article about our own university. Griffin Wray analyzes student life at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during the Prohibition era, showing how the university's ambivalence towards Prohibition, along with students' determination to evade the law, led to a noted lack of temperance on campus.

On a more personal note, this volume marks a special moment in *ARCHIVE*'s history. Not only this year, but for more than two decades, *ARCHIVE* has dedicated itself to helping recover the forgotten or untold stories of marginalized groups and communities in Madison, in Wisconsin, and across the globe. As the first Black American *ARCHIVE* Editor-in-Chief, I wanted our cover photo to foreground this accomplishment by highlighting a small piece of the rich history of African Americans on our campus. While our university has begun to take preliminary steps toward acknowledging the history of Black students on campus, representations often reflect the "angry Black student protestor" trope. Garbed in black leather clothing, emulating the Black Panther image, Black students on our campus have been treated as a monolith, continuously marginalized from the remaining student body. Rarely are we depicted as "regular" students. This cover illustration looks to reclaim our history. Though I may be the first Black *ARCHIVE* Editor-in-Chief, it is my hope that I am not the last.

- John Douglas, *ARCHIVE* Editor-in-Chief

THE WAR OF ART

Vivant Denon and the Construction of Napoleonic Imperial Identity

Matt Stiles



Image: *L'arc de triomphe du Carrousel dans le jardin des Tuileries*, 2011, Paris, Wikimedia Commons, accessed [online](#).

Matt Stiles is a senior majoring in History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His studies focus on French history and art history. Matt is particularly interested in how artists respond to societal changes. After graduation, he will spend a year in Paris teaching English in French high schools. He hopes to continue his studies in France to earn graduate degrees in either History or Art History. This article was written for Professor Suzanne Desan's capstone seminar in Fall 2018.

Paris is one of the world's most spectacular cities. With its opulent architecture and distinguished establishments, an unmistakable aura of majesty pervades its wide boulevards. The Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, both massive and commanding, makes an impression on any pedestrians along the grand Champs-Élysées. The Panthéon, the final home for many of France's most exemplary citizens, exhibits the nation's tumultuous and storied past. Embedded in the heart of the city is the acclaimed Musée du Louvre; its unparalleled collection includes treasures from every corner of the world. During my time in Paris, I was consumed by the city's distinct effect of grandeur, of conquest, and of empire. It seemed to represent a veritable epicenter of imperial power. Buildings, bridges, and monuments adorned with the capital "N" serve as reminders of the enduring legacy of the First French Empire and its ruler, Napoleon I. Under the direction of Napoleon's chief artistic advisor, Vivant Denon, the regime began to carefully weave the symbols of empire directly into the fabric of the city. When Napoleon III commissioned the Baron George Haussmann to implement massive renovations of Paris, it was the culmination of this process.¹

By all accounts, Napoleon knew relatively little about the arts. Still, given his political awareness and general popularity, he certainly understood the relevance of art and architecture in constructing an identity for his newly proclaimed French Empire. The man he chose to help with this project was Dominique-Vivant Denon. From 1802 through 1815, Denon controlled almost every aspect of the arts within the empire by serving as Napoleon's general director of museums, monuments, medals, and art acquisitions.² With his experiences in Egypt and Rome and his wealth of knowledge on art history, Denon brought a distinct approach to the challenge of realizing the First French Empire's identity. Through strict control of state-sponsored artists and appropriation of ancient civilizations, he developed the arts and the city of Paris as a way to glorify the empire and, more important, to legitimize the French Empire as Rome's successor in the historical canon.

While serving as Napoleon's museum director, Vivant Denon created a powerful legacy that still reverberates around Paris and across Europe to this day. He transformed Paris into a new imperial capital that revealed Napoleon's conquests and the empire's cultural supremacy. First and foremost, Denon implemented his ambitious vision for the Louvre, which was to create an undisputed nexus of humanity's greatest artistic achievements. To do this, he took advantage of Napoleon's military dominance by directing official looting by French armies, a practice that Napoleon had used during his earlier campaigns in Italy. By filling the Louvre with the greatest works of the empire and its conquered territories, Denon transformed it into the embodiment of Paris's cultural supremacy. Second, Denon further contrib-

uted. to Paris's new imperial status through his direction of Napoleonic monuments. He oversaw the construction of several new monuments during the empire, including the Arc de Triomphe du Carousel and the Colonne Vendôme. These structures best epitomize the regime's new brand of propaganda, which blurred the lines between history and myth in order to deify Napoleon. They also contain explicit connections to ancient Rome, showing Denon's and Napoleon's collective efforts to cement the French Empire's place in the historical canon as its successor. Finally, Denon closely managed the nation's artists as a way to institute an official, unified aesthetic across the empire, aggrandizing Napoleon's image in the process.

Background: Looting, Italy, and Vivant Denon

In order to understand the intention behind Denon's efforts, it is first necessary to analyze the existing attitudes towards looting and French cultural supremacy from the French Revolution, beginning in 1789. Popular support for looting was profound during the Revolutionary Wars and reflected the collective desire among French people to elevate Paris's cultural status. As France moved on the offensive during the War of the First Coalition, forcible acquisitions of art by looting played a significant role in the state's military campaign as a top-down, regulated aspect of conquest.³ The French soldiers in Belgium and the Low Countries, typical of invading forces, plundered these areas in a massive, disorderly fashion. Then, in 1794, the National Convention authorized artists, on behalf of the republic, to enter conquered territories and select artifacts to bring back to France.⁴ As a result, artists and curators began sending works by northern masters such as Van Dyck and Rubens to Paris.⁵ This authorization thus established a connection between cultural and military conquest. Further, it shows that a legal precedent for state-sponsored looting, as a means to enhance the arts in France, existed before Denon or even Napoleon came to power.

When Napoleon took charge of the Army of Italy in 1796, he strengthened this connection by making the acquisition of art a formal condition of his military victories. In treaty negotiations, and with complete autonomy from Paris, he included concessions of art, becoming the first of the French generals to do so. For example, Napoleon included the concession of twenty paintings of his choosing in the treaty that he signed with Parma on May 9, 1796.⁶ He continued this trend in treaties with Verona, Milan, Bologna, Venice, and Mantua, and ultimately, with Rome.⁷ This diplomatic approach directly tied Napoleon's victorious military campaigns to the looted objects acquired in conquest. Thus, in the settlement of these treaties, Napoleon created the explicit connection between artistic and military conquest.

Back in Paris, these objects served as trophies—physical evidence of Napoleon's conquests—that augmented the young general's prestige. Moreover, because of their Italian origins, these objects carried heightened political significance in Paris.

When the caravans carrying Napoleon's Italian loot arrived in Paris, their public reception reflected existing popular support for France's ascension as a cultural leader. The first of these caravans, carrying mostly paintings and antique marble statues, began to arrive in Paris in the spring of 1798. The final convoy was delayed and stoked anticipation but eventually arrived in July, coinciding with the *Fête de la Liberté*.⁸ The citizens heralded the new art with great pomp and circumstance. As the convoy entered the festival, crowds sang, "Rome is no longer Rome, It is all at Paris."⁹ They also praised the soldiers as "friends of the Arts" and thanked them for enriching the republic with the arts of its enemies.¹⁰ Clearly, Parisians were enthusiastic for the looted artwork, and made a distinct association between these prizes and military glory.

The glee over Italy's defeat and the acquisition of its treasures not only reflected French hopes for future military and cultural glory, but also a historical rivalry between Rome and Paris. Italy had long been considered the cultural center of Europe. It was traditionally the most popular stop of the Grand Tour, with its vast cultural riches from antiquity through the Renaissance.¹¹ Italy attracted scores of artists who painted landscapes, ruins, and existing masterpieces and then disseminated this work across Europe, increasing the nation's allure. Historians generally agree that Napoleon's plunder brought an end to this period.¹² Simply put, the physical transfer of masterpieces from Rome to Paris meant that artists would have to go Paris to engage with them. This unprecedented plunder enabled Paris to replace Rome as a cultural capital of Europe.

While this Franco-Italian rivalry was culturally oriented, it carried significant political implications. After the Revolution, Parisians sought to elevate French culture to complement their philosophical preeminence. Denon later justified the extensive looting by citing Revolutionary rhetoric, claiming that France, with its superior ideals, was the only country capable of housing the world's greatest works of art.¹³ Rome, as the former seat of its namesake empire and the home of the Vatican, served as a cultural capital of Europe. By transferring the cultural heritage from Rome to Paris, the French Republic, and later the French Empire, could better promote itself as the legitimate successor of ancient Rome, thereby making Paris the new capital of Europe.

Thus, assessing the impact of Italy on the cultural policies of post-Revolutionary France requires a nuanced evaluation of the vast scope of military campaigns and conquests in myriad countries. On one side, state-sponsored looting had taken place in Belgium and Germany well before Napoleon

invaded Italy. However, Italy's cultural, and therefore political, significance cannot be denied, and it had a substantial impact on French society at this formative time. These attitudes influenced Napoleon as well. While it is uncertain whether he would have negotiated concessions of art had he been in Belgium or Germany, the First Empire's later ambitions to acquire Roman art suggest his awareness of the cultural, and therefore political, importance of plundering Italy. Historians generally agree that Napoleon used art concessions as part of a larger political strategy. Both Andrew McClellan and Sabine Lubliner-Mattatia assert that Napoleon's requests for artistic advisors before the treaties implies this.¹⁴ Likewise, art historian Patricia Mainardi argues that the mass transfer of classical art from Rome to Paris carried both cultural and political weight. In her essay on the *Fête de la Liberté*, she argues that Napoleon indeed understood the impact of this plunder, and so arranged the arrival of military convoys to coincide with the *Fête*, when it would have the largest political impact.¹⁵ In any case, these attitudes reflected a larger movement in Republican France to raise Paris above Rome and the rest of Europe, which had implications that were not only well understood but also exploited by Napoleon.

In 1798, a year after his success in Italy, Napoleon set sail for Egypt. It was on this expedition that he first became acquainted with Denon. An analysis of Denon's background, particularly his experience in Egypt and his relationship with art, will help illustrate the motivations behind his work as director general of museums. Relatively little biographical information exists about Vivant Denon since he did not leave any memoirs. As a child, he was sent to Paris to become a lawyer but defied his parents by studying painting under François Boucher.¹⁶ At this time he developed a friendship with the famed painter Jacques-Louis David, who presumably influenced his aesthetic tastes and ideals.¹⁷ At a young age Denon entered the court of Louis XV and eventually became a diplomat, spending time in Russia, Switzerland, and Italy. When the Revolution began, Denon was living in Rome, and his association with the *ancien régime* got him placed on the list of *émigrés*, a term for aristocrats who had fled France during the Revolution. However, Jacques-Louis David helped clear his name and Denon returned to Paris in 1793, where he kept a low profile for several years. In 1797, he first encountered Napoleon, although the exact circumstances of this meeting remain unclear. Shortly thereafter Denon left Paris to accompany the young general as an artistic advisor on his military campaign in Egypt.

The Egyptian campaign had a lasting impact on Denon, shaping his ideas on the possibilities of architecture. His account of the journey, detailed in *Voyages dans la basse et la haute Egypte*, clearly shows Denon's conception of how architecture embodied a civilization's grandeur.¹⁸ As he experienced the expedition, he produced sketches and descriptions of each site the

campaign visited. In particular, the magnificent temple at Dendera left an indelible impression on Denon. In his narration, he obsessed over its sublime beauty:

Nothing can be more simple and better adapted than the small number of lines which are comprised by this architecture. The Egyptians having borrowed nothing from others, have employed no foreign ornament, nor any thing beyond what was dictated by necessity: ordonnance and simplicity have been their principles; and they have carried these principles to sublimity!¹⁹

To him, the temple's aesthetic perfection represented the magnificence of the society that created it. He stated:

What uninterrupted power, what wealth, what abundance, what superfluity of resources must have belonged to a government that could raise an edifice like this, and that could find in its nation men capable of conceiving, executing, decorating, and enriching it with all that speaks to the eyes and to the mind!²⁰

Here, Denon made his views on the role of architecture abundantly clear. He learned just how viscerally architecture could display a culture's grandeur. He also indicated what he viewed as ideal aesthetics by praising the temple's simplicity, open spaces, and long, unbroken lines.²¹ His appreciation for the lack of "foreign ornament" is also interesting because it directly contradicts his later work as director of museums, which drew heavily from Roman imagery. Overall, Denon's experience in Egypt profoundly influenced his understanding of the importance of architecture as a means to display wealth and power. Furthermore, through Denon, the expedition had lasting and tangible impacts on architecture and monuments in Paris.

In addition to Denon's keen grasp of the power of architecture, his early relationship with artwork also shaped his perspective as director of museums. Although he studied to be a painter, his artistic career primarily consisted of engraving reproductions of famous masterpieces. This led many of the artists under his direction to question his authority, considering him an amateur at best. Yet, this quality of Denon is critical because it demonstrates a deep appreciation for art that superseded any desire for self-expression. Studying the work of masters interested him more than making his own mark. Additionally, the fact that he did not write a memoir suggests that he found purpose in working towards something larger than himself. This characteristic is key to understanding Denon's vision for the Louvre, a place he envisioned as the epicenter of the world's greatest art. This ambitious aim complemented Napoleon's vision of making Paris the "capital of the world."²²

Thus, a combination of Denon's worldly experience, ability to charm powerful people, and expert knowledge of art history made him the ideal candidate for Napoleon's artistic advisor. He bought into Napoleon's larger-than-life image and shared his vision for the empire, which was determined to be the successor of Rome. But, more important, Denon knew how to actualize this project because he had seen first-hand the methods of history's greatest civilizations in places such as Rome and Egypt. Furthermore, Denon's love of the arts drove him to create the ultimate temple of the arts as director of the Louvre. Cultivating this profound institution, along with other more politically charged monuments, encapsulated Denon's goal of transforming Paris into an imperial metropolis by using the techniques and imagery of classical civilizations. Moreover, Denon used his position to direct the arts in France, transforming artists into a powerful source of propaganda by cultivating a distinct, imperial aesthetic. Through these efforts, Denon constructed an imperial identity as he and Napoleon envisioned it.

Reshaping Paris: Constructing New Symbols of Empire

Napoleon and Denon shared a clear aspiration to model the French Empire after the Roman Empire. The city of Rome represented the essence of its total empire. When Napoleon appointed Denon to director général des musées on November 19, 1802, he set about doing the same in Paris, constructing a new imperial identity by transforming the French city into an imperial capital. As Napoleon's "first city," Paris acted as the visual embodiment of his empire. To this end, Denon made two principal contributions. First, he developed the Louvre as the ultimate center of the arts so that it would reflect Paris's cultural supremacy over the world. Second, he directed monuments to celebrate France's military glory and to emulate the status of Rome in Paris.

Denon's most significant contribution to the aggrandization of Paris was through his development of the Louvre, called the Musée Napoléon. There, he sought to create the definitive temple of the arts by concentrating history's greatest works in one place. As director general, he oversaw the museum's physical transformation into an imposing structure that dominates the 1er arrondissement of Paris.²³ Denon essentially had dictatorial control over the museum. When describing his role, he said "Everything that is done, Sir, in the Musée Napoléon, is executed after my orders and under my watch."²⁴ Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, a prominent art critic of the period, acknowledged Denon's goal of giving "a broad overview of the arts" when reviewing the salon of 1806.²⁵ Similarly, Andrew McClellan describes Denon's aim as giving visitors a course in "art history."²⁶ In organizing the

museum, Denon intended to feature an expansive variety of works in chronological order, starting with ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, through the Italian and Dutch masters, and finally the living masters. His 1803 lecture on the works arriving from Italy perfectly summarized his views. To the *Class des beaux-arts*, he called the collection “the result of unprecedented circumstances, the result of the perfection of art across all centuries, this monument of monuments, the largest of trophies raised up by the greatest of all glories.”²⁷ In this, Denon relayed his clear intention to create a definitive pantheon of the world’s preeminent artworks at the Musée Napoléon.²⁸ He also reiterated the relationship between the Louvre and Napoleon’s conquests. In the salons, Denon put special emphasis on the looted works from Italy, particularly antique and renaissance masterpieces such as Apollo Belvedere and Raphael’s Transfiguration.²⁹ He even displayed Roman statues found at Arles and sent to Paris. Denon hoped that by concentrating the world’s masterpieces in Paris, he would draw more artists there to study them. He then disseminated those artists’ reproductions across French cities, where they served as visual reminders of Paris’s artistic prestige.³⁰ As a result, the Musée Napoléon increasingly came to represent the empire’s cultural dominance, cementing Paris’s status as the artistic capital of the world.

This conception of the Musée Napoléon coincided with promoting the French Empire’s imperial dominance, since creating such a collection was only possible by forcefully removing those works from their original homes. In 1815, when reflecting on the Louvre after Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo, Denon remarked that it “required conquering all of Europe to form” the illustrious museum that he called a “trophy.”³¹ During the French Empire, Denon would provide Napoleon with comprehensive lists of what objects to bring back from his campaigns, continuing the precedent set by Napoleon in Italy.³² They included paintings, statues, medals, relics, and other objects that would help to bolster the empire’s prestige. Denon curated the incoming items, taking the best for the Musée Napoléon and distributing the rest among other national museums. Diana Rowell notes that this practice followed the Roman tradition of displaying the prizes of conquest in one central location.³³ The looted masterpieces displayed in the Musée Napoléon acted as trophies, thereby linking France’s cultural dominance with the dominance of its army. Andrew McClellan shares these views, claiming that the accumulation of looted materials at the Musée Napoléon gave it “a more military air.”³⁴ As home to the empire’s greatest treasures, the Musée Napoléon itself become Paris’s ultimate trophy, symbolizing the capital’s cultural dominance and embodying the Empire’s military glory.

Alongside the Musée Napoléon, particular monuments constructed in Paris during the First Empire unambiguously exhibited Denon’s conceptions of the empire’s identity: the *Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel* and the

Colonne Vendôme. As director general, Denon oversaw the construction of all monuments in Paris, which furthered the imperial ambiance of the city. In these monuments, Denon augmented the militaristic ambiance of Paris and employed the visual language of ancient Rome in order to define Paris as its successor. While their principal purpose was to consecrate the French Empire's glorious moments, Denon specifically used the visual language of ancient Rome to redefine Paris as its successor. The *Colonne Vendôme* is the monument that most clearly displayed these ideas. Built to commemorate Napoleon's victorious tour in Germany, the column's reliefs recounted the campaign leading up to Austerlitz, culminating with the battle itself. The regime had the column constructed out of bronze from captured Austrian and Russian cannons. Like the Louvre, the column also acted as a trophy from Napoleon's victories, but it had a much more direct connection to the warfare. So, the *Colonne Vendôme*'s public presence demonstrates the regime's official intention to promote an atmosphere of triumph in Paris.

Simultaneously, the *Colonne Vendôme* reinforced the parallel between the French and Roman empires. It did so by replicating Trajan's column in Rome, which was constructed to celebrate the Emperor Trajan's conquest of Dacia, present-day Romania. Denon had the design meticulously reproduced, simply replacing the subject matter. The reliefs that spiral up the column portray French soldiers in a purely neoclassical, Roman style. At the summit sits a statue of Napoleon dressed like a Roman emperor, and the base inscription reads "*Neopolio Imp*" instead of "*Imp Caesar*." Denon himself told Napoleon, "I dare to assure you that [the *Colonne Vendôme*] will surpass in perfection and magnificence that of Trajan, which has inspired admiration over twenty centuries."³⁵ Denon made its design his "principal occupation," and only accepted input from Napoleon himself, keeping him informed every step of the way.³⁶ While it is unclear who decided to make this monument an explicit allusion to ancient Rome, it was most likely Napoleon or Denon. Either way, the *Colonne Vendôme* unambiguously reveals their shared intention to emulate the Roman Empire.

Even though copying Trajan's column was not necessarily his idea, Denon ensured that the *Colonne Vendôme* was as precise a reproduction as possible. With his role as director, he tightly controlled its design by selecting the artists for each aspect and micromanaging their work. Denon hired Pierre Nolasque Bergeret, a young French artist, to design the entire 820-meter relief that would spiral up the column. Bergeret's memoirs give an unfiltered view of how Denon worked with artists. Denon gave him a massive scroll with drawings of the reliefs on Trajan's column, instructing him to use them as a guide. Bergeret objected to this demand, believing it was absurd to copy the style of such a different society.³⁷ Nevertheless, Denon insisted that the artist emulate those drawings and required that he

regularly submit his work for critique. Recall that at the Egyptian temple at *Dendera* Denon praised the Egyptians for their lack of “foreign ornament.”³⁸ While Bergeret clearly considered the Romans to be a foreign society, Denon seemingly did not. This suggests that he considered the French Empire an heir to Rome. Bergeret also recounted how Denon destroyed one sculptor’s art models because they did not fit his criteria.³⁹ Overall, Bergeret found Denon overbearing and ignorant, greatly hindering the process of creating the design. This account clearly illustrates Denon’s tight control over the project and his unbending objective of replicating Trajan’s column.

In addition to its construction of the *Colonne Vendôme*, the French Empire’s renewed use of the triumphal arch further exhibits Denon and Napoleon’s Roman aspirations for Paris. Such monuments originated in ancient Rome, where they represented military victories or great events. After his victory at Austerlitz, Napoleon commissioned two triumphal arches, the *Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel* and the *Arc de Triomphe de l’Étoile*, to glorify himself and his armies.⁴⁰ The *Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel*, in a similar way to the *Colonne Vendôme*, incorporated captured objects into the design, using a quadriga statue taken from Venice.⁴¹ The arch was constructed in the Place Carrousel between the Louvre and the Tuileries palace, which linked the two and affected a sense of military glory throughout the space. This monument serves as yet another example of this regime’s conscious effort to create a militarized identity for the city of Paris.

It should be noted that Louis XIV had also constructed triumphal arches, such as the *Porte Saint-Denis* and the *Porte Saint-Martin*, as new forms of entrance into the city walls. While they represented the same concept, the architects took liberties in the design and drew inspiration from Roman monuments.⁴² In contrast, the arches commissioned by Napoleon were direct copies of their Roman counterparts. The *Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel* is an almost exact replica of the Arch of Constantine. As with the *Colonne Vendôme*, Denon directly controlled every aspect of its design; he hired the sculptors, designated the subjects of the edifices, and selected construction materials.⁴³ Given Denon’s involvement, he certainly influenced the decision to reproduce Roman monuments.

The histories of the *Colonne Vendôme* and the triumphal arches reveal Denon and Napoleon’s vision for the First Empire. First and foremost, these physical structures represent Napoleon’s military dominance. That was, after all, their defined purpose. To that end, these monuments contributed to Paris’s transformation from a national to an imperial capital that functioned as the epicenter of Napoleon’s conquests. Diana Rowell describes the regime’s use of monuments as “a potent tool through which to placate and educate the populace, and simultaneously project the cities’

pre-eminence as hubs of culture and universal power.”⁴⁴ To be sure, monuments exalting great military victories existed across Europe before the First Empire; this was not unique to the context of late eighteenth-century France. However, Napoleon’s motivations in creating his monuments make them distinct from those that came before. The regime explicitly created them to be reproductions of famous Roman monuments. This reflects the top-down imposition of neoclassicist aesthetics to create a distinct, cohesive sense of imperial identity. By filling public spaces with such monuments, the regime showed a clear intention to give Parisians the sense that they were living in an imperial capital akin to a New Rome. With a worthy capital in Paris, the First Empire could then inhabit Rome’s place in the historical canon and collective consciousness of Europe.

To summarize, Denon played a crucial role in the transformations that Paris underwent during Napoleon’s reign. Under Denon’s leadership, the *Musée Napoléon* came to represent Paris’s cultural dominance. He took advantage of Napoleon’s military primacy to fill the collection with works from across the world, predicated the French model for public art museums. In doing so, the museum became a powerful symbol of the empire’s military. Furthermore, as director of monuments, Denon was largely responsible for instilling a feeling of military glory throughout the public space of Paris. More important, he used his official power to institutionalize Roman architecture in order to draw parallels between the Roman and French empires. Using Paris as his canvas, Denon constructed the French Empire’s identity and promoted Napoleon’s image. He and Napoleon sought to define the French Empire as the true successor to the Roman Empire, and therefore as a premier cultural leader that would guide the world into the new, post-Revolutionary era.

Denon Curating the Arts: An Unbending Vision

As Napoleon’s chief artistic director, Vivant Denon nationalized French art by dictating the work of all French artists as a way of promoting Napoleon and his empire. Using his administrative authority, Denon closely managed artists, specifying and controlling almost every aspect of their work so that it would conform to the official aesthetics of the nation. When summarizing Denon’s relationship with artists, Pierre Nolasque Bergeret put it frankly: “Of all types of despotism, the most intolerable is that which imposes and dictates the taste of one artist on all artists.”⁴⁵ This statement brings to light how artists perceived Denon’s patronage. As previously discussed, Denon enforced neoclassicism while constructing monuments in Paris. He did the same in the realms of

painting and sculpture, using them as platforms to disseminate the new imperial identity throughout France and its conquered territories. While this policy generated friction between Denon and artists, it nevertheless produced a cohesive body of paintings and sculptures that promoted Napoleon, the French army, and a distinct imperial identity.

To begin, in his role as director general of museums, Denon subsidized the work of painters and sculptors to create art that exalted Napoleon and French soldiers. He worked vigorously to amass a collection of battle paintings, portraits, and statues to be displayed in the *Musée Napoléon* and across the empire. He commissioned busts of every general, portraits of every marshal, and similar works for fallen soldiers. He also commissioned paintings of major Napoleonic battles, such as Marengo, Rivoli, Lodi, and Aboukir. With painting, Denon glorified these victories while also drawing attention to the valiant attributes of the soldiers. Likewise, statues such as that of the fallen General Desaix at *Place des Victoires* martyrized soldiers while disseminating a romantic view of warfare within museums and public spaces. Thus, the arts in France took on a militaristic tone under Denon's leadership, which shows how they contributed to enhanced French national identity under Napoleon.

In order to ensure that artists' works produced the intended effects, Denon closely managed them through every step of the production process. For example, in 1807, Denon announced a competition to select an artist to paint the Battle of Jena. He specifically cited *Bonaparte Visitant les Pestiférés de Jaffa* by Antoine-Jean Gros as a model that painters should emulate in terms of lighting, proportions, and composition. Susan Jacques notes that in that painting, Gros portrayed Napoleon in the same pose as the *Apollo Belvedere*.⁴⁶ This further indicates Denon's promotion of neoclassical aesthetics. Additionally, the memoirs of Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret show that Denon gave rigid guidelines rather than suggestions. After all, Denon made Bergeret regularly submit his drawings for review, and discarded anything that did not cohere with his vision. Bergeret, however, represents an extreme example since he was working on a public monument. Nevertheless, his account shows Denon's heavy-handed influence on state-sponsored art, which fomented a uniform French aesthetic and national identity.

While Denon certainly governed artists with exceptional authority, he also used his administrative power to help them in their productions. This effort reflected his desire for accuracy and consistency from commissioned works. When hiring artists, Denon regularly provided them with reference material, such as the aforementioned notice for the Battle of Jena painting. He routinely wrote to the family of fallen soldiers, asking for information, visuals, and advice to aid the artists in executing their portraits. In one case, Denon had a soldier's sister, bearing the

soldier's his resemblance, come to Paris to model for her brother's bust.⁴⁷ He did the same for painters commissioned with battle paintings. For example, on behalf of Louis-Philippe Crépin, who was the painter tasked with depicting the Battle of Boulogne, Denon contacted Admiral Louis-René Latouche to request his account of the battle.⁴⁸ In these cases, Denon took great care in ensuring a degree of accuracy for each work representing French military affairs. This rigidity also explains his promotion of certain artists and styles, particularly neoclassicists such as Jacques-Louis David, Antoine-Jean Gros, and Antonio Canova. On one occasion, Denon procured Napoleon's old jacket, which had been used by David and Gros for their portraits, so that new paintings, destined for cities throughout France, would resemble those previous works.⁴⁹ This emphasis on consistency shows Denon's intention to create a universal style across the French Empire that would therefore enhance French national identity.

While they depicted real subject matter in accurate detail, artists working under Denon were encouraged to take certain creative liberties in order to depict the most glorious national narrative. The practice originated from the aesthetic principles of neoclassicism. Championed by Jacques-Louis David, neoclassical painting depicted real people and events in an idealized way. This style was exemplified by several of David's works, such as the *Death of Marat*, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, or *The Coronation of Napoleon*. While they all portrayed actual events, David changed certain details in order to highlight the virtues and heroism of the people involved. Antoine-Jean Gros worked in a similar fashion. As with the Revolution, the neoclassicists' idealized depictions of people and nature reflected the French Empire's idealized conception of itself.⁵⁰ Denon well understood this idea, and so enforced neoclassicism in commissioned works to disseminate an idealized image of the empire throughout its territories.

Napoleon's role in this process should not be overlooked. Whenever he interacted with artists, Denon always stated he was writing on behalf of Napoleon. Whether this was a bureaucratic formality or reflected Napoleon's direct involvement remains uncertain. Nevertheless, Denon regularly provided Napoleon with thorough updates on a variety of state-commissioned projects and asked for feedback from the emperor.⁵¹ This suggests that Napoleon was involved in French institutional and bureaucratic affairs, which makes sense given the care with which he crafted his public image. Depictions of Napoleon from this time, both in painting and in sculpture, formed a distinct, almost deified image of him that was then disseminated across the empire.

In his direction of the arts, Vivant Denon had a clear vision for how the Empire should be portrayed. During his tenure, he directed artists to

glorify the military through their work. He devoted substantial attention to the production of art that celebrated the heroic deeds of Napoleon and his soldiers. He also acquired references for those artists to ensure that their work would accurately and consistently represent the reality of France's military. Furthermore, he used his official power to closely manage state-sponsored artists by dictating that they follow the style of neoclassicists like David and Gros. As a result, state-sponsored art essentially created a brand for the Empire, based on neoclassicism, that Denon used to market Napoleon and his regime to the people of France and Europe. With a consistent style and tailored subject matter, Denon effectively used art for its political utility to promote Napoleon and his military throughout the Empire.

Paris and Napoleon: The Legacy of the French Empire

When Napoleon took control of the Revolutionary government, he undertook an ambitious imperial project that combined the motifs of ancient civilizations with new ideas from the Enlightenment. During his reign, Paris was transformed into an imperial capital, which embodied the new French Empire's identity. It became a single place that citizens and foreigners alike could visit to see the greatest achievements of French society. It became home to some of the world's finest artistic masterpieces and memorials of how mankind's greatest cultural epochs. Before the Revolution, no city in Europe represented this idea more than Rome. With its imperial glory and centrality to the Catholic church, Rome maintained a powerful symbolism in European culture. As a young general, Napoleon brought an end to Rome's cultural dominance with the mass plunder of Italy, massively boosting his own popularity in the process. After his 1799 *coup d'état*, he used his political power and military prowess to transform Paris into the cultural capital of the world.

While Napoleon had the vision, its architect was his chief artistic advisor and director general of museums, Dominique-Vivant Denon. With his expertise in art history, Denon understood how to use architecture to implement Napoleon's imperial vision for Paris. His most enduring legacy was his development of the Louvre into the definitive temple of the arts—the symbol of Paris's cultural supremacy. As Napoleon and his armies swept across Europe, Denon directed state-sponsored looting, filling the Louvre with art from Italy, Egypt, Germany, and other regions. Under Denon, the Louvre increasingly took on the role of Napoleon's trophy cabinet, making the museum itself the ultimate trophy. Denon was a man who loved the arts above all else; in the Louvre he envisioned a place where the public could experience the world's greatest artistic achievements. After the armies of the Sixth coalition entered Paris in 1814, they began reclaiming

their lost works. Masterpieces like *Transfiguration* and *Apollo Belvedere* returned to their original homes. Yet, Denon fought tooth and nail to retain the Louvre's collection. Today, the Louvre still stands at the heart of Paris and remains the world's largest and most famous art museum.⁵² With Denon's leadership, the Louvre set the bar for art museums around the world.

Additionally, Denon played a significant role in reshaping Parisian architecture through the monuments he directed. Denon's personal account of the Egypt expedition reflected how he conceived the role of architecture in displaying a society's grandeur and identity. Paris became dense with references to great military victories during the First Empire, such as the Rue de Rivoli and the Pont D'Iena. This tradition continued through the Second Empire and World War II. To be sure, Denon created monuments like the *Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel* and the *Colonne Vendôme* with a purpose beyond celebrating military glory. His primary objective was to transfer the dominant status of Rome to Paris by appropriating Roman architecture and constructing French monuments as exact copies of Roman counterparts. The building of Roman arches was a phenom that extended beyond French borders, inspiring similar constructions in London, Munich, St. Petersburg, and even New York. The *Arc de Triomphe* and the *Colonne Vendome* are two striking examples of how Denon wove the essence of empire into the fabric of Paris.

Constructing the French Empire's image in Paris represented one facet of the French Empire's cultural conquest. In order to disseminate that image, Denon exerted strict control over every aspect of the arts. By directing artists, he could ensure that they produced a unified imperial identity. He devoted substantial energy towards this goal, taking every step necessary to help artists produce the most accurate renderings possible. Yet, this policy created palpable tension between Denon and those artists. Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret gave an unfiltered perspective on how rigorously Denon enforced his vision. Nonetheless, following the tenets of neoclassicism, Denon cultivated an enduring image for Napoleon and his empire.

Today, Paris is filled with the unmistakable ambiance of imperialism. Beginning with the First Empire, subsequent regimes in Paris have meticulously designed its monuments, grand boulevards, and opulent buildings to convey the grandeur of France and its society. The recent vandalism of the *Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile* by the *gilets jaunes* testifies to the enduring importance of these monuments to the French national identity. Moreover, even since the fall of Napoleon, Paris has held a dominant place in the art world. Impressionism, art nouveau, cubism, and countless other art movements were deeply influenced and inspired by Paris. Artists and enthusiasts from across the world flock to Paris to see the treasures of the Louvre and to contribute to the capital's rich artistic heritage. For this reason and in many other ways, Paris feels like the apex of society. Built to recapture the glory of the

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Roman Empire, the First Empire established an abiding impression of Paris and French society. The combined vision of Napoleon and Vivant Denon still permeates France, and will continue to do so for generations to come.

1. George Eugène Haussmann was an architect and city planner under Napoleon III. In 1853, he began renovations in Paris that saw the destruction of up to 60% of the city for the construction of grand boulevards, public works, and monuments. Paris's distinct layout today is largely attributed to these renovations. For a more in-depth discussion on Haussmann's renovations, see Adrien Dansette, "L'oeuvre du Baron Haussmann a L'épreuve du Temps," *Annuaire-Bulletin De La Société De L'histoire De France* (1972): 59-72.
2. Pierre Rosenberg, *Dominique-Vivant Denon: L'œil de Napoléon* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2000), p. 23.
3. The War of the First Coalition (1792-1797) was fought between the First French Republic and several European powers—notably the United Kingdom, Spain, Austria, Prussia, and other various German and Italian states. Charles Esailie, *The French Wars, 1792-1815* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 4.
4. Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: art, politics, and the origins of the modern museum in 18th-century Paris* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 114.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
6. Sabine Lubliner-Mattatia, "Monge et les objets d'art d'Italie," *Bulletin de la Sabix* 41 (2007): 2.
7. McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, p. 117.
8. The Festival of Liberty was an annual celebration of the creation of the First Republic; see Patricia Mainardi, "Assuring the Empire of the Future: The 1798 Fête de la Liberté," *Art Journal* 48, no. 2 (1989): 155-63.
9. "Poesie. Le Doyen de Badajoz," *La Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique; par une société de républicains* (Paris, 1798): 232.
10. *Ibid.*, 234.
11. The Grand Tour was an 18th-century custom where students, at the end of their studies, traveled around Europe, visiting the major cultural and historical landmarks. It was especially popular among British aristocrats.
12. Mainardi, "Assuring the Empire of the Future," and McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, both cite Napoleon's conquest as the beginning of the end of Italy's cultural primacy.
13. Léon Lanzac de Laborie, *Paris sous Napoléon* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1905), p. 234.
14. Lubliner-Mattatia, "Monge et les objets d'art d'Italie"; McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, p. 117.
15. Mainardi, "Assuring the Empire of the Future," 157.
16. François Boucher (1703-1770) was a prominent French Rococo painter.
17. Jacques-Louis David was perhaps the greatest of the neoclassicists, and the most famous French painter at the time, becoming Napoleon's preferred portraitist.
18. *Voyages dans la basse et la haute Egypte* (Voyages in Lower and Upper Egypt) was a compilation of Denon's journals and sketches from the Egyptian expedition, which he published in 1802.19.
19. Dominique-Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte: pendant les campagnes du general Bonaparte*, trans. Edward A. Kendall (London: B. Crosby, 1802), p. 209.

20. Ibid., p. 207.
21. Ibid., p. 205.
22. Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted by Lewis Claflin Breed, ed., *The Opinions and Reflections of Napoleon* (Boston: The Four Seas Company, 1926), p. 204.
23. The 1er arrondissement (1st District of Paris), is at the center of the city. It contains many of the city's landmarks, such as the Tuileries, the Louvre, the Palais Royal, and the Pont Neuf. Olivier de Monicault, "Editorial: *Autre Temps... Même Combats*," *Le Bulletin d'Information de SOS Paris* 96 (2016): 1.
24. Vivant Denon to M. Petit on October 31, 1804, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, ed. Marie-Anne Dupuy (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999), p. 205.
25. Chaussard is notorious for his accusation against Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres of "setting art back 400 years" with his painting, *Napoleon I on his Imperial Throne*; see Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Le Pausanias Français, État des arts du dessin en France, à l'ouverture du XIXe siècle: Salon de 1806...publié par un observateur impartial* (Paris: Chez F. Buisson, 1806), p. 6.
26. McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, p. 140.
27. Vivant Denon, "Discours sur les monuments d'antiquité arrivés d'Italie," Lecture, *Classe des beaux-arts* (Paris: l'Imprimerie de P. Didot, 1803), p. 23.
28. Vivant Denon to the Minister of Interior, 19 January 1803, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, p. 47.
29. "Notice relative à l'exposition du tableau de la Transfiguration," *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, January 3, 1803.
30. Vivant Denon to the citoyen Lecomte, 7 May 1804, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, p. 175.
31. Vivant Denon, "Précis de ce qui s'est passé au Musée royal depuis l'entrée des alliés à Paris" (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1999).
32. Vivant Denon to Napoleon, 31 January 1806, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome II*, pp. 1287-1289.
33. Diana Rowell, *Paris: The "New Rome" of Napoleon I* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), p. 48.
34. McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, p. 119.
35. Vivant Denon to Napoléon, 18 June 1806, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, p. 359.
36. Ibid.
37. Pierre Nolasque Bergeret, *Lettres d'un Artiste sur L'État des Arts en France: Considéré é sous les Rapports Politiques, Artistiques, Aommerciaux et Industrielles* (Paris: Chez L'Auteur, 1848), p. 41.
38. Denon, *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte*, p. 205.
39. Bergeret, *Lettres d'un Artiste*, p. 55.
40. While preliminary construction on the more famous *Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile* began in 1806, it stopped with Napoleon's abdication; it was not completed until 1836. Centre des Monuments Nationaux, "Arc de Triomphe," <http://www.paris-arc-de-triomphe.fr>.
41. A *quadriga* is a four-horse chariot team. Napoleon also took the famous *quadriga* statue from the Brandenburg gate and initially intended to use it at the *Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile*. However, Denon advised against it since the planned arch would

be too large. They planned the *quadriga's* own monument, but the allies reclaimed the statue before that monument could be built.

42. François Blondel was the architect who designed the *Porte Saint-Denis*. His student, Pierre Bullet, designed the *Porte Saint-Martin*. Blondel had also designed the *Porte Saint-Bernard* in 1670. It was destroyed in 1797. François Blondel, *Cours D'Architecture Enseigné Dans L'Academie Royale D'Architecture* (Paris: De l'imprimerier de Lambert Roulland, 1675), pp. 618-622.

43. Vivant Denon to M. Lamut, 6 August 1806, Vivant Denon to M. Moutoni, 17 August 1806, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, pp. 382-387.

44. Rowell, *Paris: The "New Rome" of Napoleon I*, p. 41.

45. Bergeret, *Lettres d'un Artiste*, p. 311.

46. Susan Jacques, *The Caesar of Paris: Napoleon Bonaparte, Rome, and the Artistic Obsession that Shaped an Empire* (Washington: Pegasus Books, 2018), p. xiii.

47. Denon to Madame Villeneuve, 12 June 1803, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, p. 86.

48. Denon to Admiral Latouche, 23 December 1803, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, p. 148.

49. Vivant Denon to le citoyen Fister, 14 November 1803, in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome I*, p. 137.

50. Pierre Levallois, *Treasures of the Louvre* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), p. 227.

51. Vivant Denon to Napoléon, 19 February, 1806. in *Vivant Denon, Correspondance, Tome II*, pp. 1294-1301.

52. In 2017, the Louvre was the world's most visited art museum, with 8.1 million visitors. "8,1 millions de visiteurs au Louvre en 2017," *Presse du Musée du Louvre*, <http://presse.louvre.fr/81-millions-de-visiteurs-au-louvre-en-2017/>.

DIME NOVEL INDIANS

Individualism and the American Imagination

Lucas Sczygelski



Photo: *Adirondack Wild West: Ned Buntline to Frontier Town*, Adirondack Almanack, accessed [online](#).

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In 1904, the German economist and sociologist Werner Sombart toured the United States looking for an answer to the question perplexing the radical European Left: Why was the American working class seemingly inoculated against the siren call of socialism? Why was the Socialist Party of America so inconsequential? Sure, cities like Milwaukee, Berkeley, and Flint had elected socialist mayors, and leaders from both the Democratic and Republican parties had advanced progressive reforms. Yet the early twentieth century's bitter struggles between American labor and American capital had failed to culminate in a broad third-party alternative. In his bluntly titled book, *Why is There No Socialism in the United States?*, Sombart proposes several explanations—the workforce is just too foreign, too rich, too egalitarian—before arriving at a certain widely held national myth: A working-class American could simply pick up and leave for the “vast areas of free land” to the west.¹ Sombart suggests that the myth of the American frontier, that dazzling wide open place where white men could live free and repel an Indian ambush, all while making a fortune, prevented the American working class from conducting a clear-sighted examination of their plight.² The myth scoffed at the need for economic assistance from the government and class solidarity (advocating for the elevation of white Anglos over native peoples instead), helping make libertarian politics palatable to working Americans at the turn of the twentieth century.³ No genre of American popular culture did more to inject this myth into the American bloodstream than western dime novels.

The western dime novel popularized a story that in many ways is still with us, a story that dominated Hollywood through the 1960s, reenacted by actors like John Wayne and languidly summarized by Joan Didion as “Another world, one which may or may not have existed ever but in any case existed no more; a place where a man could move free, could make his own code and live by it.”⁴ As a young woman, Didion herself eagerly imbibed the American frontier myth. She was born into a wealthy old California family that made its money selling off federal land grant acreage that it bought at a subsidy for massive profit.⁵ That did not stop her from maintaining her family's separation from history, framing them as plucky settlers who “reached a happy ending on the day the wagons started west.” They were merely one of the thousands of families “who for two hundred years had been moving west on the frontier,” with the “buried but ineradicable suspicion that things had better work here, because here, beneath that immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent.”⁶ Writing for *National Review* in 1965—William F. Buckley Jr.'s reactionary magazine dedicated to standing “athwart history, yelling Stop”—Didion praised John Wayne's Westerns for determining “forever the shape of certain of our dreams.”⁷ If Didion's experience is to be trusted as nearly universal for white Americans, then Sombart's century-old conjecture about the importance of the

western myth promulgated by dime novels (and later by motion pictures) holds some weight and deserves attention.

Dime novels produced during the dwindling decades of the nineteenth century by writers like Ned Buntline built upon a uniquely American individualism, insidiously grafting notions of Anglo-American superiority onto it. Much of this has been convincingly argued by the American Studies scholar Richard Slotkin. However, special emphasis should be placed on the continuity between an American style of individualism (reaching its apogee with Henry David Thoreau and his reformist Transcendental clique) and the purveyors of dime novels. Their new Wild West archetype, the one that softly wafts through Didion's reveries, pushed the multiethnic, cooperative story of the American West aside, favoring another that highlighted race- and gender-based dichotomies where one side was noble, just, and hardworking, and the other was lazy, violent, and irrational. These dichotomies were put in place to justify the subjugation of immigrants located in East Coast metropolises far away from the Wild West sets of Beadle and Adams. That they have made a broader, permanent stamp on the collective American memory, as Sombart and Didion so clearly show us, is also beyond question.

American Individualism: From *sola scriptura* to *Civil Disobedience*

But hadn't an anti-government libertarianism long pulsed through American intellectual thought? In *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau wrote that during his time in the woods he "was never molested by any person but those who represented the government."⁸ He devoted an entire chapter of the book to "Higher Laws," a Transcendentalist term for certain moral red lines that no government could force an individual to transgress. Saul Bellow published *The Adventures of Augie March*, now a perennial candidate for the dubious Great American Novel distinction. The words that jump from the first page seem to communicate a kind of Jacksonian individualist ethic that has *always* been an important part of the American character: "I am an American, Chicago born—Chicago, that somber city—and go at things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record in my own way."⁹ Aren't Americans, like Ahab, allowed their "monomaniacal" quest? It is true that the nation's individualist ethic predates dime novels, but where did it come from and what was its specific nature?

Seventy-three years before Werner Sombart toured the United States to interrogate the American working class, Alexis de Tocqueville was sent by the French Minister of the Interior to look at the U.S. prison system. The diligent young bureaucrat complied, trudging as far west as Green Bay and floating as far south as New Orleans to peer through dreary iron bars. But

along the way he nursed a side project that would grow into *Democracy in America*, a multi-volume, quasi-ethnographic study of the young country's "political character"—a set of supposedly universal attitudes and policies he hoped France would emulate.¹⁰ Ever the liberal of the "arc bends towards justice" variety, Tocqueville repeatedly reminds the reader of the "providential fact" that equality will gradually grow until it is extended to all Americans. But he holds several reservations—chief among them, America's dominant religious confession. New England's first Anglo inhabitants carried with them a form of Protestantism that "I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion," Tocqueville (the Catholic) writes. But that unyielding democratic instinct, he argues, "tends to make men independent more than to render them equal."¹¹

As a result of that Protestant inheritance, Tocqueville writes, the "mental operations [of] each American relies on individual effort and judgment. So, of all countries in the world, America is the one in which the precepts of Descartes are least studied and best followed."¹² René Descartes, the French philosopher and mathematician, propounded a notion of intellectual individualism that remains the best pocket definition of that amorphous, slippery concept we sometimes glibly call The Enlightenment Project. To find truth, argued Descartes, one needs merely to shed prejudice and superstition, outside authority and the strictures of community. Armed with reason, the solitary philosopher can forge her own path.¹³

It helps to see Descartes, Tocqueville's point of reference, as an inheritor of a European intellectual tradition stretching back to Martin Luther in 1517. Up until then, Christian doctrine was ossified and handed down from Rome. Clerics educated in Aristotelian metaphysics explicated biblical teachings in dense, impenetrable Latin, pronouncing the "word of God" and expecting obedience from the flock. Luther, a German friar and professor, punched a tiny initial hole in that hierarchical arrangement by nailing his critique of Rome's fundraising policy to a heavy oak Wittenberg church door.¹⁴ There was no scriptural basis for the administering of Indulgences, those expensive tickets out of Purgatory, Luther argued. But what started as a specific quibble over financial doctrine ballooned into a larger point about where to listen for God's voice. From Papal encyclicals or from the Bible? From authority or from the individual? Luther thought he knew: "The righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel ... as it is written," he wrote in 1545, boiling down his teaching to its essence (*sola scriptura*, or scripture only).¹⁵ As Luther wrote, "You will ask, 'If all who are in the church are priests, how do these whom we now call priests differ from laymen?' I will answer: Holy Scripture makes no distinction between them." And with that, Luther cracked open authority's monopoly on thought.¹⁶ If everyone can be their own priest and follow their own intuition, what need was there for Rome's hierarchy? Each individual, armed only with a bible and

rational faculties, could find his/her own truth. Multiple truth claims could be made simultaneously. *Individuals*, not clerics, could argue about the image of God, morality, and the like, resulting in a kind of hyperpluralism that is often regretted by contemporary Christian intellectuals.¹⁷ Regardless, Pandora's box was open, and authority, religious or otherwise, would have to strain much harder in order to make a total claim on the individual again.¹⁸

It might seem like a stretch to draw a thin, wavering line of causality from Luther's hierarchy-flattening *sola scriptura* to American pulp westerns—conflating the theology of a sixteenth-century monk with “the saloon brawl, the blonde schoolteacher from the East, the gun duel in the deserted main street,” as Susan Sontag, with characteristic laconic wit, listed the western stock characters.¹⁹ What could Luther, damnation on his mind, possibly have to do with that all-American cast? But it is important to remember that in America, with no official state religion of its own, Luther's orthodoxy-busting principles were applied with much greater success than in Europe, where orthodoxy retained its coercive power. George Whitefield, an eighteenth-century itinerant preacher, never had much success in England, his home country. But in America, he drew cross-denominational crowds in the tens of thousands, to whom he preached a gospel of individual “cohabitation” with Christ, as a way of “experimentally” knowing Him. Throw off the rusty chains of orthodoxy's dogma, he argued. Only through an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit can Christians catch a glimpse of “their own darkness” and accept God's grace.²⁰ This religious individualism, despite being distilled and secularized in the intervening years, drenches the dime novel plots, as well as the lives of their writers.

But there were limits to the unbridled Cartesian individualism that Tocqueville identified and Whitefield exploited among inhabitants of the U.S. For example, English clergyman William Paley's essay *On the Duty of Submission* remained required reading at Harvard University deep into the nineteenth century, its charge that the most urgent goal should be the maintenance of society hammered into the minds of the New England elite. Paley argues that the conscience of dissenting individuals must, at times, be subjugated to the “happiness of every part.”²¹ Paley's was the kind of soft-touch individualism disseminated at the time by highbrow American literary journals like the *Democratic Review*. Between 1837 and 1859, that magazine published some of America's most prominent literary talent under the leadership of John O'Sullivan, the man who popularized the phrase “Manifest Destiny.” Essays by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Catharine Sedgwick appeared here, their prose tucked under a front cover that prominently displayed the periodical's official motto: “The best government is that which governs

least.”²² Like Paley, the magazine charted a middle ground, neither endorsing nor denying the supremacy of individual conscience while maintaining a respect for the “obligations resulting from civil union,” in Paley’s formulation.

It was the *Democratic Review*’s coversheet catchphrase that Henry David Thoreau borrowed and subverted in the opening of “Civil Disobedience,” his incendiary 1848 lecture. Thoreau applauds the essence of the motto, but asks that it be carried out to its logical conclusion. “It finally amounts to this, which also I believe,” Thoreau writes. “That government is best which governs not at all.”²³ His outburst of self-determination had been set in motion two years earlier when the U.S. declared war on Mexico, a conquest that abolitionists, like Thoreau, feared would allow U.S.-style chattel slavery to spread into New Mexico and Texas. As a result of U.S. aggression, Thoreau refused to pay his \$1.50 poll tax and spent a night in the Concord jail—a decision that made him unique among his Transcendentalist clique. His friend and mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, reacted with scorn when he learned about Thoreau’s refusal to maintain the least bit of deference to authority. He called Thoreau’s actions “mean and skulking, and in bad taste.”²⁴ “Civil Disobedience” was Thoreau’s chance to defend himself. The Harvard graduate quickly quotes Paley’s *On the Duty of Submission*: As Paley (“the common authority with many on moral questions”) would have it, Thoreau writes, political matters should be solved on the basis of “expediency”—the smooth maintenance of the state. But what if expediency causes injustice? “There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly, Thoreau asserts.”²⁵ It is important to note that this lecture does not propound burn-it-all-down individualism of the kind written into some dime novels fifty years later. For Thoreau, civil disobedience was an act of groping toward some “better government”—one to which he would “cheerfully” submit.

But that utopia remained elusive. The Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850, part of a broad legislative compromise that attempted to keep the peace as the nation grew westward. It required all state and federal law enforcers, as well as every ordinary citizen, to help prevent slaves, valuable Antebellum capital, from escaping north. No state or individual had the right to protect people of color from arrest and deportation back to southern bondage. It was a startling moment for northern abolitionists, many of whom actively provided aid to escaped slaves on their way to Canada. This time, instead of acquiescing to state authority, Emerson—that genteel paragon of New England respectability—echoed Thoreau: “An immoral law makes it a man’s duty to break it,” he declared at the Concord Lyceum.²⁶ Certain “higher laws” superseded the whims of the state.

It was a sharp reversal and a capitulation to Thoreau's radical "Civil Disobedience" lecture. The Transcendental movement was following Thoreau's lead. When news of John Brown's failed raid on the arsenal at Harper's Ferry reached Concord, the movement defended him. They held a memorial service for him the day he was hung. According to Thoreau, the ears of attendees pricked up as they heard Brown's words read aloud, as they heard his own speech, which was also printed in newspapers across the nation.²⁷ "Years were not required for a revolution in public opinion," Thoreau wrote in a later essay. "Days, nay hours, produced marked changes in this case."²⁸ According to Thoreau, the northern masses bought into the *idea* of John Brown after his raid and subsequent execution. Brown's act of civil disobedience startled the nation into adopting the core Transcendental value—Higher Laws.

There is something to this. After the Civil War broke out in 1861, the abolitionist author Julia Ward Howe wrote down a few stanzas to be sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." And people started singing it. Civilians toiling at home, Union troops on the march, prisoners of war in their cells—they all sang out Howe's lyrics: "John Brown's body lays a-mouldering in the grave. His soul is marching on!"²⁹ The canonization of John Brown, the free-wheeling militant Christian who followed his conscience, was complete. As Thoreau wrote, the North was indeed "suddenly all transcendental." And the converts wanted action—specifically, reform. As Emerson laid out in an earlier lecture, the ideal individual was "a free and helpful man, a reformer, a benefactor, not content to slip along through the world like a footman or a spy, escaping by his nimbleness."³⁰

This is the intellectual landscape from which the western dime novel genre sprung. William Paley's ode to "submission" was out; Thoreauvian individualism was in. Tocqueville's observation about the fiercely autonomous Cartesian ethic of the American people was never truer, animated not only by Luther's *sola scriptura* but also by the righteous moral crusade against the slavery-endorsing state. That energy would spill into a series of other reform projects: education, religion, criminal codes, temperance. As the intellectual historian Daegan Miller writes of the period, "The universe was no longer governed by chaos, but by rational, perfectible laws."³¹ Enlightened reformers could tweak those unimpeachable rules—chipping away a little irrationality here, affixing a rubric of order there—to perfect the nation. The perfect individual, according to this logic, was an idealist, following an internal moral compass, as John Brown did. The dime novel would seize this radical individualism, with its reformist charge, and graft notions of racial supremacy to it.

Ned Buntline: Reformer and Dime Novelist Provocateur

One man caught in the spirit of follow-your-conscience reform was Edward Zane Carroll Judson, known professionally as Ned Buntline. At different times Buntline was a sailor and a scout, a newspaperman, reformer, poet, and nativist lecturer—all while helping spawn the western dime novel genre. He definitely skirted what Martin Amis calls the “Flaubertian Line”: that only a regular, orderly life leaves room for voluminous reams of savage, original art. In daguerreotype he is a stout man, jowls and double-chin slouching down from an unkempt mustache. The publicity photos betray the two sets of books Buntline lived by: In some he is showing off a gun and flashing a heroic gaze, his paunch stuffed into a deerskin jacket; in others he looks like a dandy, with his cane and his porkpie hat.³² He was both a man of the people and a shrewd cosmopolitan striver. If the true reformer, as Emerson writes, is a person who “in the insatiable thirst for [the] divine . . . casts into the ground the finest ears of his grain” in the hope of sowing a morally upright nation, then Buntline’s kernels of conscience found their way into almost every nook of the nation—in ways that still nourish American imaginations.³³ And what did Ned Buntline’s conscience tell him? Buntline sketches his Hobbesian worldview in an autobiographical poem: “Life since then a constant battle, Foes ahead and foes behind / Like a skirmish line, the rattle sweeping up on every wind.”³⁴ By late life, observed an acquaintance, his physical and mental “scars and wounds attested to desperate encounters he had engaged in.”³⁵ For Buntline, life was brutal conflict: against foreigners, against Indians, against the wilderness, against intoxicants. In the fight against intemperance, he traveled the country giving lectures for the cause, although it is unclear how solemnly he took his own advice. His friend Winfield Palmer alleged that Buntline, while on the temperance lecture circuit, would interrupt his platitudes with discreet sips of “white whisky” from a glass on the lectern. The crowds assumed he was merely drinking water.³⁶ That was Ned Buntline too. A bit of a rascal, he was always kicking up intrigue, impossible to pin down and dissect. Above all, he followed the Thoreauvian example, listening to his conscience, crafting his own “Higher Laws.”

He was born March 1823 in Stamford, New York. In his telling, his childhood was happy, an idyllic succession of rambles through the family’s patch of woods, creek, and pasture. There, Ned ran from his domineering, bookish father and learned to hunt and fish with, in the words of his friend and first biographer Frederick Pond, “Spartan courage and endurance.”³⁷ What Ned did learn from his father, however grudgingly, was an intense patriotism bordering on outright nativism. Levi Carroll Judson maintained that the family lineage was traceable back to the “Puritan forefathers” of New England. The senior Judson published several books, one entitled *The Sages and Heroes of the American Revolution* to honor the kind of old New England stock he identified with and that he saw being rapidly supplanted by immigrant labor.

But real literary ambition was for his son to take up instead. Buntline left home at the age of fifteen and found work as a cabin boy on a flour-filled schooner bound for Rio de Janeiro. On the ship he started writing a bit, and got his first story, "The Captain's Pig," published in *The Knickerbocker Magazine* before he turned 16. In 1840, he joined the U.S. Navy and fought in the Second Seminole War, continuing to write and place stories in periodicals.³⁸

After the war and an ill-fated literary venture in Cincinnati, Buntline returned to New York and began publishing his own periodical, *Ned Buntline's Own*, a scandal sheet dedicated to rooting out prostitution, intemperance, and immigrant immorality. By the end of the 1840s, his publication had spawned a political party called the United Sons of America, dedicated to "the inculcation of pure American principles" and "the opposition to foreign interference with state interests."³⁹ Although his party was eventually absorbed by the Native American Party, more commonly referred to as the Know Nothings, Buntline remained one of the "leading spirits and prime movers," according to his friend and biographer Pond. When he was not lecturing for the temperance movement, Buntline was preaching nativism for the Know Nothings. Pond provides an undated example of the scene at one of Buntline's lectures: While holding forth, Ned was confronted by a "huge foreigner" armed with an ax-helve. Buntline stopped his speech and fearlessly tossed the man, who protested that he was a naturalized American citizen, into the nearby river.⁴⁰ Buntline did not care if the immigrant was naturalized, proof that the state had accepted him into its ranks. No, Buntline followed his individual conscience, and his conscience told him that the immigrant simply did not belong in the states. And so Buntline was happy to skirt the law, throwing the man in the river to prove that point. Some of Buntline's other nativist activities were even more serious. In 1852 he was arrested in St. Louis after helping incite a mob in which several people were killed. A friend bailed him out, and he left the city quickly. The next time he visited, in 1872, he was arrested before he could give a planned temperance lecture.⁴¹ When Buntline passed away in 1883, Charles J. Beatti, a Sons of America leader, wrote a letter to Know Nothings relaying the dime novelist's last words: "Americans must rule Americans."⁴² A nativist till death.

But what was an aspiring litterateur doing stoking anti-immigrant resentment in such a crude way? His assistant literary editor thought he knew: Buntline "only promoted the nativist cause to extract more money from the public."⁴³ Popularizing a claustrophobic sense of national decline at the hands of un-American outsiders sold copies of Buntline's novels. Nativism dovetailed perfectly with the imagined landscapes that Buntline increasingly drew up: the frontier, the Wild West that Didion would

The Dime Novel

Ned Buntline's fictions were primarily published as dime novels, a genre that was popular from the 1860s up through the early twentieth century.⁴⁴ Typically selling for a nickel, likely confusing first-time buyers, dime novels were widely read throughout the nation thanks to the U.S. Postal Service, which shipped the novels cheaply via second-class mail, as it would a periodical. They looked like slim little paperbacks with their lurid-heroic front illustrations and their stapled spines. Publishers pushed stacks of them out at a prolific rate. One house in particular, Beadle and Adams, published 3,158 different titles in its mere thirty-five years of existence.⁴⁵ The firm began operations in 1860. A year later, when the Civil War started, Union soldiers' demand for the novels was so great that the books were known colloquially in-camp as "yellow-backs" and "orange-backs," in reference to the color of their paper covers.⁴⁶ The American literary establishment gasped. One critic characterized the tales produced by Beadle and Adams as the "Vilest among those that are very vile...veritable Bibles of Damnation."⁴⁷

That did not stop them from becoming popular. After the war, New York-based writers like Horatio Alger and Ned Buntline became celebrities, penning yards of pulp and selling millions of copies during their careers. In the words of mid-twentieth-century science fiction publisher E.F. Bleiler, dime novelists were "men who could emit novels as a queen bee lays eggs."⁴⁸ Buntline was no exception. "I once wrote a book of 610 pages in sixty-two hours," he claimed.⁴⁹ Bee-like indeed. But that torrential output meant dime novelists could not spend days waiting around for what the meticulous émigré writer Vladimir Nabokov called the "little throb" of inspiration to strike them unannounced.⁵⁰ They had to grab whatever was at hand. In many cases they grabbed the news. This meant that dime novels often tracked and then sensationalized national developments. For example, after the Chicago fire of 1871, a new series, *Bert Adams, the Fireman Detective*, hit news racks.⁵¹ By contrast, the nation's North/South divide over the legacy of slavery was typically left untouched, as were conflicts between immigrants and nativists, capitalists and laborers.

America's serious social and economic conflicts were instead played out on frontier stage sets. Indeed, the frontier had long been seen as key to forging a uniquely American literature.⁵² "Our eyes will turn westward and a new and stronger tone in our literature will be a result," wrote Emerson in an 1843 issue of *The Dial*, a magazine that published many of the New England Transcendentalists, including Thoreau. He continued, "The Kentucky stump-oratory, the exploits of Boone and David Crockett, the journals of Western pioneers...are genuine growths, which are sought

with avidity in Europe.”⁵³ Richard Slotkin argues that these kinds of stories eventually coalesced into a “nascent national ideology and mythology.”⁵⁴ Literary and ideological spokespeople reshuffled the tropes—Indians, nihilism, plebian Anglos, desolate gulches, lonesome ravines—to create a unifying nationalism for the emerging country. In this tradition, writing about a steep cliff is only useful insofar as it inspires dread; a cozy hamlet is only mentioned to evoke clean living. But if everything merely signifies some abstraction, if a buffalo does not get the chance to exist as a buffalo, what is really being written about? Not the West. The animals, peoples, and landscapes that filled the actual West are gutted and stuffed, denied what W.S. Merwin once called that “infinite thing in them” and tossed off as “counters in a game that is of very doubtful value.”⁵⁵ Men like Buntline who played that game, maintaining a myth inherited from Rowlandson and Cooper, aimed to obscure internal social conflicts behind a veil. Real metropolitan conflict—class division, religious-ethnic difference—was acted out between Indians and whites, between the irrational frontier and rational Anglo-American pluck.⁵⁶ Buntline, a man who helped foment racial tensions, was in the position to help soothe them with his dime novel westerns—and make money doing it.

Anti-Immigrant Parables on the Western Plains

While Indian military resistance ceased and Plains Indians were finally sequestered onto finite reservations in the late 1800s, a dramatized Wild West flourished as dime novel material under the stewardship of Beadle and Adams. But the template for that later western literature was set down almost half a century earlier by writers like Ned Buntline. Before turning his gaze west, Buntline primarily wrote mysteries and romances set in the metropolis, an effort that complimented his temperance and nativist reform work. *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York* is a characteristic piece of work from this period.⁵⁷ By the end of this multi-volume set, almost every male character has been degraded by a criminal, immigrant element. Even the heroine, Isabella Meadows, degenerates from a “pure and virtuous maiden” into a “desperate, crime-hardened being.”⁵⁸ Buntline consistently pits urban depravity—something he heavily-handedly associated with immigrants (whom he calls “wretched creatures” in *Mysteries and Miseries of New York*)—against pure Anglo natives. The natives slowly get corrupted, unless they resist the temptations brought on by immigrants: alcohol, gambling, prostitutes.

Of course, Buntline’s dimly lit sketches of urban immorality were not accurate representations of life in the city. But if Nietzsche was onto something when he wrote “Art is not an imitation of nature but its metaphysical

supplement raised up beside it in order to overcome it," accuracy was never Buntline's goal, anyway.⁵⁹ Instead, he attempted to supplant America's multiethnic, urban reality in his novels, preempting interpretation by shoe-horning his characters into neat archetypes (drunk, lecher, thief, thug, harlot). These archetypes remained at such a distance from lived reality that they, paradoxically, touched back on the world and instilled new prejudices in the reader.⁶⁰ Susan Sontag characterizes literature as "an imaginary landscape or décor of the will," where the writer's subconscious can expose itself and dance about. If that is true, then Buntline's interior will, with its nativist prejudices and a thirst for reform, jumps out at the reader. It does not matter that Buntline's will is a flawed one, an interior will that had to look across a yawning gap to find the lived reality it portends to represent. Buntline's urban fictions and western fictions overcome that lived reality by substituting a new one, influencing reality in turn.⁶¹

Buntline first turned his literary gaze westward in 1856 when he began writing for the *New York Mercury*, a fiction magazine with an average circulation of 156,000 until it folded in 1896. For the *Mercury*, Buntline set his stories almost exclusively in the West. He lifted themes from his previous "crime in the city" works and dropped them, intact, into the "the wild and picturesque" borderlands of the American West, where *Stella Delorme: or the Comanche's Dream* opens.⁶² The plot centers on a woman named Stella Delorme, who lives on a ranch with father and mother near the Rio Pecos. They are regularly harassed by bands of Lipan Apaches, who often take her captive. But try as they might to steal her, the Lipans always fail. She is routinely reunited with her father after being rescued by a Texas Ranger named Major Ben McCulloch and a Comanche brave named Lagona.

McCulloch is recognizable as a stock character plucked from Buntline's previous mystery and crime fictions. He is the trustworthy Anglo American: rational, brave, and handsome, even described as "one of the most gallant that ever rode astride a horse."⁶³ He leads the small contingent of Texas Rangers who have been sent to pacify the Lipan Apache "horde."⁶⁴ Lagona, the young Comanche brave, despite being a new kind of character for Buntline, was a longstanding American literary archetype: the Noble Savage, main character in what Philip J. Deloria terms the "vanishing Indian doctrine."⁶⁵ In this historical myth, promulgated by dime novels as well as serious literature, North America's native people are reflexively remembered in a constant state of noble surrender to progress. This was the story forcefully inked by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his popular poem *The Song of Hiawatha*, published only four years before Buntline published *Stella Delorme*. In the poem, Longfellow conjures Hiawatha as a romantic representative for a fading world. Waking up, Hiawatha freshly recalls a grim dream. Canoes in the distance carry people "from the distant land of Wabun" toward his village. The newcomers bring a "restless, toiling, struggling" ethic to the virgin land,

forcing Hiawatha's people to disperse, "weakened, sweeping westward, wild and woeful."⁶⁶ There is no room for native people or the archaic traditions, mores, and social structures they have cultivated. The settlers from Wabun cast them out.

Of course, this was a myth. Native peoples did not idle calmly as their worlds collapsed. They adapted to contact with Europeans, constructing new trade networks and forging independent military alliances outside of the American nation-state's control.⁶⁷ This quickly became evident to certain white observers, who began mercilessly mocking the Noble Savage myth. Mark Twain was doing some of that when he wrote, "All history and honest observation will show that the Red Man is a skulking coward and a windy braggart, who strikes without warning."⁶⁸ Twain is, at least in part, acknowledging native peoples' agency: they have the capacity to be just as ill-tempered as Anglos. But he was also condemning them, labeling them irredeemable, with their dirty tricks and expansive capacity for violence.

Buntline straddles both camps (Cooper's and Twain's) by dividing the Indian characters in *Stella Delorme* into two types. First, there is Lagona, the Noble Savage: "Never did man look more noble than he, as he stood there, with his arms folded across his chest—his tall form as erect as the lance which leaned his shoulder."⁶⁹ Lagona has a dream in an early scene, relayed to him by the Great Spirit who tells him that "a maiden of the pale faces, more beautiful than all the flowers of the earth, [is] about to be sacrificed by the Lipans." The Great Spirit tells him "to mount [his horse] and rescue the maiden."⁷⁰ Lagona alerts the Texas Rangers and, along with them, saves her and promptly falls in love with Stella.⁷¹ Throughout the remainder of the book, Lagona selflessly helps save Stella from Lipans until he is certain she is safe from further harm. Then, at the novel's end, with his "eyes fixed fondly upon Stella," he drives a "bloody knife deep through his brave, noble, generous heart."⁷² By killing himself, Lagona is fulfilling the destiny of the Noble Savage, gruesomely acknowledging, as Chief Chingachgook does more poetically in James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, that he is obsolete, a "blazed pine in a clearing of pale faces."⁷³ Stella marries McCullough the next day.

Then there is the second type of Indian in Buntline's novel: the Lipan Apaches. Like Lagona, the "vanishing Indian" representative, the Lipans are irrational and stupid. But they are also inherently malicious. They attack and kill people without warning, doggedly attempt to make Stella their captive, and unsuccessfully fight McCullough and the Rangers repeatedly. Lagona can be noble with his steady gaze and his feather headdress, but the Lipans are nothing more than a nasty criminal outfit. There are no Indian characters capable of fitting into the Anglo world growing around them in Buntline's West—just as there are no Irish immigrants capable of adaptation in his previous New York fictions.

Another dime novel series that eagerly transplanted nativist themes onto the Plains was Beadle and Adams's *Buffalo Bill*. Buntline initially wrote the series, which focuses on the semi-fictionalized exploits of William F. Cody. The series proved so popular that Beadle and Adams decided to continue it after Buntline passed away.⁷⁴ Prentiss Ingraham was selected to continue the writing. A veteran of the Confederate Army and a former mercenary with stints in Cuba, Mexico, and Egypt behind him, Ingraham likely experienced the gore he sprinkled so liberally throughout his *Buffalo Bill* novels.⁷⁵ Like the Buntline entries, Ingraham's *Buffalo Bill* stories are set before and after the U.S. Civil War on the frontier edge. Bill Cody, the "Monarch of Bordermen," protects his friends, neighbors, and family from the ravages of desperados, Mexicans, and roving Indians. *Adventures of Buffalo Bill: From Boyhood to Manhood* was the first of the series written by Ingraham.⁷⁶ Throughout, Bill is depicted as an honorable, industrious young man who works as a trail guide, trapper, and herdsman following his father's death in order to support his mother and sister back on the homestead.

The characterization of civilization and nature mirrors the Anglo/Indian dichotomy in the novels. Civilization is calm and peaceful; nature is irrational and violent. During a trapping expedition, an oxen that "had fallen over a precipice and killed himself," for no apparent reason, leaves Bill alone and with a broken leg, surrounded by hostile Indians and wolves.⁷⁷ Conversely, civilization is equated with safety and rationality. In a chapter entitled "The Desperadoes' Den," Bill rides out of town to hunt deer and sage hens and gets lost in the foothills of Laramie Peak. As the sun dims, Bill gets anxious. Convinced that a band of Indians is following him, he silently creeps through the woods like a panther to evade them. His fright turns to relief as he spies the outline of a backwoods cabin: "Hearing voices and recognizing that they were white men he stepped boldly forward and knocked on the door." Seeing a mark of Anglo civilization, he is completely certain that he will be safe. Unfortunately for Bill, the door swings open to a band of desperados. After a terse introduction, he leaves the cabin on amiable terms after one of the men recognizes him from childhood.⁷⁸ Dime novels like these reimagined the pre-reservation West as a bipolar place where nature and Indians were violent and irrational, while white civilization was safe. In the imaginations of Ingraham and Buntline, the borderlands were cruel and irrational, just like the Indians.

A Conjuring Trick: Emptying the West

This fantastical West, its omissions and elisions tailored to stoke xenophobia back East, also whitewashed history out West—obscuring the Indian presence in western North America.⁷⁹ As Marilynne Robinson puts it, history's

erasures are “strongly present in their apparent absence, like black holes, pulling the fabric of collective narrative out of shape.”⁸⁰ Well, writers like Buntline and Ingraham—so intensely focused on writing nativist parables that they left out Indian involvement in the construction of an American market economy—further elevated Anglo Americans and helped justify the reservation system while also inferring white superiority over newly emancipated blacks. This sterile history, bent to the will of crusading dime novelists, enhanced American individualism, this time wedding it to a notion that a certain kind of person (white Anglos) built the West as individuals, without native and government assistance.

In the first half of the 1800s, American traders truly needed the participation of North American native peoples if they were to make any profit. In many cases, “participation” should really be substituted for “partnership”—on such equal footing did Indians and non-Indians operate. Western historians have been making the case for decades that the demographic makeup of the American West, prior to the consolidation of the nation-state, was much more cosmopolitan than regularly assumed. One of them, Anne Hyde, uses Bent’s Fort, located in present-day Colorado, as an example. William Bent was a prominent trader along the Santa Fe Trail. He married Owl Woman, a Cheyenne, as a way of entering the tribe’s complex labyrinth of kin and of ritual, a prerequisite for a successful trading operation. By operating with native peoples instead of apart from them, the first shoots of a market economy began to sprout on the arid plains.⁸¹ But as more and more white Americans poured into the region with their rigid racial categories, the relative diversity of the West had to end. It did not take long for tensions to escalate into violence. Eventually, while Cheyennes, Arapahos, and several of the Bents slept, an aggrieved Denver militia approached their camp at nearby Sand Creek and slaughtered Owl Woman and William Bent’s West.⁸²

Dime novels played a role in making sure the slaughter was final. *Adventures of Buffalo Bill: From Boyhood to Manhood* helps show how this new history was arrayed. In this story, Bill’s father is a Kansas Indian trader in Salt Creek Valley at around the time Bent’s Fort was flourishing on the Santa Fe Trail.⁸³ But the communal walls of kinship and fort present on the Santa Fe Trail are missing in the retelling. When trading does take place, Bill’s father simply rides his horse to the Indian village and returns home with a load of hides in time to catch a hot meal fried up by his white wife and daughter.⁸⁴ In dime novels, men like Bill’s father cannot forge relationships with non-Anglos, because Indians have been purposefully flattened into caricature. They are either noble savages or violent nihilists—either way, they are not worth getting to know on intimate terms.

Thanks in part to dime novels, the actual historical past where Indians participated with whites to forge trading systems and open the West to the

market economy faded from popular memory. In its place stood the lone white man, who forged an empire and brought nature under cultivation without the help of Indians, Mexicans, or the government.⁸⁵ Dime novels, xenophobic pulp sold by men like Buntline in an effort to do little more than buttress nativist activities and make quick cash, morphed into a foundational American myth: the frontier. But if this abstract story brought clarity and purpose to the American nation state, it did so at a cost—erecting firm boundaries between peoples, obliterating complexity.⁸⁶ As the story goes, native peoples and Mexicans were obstructing American progress. They deserved to be put down with the same icy fortitude that a police battalion would bust an immigrant crime syndicate.

Walter Benjamin—that famously woolly philosopher, perhaps best known for his tragic 1940 suicide at the gates of Franco's Spain—defines the historian's role as "holding fast to a picture of the past" before it dissipates into abstraction and "tradition." In place of the historian as chronicler, he elevates the historical materialist as messiah, puncturing holes of light in the drab fabric of ruling-class-sanctioned memory and discourse in order to save the vanquished dead—in this case, the nonwhite people who populated the West—and ensure that they did not die for nothing, that the complex memory of their lives is not flattened into myth and bent to the use of the victors.⁸⁷ It is safe to say that Buntline and his fellow dime novelists participated in the process Benjamin sought to reverse. In place of the vanquished, the Anglo man stood tall (looking a bit like John Wayne), able to conquer the West by himself.

Conclusion: The Universal Eligibility to Swallow Myths Whole

The grand narrative that grew out of dime novel fiction became more than a myth. In spite of its tawdry nativist origins, it became, in effect, the unofficial history of the American West—or as Slotkin argues, the official historical frame for the entire United States in the twentieth century.⁸⁸ But can we really blame people for buying it? Can we knowingly canonize dime novel mythology in the halls of what Thomas Pynchon calls "Classics of Idiocy"?⁸⁹ Of course not. "Berate him as we will for not reading our books," warned Carl L. Becker in his 1931 address to the American Historical Association, "Mr. Everyman is stronger than we are... The history that influences the course of history, is living history, the pattern of remembered events, whether true or false."⁹⁰

My grandfather was a "Mr. Everyman." He did not attend school past sixth grade and his rounded, Polish-inflected speech made it sound like he had marbles in his mouth. But he also valued learning: Austen, Dickens, encyclopedias, and obese paperback histories lined his sturdy living room shelves.

It was not from formal learning, but from those books, along with scraps of magazines, records, and movies, that his historical narrative was stitched, all sources haphazardly colliding, contradicting each other. When I was a young boy, I would often go north to his house on Sundays. There, after church, in the sunroom that he'd cobbled together years earlier, my grandfather would give his creaky dairy farm knees a rest and pull out his records: Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Patsy Cline. One of his favorites was a Marty Robbins song, *Big Iron*. In a clear baritone, Robbins sings:

To the town of Agua Fria rode a stranger one fine day
 Hardly spoke to folks around him, didn't have to much to say,
 No one dared to ask his business, no one dared to make a slip;
 The stranger there among them had a big iron on his hip,
 Big iron on his hip.⁹¹

The song's plot is pure western boilerplate. It becomes clear, as the record spins, that the stranger with the big, heavy pistol wants to challenge the outlaw, Texas Red, to a duel. The only problem is that "Many men had tried to take [the outlaw] and that many men were dead." Texas Red is tough to beat! The stranger duels him anyway and, to the surprise of the residents of Agua Fria, "watchin' from their windows," the outlaw's body falls:

There was twenty feet between them
 When they stopped to make their play
 And the swiftness of the ranger is still talked about today
 Texas Red had not cleared leather when a bullet fairly ripped
 And the ranger's aim was deadly, with the big iron on his hip,
 Big iron on his hip.⁹²

It is a good song. But it also recapitulates the dime novel's frontier myth, part of which states that one good man with a gun can solve any problem. Of course, this individualism is not unique to the frontier myth. America, by deregulating religion, created an especially individualistic society, as noticed by Tocqueville. The post-1517 profusion of competing truth claims allowed the American Transcendentalists to flourish, with their call to follow "higher laws" instead of the government, with their reforming zeal. But this individualism could be weaponized—and it was by men like Ned Buntline. The writer's conscience pointed him to nativism, a conflict he projected onto the western borderlands, helping create a western myth founded on race- and gender-based dichotomies, where one side was rational and one was irrational; where one deserved a place in the American project and one did not. Buntline and others took a belt-sander to the rough-hewn interdependencies of the American West, then applied a thick coat of lacquer in an attempt to obscure the fundamentally inextinguishable

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asymmetry of the people who lived there. This myth eclipsed the more inclusive, historically accurate, multiracial western story (only now being reclaimed by scholars like Hyde), hiding it from all the Mr. Everymans: Joan Didion, my grandfather, and everyone else.

1. Werner Sombart, *Why is There no Socialism in the United States?*, trans. Patricia M. Hocking and C.T. Husbands (London: Macmillan Press, 1976), p. 118. Sombart seems to be paraphrasing Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. The 1893 essay is so well-trod that, as William Cronon wrote in 1987, "to summarize it is to engage in ritual." What was true in then is truer now, but I will summarize it anyway. Turner posited that the existence of large tracts of Edenic, "unpeopled" land to the west, where white men toiled to bring nature's bounty to heel, forged a unique American character: individualistic, egalitarian, pragmatic. Despite the pile of criticism that has grown around the thesis (Where are the non-white actors? Is this myth-making or history?), Turner's contentions provided the dominant narrative structure for decades of western historical scholarship. William Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 18 no. 2 (April 1987): 157-76. One of the criticisms leveled against the Frontier Thesis comes from the data-driven analysis of economic outcomes for frontier laborers versus laborers in eastern metropolises. Analysis conducted by Ralph Mann suggests that those who went west, on average, did not find enhanced economic mobility. Ralph Mann, "Frontier Opportunity and the New Social History," *Pacific Historical Review* 53 (November 1984): 463-91.
2. Howard Lamar argues that the American West, far from being a laborer's idyll, was "indeed an area of bondage." Frontier settlers were inserting themselves in a contested space with a long history of competing labor systems, not all of them free. Howard elevates class position on bonded labor systems over race as the defining source of unrest in the American West after Spanish intrusion. Howard Lamar, "From Bondage to Contract: Ethnic Labor in the American West, 1600-1890," in *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 293-326.
3. Carlos A. Schwantes quotes a member of Industrial Workers of the World, who echoed Sombart's concern in 1915: "The Golden West has been the Mecca in the dream of the misguided worker in all parts of the country," the unnamed Wobbly said, "If I can only get west, is his only thought." But Schwantes argues that once white workers arrived in the "Golden West," the error of their thinking often became apparent—that working as a lumberjack or a miner alongside nonwhite labor was neither lucrative nor free. After this realization, they often adopted an "ideology of disinheritance," throwing off their particular ethnic identity in favor of militant class consciousness. Carlos A. Schwantes, "Protest in a Promised Land: Unemployment, Disinheritance, and the Origin of Labor Militancy in the Pacific Northwest, 1885-1886," *Western Historical Quarterly* 13 (October 1982): 373-90, quote on 390.
4. Joan Didion, "John Wayne: A Love Song," in *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live: Collected Nonfiction* (New York: Everyman's Library, 2006), pp. 30-38, quote on 31.
5. Paul Gleason, "The Picture in Her Mind," *The Point*, April 20, 2018, <https://thepointmag.com/2017/criticism/the-picture-in-her-mind-joan-didion>.
6. Didion, "Notes from a Native Daughter," in *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live*, pp. 131-41, esp. pp. 131-133.
7. Didion, "John Wayne," p. 30.

8. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), p. 155.
9. Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March* (New York: Viking Press, 1949), p. 3.
10. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, trans. Henry Reeve (1835; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), pp. viii-x.
11. Tocqueville, 1: 300, 301. Tocqueville argued that American Catholics also held individualism in a higher regard than their European counterparts.
12. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 2, trans. Henry Reeve (1840; New York: HarperCollins, 1966), p. 429.
13. Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 114.
14. Alec Ryrie, *Protestants: The Faith That Made the Modern World* (New York: Viking, 2017), pp. 16-28.
15. Martin Luther, *Preface to the First Volume of His Latin Writings* [1545] and *The Freedom of a Christian* [1520], in *The Protestant Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hildrebrand (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), p. 30.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
17. This story, of how Luther's theses helped loosen hierarchical authority's grip and devolve authority to the individual, is argued by Gregory in *The Unintended Reformation*. It is worth pointing out, however, that his work has been criticized, labeled ideology hiding behind footnotes. Mark Lilla has compellingly labeled it "Mytho-history," where a version of the "Road not Taken" is offered to critique contemporary liberal society. Mark Lilla, *The Shipwrecked Mind: On Political Reaction* (New York: New York Review Books, 2016), pp. 67-85. I would like to avoid falling into the same trap as Gregory. While parroting his contention that Luther's *sola scriptura* marks a break—where hierarchical authority, religious or otherwise, started to lose its hold on the individual—I'm not asserting, like Gregory, that life was necessarily better before the break. Bemoaning the hyper-individualism of modernity (and the commoditized Dime Novel fictions it spawned) is not my intent at all.
18. Gregory, *Unintended Reformation*. This is one of the less controversial claims made by Gregory, echoed by Ryrie, *Protestants*.
19. Susan Sontag, "The Imagination of Disaster," in *Essays of the 1960s & 70s* (New York: Library of America, 2013), p. 199.
20. George Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus," in *Early Evangelicalism: A Reader*, ed. Jonathan M. Yeager (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 24-25; Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 80-88.
21. William Paley, *The Works of William Paley* (Philadelphia: J.J. Woodward, 1836), p. 115.
22. Laura Dassow Walls, *Henry David Thoreau: A Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 149.
23. Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," in *The Portable Thoreau* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 75.
24. Quoted in Walls, *Henry David Thoreau*, p. 212. Thoreau biographer Walls

calls the fact that Thoreau went to jail and Emerson did not “perhaps the most important difference” between the writers. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

25. Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience,” in *Portable Thoreau*, pp. 78, 97.

26. Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Fugitive Slave Law—Address at Concord” (1851), in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1878), pp. 177-214, quote on p. 186.

27. Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience,” in *Portable Thoreau*, p. 453.

28. Thoreau, “The Last Days of John Brown,” in *Portable Thoreau*, pp. 547-48.

29. Richard Marius, *The Columbia Book of Civil War Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. xix-xx.

30. Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Man the Reformer,” in *The Portable Emerson* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), pp. 69-70.

31. Daegan Miller, *This Radical Land: A Natural History of American Dissent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), p. 9.

32. Frederick Pond, *Life and Adventure of “Ned Buntline” with Ned Buntline’s Anecdote of “Frank Forester” and Chapter of Angling Sketches* (New York: Cadmus Book Shop, 1919).

33. Emerson, “Man the Reformer” in *Portable Emerson*, p. 88.

34. Ned Buntline, “March Born,” quoted by Frederick Pond, *Life and Adventures*, p. 120. Pond, the editor of *Turf, Field and Stream* magazine and a dime novelist who wrote under the pseudonym Will Wildwood, met Buntline in 1881, only two years before the man would pass away. He visited Buntline regularly at his home in New York, where he pumped him for information. The biography Pond produced is fawning. The only other full biography of Buntline was published in 1951 by Jay Monaghan, the Illinois State Historian from 1945 to 50. When Monaghan died in 1980, an obituary printed in the Illinois State Historical Society journal called him “a historian in cowboy boots.” Irving Dillard, “Historian in Cowboy Boots: Jay Monaghan, 1893-1980,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 74, no. 4 (1981): 261-78. And you can see why when you read the biography of Buntline he produced. Like Pond, he sympathized with Buntline.

35. Chauncey Hawthorn, *Eulogy for Ned Buntline*, quoted in Pond, *Life and Adventures*, p. 59.

36. Malcolm Macpherson, *E.Z.C. Judson, Alias Ned Buntline*, n.p. (1971), p. 1.

37. Pond, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 11-12.

38. Jay Monaghan, *The Great Rascal: The Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952), pp. 70, 74.

39. John William Schmidt, “Edward Zane Carroll Judson (Ned Buntline)—The Granddaddy of the Dime Novelists” (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1973), pp. 47-50.

40. Pond, *Life and Adventures*, p. 49.

41. MacPherson, *E.Z.C. Judson*, pp. 7, 16.

42. Charles J. Beattie, quoted in Pond, *Life and Adventures*, p. 137.

43. Schmidt, “Edward Zane Carroll Judson,” p. 48.

44. Although many of his stories predated the dime novel boom, Buntline helped pioneer the formula that eventually dominated the genre.

45. Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1987), p. 15.

46. Albert Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels: A Story of a Vanished Literature*, vol. 1 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), pp. 34-35.
47. *Land We Love*, V, 81 (May 1868), quoted in Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines 1865-1885*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 43.
48. E.F. Bleiler, ed., *Eight Dime Novels* (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), p. xv.
49. Quoted in Pond, *Life and Adventures*, p. 52.
50. Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita* (New York: Vintage International, 1970), p. 311.
51. Bleiler, ed., *Eight Dime Novels*, pp. iv-x.
52. Richard Slotkin, *The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).
53. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Europe and European Books," *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion*, vol. 3 (Boston: E. P. Peabody, 1843), pp. 511-12.
54. Slotkin, *Myth of the Frontier*, p. 39.
55. W.S. Merwin, Ed Folsom, and Cary Nelson, "Fact Has Two Faces: An Interview with W.S. Merwin," *Iowa Review* 13, no. 1 (1982): 30-66, quote on 35.
56. Slotkin, *Myth of the Frontier*, pp. 51-52.
57. Ned Buntline, *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York: A Story of Real Life*, vol. 5 (New York: W.F. Burgess, 1849).
58. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
59. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, quoted in Susan Sontag, "On Style," in *Essays of the 1960s & 70s* (New York: Library of America, 2013), p. 35.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
61. In the essay "On Style," Sontag asserts that "Art is nothing more or less than various modes of stylized, dehumanized representation." But she concedes that "the overcoming or transcending of the world in art is also a way of encountering the world, and of training or educating the will to be in the world." Novels can teach us how to live. *Ibid.*
62. Ned Buntline, *Stella Delorme: or the Comanche's Dream* (New York: Frederick A. Brady, 1860), p. 1. (First published in *New York Mercury* in 1859.)
63. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
65. Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 64-65.
66. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1855), lines 283-287.
67. Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), pp. 116-33, 162-66. Witgen argues that successful trade between French and Anishinaabeg peoples in the seventeenth-century Great Lakes was predicated on a series of ritualized gift exchanges, conducted on Anishinaabeg, not French terms. The resulting "middle ground," Richard White's term for the messy cultural give-and-take on the jagged frontier edge, complicates the traditional story of foreordained European supremacy. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

68. Mark Twain, *Collected Nonfiction*, vol. 1 (New York: Everyman's Library, 2016), pp. 504-05.
69. Buntline, *Stella Delorme*, p. 7.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 7-8.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-71.
73. James Fenimore Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans* (1826; London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1992), pp. 395-96.
74. The continuation of the *Buffalo Bill* series after Buntline's death is tied to a process Michael Denning identifies as the increasing commodification of the dime novel. Celebrity writers, like Buntline, gave way to celebrity characters, like Buffalo Bill—a trademark that could be ventriloquized by a rotating cast of hack writers. Denning is riffing on Frankfurt School theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who coined the term "Culture Industry" for commoditized artwork produced by deskilled wage labor. This art, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, results in "mass deception." Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, p. 20.
75. Bleiler, ed., *Eight Dime Novels*, p. xiii.
76. Colonel Prentiss Ingraham, *Adventures of Buffalo Bill: From Boyhood to Manhood, Deeds of Daring and Romantic Incidents in the Life of Wm. F. Cody, the Monarch of Bordermen* (New York: Beadle and Adams, 1881), p. 1.
77. Ingraham, *Adventures*, p. 7.
78. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
79. My thinking about myth in this section is influenced by Roland Barthes. He argues that historical complexities are often flattened into myth, resulting in a "harmonious display of essences." "A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature." Barthes further writes that myth substitutes history for ideology, giving it a "natural and eternal justification." Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Laver (1957; New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), pp. 255-56.
80. Marilynne Robinson, "Our Public Conversation: How America Talks About Itself" [2016], in *What Are We Doing Here? Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), pp. 135-82, quote on pp. 136-37.
81. Anne Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), pp. 155-63.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 492-96.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-63.
84. Ingraham, *Adventures*, p. 3. The historian Susan Lee Johnson suggests that in episodes like this, the memory of the West became gendered (over the course of what Judith Butler calls "a set of repeated acts ... that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance"), resulting in the "consolidation of the 'American West' as a masculine preserve." Susan Lee Johnson, "'A Memory Sweet to Soldiers': The Significance of Gender in the History of the 'American West,'" *Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1993): 495-517, quote on 512.
85. Shelby Steele, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 221.
86. Daegan Miller makes a similar argument about land surveying (and technocratic abstraction in general), arguing that if the rationalization of land "brings clarity and

connection to disparate things flung across great distances, it can do so only through severing the tangled roots that plot any thing in a local place. Abstraction is a way of saying that some general connections matter and that others, the more specific ones, don't." Without too much strain, I think, Miller's argument can also apply to the generalities and abstractions promulgated by many dime novels. Miller, *This Radical Land*, p. 24.

87. Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, trans. Dennis Redmond (Frankfurt: Gesammelten Schriften, 1974), p. iv.

88. Slotkin argues that although the "frontier" went away as a locatable place, it retained latent metaphoric power. That power was tapped by politicians to gain support for everything from foreign entanglements and the Space Race to the "War on Poverty" and Cold War research funding. It was most notably used by John F. Kennedy, with his "New Frontier": "For Kennedy and his advisers, the choice of the Frontier as a symbol was not simply a device for trade-marking the candidate. It was an authentic metaphor, descriptive of the way in which they hoped to use political power...a complexly resonant symbol, a vivid and memorable set of hero-tales—each a model of successful and morally justifying action on the stage of historical conflict." Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (1992; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), p. 3.

89. Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* (New York: Picador, 1995), p. 190.

90. Carl L. Becker, "Annual Address of the President of the American Historical Association, Delivered at Minneapolis," *American Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (1931): 221-36, quote on 234.

91. Marty Robbins, *Big Iron*, track 1, on *Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs*, Columbia Records, 1959.

92. Ibid.

DEFENDING AND DENOUNCING IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

Capitalism, Justice, and Empire in *Ero-Guro* Literature

Ian Rumball



Image: Suehiro Maruo, *The Caterpillar* (Tokyo: Beam Comics, 2009).

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As Imperial Japan transitioned from the liberal consumerism of Taishō Democracy to mobilizing its society and military to dominate East Asia in the 1930s, state actors and nationalist civic leaders employed rhetoric meant to inspire loyalty and evoke productivity among the citizenry.¹ Despite censorship by the country's Home Ministry, some Japanese cultural producers of the 1920s challenged the state-sanctioned ideology. The creators of the *ero-guro-nansenu* (erotic, grotesque nonsense) genre provide one such example. *Ero-guro* was an artistic and literary movement that gained popularity in the 1920s and early 1930s, but foundered under increased state repression and militarism during the later 1930s. Many authors and artists of the genre found inspiration in the fields of popular criminology and sexology, and focused on bizarre, decadent, and deviant topics. *Ero-guro* creators granted Japanese "consumer-subjects" an escape from so-called productive behaviors and nationalist thought.² Their works, though, could also align with state doctrine in an unlikely synergism. *Ero-guro* reached its greatest popularity concurrent to "the ascendancy in Japan of authoritarian political and social forces that strongly advocated the fascistic ideological fantasies of cultural harmony, ethnic purity, national power, and empire."³ *Ero-guro* authors, reflecting the anxieties of a Japanese society grappling with modern capitalism, unsure justice, and imperial expansion, approached the narratives promulgated by the Japanese state with a paradoxical ambivalence: their literature both defended and denounced imperial ideology—at times doing both simultaneously.

Japan's rapid foray into capitalist modernity, a product of industrialization and urbanization during and after World War I, made late Taishō urban centers incubators for the developing *ero-guro* genre. In 1910, manufacturing accounted for just 23 percent of the Japanese economy, of which only 21 percent was in by heavy industry; the interwar economy, by contrast, was far more reliant on heavy and capital-intensive industries.⁴ Burgeoning industrial capacity was made possible by an expanding urban labor force—Tokyo doubled its population to 3.35 million between 1900 and 1920, mirroring similar growth in other Japanese cities—fueled by rural to urban migration and the expanded entry of women into the workforce.⁵ It also produced an unprecedented array of goods for urban consumption. Economic and demographic modernization, coupled with growing literacy rates, created a wage-earning urban population capable of consuming and discussing *ero-guro* works.⁶

The inequalities produced by accelerated capitalist development, as well as resultant agitation fomented by Marxists, motivated the passage of legally oppressive legislation by late Taishō policy-makers. On one hand, the era of Taishō Democracy saw a notable transfer of power from an oligarchic political establishment to the Imperial Diet, as well as increased social and political participation for women and urban and rural laborers.⁷ On the other hand,

unprecedented inequality generated by Japan's capitalist economic system—exacerbated by the dominance of the Satsuma-Chōshū *genrō* and *zaibatsu* conglomerates in the political and economic realms, respectively—galvanized social and political dissatisfaction among the middle and working classes.⁸ While state decision-makers concerned themselves with the erosion of traditional values as a result of growing consumerism, Marxism was seen as the more immediate threat following the assassination attempt on Crown Prince Hirohito by a communist agitator in 1923. In response, the Public Security Preservation Law of 1925 outlawed the Japanese Communist Party and allowed for the creation of the *Tokkō* (the “Thought Police” of the Home Ministry), which functioned to identify and convert Marxist extremists to the political orthodoxy.⁹ The consequences of such legislation led *ero-guro* authors to question the state of justice in interwar Japan.

The perceived shortcomings of liberal capitalist and Marxist ideologies led ambitious figures in the Japanese political and military realms to advocate state-directed capitalism. Utilizing the emperor and the concept of *kokutai* as rallying points, and borrowing from Marxist ideas about the injustices of capitalism and inequality, they believed fascist “state intervention in the economic, political, and social realms” would advance the interest of Japan “conceived as a single, unified, and classless social whole.”¹⁰ Though not in the mainstream of Taishō political thought, these ideas influenced *ero-guro* authors and became increasingly influential as the Japanese Empire pivoted toward statism in the Showa period.¹¹

The development of increasingly militaristic and fascist activity in Showa Japan was fueled by several factors. The longstanding perception that Japan was destined to spearhead a coalition of Asiatic peoples, outlined by the writings of nationalist authors like Fukuzawa Yukichi and reified by Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War, was a common justification for Japanese imperialism in East Asia. Continual, racially-charged disrespect by Western powers—such as the blocking of a racial equality clause in the League of Nations Covenant, or the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 in the U.S., which banned Asian immigration—and unequal naval allowances in agreements with the United Kingdom and U.S. gave Japanese nationalists further rallying cries for strengthening the nation's military.¹² Finally, the onset of a global economic depression in 1929 made the formation of an autarkic economic sphere, directed by the Japanese, a high priority of the Showa administration. The confluence of these arguments were influential in the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, a watershed moment in the shift to statism.

With the rise of fascism in the Japanese empire, *ero-guro* works became not only a product within the capitalist marketplace, but also an alternative to increasingly absolutist and nationalistic discourses. Contradiction and ambivalence was inherent to *ero-guro* creations in their

discussions of capitalism, justice, and empire; their producers both were influenced by and responded to state ideology. Japan's capitalist modernity allowed *ero-guro*'s development and generated anxieties that the genre's cultural producers reflected in their work. This milieu of sociopolitical unrest led state decision-makers to pass repressive legislation. The work of *ero-guro* creators provided commentary and questioned the state of justice in Japan. By the time state decision-makers looked toward Chinese expansion in the early 1930s, *ero-guro* works were complicating discourse on state militarism and fascism.

Analyses of *ero-guro* in by late twentieth- and early twenty-first century historians have focused on how production and consumption of the works were social and political acts of rebellion by an increasingly repressed public, or on how the genre reflected the omnipresence of capitalism in interwar Japanese society. Arguing the first perspective, Gregory Pflugfelder posits that each component of the *ero-guro-nansensu* moniker had an adversarial connotation:

The celebration of the "erotic" (*ero*) in its myriad forms constituted a rejection of the Meiji dictum that sexuality was unsuited for public display or representation unless it conformed to the narrow standards of "civilized morality." The elevation of the "grotesque" (*guro*) betrayed a similar disregard for prevailing esthetic codes, with their focus on traditional canons of beauty and concealment of the seamier sides of existence. Finally, the valorization of the "nonsensical" (*nansensu*) signaled a discontent with the constraining nature of received moral and epistemological certitudes.¹³

Jim Reichart extends this argument of *ero-guro* "oppositionality," saying that the genre gave urban socialites the opportunity to distinguish their moral and aesthetic tastes and express their participation in capitalist modernity.¹⁴ He claims that *ero-guro* sensibilities thrived in "modern-life contexts, including nightclub reviews, popular song lyrics, poster art, advertising campaigns, tabloid journalism, and various literary genres."¹⁵ However, Reichart also argues that Social Darwinist ideologies influenced the discourse and attitudes of *ero-guro* consumers, and that non-mainstream sexualities or gender identities were looked down on as "deviant" or under-evolved.¹⁶

Alternatively, some historians have focused on *ero-guro* as either a symptom or integral component of capitalist modernity. Mark Driscoll uses the concept of "neuropolitics" to argue that in early Showa Japan, capitalism had completely invaded Japanese life, down to the level of dominating the attention and leisure time of consumers.¹⁷ With frequent overstimulation of the consumer nervous system with the pleasures of capitalist modernity, entertainment forms needed to become increasingly

revolutionary or extreme to elicit a response; it is in this context that the erotic, the grotesque, and the nonsensical became fixtures within Japanese popular culture. Miriam Silverberg contends that scholars have obscured the cultural meaning of *ero-guro-nansenu* by simply labeling it as a decadent celebration of “sensual pleasures while ignoring the plea of party politics and the unharnessed military.”¹⁸ She emphasizes that *ero-guro* was both the mass culture of Japanese modernity and a popular mobilization “positioned from within capitalist structures of domination.”¹⁹

Disciplining Modernity or Celebrating Indulgence?

Edogawa Ranpo, a foundational author of the Japanese mystery and suspense genre, raised questions about the socially fragmenting forces of modern capitalism.²⁰ Born in 1894, Ranpo matured alongside both Japan’s empire and its capitalist modernity. The expansion of the Japanese empire and its industrial capacity in the early twentieth century led to marked changes in urban society. Modernity increasingly came to be represented by a burgeoning consumer industry “epitomized by the growth of department stores, and a constantly expanding array of magazines and journals.”²¹ The popularity of Western fashion and entertainment styles grew, as did the availability, for some Japanese, of middle-class pleasures. Sites like Tokyo’s entertainment district Asakusa—modern to every exigency—invited Japanese workers to “pay back capitalism with their stimulated curiosity and stupefied attention” in the invasion of the human nervous system that Driscoll refers to as *neuropolitics*.²² To “modern girls (*mogu*) and modern boys (*mobu*) on the cutting edge,” consuming Ranpo’s *ero-guro* productions both rejected state-sanctioned notions of “productive” behaviors and demonstrated participation in the “self-consciously modernist lifestyle known as modern life (*modan seikatsu*).”²³

Ranpo’s foray into literature began in 1923 amid the physical and social devastation of the Great Kantō Earthquake, writing “The Two-Sen Copper Coin” (*Nisen dōka*) for Japan’s only mystery magazine at the time, *Shinseinen* (New Youth). Ranpo’s rise in popularity mirrored *ero-guro*’s larger ascent within Japanese culture, as well as an increase in fascist state rhetoric. Narratives promoted by the Japanese state critiqued modernity’s side-effects of Westernization and liberal capitalism. According to the nationalist decision-makers of the late 1920s:

Japan’s experiment with Western liberalism and individualism. . . had generated selfishness, greed, and decadence, and a corresponding departure from the morality and spirit of Japan’s “traditional” culture. This called for a restoration of older cultural norms and national social cohesion that modernization had undermined.²⁴

Ero-guro cultural producers like Ranpo, toying with the tensions between *modan seikatsu*, liberal capitalism, and imperial doctrine, both decried and immersed themselves in modern capitalist life.

Ranpo's short story, "The Human Chair" (*Ningen Isu*), polemicized Japan's modernization and capitalist realities in the 1920s. In the 1924 story, a popular author named Yoshiko receives a letter from a self-deprecating chair-maker in which he elaborates how his obsession with his craft descended into an intense need to become the commodity that he had been constructing. The chair-maker—bearing the self-attributed moniker of "ugly beyond description"—reveals to Yoshiko that his perverse yet fleeting love for the users of his chair has most recently been directed at her, as her husband has purchased the eponymous human chair for their home.²⁵ Ranpo leaves the reader questioning the letter, however, as Yoshiko receives a second missive claiming the first to be an exercise in creative writing meant to shock and impress her.

The chair-maker's self-loathing, self-commodification, and distorted eroticism are rooted in the consequences of modern capitalist society. Though delighted by the creation of his masterful chairs, his indulgence in their comforts leads to the imagining of "palatial residences"; the marked contrast between these musings and his humble realities leaves him feeling like a "helpless, crawling worm."²⁶ Reflecting the anxieties caused by the "unprecedented imbalances and inequities" of Japanese capitalist society in the interwar period, these feelings lead the craftsman to fashion himself into something he knows to be appreciated: his luxury chairs.²⁷ This commodification of the body comes at great cost, as the craftsman constructs the fateful chair at the expense of sleep and food, and his long-term habitation of it reduces him to crawling across the floor. Despite this, he cannot "abandon [his] folly and leave that weird world of sensuous pleasure."²⁸ The eroticism and stimulation he feels being a chair for multitudes of hotel patrons and his resolve to induce Yoshiko to fall in love with the chair show how commodification has warped his conception of desire and human interaction. The story as a whole "presents a masterful discourse on the chairmaker's ambivalence vis-à-vis Japan's modernization."²⁹ Further, one could read it as demonstrating the "neuropolitical invasion of the body and the de-anthropomorphizing effects that ensue" as a result of the distortion and dehumanization of modern capitalist society.³⁰

Umehara Hokumei, whom Driscoll calls the "most important of the erotic-grotesque cultural producers," saw capitalist print media as a medium of immense potential.³¹ In Umehara's 1924 *The Killing Kapitalist Konglomerate* (*Satsujin kaisha*), the narrator overcomes his writer's block after learning about the titular corporation, which "existed for the sole purpose of extracting surplus and killing people."³² Tales of international murder and kidnapping, along with decadent cannibalism, necrophilia, and suicide,

fascinate and shock the narrator and Umehara's readers alike. Umehara's brutal depiction of capitalist expropriation, promptly censored by the Japanese Home Ministry, was itself a product within the capitalist print media marketplace.³³ This irony was not lost on Umehara. He once wrote that "in advanced capitalist society it's impossible for something to exist that's not a commodity."³⁴ Driscoll contends that Umehara and his contemporaries saw Japanese mass readership and improved printing and distribution methods in the 1920s as unprecedented opportunities to distribute their chosen ideologies from within the capitalist system.³⁵

Ranpo and Umehara both criticized modern capitalism, albeit with varying severity. They bolstered state-promulgated narratives of capitalism's immorality and dehumanizing effects, straying far from imperial ideas of national character in their subject matter. Umehara, having already discovered the surprisingly miscible relationship between anti-capitalist rhetoric and the capitalist marketplace, faced state censorship while concurrently backing and threatening state doctrine. These seemingly incompatible notions epitomize the paradoxical relationship between *ero-guro* literature and imperial ideology.

Uncertain Justice

The psychologically probing and provocative detective fiction of Hamao Shirō questioned tightly-held notions of justice and rule of law in interwar Japan. Hamao's time spent as a prosecutor left him jaded toward the Japanese legal system, and gave him a "critical insider's perspective" through which to question the infallibility of the law.³⁶ The interwar Japanese criminal justice system stacked the odds against defendants, as closely allied instruments of state power dominated information in investigations, trials, and sentencing. This French-inspired system was established in the Meiji period and featured integrated fact-finding among the police, prosecutor, and judge.³⁷ Defendants were held, often for long periods, without right to *habeas corpus* while the *yoshin* (hearing) was conducted.³⁸ An observer could note the intimacy of state actors in the public trial, as the prosecutor "[was] scarcely distinguishable from the judges" in dress and location.³⁹ The prosecutors represented the state, and their elevated position hinted at their perceived status vis-à-vis the defense. In the case of crimes against the *kokutai*, "a summary word composed of the characters for 'nation' and 'body' and symbolizing the unity between Emperor and people," state authorities coerced defendants into producing *tenkōsho* statements elucidating their conversion to state-sanctioned ideology.⁴⁰

Many of Hamao's works quintessentially represented the *henkaku* (heterodox) style of Japanese detective literature, featuring unreliable narration,

unsettling conclusions, and the line between good and evil being “deliciously blurred.”⁴¹ One such *henkaku* mystery is *The Devil’s Disciple* (*Akuma no deshi*). The 1929 novella is itself a letter from the narrator, Shimauro Eizō, to his ex-lover and former mentor, Prosecutor Tsuchida. The lack of reliability of Shimauro’s narration is revealed in the story’s opening paragraphs, as he writes, “Prosecutor Tsuchida, I am being held here as a murderer. But the truth is that I am probably not that murderer. That’s right. *Probably*.”⁴² This lack of certainty is caused by the narrator’s failed suicide—using sleeping medication that Tsuchida hooked him on—following his bungled attempt at murdering his loathed wife. Shimauro’s efforts to trick his wife into overdosing on his sleeping medication leads to his lover’s death, as she naively consumes an enormous portion of the drug.

Shimauro unveils his hedonistic, misogynistic, and homophobic path toward possible murder, all while suggesting that Prosecutor Tsuchida is the devil himself. The narrator’s critique of the prosecutor extends to the Japanese legal system, stating that he “cannot help being appalled at the frailty of the laws of this nation that are powerless to do anything to stop someone as dangerous as you.”⁴³ Shimauro’s challenge of the prosecutor, representative of the state and the legal system, reflects Hamao’s reservations about the condition of justice within Japan. Prosecutor Tsuchida, like the interwar Japanese justice system, could violate legal rights without meaningful consequence. Early Showa officials marshalled this power to silence political dissent, as in the infamous mass arrests of nearly 1,700 suspected Marxists on March 15, 1928. Philosopher Michel Foucault argues that nation-states utilized disciplinary structures, such as schools, hospitals, or prisons, for “achieving the subjugation of bodies” and harnessing their productivity.⁴⁴ As early Showa decision-makers in the political and military realms attempted to mobilize Japanese society for expansion into East Asia, utilization of biopower—the “numerous and diverse techniques” employed by nation-states to control their subjects’ bodies and production—was essential.⁴⁵ Modern states such as Japan employed criminal justice as a tool to maintain Foucauldian “discipline”—thereby “[extracting] from bodies the maximum time and force” for their militaries and industrial economies.⁴⁶ *Ero-guro* authors like Hamao challenged this arrangement.

Notably, Keith Vincent’s essay “Hamaosociality: Narrative and Fascism in Hamao Shirō’s *The Devil’s Disciple*” contends that Hamao’s novella works “as a kind of participatory theory of fascism.”⁴⁷ The reader is at times tempted toward, but ultimately dissuaded from, fascist positions as the narrative unfolds. Vincent observes:

Written just as the promise of so-called Taishō democracy was giving way to unchecked militarism and colonial expansion, it [*The Devil’s Disciple*] . . . stages an unresolved struggle between a homo-social heaven in which both narrative closure and juridical certainty

are possible, and a hell of perversion and addiction where the law is undermined and the national order is threatened.⁴⁸

Vincent also notes that Shimaura attempts to pathologize homosexuality and shame Tsuchida, all the while constructing his own fascist, heteronormative narrative of recovery.⁴⁹ His outcry at the “frailty of the laws of this nation” is reframed as a castigation of Tsuchida’s homosexuality, and Shimaura “manages to homosexualize the arbitrariness of legal power.”⁵⁰ Vincent’s deeper reading of Shimaura’s conflicting attitudes toward sexuality and the legal system shows that Hamao’s *The Devil’s Disciple* both questions justice and engages with fascism’s redemptive narratives.

Questioning Empire

Japanese imperial expansionism, which affected both peripheral territories and the citizens within the main islands, provided *ero-guro* authors with a multitude of topics to examine. While *mobu* and *mogu* reveled in modernity and pluralism during the Taishō period, “conservatives and officials worried about challenges to the traditional order. They responded with writings, laws, and programs intended to undercut the Left and promote loyalty to the state.”⁵¹ Domestic imperial efforts included campaigns to expand state Shinto, the insertion of military training into schools’ curricula, the formation of nationalist organizations, and a 1925 peace preservation law, which laid “the groundwork for thought police.”⁵² Decades of military pageantry and propaganda, successive victories against China, Russia, and the Central Powers, and a shocking military-centric national budget—military spending reached 70 percent of national expenditures by 1938—contributed to the intertwining of martial spirit and imagined national character.⁵³ Military prowess and imperial rhetoric allowed for Japanese colonial expansion to reach East Asia, and increasingly fascist imperial policies at home paradoxically emerged alongside *ero-guro*’s cultural ascendancy.

Ranpo’s only work to be censored, “The Caterpillar” (“*Imomushi*”), portrays Japanese militarism through a pessimistic and disquieting lens. The 1929 short story follows Tokiko, whose husband, Lieutenant Sunaga, has been rendered deaf, dumb, and limbless in the service of the state. His self-sacrifice is extolled by the Japanese media, and the military surgeon’s genius and skill are emphasized above Sunaga’s disfigured condition. Because of her husband’s pension from the state is quite modest, the couple is forced to rely on the generosity of Sunaga’s commanding officer to secure housing. Fellow citizens attempt to instill the importance of honor, virtue, and bravery in Tokiko’s psyche in this trying time, but she begins deriving perverse pleasure from abusing her helpless husband. After gouging out Sunaga’s eyes,

one of his final sensory portals to the outside world, Tokiko watches the former soldier writhe across the ground like a caterpillar, committing suicide by throwing himself down a well.⁵⁴

The response of Japanese compatriots, Lieutenant Sunaga, and Tokiko to Sunaga's mutilation demonstrate the communal toll of military bellicosity on a citizenry. The couple experiences "maddening loneliness," partially because the "stale news" of a "crippled war hero and his dutiful wife" no longer engaged a desensitized populace.⁵⁵ Fellow citizens praise—and demand—Tokiko's absolute loyalty to her husband, and thus compel her into a "miserable 'career' as a nursemaid to a cripple."⁵⁶ Sunaga becomes "bored with the term 'honor'" and "no longer [asks] for the relics of his war record. Instead, his requests [turn] more and more frequently toward food."⁵⁷ Tokiko takes the darkest turn of all, wholly rejecting state-promoted ideals of national character: she "[comes] to look upon her husband as a big toy, to be played with as she pleased." Tokiko delighted in "tormenting this helpless creature whenever she felt like it. Cruel? Yes! But it was fun—great fun!"⁵⁸

Demon of the Lonely Isle (*Kotō no oni*), written by Ranpo in 1929, is a striking example of the ambivalence toward state ideology and fascism found in *ero-guro* literature. In the novel, the protagonist Minoura Kinnosuke and homosexual physician Moroto Michio attempt to solve the murder of Kinnosuke's late wife. The duo investigates the evil Ototsan, an individual suffering from kyphosis,⁵⁹ who is attempting to create a race of "freaks" for profit and revenge against society. Ranpo's portrayal of Moroto's homosexuality, an identity that Japanese sexologists of the 1920s largely pathologized, and his treatment of freakish characters both discipline and encourage the deviance of *ero-guro* cultural productions. The characterization of homosexuality as deviant "[reinforced] fascistic visions of natural, respectable sexuality (and social order)," and assumed it was rooted in the "toxic effects of modernism and urbanization."⁶⁰ Minoura initially suspects Moroto as the murderer simply because he is homosexual, asking "wasn't it more than likely he had tried to interfere with my engagement because of his homosexual love for me?"⁶¹ Ranpo occasionally undermines this trend, however, describing the pair's relationship as "an idealized form of samurai love known as *shudō*."⁶² The freaks of *Demon of the Lonely Isle* either are modified to become acceptable members of society, such as the conjoined twin Hide-chan, or must be defeated, as in the case of Ototsan.

On one hand, Ranpo reinforces redemptive fascist narratives and disciplines all things bizarre or deviant; on the other, his novel is a celebration of these things. Reichert, in his analysis of *Demon of the Lonely Isle*, advances a convincing scholarly interpretation of its significance:

[E]rotic-grotesque cultural performance functioned as an indirect form of resistance against the totalitarian tendencies exhibited by the Japanese state during the 1920s and 1930s.... Works such as

Kotō no oni were produced and consumed at a historical moment when Japanese citizens were bombarded by propaganda urging them to devote themselves to such “productive” goals as nation building and mobilization. In this context, the sexually charged, unapologetically “bizarre” subject matter associated with erotic-grotesque cultural products is reconstituted as a transgressive gesture against state-endorsed notions of “constructive” morality, identity, and sexuality.”⁶³

When coupled with Ranpo’s apparent pathologizing of homosexuality and freakishness, this interpretation shows the paradoxical nature of *ero-guro* literature: it had potential to reinforce and subvert state ideology, often simultaneously.

According to Silverberg, *ero-guro* represented a “popular mobilization that offered an alternative to the state ideology” of the late Taishō and early Showa periods.⁶⁴ While some *ero-guro* authors certainly contradicted imperial and fascist doctrine, some reinforced it, while others simultaneously did both. They collectively engaged with the challenges of capitalist modernity, uncertain justice, and empire with ambivalence. As agents of the Japanese empire sought to silence dissenting voices, *ero-guro* authors subjected state ideology to questioning and polemicizing in public discourse despite overarching uncertainty and contradiction.

1. Taishō Democracy refers to the perception of pluralism and liberalism during the interwar Taishō years, a contrast to the conservatism of the Meiji Period. The early 1920s in Japan has been considered democratic in part due to the progressive transfer of political power from oligarchic political clans (*genrō*) to the Imperial Diet, and to the achievement of universal male suffrage in 1925. Prior to 1925, only the wealthiest Japanese men could vote in elections.
2. Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 20.
3. Jim Reichert, "Disciplining the Erotic-Grotesque in Edogawa Ranpo's *Demon of the Lonely Isle*," in *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, ed. Alan Tansman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 355-80, quote on p. 355.
4. Takafusa Nakamura, *Economic Growth in Prewar Japan*, trans. Robert A. Feldman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 21-23.
5. Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 8, 12.
6. Mark McLelland, "Japan's Queer Cultures," in *The Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, ed. Theodore Bestor and Victoria Bestor (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 140-49, esp. pp. 140-41.
7. The Diet (*kokkai*) was a bicameral legislature created by the Meiji Constitution in 1889. It consisted of a House of Representatives and a House of Peers, the latter of which consisted of elite noblemen (*genrō*). On increased political participation, see Ethan Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java in the Second World War: A Transnational History* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), chap. 1, e-book.
8. Ibid.
9. James L. Huffman, *Japan and Imperialism, 1853-1945* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2010), p. 36.
10. Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, chap. 1. According to Chalmers Johnson, *kokutai* is "a summary word composed of the characters for 'nation' and 'body' and symbolizing the unity between Emperor and people." Ethan Mark summarizes it as connoting the Japanese national polity, and the basis of the Emperor's sovereignty. See Chalmers Johnson, *An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 189; Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, p. 69.
11. Statism refers to a political system of complete state control over social and economic policy, or to the ideology in support of this arrangement.
12. The U.S. Immigration Act of 1924 banned all immigration from Asia. See U.S. Congress, House, *An Act To limit the immigration of aliens into the United States*, HR 7995, 68th Congress, 1st sess. (1924).
13. Gregory Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 290.
14. Jim Reichert, "Deviance and Social Darwinism in Edogawa Ranpo's Erotic-Grotesque Thriller 'Kotō no oni,'" *Journal of Japanese Studies* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 113-41, esp. 117.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, Dead and Un-*

dead in Japan's Imperialism (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

18. Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, p. 14.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

20. Ranpo's real name is Hirai Tarō. The pen name Edogawa Ranpo resembles that of American macabre author Edgar Allen Poe, especially when said quickly. Patricia Welch also notes that "the Chinese characters chosen to write the pen name can also be translated as... 'chaotic ramblings.'" Patricia Welch, foreword to *Japanese Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, by Edogawa Ranpo, trans. James B. Harris (Rutland: Tuttle, 2012), p. 14.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

22. Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic*, p. 140.

23. Reichert, "Disciplining the Erotic-Grotesque," p. 356.

24. Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, chap. 1, e-book.

25. Edogawa Ranpo, "The Human Chair," in *Japanese Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, trans. James B. Harris (Rutland: Tuttle, 2012), pp. 27-48, quote on p. 31.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

27. Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, chap. 1, e-book.

28. Ranpo, "The Human Chair," p. 40.

29. Welch, foreword to *Japanese Tales*, p. 25.

30. Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic*, p. 139

31. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

32. Umehara Hokumei, *Satsujin kaisha* (Akane Shobō, 1924), pp. 23-30, quoted in Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic*, p. 165.

33. Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic*, p. 163.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. Keith Vincent, introduction to *The Devil's Disciple*, by Hamao Shirō, trans. Keith Vincent (London: Hesperus Worldwide, 2011), p. viii.

37. Johnson, *An Instance of Treason*, p. 186.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.

40. *Tenkōsho*, translated by Chalmers Johnson as "documents of conversion," would be elicited by Japanese law enforcement. An individual accused of practicing treasonous activity or ideology could undergo *tenkō* (conversion) and become a *tenkōsha* (convert). Johnson, *An Instance of Treason*, pp. 189, 323.

41. *Ibid.*, p. ix.

42. Hamao Shirō, "The Devil's Disciple," in *The Devil's Disciple*, trans. Keith Vincent (London: Hesperus Worldwide, 2011), p. 3.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

44. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 140.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), p. 220.

47. Keith Vincent, "Hamaosociality: Narrative and Fascism in Shiro Hamao's *The Devil's Disciple*" in *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, ed. by Alan Tansman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 381-408, quote on p. 382.

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., p. 402.
50. Ibid.
51. Huffman, *Japan and Imperialism*, pp. 35-36.
52. Ibid., p. 36.
53. J. Charles Schencking, *Making Waves: Politics, Propaganda, and the Emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy 1868-1922* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 227.
54. Edogawa Ranpo, "The Caterpillar," in *Japanese Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, by Edogawa Ranpo, trans. James B. Harris (Rutland: Tuttle, 2012), pp. 83-104.
55. Ibid., p. 95.
56. Ibid., p. 96.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., pp. 96-97.
59. Kyphosis is a spinal disorder characterized by a rounding of the upper back. Individuals living with kyphosis have often been stereotypically depicted as "freakish" in fiction. Examples include William Shakespeare's *Richard III* or Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.
60. Reichert, "Disciplining the Erotic-Grotesque," p. 367.
61. Edogawa Ranpo, *Kotō no oni* (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1996), p. 33, quoted in Reichert, "Disciplining the Erotic-Grotesque," 368.
62. *Shudō* translates to "the way of young men," and was a custom of close relationships between older and younger samurai. Though these relationships were often sexual, they also entailed close emotional bonds and mentorship, and were idealized by Edo Period (1615-1867) literature. Reichert, "Disciplining the Erotic-Grotesque," 368.
63. Reichert, "Deviance and Social Darwinism," 115.
64. Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, p. 20.

KEMALIST REPUBLICANISM AS MILITARISM

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Military Career and the Birth of the Turkish Republic

Necdet Emre Kurultay



Image: Rafael De Nogales, *Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later Atatürk), in Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, 1924, accessed [online](#).

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By 1919, the sun had begun to set on the Ottoman Empire. By the conclusion of the Great War, the once great empire, which had long served as the stabilizing force in the Middle East, would soon cease to exist. The territory of the empire was partitioned by Allied Powers, and independent nations arose as a result. Yet, the demise of the Ottoman Empire lay not in the partitioning of its lands by foreign powers, with Greece the most notable of the former Ottoman vassals; rather it was spurred by a revolution in Anatolia, the heartland of the empire. Young, politically active Ottomans answered to the call for revolution, and it was the very military officials of the empire who spearheaded the revolution.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Ottomans grappled with the idea of Western modernity. Soon after their confrontation with Western world, many Ottomans began to take issue with Western influence, which, in their eyes, was allowed to pass through the gates of the empire unscathed. Disillusioned by the thought of becoming too Western—losing sight of their Ottoman identity—Turkish nationalists mobilized and created a campaign to resist Sultan Abdul Hamid II's authority and counteract his passive attitude towards this foreign "invasion." But while the tension between the Ottoman Sultan and his constituencies came to light in the wake of World War I, this internal conflict was more than a decade in the making.

Most scholars acknowledge that the decline of the Ottoman Empire came in part due to the attempts of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), *Osmanlı Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, to overthrow Sultan Abdul Hamid II and to abolish—and ultimately reverse—his pan-Islamist policies.¹ By the late nineteenth century, the CUP had become an umbrella organization of the opponents to the Hamidian regime. Yet, the only commonality members of the CUP shared was their opposition to Sultan Abdul Hamid II; most CUP members did not share a specific ideological cause.² Though ideologically fragmented, the CUP successfully instigated the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which abruptly ended Sultan Abdul Hamid II's reign. But the CUP's victory was short-lived, since the First World War began six years after the successful revolution. However, the Great War cemented the rule of the Triumvirate of the Pashas, Enver, Talat and Cemal. The three pashas, contrary to the Hamidian pan-Islamist agenda, turned towards what they called pan-Turanism, an ideology that called for the unification of all Turkic peoples under Ottoman rule.³ And when faced with defeat in World War I, the Hamidian regime held the leadership of the CUP, along with their pan-Turanist compatriots, responsible for the empire's failings and exiled them to live out the rest of their days as banished Turks. But it was in their exile where these revolutionaries decided to abandon their ideology and search for new beliefs.

When the time came to gird the Sword of Osman as the 36th Sultanate of the Ottoman Empire, it was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, not the “rightful” successor Sultan Mehmet VI, who was given this honor. Indeed, not only was Kemal—who himself was a low-ranking member of the CUP—able to transform pan-Turanism into a localized form of Turkish nationalism, taking Anatolian culture as the foundation of its identity, but he gathered the support of many of the military officers, activists, and lower-ranking leaders who had been long-time members of the CUP. His successful role in leading the Congresses of Erzurum and Sivas, which were both held in 1919, made the first decisive steps by the Turkish nationalist movement to advance the goal of creating a distinctly Turkish nation-state; it was, after all, in Erzurum where Atatürk was named the leader of the national resistance movement (*Kuva-yi Milliye*).⁴ To avoid the pitfalls of overly identifying the movement with the CUP, however, it was decided in Sivas that all members of the national resistance would renounce the CUP and its past policies, thereby pledging their allegiance to the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*).⁵ Those who signed the pact would go on to become the first members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), which was established under the leadership of Atatürk in 1920.

The resistance set in place by the *Kuva-yi Milliye* escalated into a full-scale war against the foreign powers that occupied Ottoman territory; and by 1922, the *Kuva-yi Milliye* emerged victorious. But this monumental victory only marked the beginning of the struggle towards establishing the Turkish Republic, which eventually took place on October 23, 1923. During that formative year, the revolutionary regime undertook drastic and radical reforms—the most drastic being the abolishment of the six-century-old Ottoman Sultanate.⁶ But this was just the beginning. After the *Kuva-yi Milliye* proclaimed the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the post-revolutionary regime, comprised of the leaders of the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, forged a new socio-political order, one that aspired to break profoundly (if not completely) with its recent past. This aspiration drew the young Turkish Republic into yet another conflict: Turkey had become an ideological battleground, where the tensions between “the conflicting demands of order and change, innovation and stability, religious orthodoxy and laicity, national unity and ethnic diversity” led to numerous factions that vied for political power.⁷ The outcome of this new conflict, however, was predetermined: Kemalism emerged as the victor and became the dominant state ideology of the Turkish Republic. The ideology and its supporters subscribed to “the fundamental principles of nationalism, secularism, populism, statism, revolutionism, and Westernization.”⁸

The leader of the *Kuva-yi Milliye* and the founder of Kemalism, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, had a career as a military officer long before he was elected as the first President of the Turkish Republic. This paper ana-

lyzes how Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's experiences as an officer in the Ottoman military shaped his political vision for the modern Turkish Republic. By studying his military and political writings, along with his personal memoirs, we can truly understand how Atatürk's vision of the modern Turkish state was a guise to creating a militocratic state.

In accordance with Stanislav Andreski's definition of militarism in *Military Organization and Society*, this essay studies Kemalism and its relationship to Atatürk's military career on two fundamental levels: state and national. On the state level, I analyze how Atatürk's military career influenced his militocratic policies and the militaristic features of the Kemalist state, defined, respectively, as "the preponderance of the military over the civil personnel in government" and an emphasis on "patriotism and a militant foreign policy" in defense of Turkish national interests.⁹ Yet, on the national level, this militaristic influence is palpable in the militarization of the Turkish Republic—"the spread of military modes of organization into civilian society"—and in widespread militolatri through the "propagation of martial values throughout civilian society."¹⁰ It is through these observations of the ways in which the militaristic elements of Kemalism that pervaded politics in the early years of the Turkish Republic that I argue Kemalism's innate militocratic character. While lauded as the "Father of the modern Turkish Republic," Atatürk used Kemalism as a guise for militarism, envisioning the Turkish military as the vanguard institution to spearhead the construction of a modern and, eventually, democratic Turkish nation.

A Discussion of Historiography

There is an abundance of literature on various aspects of Kemalism. Scholars of late Ottoman and early Turkish Republic history have oft-used Kemalism as a mechanism to understand the progression of Turkish society during the twentieth century. The works of Erik Zürcher, William Cleveland, and Martin Bunton are among the most widely acclaimed scholarly monographs on the topic. Alongside these scholars stand Jacob Landau, Metin Heper, and Bernard Lewis, who have also provided insights on this political (and intellectual) movement and its effort to modernize and promulgate Turkish nationalist rhetoric. Landau's *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* traces the development of national identity among the Turkic peoples of these republics and their relationship with the Russian state (and later Soviet Union), along with the Turkish nationalists of the late Ottoman Empire and the modern Turkish Republic.¹¹ He usefully attempts to draw a sharp distinction between what he refers to as Turkish nationalism—the territorially constrained nationalism adopted by

the Turkish Republic—and pan-Turkism, an expansive version of Turkish nationalism that aimed to include all Turkic-speaking groups. On the other hand, the anthology Landau edited, *Ataturk and the Modernization of Turkey*, focuses on continuities and change in Turkish history, with an emphasis on continuities from the nineteenth-century reforms, through the Young Turk period, to Ataturk's Turkish republic, and beyond.¹² For example, Rachel Simon's article establishes the link between Young Turk and Kemalist ideas, and similarly, Paul Dumont, in his "The Origins of Kemalist Ideology," traces not just the links between certain ideas that define Kemalism but the evolution of these ideas from their origin in the nineteenth century to their adoption and transformation by the Kemalists.

Conversely, in *Emergence of the Modern Turkey*, Bernard Lewis approaches Kemalism from a broader perspective, encompassing the period between the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. Lewis argues that the social change that preceded and accompanied the rise of democratic sentiments remained constant, while stressing Turkish qualities of calm self-reliance, responsibility, and above all, civic courage; he sees the latter as the cornerstone to the success of successful democracy.¹³

Finally, Metin Heper asserts in "Kemalism/Ataturkism," a chapter in *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, that "Atatürk's Kemalism was a project undertaken to attain contemporary civilization, that is, to adopt modernization along Western lines," since "Democracy was perceived as an integral part of Western modernization."¹⁴ Heper also draws attention to Western scholars' views of Kemalism. While he notes that "The admirers of Atatürkism consider it to consist of formulae appropriate for all times and places," he contrasts this with the viewpoint of the "detractors of Kemalism," who regard Kemalism "as an elitist and authoritarian system of thought, leading to tutelary democracy from which Turkey still, in their opinion, suffers."¹⁵

Nevertheless, the body of knowledge regarding Kemalism that these scholars have constructed contains certain gaps. One such gap is the current scholarship's neglect of the militarist roots of Kemalism. It is surprising that this secondary literature fails to acknowledge that the root of Kemalism lay in Ataturk's career as a military officer. This failure becomes especially evident in Heper's work, since he observes that in more recent years, "the Republican People's Party, established by Ataturk, has appeared to have allied itself with the military and the Constitutional Court, in that it has expressed agreement with the rationale behind those military interventions and/or court rulings." Herper fails to contextualize this relationship historically within Ataturk's military career in his study of "Ataturk's own 'Kemalist' discourse."¹⁶ The significance of this aspect of Kemalism can best be illuminated by recourse to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of social capital in "The Forms of Capital." Bourdieu defines social capital as "the aggregate of

the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.” He sees it as a mechanism that generates inequality and thereby allows individuals to gain access to positions of power through their social connections.¹⁷ By applying Bourdieu’s notion of social capital, it becomes clear that Atatürk’s militarism constituted as a decisive break from standard practice in Ottoman society. His attempts to redefine the social order and shape it through a militaristic lens challenged the power of the *‘ulema*, and ultimately transferred the social capital from the *‘ulema* to the institution of the military. Since this transferral of social capital was an integral part of the broader transformation of the Ottoman society into a Turkish nation under Atatürk’s regime, the militarism inherent in Kemalism cannot be ignored. In situating Kemalism in relationship to concrete historical examples of Atatürk’s militarism, then, this essay will cast new light on the history of Kemalism in its formative years and begin to fill historiographical gaps in the field.

Kemalism: A Guise for Militocracy

In order to revise the narrative of Kemalism’s role in the creation of the Turkish Republic, it is important—arguably essential—first to analyze Atatürk’s vision for the military through his writings. The earliest and “most expressive” of these writings is *Taktik Tatbikat Gezisi* (*A Survey of Training and Drill*), a collection of his private meditations from the early 1910s when he was the commanding officer of the 5th Army Corps in Thessaloniki.¹⁸ This collection details the importance Atatürk placed on tactical and drill experience for future military officers, not only for military preparedness but also for governance and administration. Indeed, while his meditations contained specific examinations of the training and drill procedures of the army under his authority, Atatürk reflected on what he referred to as “the proper role of the professional military men.”¹⁹ For Atatürk, this role entailed “the education—overseeing the training and the drill—of subordinate officers, including the rank and file,” as well as “leading the nation to an enlightenment on par with the modern and civilized world.”²⁰ Even though Atatürk elaborates very little on the latter, his characterization of “the ideal commander” sheds light on to how he imagined the crucial role military officers would play in his ultimate goal of a modern, secular nation.²¹ “The commander,” wrote Atatürk, “must not only be an effective leader of men in arms, but must also be an example for his nation to follow, under conditions of peace and war alike.”²² Accordingly, Atatürk argues that this required the commander to “undergo rigorous education in modern military science and in bureaucratic administration,”

and to possess experience in affairs pertaining to both “the sword and the law.”²³ In essence, a military officer had to be indistinguishable from what Atatürk believed a statesman to be.

While Atatürk conflated the military officer with the statesman, it is important to note that he penned his survey immediately after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. In the aftermath of the revolution, a de facto military government was established in the Ottoman Empire, controlled primarily by Enver, Cemal, and Talat Pashas—known simply as the Triumvirate of Pashas or the Trimuvirate.²⁴ From that point on, the military began to play an integral role in the affairs of the Ottoman state, and while he disagreed with the policies of the Triumvirate, Atatürk embraced this change wholeheartedly, as may be seen in the role that he prescribed to prominent military officials in his survey.²⁵

Atatürk continued to endorse militocratic principles even after the Triumvirate’s disastrous defeat in the First World War. He placed the military at the heart of his narrative of founding the modern Turkish Republic. In fact, in his famous speech from 1927 that lasted five days, *Nutuk (The Speech)*, the remaining officers in the Ottoman army fill precisely this role of enlightening the people. *The Speech* recounts the national struggle against the occupation of Anatolia and Rumelia from its origins as guerrilla warfare to its gradual evolution into a full-fledged conventional war of independence. Atatürk saw the purpose of his speech as explaining “how a great nation, which was thought to have come to the end of its national existence, had gained its independence and had founded a national and modern state based on the latest principles of science and technology.”²⁶ Atatürk called this process “the national awakening,” and this vital awakening was induced, according to his account, by the “efforts of my comrades-in-arms, without whom the country would be all but lost.”²⁷ Historians tend to agree with this claim: according to Erik Jan Zürcher, “the success of the nationalist movement in Anatolia was ultimately based on the strength of the remains of the Ottoman army.”²⁸ Zürcher contends that despite the considerable reduction of its size “down from some 800,000 in 1916” to “only some 100,000 in October 1918 [after the Armistice of Mudros],” the army “remained intact as an organized, indeed a disciplined, body.”²⁹ Going back to *The Speech*, in his narrative of the cultivation of the Turkish resistance, Atatürk himself performed the role of the ideal commander that he described in the *Survey*. He wrote “the task that befell on my shoulders in the aftermath of the Great War was first to contact the army...and educate them in the principles of our [national] cause.”³⁰ Zürcher also agrees with this part of Atatürk’s narrative, since there was no tendency among the “leading officers of the regular army to establish themselves as warlords,” and the majority of these officers, who “had been educated in the Western-style military schools and academies, had gained experience and rapid

promotion during the years of the Balkan War (1912–13) and the World War (1914–18) [and] ended up supporting the national struggle.”³¹

Once Kâzım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy, along with other leading officers, accepted Mustafa Kemal’s leadership, Kemal in turn placed them in positions of power to implement his strategy.³² Atatürk argued that after he had convinced—“educated”—enough key personnel, these officers held “national congresses in cities across Anatolia” that were essential for his cause to gain popular support and disseminate its ideals which, in reality, “originate[d] from Atatürk himself.”³³ There were certainly elements of resistance throughout Anatolia, but as Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher assert, “this resistance was scattered and ill organized.”³⁴ According to a member of this early resistance, “This heroic [Turkish] people had only one defect—it was not yet linked to any organization.”³⁵ Atabaki and Zürcher claim, “it was this defect which leadership by the army and its high-ranking commanders was ideally equipped to remedy.”³⁶ This picture of the hierarchical structure of the resistance movement in Anatolia, with the military and Atatürk himself at its top, showcases Atatürk’s militocratic thought, first expressed his survey: a military commander, educated in both military and political affairs, first recruits the military to his cause, and then this military cultivates national resistance.³⁷ Thus, substantial evidence of Atatürk’s inherent militarism may be found in his endorsement of an essentially militocratic state in both his *Survey of Training and Drill* and *The Speech*.

Elements of Militancy in Kemalism

Though less profound than Atatürk’s approach to domestic policy, the Turkish Republic’s foreign policy was guided by Atatürk’s famous dictum: “Peace at Home, Peace in the World.”³⁸ In Atatürk’s view, Turkey could only determine what constituted “home” through an aggressive and uncompromisingly patriotic foreign policy. The most relevant insights into the militant character of Atatürk’s foreign policy come from *The Speech*, which provides a glimpse into his thoughts on the Treaty of Lausanne. Atatürk perceived this treaty as a departure by the modern Turkish Republic “from its expansionist and imperialist past,” since, “the Turkish delegation [that signed this treaty] was concerned only with the independence, integrity and security of our national borders, as defined in *Misak-i Milli* [the National Pact].”³⁹ The National Pact was a 1920 document in which the ministerial cabinet of the Ankara government, consisting almost exclusively of the Turkish military elite, determined the borders of the Turkish Republic.⁴⁰ While the document revealed Atatürk’s militocratic politics, it demonstrated the militancy of his foreign policy. To Atatürk, only the leaders of the national struggle were capable of the uncompromising patriotism required for the defense of the National Pact.

Ataturk, and Kemalism, had a quasi-realist approach to foreign affairs. Both the leader and his ideology staunchly held that “without the glorious victories of our nation and military, the hostile powers occupying our country would never have respected our autonomy.”⁴¹ In Ataturk’s opinion, as both the authors and the defenders of the National Pact, it was “only natural for the military leaders to represent the Turkish people in the negotiations at Lausanne,” since they alone “could convey the true patriotic spirit of the National Pact to the foreign delegations.”⁴² Ataturk was uncompromising in this line of argumentation; when Ismet Pasha, the head of the Turkish delegation at Lausanne, remarked that it would be “inappropriate for a soldier to negotiate on behalf of the nation,” Ataturk recalled, “I reiterated the importance of these negotiations, and Ismet Pasha then obeyed my command as a direct order.”⁴³ Though the delegation mostly reinforced Ataturk, it took issue with Ataturk’s position on the national border with regard to Hatay.

Ataturk’s approach to resolve the issue of Hatay is perhaps the most revealing example of his militancy in foreign affairs. As William Cleveland and Martin Bunton demonstrate, according to the National Pact, Hatay—under French control at the time—consisted “overwhelmingly of Turkish peoples,” and hence belonged to the Turkish Republic.⁴⁴ To Ataturk’s dismay, Hatay remained under French control after the Treaty of Lausanne was signed. Reinforcing his patriotic stance on foreign policy, Ataturk never capitulated on the Hatay issue. While the National Pact never called for military intervention in the areas it considered within the Turkish borders, it did call for a plebiscite in Hatay. Regardless, Ataturk stated that “Hatay is an issue of personal and immediate importance to me.”⁴⁵ His tone in this speech was almost threatening. Indeed, he went as far as to assert, “while I do not think that it is possible for this issue to escalate to an all-out war between Turkey and France, faced with even the smallest wrong committed against our people in Hatay, I will personally lead a military campaign to annex Hatay and rescue our people from French dominion.”⁴⁶ This effectively put Hatay in Turkish hands, as the Prime Minister of the so-called “State of Hatay” was an elected member of the Turkish Parliament.⁴⁷ Afterwards, Turkey audaciously worked to incorporate Hatay into its national borders, which involved the covert “transportation of tens of thousands of Turks into Hatay from Anatolia” who would “register as citizens and vote in the plebiscite” between 1937 to 1938.⁴⁸ Although Ataturk did not live long enough to see his efforts come to fruition, because of his militancy in foreign affairs, Hatay was incorporated into the Turkish Republic in 1939. His vehement belief in a militant foreign policy informed his vision of a Turkish Republic that came to fruition.

The Militarization of Turkish Society: Kemalism

One of the most profound consequences of Atatürk's militarism was the militarization of the Turkish society, which may best be studied in Atatürk's militarist attitude towards national education. In his *Zabit ve Kumandan ile Hasb-i Hal* (*A Dialogue between the Officer and the Commander*), Atatürk asserted that true modern, secular education is an "absolute necessity for the restoration of order to civil society."⁴⁹ Deeply concerned with the state of the collapsing Ottoman Empire by 1918, Atatürk's visceral language illuminates his vision of an ideal society, and, more specifically, where militolatracy fit in within that society.

What led Atatürk to believe that the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of collapse were the military catastrophes the Ottoman military experienced during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. In *A Dialogue*, Atatürk opined that the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the Balkan Wars was rooted in the political paranoia of the pan-Islamist Sultan-Caliph Abdul Hamid II. Under Sultan Hamid II's authoritative reign, he "had forbidden the military from engaging in war games or maneuvers," since he was "always expecting a coup attempt" by the leading officers of the army.⁵⁰ Depriving the Ottoman officer corps of the vital education they needed for "conducting large-scale maneuvers," was "the fundamental reason for [the Ottoman Empire] defeat in the Balkans."⁵¹

The Ottoman defeat in the Balkan Wars held personal significance to Atatürk, as the city where he was born and raised—his "dear Thessaloniki"—was among the lands the Ottoman Empire ceded to the victorious Balkan states.⁵² Atatürk greatly valued the lesson that was instilled in him from the defeat in the Balkan Wars: "the military, and indeed the nation, can only be saved through modern education."⁵³ This lesson on the importance of modern education made such a significant impact on Atatürk's vision of the modern Turkish state that he implemented a modern and secular educational policy at the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic. For instance, in his defense of a bill that added a mandatory course titled "Preparation for Military Service" to the national curriculum for all levels of education, he stated that "special effort will be made in order for the military, which is a great national school of discipline, to be turned into a grand school where the most needed personnel for our economic, cultural, and social wars will be raised."⁵⁴ These remarks illuminate his belief that every Turkish citizen should receive a formal military training, which in turn would raise better—or at least, sufficiently disciplined—economists, historians, and intellectuals for Turkey.

The bill passed by an unanimous vote among 320 members of the Grand Assembly.⁵⁵ For Atatürk, this was only natural, since the "undefeatable Turkish military [was] not only the guardian of our country and our

regime, but also a hearth of education and instruction.”⁵⁶ Perhaps the most clear-cut example of Ataturk’s support for the spread of military modes of organization into civilian society is found in a speech he delivered to a crowd in Konya:

There are very few examples, in the world and in history, of the kind of union established between [our] nation and the military, made up of the nation’s heroic children. We can always be proud of this national manifestation. My friends! When I talk about the military, I talk about the bright children of the Turkish nation. The teachers who raise the heroes of tomorrow are surely among those children. The teachers who, when necessary, switch roles and walk side by side with the military, risking their lives are among those children. When I talk about the officers and bright Turkish children of our distinguished military, I am talking about the Turkish youth who are with them and who are ready to participate in national heroism with their ideas, conscience and knowledge....As I wrap up my words, I would like to state this with clarity: The Turkish nation loves its military and considers it the guardian of its ideals.⁵⁷

Ataturk fused the very identity of Turkish youth with that of the military; he regarded education as the primary means through which youth would become disciplined soldiers. As these examples illustrate, Ataturk openly endorsed the militarization of the Turkish nation through education in both his personal writings and formal speeches.

Ataturk’s militarization of Turkish society, however, cannot be understood solely by scrutinizing his words; a deeper understanding of the Turkish people’s militarization under Ataturk requires an examination of the contents and impact of the relevant laws passed under Kemalist regime. As Ayse Gul Altinay argues, the Kemalist Republic “did not limit the role of the military to the defense of the country against outside threats;” the state also tasked the military with the duty “to protect the regime in the country against internal threats, as well as to educate and instruct the citizens of the country.”⁵⁸ The practice of universal military service was one of the most effective ways in which the military carried out the latter duty. According to Altinay, the “significance of military service is not limited to the creation of an armed force for defense, but also encompasses the education of the citizens and the creation of citizen-soldiers,” which epitomizes Ataturk’s vision of fusing the Turkish military with the Turkish youth and the idea of citizen-soldiers.⁵⁹

Ataturk embodied this process of militarization: he was awarded the titles of *Bas Kumandan* (Commander-in-Chief), *Bas Ogretmen* (Teacher-in-Chief), and the fitting name of “Father of the Turks” by the Grand Assembly.⁶⁰ To this day, the course on “Preparation for Military Service” remains one of the most visible examples of Ataturk’s legacy of militariza-

tion as both Commander-in-Chief and Teacher-in-Chief. Altınay contends that the course's "overall aim of teaching the students to be proud members of a military-nation and obedient citizens of the Turkish state has remained unchallenged" since its introduction in 1926.⁶¹ Though it may be self-evident, the course was taught "by military officers (or retired officers) [who] get paid by the Ministry of National Education," but despite this fact, "the officer-teachers are appointed by the highest commander of the nearest garrison on an annual basis." Moreover, Altınay also shows that "there is no requirement (or even expectation) that these officer-teachers have any training in pedagogy."⁶² The necessary qualifications for teaching "Preparation for Military Service," as Altınay argues, is "defined solely in military terms: the most preferred category is that of staff officers (Staff Colonels, Majors, and Captains), followed by other officers ranked militarily."⁶³

As any Turkish high school graduate would have known at the time, "the officer-teachers...frequented all high schools in their uniforms at least once a week and educated all students (female students since 1937) in military affairs."⁶⁴ The contents of the course—determined exclusively by the General Staff—reveal the pervasiveness of the militarization implemented by Atatürk's regime. In Altınay's view, the guiding principle in this course "has been the emphasis on the predetermined role of the military in Turkish history, character, and politics."⁶⁵ The students were taught that "the 'eternal symbol of heroism is the Turkish nation and its unmatched military' and [were] called upon to be worthy of their 'ancestors' by displaying the 'heroism that is naturally present [in their character].'"⁶⁶ Some of the subject matter of the official textbooks for "Preparation for Military Service" also reveal the arguments advanced by Atatürk's regime, which include the following:

The Turks have been a military-nation throughout history; Turkish history is written with victories; military service is not only a sacred duty, but a necessary rite of passage for young men; military is a school and students are soldiers; self-sacrifice is necessary for the nation (and the state) to survive and all Turks sacrifice willingly and without hesitation.⁶⁷

In the end, the full extent and the essence of the militarization of the Turkish society under Atatürk's regime is best summarized by the following statements, as quoted by Altınay, from a Ministry of Education publication:

The Turkish youth is hard-working, sportsmanlike, patriotic, and militant...The art of soldiering, which Turks have inherited from their ancestors, is taught in Turkish education through instruction, training, and practice, under a strict discipline, and in accordance

with contemporary war techniques and desires, to all male and female students in the secondary schools, high schools, and higher education institutions.⁶⁸

One of the most profound consequences of Atatürk's militarism on the Turkish nation was the widespread militarization of the Turkish society during the foundational years of the Turkish Republic.

The Awakening of a Turkish Militaristic Spirit

Atatürk awoke a spirit in the Turkish people in his climb to power, a spirit that was innately militaristic. To him, organizing Turkish society in accordance with militaristic principles alone—its militarization—was not sufficient in creating a modern nation of citizen-soldiers; this required the Turkish people to possess a militaristic spirit and to embrace its ideals, to the point that it may be considered militolatriy.

Indeed, Atatürk's writings and public speeches evince his support of militolatriy. In a speech he delivered after the Turkish military's key victory over the occupying Greek forces at Dumlupınar, Atatürk exclaimed that "A nation can only be subjugated by the destruction of its spirit, its essence, its will....the eternal spirit of the brave and militant Turkish people may never be broken!"⁶⁹ Atatürk also discussed with his minister of education Mustafa Necati Uğural, as they discussed "instilling a national spirit to the Turkish youth" during the educational reforms of 1926.⁷⁰ Both Atatürk and Uğural believed that it was the duty of the Turkish government to foster the innate militaristic spirit of the Turkish youth. Atatürk wrote:

Our children cannot be taught the spirit of the Turkish nation, which is inherently militaristic, independent and great, for they already possess this spirit in their noble blood. We must teach them how to access this spirit. Our nation must know how to demonstrate its might, through both its conventional arms and its militaristic mindset.⁷¹

It must be conceded that Atatürk's advocacy for militolatriy is quite difficult to distinguish from his support for the militarization of the Turkish society. For Atatürk, there were "two kinds of army that will carry our nation to its ultimate glory."⁷² One of these was "the army that physically fights for the life of this country," while the other was "the army of irfan [ideas/knowledge] that forges the future of this country and reminds the former army of the reasons that it kills and dies for."⁷³ Atatürk placed great importance on the cultivation of this army of ideas/knowledge. After all, the army would "sustain the noble spirit of the Turkish people and make their sacrifices meaningful."⁷⁴

Ataturk attempted to raise this army primarily through propaganda that portrayed the military as an indispensable institution of the Turkish Republic. One of the most influential pieces of propaganda that Ataturk sponsored was the development of the “Turkish History Thesis,” which involved ten radically Kemalist historians who collectively worked to write a comprehensive history of the Turkish people, covering some three millennia.⁷⁵ The preface of this work provides an invaluable insight into not only the character of the militolatracy that prevailed under the Kemalist regime, but the ways in which the Kemalist state’s militolatracy distinguished itself from the process of militarization.

Military training can be given in a matter of years, whereas military spirit is an ore that is born from the hammering of the abilities and capabilities of humankind throughout the centuries on the anvils of experience, and transformation into steel in the fire of life that has been fanned with raging storms. That is why the Turkish nation is the nation with the most developed military spirit....A nation with high military spirit is a nation with a history of civilization; one that embodies deep and far-reaching knowledge. It is natural that the Turkish race, which has been the ancestor of all major civilizations since the first days of humanity, perfected this spirit....The Turkish nation has preserved its military-nation character from the beginnings of history till today....If the Turk is...marching on the forefronts of world history, that is because of his unshakable national characteristics, military character, his grand military virtues and his ability to engage in total war for his rights and freedom. The Turk has inherited this character from his history that goes back thousands of years.⁷⁶

In order to conquer the minds of the Turkish society, Ataturk deliberately propagated militolatracy as a means of creating his ideal, modern nation of citizen-soldiers. This militolatracy propaganda campaign makes clear that Ataturk’s true vision for the Turkish Republic was one in which the military served as the vanguard institution behind the state.

Conclusion

At the turn of the twentieth century, the social and political order of the Ottoman Empire experienced a monumental shift. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 served not only as an attempt by Ottoman youth to sever ties with the old political order of the Ottoman empire—the Sultan—but, more importantly, it provided Mustafa Kemal Ataturk an opportunity to launch a campaign and vie for political power. Often deemed the “Father of the Modern Turkish Republic,” Ataturk’s signifi-

cance in the broader context of modern Turkish history is unmistakable: both charismatic and a visionary, Atatürk is often lauded as Turkey's "modernizer." While Atatürk has been praised and acknowledged over the past century for catapulting Turkish society into the modern, secular, Western world, what laid at the heart of this agenda was a vision of the Turkish military standing as the vanguard institution as he built a modern, secular, and, eventually, democratic Turkish nation.

Under the guise of "modernism" and "secularism," Atatürk used Kemalism as a means to inject militocratic and militant characteristics into the modern Turkish Republic. Even though Atatürk believed in the ideals of democracy and held it in higher regard than autocracy, Turkish democracy remained almost entirely dependent on the military. Indeed, as Gerrassimos Karabelias has persuasively asserted, Atatürk had felt that "a different sort of state was needed in Turkey. Perhaps despite the people but for the people."⁷⁷ However, Atatürk's pro-democratic militarism was not without its adverse consequences; historian Banu Turnaoglu argues that "to maintain national cohesion, [later] republican governments have adopted authoritarian measures, excluding liberal, socialist, conservative, and Islamic challenges."⁷⁸ Furthermore, in her recent study of Turkish republicanism, she finds that this "inflexibility has served to inhibit the development of a strong democratic culture and prevented the recognition of different minority groups and demands."⁷⁹ The military interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997 all showcase the extremely fragile nature of the democracy that the Kemalist vanguard military has created. This fragility may also explain the relatively recent Islamist turn that Turkey has experienced under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's explicitly authoritarian and populist regime. This paper is limited in its scope to an analysis of the ways in which Atatürk was a militarist, leaving the relationship the contemporary changes that the Turkish democracy has undergone and the changes implemented by Atatürk in the Republic's formative years as an avenue for future research.

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69. Ibid., p. 127.
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“PERHAPS I WAS HAPPIEST AT TILSIT”

Napoleon and Alexander I, 1805-1821

Sebastian van Bastelaer

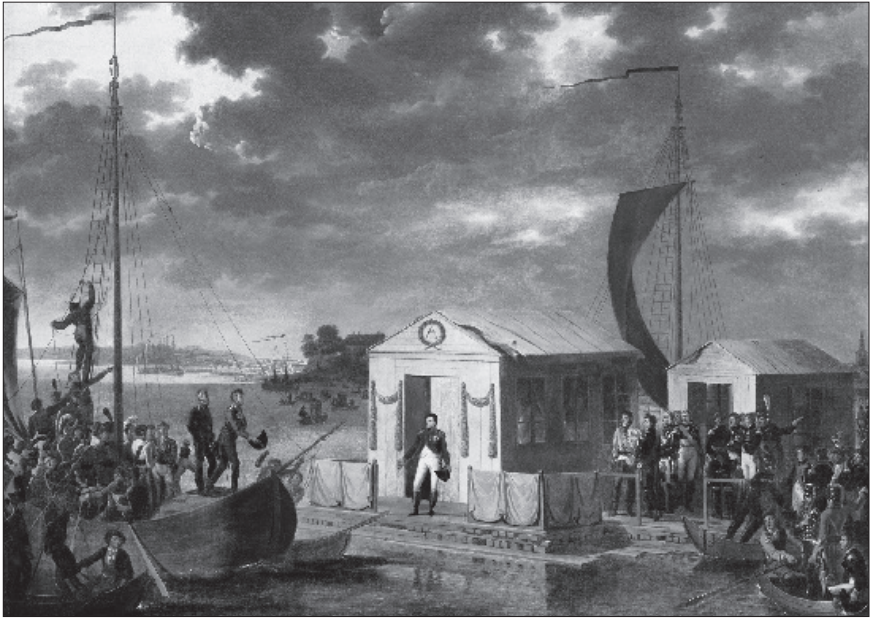


Image: Adolphe Roehn, *Entrevue de Napoléon Ier et d'Alexandre Ier sur le Niemen*. 25 juin 1807, 1807, Versailles.

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Emperor Napoleon's relationship with Tsar Alexander I began in a manner hardly befitting such a momentous summit. The two sovereigns met in late June 1807, on a bobbing, jerry-rigged raft in the middle of the Niemen River near the town of Tilsit in East Prussia. Napoleon arrived first, having just triumphed over Russian, Austrian, and Prussian forces in the decisive battle of the War of the Fourth Coalition. Alexander made his entrance shortly thereafter, wearing the dark green uniform of the Preobrazhensky Guards. After a moment of silence, the two men embraced. Alexander told Napoleon, "I will be your second against England."¹ These words inaugurated one of the most influential relationships of the nineteenth century. This friendship, as ill-fated as it was genuine, would help decide the destiny of Europe. Its high point was the apotheosis of the Napoleonic Empire, and its collapse portended France's ultimate downfall.

Russia and France were frequently at war in the early nineteenth century, in large measure because of the radical implications of the French Revolution. Joining forces with other dynastic forces in Europe, the Russians were a part of the Second, Third and Fourth Coalitions against Napoleon's forces, whom they regarded as a threat to the European geopolitical order. The last of these conflicts ended with the Battle of Friedland, considered a "serious defeat" for the Russians, with around 20,000 casualties. While not as catastrophic as the 1805 defeat at Austerlitz that embarrassed the Russians and toppled the Holy Roman Empire, it was sufficient to compel Alexander to sue for peace.² On June 27, 1807, Napoleon announced to his brother Joseph that the two sides had reached an armistice, and that the Russian and French sovereigns had made plans to meet to draft a treaty.³ Engineers hastily constructed the raft in the middle of the Niemen, a location that could technically be considered neutral ground. The pair's personal chemistry was palpable and immediate.

The leaders' personal qualities helped create an authentic (albeit ephemeral) connection between the two. Tsar Alexander was fascinated with the Enlightenment and French Revolution, a product of his liberal education and the timing of his ascent. These ideals evidently underlaid his early infatuation with Napoleon. Yet the Russian emperor's well-known capriciousness and intellectual inconsistencies quickly undermined interpersonal concord. Alexander, who had been an avowed enemy of Napoleon since as early as 1805, changed his mind after the Tilsit conference, and had changed it yet again by the time hostilities commenced between Russia and France in 1812.

Per contra, Napoleon's desire to have a seat at the table with fellow sovereigns cultivated a long-lasting appreciation for his Russian counterpart. In a misbegotten attempt to formalize and solidify this alliance, Napoleon even sought to marry Alexander's sister. The failure to link himself perma-

nently to the Romanovs and keep the tsar's friendship left a visceral sense of personal betrayal in Napoleon. Though geopolitical concerns were also crucial, Napoleon and Alexander's unique character traits—their insecurities, their respective upbringings, and their personal interests—played a key role in the rise and fall of the autocrats' friendship.

Historians' Interpretations

Many scholars of this period focus on geopolitical exigencies and outcomes when discussing the pair's relationship. They scrutinize the concrete results of the conferences, which included an alliance against Britain, cessation of territories, and a quixotic plan jointly to invade British India, thereby drawing general conclusions about the relationship.⁴ When they do examine the emperors personally, historians often argue that the harmony was a result of trickery, casting doubt on the authenticity of Napoleon and Alexander's feelings towards one another. Some accuse Alexander of duping Napoleon, while others assert that the exact opposite occurred; still others cast both of the emperors as disingenuous.⁵

Some historians, mostly biographers of Alexander, aver that it was the Russian who manipulated his French counterpart. The early twentieth-century academic L.I. Strakhovsky claims that at Tilsit, "Alexander, the diplomat, scored the first touch: he...found Napoleon's weak spot. From that point on the duel was nothing but a game."⁶ Later, Strakhovsky says:

It might appear at first glance that Alexander was defeated in the diplomatic game....In reality he was victorious because he achieved his aim: to blindfold his opponent, if it were only for a short time and this by all possible sacrifices, in order to prepare quietly for the final and open struggle on the field of battle.⁷

Other historians share this view. Michael Klimenko argues, "Even if people thought he was blind, Alexander certainly was not," claiming that the tsar only chose to cooperate with Napoleon because it was expedient.⁸ Maurice Paléologue concurs, maintaining that the credulous Napoleon miscalculated the wily Russian:

[Bonaparte] believed he had acquired the friendship, the faithful and enduring friendship of the Russian autocrat. And that was one of his gravest errors. His mind was too clear, too simplified, too Latin; he was too infatuated with the heroes of Corneille and their logical harangues to penetrate the impulsive and complex, sinuous and flowing nature of Alexander.⁹

These historians give Napoleon little credit, positing that Alexander was able to fool him, buying time for his army and minimizing Russia's concessions following the defeat at Friedland.

Notably, other scholars make the opposite argument: that Napoleon exploited his advantageous position after Friedland, and cowed the defeated Alexander into an undesirable alliance against Britain. After a crowning achievement in the field, they posit, Napoleon was free to dictate the terms of his new alliance. Moreover, Napoleon could marshal his charisma and rarefied reputation to overawe his counterpart, feigning affection and rendering Alexander a more pliant accomplice against the loathed British. In his authoritative work *Russia Against Napoleon*, Dominic Lieven outlines many earlier authors' claim that "Alexander was bowled over by Napoleon and that this partly explains the terms of the Franco-Russian treaties."¹⁰ Biographer Andrew Roberts states, "Napoleon made every effort to charm the twenty-nine-year-old absolute ruler of Russia, and establish a warm personal relationship with him" in order to get what he wanted.¹¹ Still others accuse both leaders of duplicity: Alexander biographer Henri Troyat argues that they "duped each other" at the conferences.¹²

These academics agree that one—or both—of the emperors tricked the other during these exchanges. While it is certain that Alexander and Napoleon postured to an extent to achieve the best possible result for their nations, the friendship that developed at Tilsit was unquestionably genuine. This harmony—and its eventual collapse—came about because of personal insecurities and proclivities, hopes and desires. In the next sections, we will explore these character traits and how they affected Alexander and Napoleon's connection—and by extension, Franco-Russian relations as a whole.

The Inscrutable Tsar

Alexander I came to power in 1801 following the assassination of his father, Paul I. He grew up in St. Petersburg, which was awash with the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution given its role as Russia's intellectual and diplomatic center. Spending his time in a court whose diplomatic language was French, Alexander was raised by his grandmother, Empress Catherine the Great, one of Russia's most forward-thinking and liberal sovereigns. Moreover, Alexander was tutored by foreigners who also revered Enlightenment thinkers. These influences manifested themselves in his views as the young ruler of the Russian Empire. Prince Metternich of Austria met the tsar in 1805; he later recalled, "I found him then liberal in the largest sense of the word."¹³ Napoleon himself said that in Alexander's youth, the Russian "was apparently imbued with the idea that monarchs ought to govern for the people, and are

instituted for the people.” Continuing, Napoleon posited that Alexander was “too liberal for his Russians.”¹⁴

Scholars have also noted Alexander’s early affinity for the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment. Michael Klimenko explains that Alexander’s “ideals were formed on the principles of 1789.”¹⁵ At one point in the tsar’s youth, a diplomat from Revolutionary France visited the Russian capital. Alexander gleefully called the envoy *citoyen*—only to be told that this was no longer in fashion.¹⁶ This appreciation for the liberal ideas of the era molded Alexander into a forward-thinking figure in the early days of his rule. He often sought to “depict himself as a truly enlightened man and monarch,” particularly in the presence of visitors and fellow European sovereigns.¹⁷ Alexander’s actions validate these assessments: he abhorred serfdom, and considered creating a more representative government.¹⁸ The political system of Russia, though, was hidebound by centuries of tradition and could not be easily overhauled. Yet this reality did not deter Alexander from desiring reform.

Given his fascination with the French Revolution, one can understand why Alexander took a personal liking to Napoleon. The charismatic French ruler represented the culmination of a struggle for liberty, and embodied the final evolution of the spirit of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*, even if he did not always uphold these values. Understanding Napoleon’s significance as the leader of a modern liberal state, Alexander immediately found much in common with his French counterpart. After Tilsit, the tsar reminisced, “I have never been so prejudiced against anybody as against him, but after three-quarters of an hour of conversation with him, it all passed like a dream.”¹⁹ His initial biases upended, Alexander quickly took to his fellow autocrat. At Tilsit, he was only too willing to flaunt his liberal credentials. In a conversation that now seems surreal, the two leaders debated the optimal form of government. Napoleon, who purported to represent the French people and their revolutionary struggle, argued in favor of hereditary monarchies. Alexander, himself a product of centuries of dynastic domination, proselytized for elective monarchies.²⁰ The emperors’ dialectic highlights Alexander’s enlightened nature in his youth, and the tenacity with which he held these revolutionary beliefs. As we shall see, it also reveals Napoleon’s insecurity about the legitimacy of his own rule, a feeling that stemmed from his relatively humble origins.

Students of Alexander, however, are quick to point out that his strange inconsistencies undermined even his most passionately held beliefs. Indeed, his capricious nature and habit of overturning his own principles on a whim are frequent topics of discussion and inquiry in Russianist spheres. Prince Metternich gives the best summary of this proclivity: the tsar “seized an idea, and followed it out quickly,” accepting it as axiomatic. Over time, “he remained faithful to the system he had adopted and learned to love,

listened with real fervor to its promoters, and was inaccessible to any calculation as to its worth or dangerous consequences.” After several years, however, Alexander would come across another viewpoint, “often diametrically opposite to the one he had just left,” and pursue that creed instead.²¹ Metternich summarizes this capriciousness: in the time he knew Alexander, the emperor embraced liberalism, then endorsed religious mysticism, and eventually became “a zealous champion of monarchic and conservative principles, a declared enemy of every revolutionary tendency, and already on his way to return to religious mysticism.”²²

Metternich was not the only contemporary to note these ideological inconsistencies. Napoleon remarked presciently, “With so many intellectual advantages and dazzling qualities, there is something in him for which I have no name, and which I cannot better express than by saying that there is always something wanting in him.”²³ In a debate with General Caulaincourt, the French general called Alexander “fickle and feeble.”²⁴ Napoleon spent little time with Alexander, yet was able to spot these traits and remark on his counterpart’s propensity for vacillation. This reputation lasted throughout Alexander’s life, and came to affect his relationship with a slew of fellow sovereigns, officials, and subjects.

French-born historian Albert Vandal has asked, “Was Napoleon one of these passions, following and preceding so many others?”²⁵ The tsar’s views on Napoleon clearly shifted several times: Metternich says that even before meeting the French emperor, Alexander was considered “a bitter enemy of Bonaparte....he loaded him...with execrations.”²⁶ By the time of the war in 1812, the hatred had returned; one historian says that in this period, the tsar’s abhorrence of Napoleon “knew no limits.”²⁷ Alexander came to view the struggle as an apocalyptic, existential duel: as Moscow burned, he remarked, “Napoleon or me, I or him, we cannot both rule at the same time.”²⁸

Was the tsar’s appreciation real, then, or was it merely affected? One possibility is that the two emperors’ conduct was simply a product of the time, a customary exercise useful for achieving political ends. Historian William M. Reddy calls the emotional language of the eighteenth century “sentimentalism.” This trend in communication accepted that emotion was as “important as reason in the foundation of states and the conduct of politics.”²⁹ Alexander and Napoleon certainly would have grown up understanding the importance of conveying emotion in writing. It would therefore be easy to assume that Alexander’s expressed friendship for Napoleon was primarily driven by his political wants. Yet his characteristic fickleness, what Metternich called the “periodicity” of his thoughts, made it possible—indeed, likely—that Alexander truly did admire Napoleon for a time.³⁰ S.S. Tatischeff argues that, for a time, at least, “For Alexander, there was a passionate and boundless admiration for...this great man.”³¹

Plentiful evidence shows that Alexander's admiration was sincere while it lasted; an infatuation with Napoleon palpably permeated his thinking and writing. After Tilsit, he gushed, "The Emperor Napoleon gave me tokens of friendship then which I shall never forget. The more I think of it, the more happy I feel to have known him.... What an extraordinary man!"³² Alexander's wife, Elizabeth, also noted that her husband was smitten, commenting, "He [Alexander] feels a secret attraction towards his seducer which is apparent in everything. I should dearly like to know what magic it is that Bonaparte employs to transform people's opinions so suddenly and so completely."³³ These comments, not addressed to Napoleon or anyone in France, reveal that Alexander's respect was indeed unaffected. If his behavior had been a ploy intended to dupe the French emperor, there would have been no need to uphold the charade in private writings, and the tsar's wife almost certainly would not have noticed a marked change in her spouse.

Tsar Alexander's enlightened upbringing and capricious nature were vital factors in his relationship with Napoleon. He was predisposed to appreciate the French ruler, who represented the revolutionary ideals of 1789 and spoke the language of the Russian court. Yet Alexander eventually came to abjure his liberal ideology, as he rejected many other beliefs. His inconsistencies made it possible for him to esteem Napoleon temporarily, even though he soon came to resent the oft-derided "usurper." Evidence makes clear that this passion was, in fact, real—even if it soon abated. While most scholars rely on domestic and international political issues to explain the demise of the Franco-Russian alliance, Alexander's own innate qualities had an unmistakable impact. They help to explain both the immediate establishment and precipitous decline of his relationship with Napoleon. Though a common theme in Alexander biographies, they are curiously neglected in many analyses; they nonetheless are crucial for better understanding the emperors' interpersonal dynamic.

The Insecure Emperor

Let us now turn to Napoleon. Having just triumphed at Friedland, was he only simulating magnanimity and fondness because he knew he could dictate the terms of the treaty? Was he flattering Alexander simply in order to extract the best possible terms from the peace deal? Even a cursory examination of the evidence elicits a resounding "no" to these questions. Less fickle than his Russian counterpart, Napoleon had a deep desire to befriend and ally himself with Alexander. Not satisfied with his station and desperate to humiliate the ruling classes who decried him as a usurper, at Tilsit Napoleon saw an opportunity to humble England and

earn respect. As a result of his insecurity, he took an obsequious tone towards Alexander and extolled him in conversations with others. This praise of the tsar and pleas for his friendship persisted as Alexander's affections faded—even after war had commenced between the two nations. Over time, the emperor evinced a strong displeasure with his old friend's faithlessness, even as his acclamatory references to the tsar continued. The intensity and longevity of this passion reveal that it, too, was sincere and weighed heavily on Franco-Russian relations.

Napoleon harbored deep insecurities about his status. Several historians have noted his unremitting pursuit of legitimacy and his desire to be seen as coequal with the sovereigns of Europe. For a man widely viewed as an authoritarian, he often lacked self-assurance and craved approbation. Steven Englund explains that when it came to legitimacy, “*Napoléon Premier* could never win...He had to stand comparison with the monarchical tradition in the vital area that counted most: bloodline. Here he would always come acropper [sic].”³⁴ Biographer David A. Bell adds, “The monarchs of Britain, Russia and Prussia...had trouble recognizing Napoleon, the son of the French Revolution, as a truly legitimate adversary.”³⁵ Modern historian William Henry Hudson calls the emperor “jealous of the position which, as a man from the ranks, he had now made for himself among the potentates of Europe.”³⁶ Napoleon himself acknowledged this sense of inferiority. In what Englund calls a “long imperial sigh,” Napoleon said, “Five or six families share the thrones of Europe and they take it badly that a Corsican has seated himself at their table.”³⁷ Records of his debate with Alexander on the proper form of government reveal Napoleon's inner wants as well. While Alexander, who inherited his power from his father, saw the value of elective monarchies, the affirmation-deprived Napoleon professed a preference for more stable hereditary systems. This manifest jealousy made Napoleon eager to consolidate his power within Europe and to secure the companionship of a dynastic ruler.

Napoleon's initial encounter with Alexander offered a perfect opportunity to achieve this goal. After their introductory meeting, Napoleon reported breathlessly to his first wife, Josephine: “My Dear, I have just seen the Emperor Alexander. I was much pleased with him. He is a very handsome, young, and kind-hearted Emperor; he has more intelligence than people usually give him credit for.”³⁸ Evidently, Napoleon was pleasantly surprised by his fellow ruler—much as Alexander had been. Albert Vandal writes, “At Tilsit, Napoleon met for the first time an amiable vanquished enemy....It is easy to read all the hope Napoleon placed in [this friendship].”³⁹

The emperor's letters back to France and to his family furnish proof of his excitement over this new rapport and the promise it held. Napoleon boasted to his stepson Eugene and to Minister of Police Joseph Fouché

about having dined with Alexander every night during the conclave.⁴⁰ In letters to his colleague Cambacérès, Napoleon discussed a “meilleur harmonie” (best harmony) and a “plus grand intimité” (great intimacy) between Alexander and himself.⁴¹ Upon leaving Tilsit, Napoleon wrote to Eugene about the twenty days the pair had spent together, and recounted how his new friend had let him appear in the Order of St. Andrew.⁴² These letters reveal, much as Alexander’s post-Tilsit behavior did, that the accord was real and desirable to both parties. A leader simply abiding by the political mores of the time or seeking to take advantage of a rival would not have needed to misrepresent his feelings to trusted correspondents in this way.

The victory at Friedland and consequent Tilsit summit represented, to Napoleon, a tremendous victory in his quest to obtain legitimacy. The most convincing proof of this sense of vindication came from Napoleon himself. When asked on St. Helena about his happiest moment, he reflected,

Yes, I was happy when I became First Consul, happy at the time of my marriage, and happy at the birth of the King of Rome....But then I did not feel perfectly confident of the security of my position. Perhaps I was happiest at Tilsit. I had just surmounted many vicissitudes, many anxieties, at Eylau for instance; and I found myself victorious, dictating laws, having emperors and kings pay me court.⁴³

This attitude confirms that Napoleon’s relationship with Alexander was not only about making peace or finding an ally against Britain, but also about fortifying his place on the continent.

Following Tilsit, as the two lavished one another with praise and presents, Napoleon continued to express his commitment to the friendship. He sent a letter to Alexander thanking him for a gift of furs, and bragged about wearing the Cross of St. Andrew in the presence of a Russian diplomat.⁴⁴ Numerous letters contain similar compliments and boasts, along with assurances of his sincerity. In December 1807, he invited Alexander to join him in Paris while exulting in their recent success.

I was truly happy to see the culmination of our work at Tilsit. I will be even more so when Your Majesty keeps his promise to come to Paris: it will be an extra sweet moment for me and my people. We will then go to England, we will pacify the world, and the peace of Tilsit will, I hope, be a new époque in the annals of the world.⁴⁵

Their correspondence is punctuated with compliments, from Napoleon in particular. He showed a strong desire to stay friends with Alexander, both to allay his own insecurities and because of the enjoyable experience

they had shared at Tilsit. This further undermines any argument that the relationship was simply, as one scholar argues, a “game of cat and mouse, in which each believed himself to be the cat.”⁴⁶

Even the way in which Napoleon addressed his letters to the tsar betrays an insecurity and desire for a seat at the royal table. His correspondence followed a general pattern: the opening phrase of his letters differed depending on the recipient’s perceived status. To his fellow military officers and French politicians, including Marshall Davout, Marshall Ney, and Cambacérès, Napoleon began with *mon cousin* (my cousin). To family members such as Eugene, Joseph, and Murat, it was *mon frère*, (my brother) or *mon fils* (my son). In many cases, he simply began writing his order or message without any address.⁴⁷

Yet in his letters to Alexander and other heads of state, Napoleon only commenced with one phrase: *n frère*. This was the case throughout much of his political career, particularly after he had been crowned emperor. Whenever he wrote to a fellow sovereign—in other words, someone whose respect he sought to earn and retain—he would begin with this phrase. Letters to the King of Denmark, the King of Prussia, the King of Saxony, the King of Spain, the King of Wurtemberg, and others invariably contained this trademark opening.⁴⁸ Napoleon’s letters to Alexander were no exception. In fact, this practice continued long after official diplomatic ties had been broken: even in Napoleon’s final letters, he started his letters with *monsieur mon frère*. Hoping to force other European monarchs to accept him, the French emperor never relented in asserting his coequal status.

The Faltering Friendship

In spite of the heady experience at Tilsit, the Franco-Russian alliance began to falter quickly. The treaty’s stipulations were cause for opprobrium in St. Petersburg; Napoleon’s Continental blockade was anathema to Russian merchants dependent upon overseas commerce. Napoleon, for his part, was frustrated when Russian troops failed to succor his own adequately against Austrian forces in Central Europe—a key feature of the peace agreement. Yet the epistolary paeans persisted, and the personal accord remained. After Alexander’s daughter died in the summer of 1808, Napoleon wrote to his Russian counterpart, “I hope you will permit me to reiterate that you have a friend who feels all of your pains.”⁴⁹

In order to mend the broken relationship between their nations, Napoleon and Alexander agreed to reconvene in the summer of 1808 at Erfurt (in modern-day central Germany). It would be the last time the two met. They spent considerable time together, attending plays and having conver-

sations deep into the evening. Napoleon composed a now famous letter to Josephine (whom he would soon divorce), in which he said, "I am pleased with Alexander; he ought to be on my side. If he were a woman, I think I should make him my sweetheart."⁵⁰ Yet domestic and international tensions rendered this summit more tense than the first had been. At one point, Napoleon's obdurate political style made Alexander threaten to leave. The crestfallen French emperor reported tersely to Joseph, "I am still with the Emperor of Russia. All goes on as well as possible."⁵¹ He complained to Caulaincourt, "Emperor Alexander is stubborn as a mule."⁵²

A more personal source of animosity was Napoleon's futile attempt to wed Alexander's sister, Catherine. An ancillary goal of the Erfurt conference, the success of this endeavor would have further solidified the Franco-Russian alliance. Napoleon acknowledged his personal stake in the matter when he said to Caulaincourt, "This is to see if Alexander is really one of my friends and if he takes a true interest in the welfare of France."⁵³ Catherine, however, was an implacable enemy of Napoleon and unwilling to change her religion from Russian Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism. Thus, the proposed arrangement fell apart. Napoleon instead married Marie-Louise of Austria. Yet another grating disappointment in the emperor's relationship with the Russians, this failure only added to his misery.

Following these setbacks, Napoleon often appeared disappointed and irritable at the mere mention of Alexander's name. Caulaincourt recorded one conversation in which the emperor, for once, "referred to the Tsar Alexander without manifesting his usual ill-humour at mention of this name."⁵⁴ Napoleon explicitly admitted his bitterness when, in the same conversation, he inveighed against Alexander, saying, "He has the Greek character—he is untrustworthy."⁵⁵ This reference to the perfidious statesmen of the Byzantine Empire underlines Napoleon's frustration at the collapse of this friendship. This allusion would persist in the Napoleonic lexicon.

Napoleon portrayed himself as the victim of Alexander's duplicity, and was not afraid to verbalize this sense of hurt. In some ways, Napoleon's behavior traces earlier complaints about his seldom-requested love for Josephine. Early on in their marriage, as Napoleon was on campaign, he implored Josephine to respond in kind to his love letters. Writing to his bride from Nice in late March 1796, the newly minted commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy bemoaned her reluctance to express affection. He admonished her for using the formal second-person pronoun *vous*, lamenting, "How could you ever write such a letter? How cold it is!...*Vous*! *Vous* indeed! What will it be in a fortnight's time?" Seemingly on the verge of breaking down, he queried, "Do you love me no more?"⁵⁶ Three days later, he composed another maudlin message to his wife. Having received a cold letter from her, he replied, "Do you suppose my

position is not so painful already, that you must pile regret upon regret, and reduce my soul to distraction? The way you write! The feelings you describe! They are flames that scorch my poor heart.”⁵⁷ Remarkably enough, the pair had married less than a month earlier and Napoleon was already reproaching Josephine for her aloofness. Evidently, the gallant soldier was susceptible to feelings of abandonment and was quick to take offense at perceived slights. The rejection—whether imagined or real—of those he loved aroused visceral feelings in the conquering hero of Europe. This was the case not only in his marriage, but also in his relationship with royal counterparts.

Due in part to Alexander’s intransigence, war finally broke out in 1812. The tsar did not properly enforce the Continental System within his own borders, undermining France’s efforts to cripple Britain’s finances. Unsupported by the Russian public and unsustainable in the absence of familial connections, the alliance broke down, and war seemed inevitable. It arrived in 1812. At this point, one could only expect Napoleon’s correspondence with the tsar to cease—or at least for him to dispense with the exaltations. Yet in the few letters he wrote during the war, he articulated a sincere desire for peace and a rapprochement with his old friend. Shortly after the French invasion began, he penned a letter to Alexander that was suffused with desperation. Beginning with the customary *Monsieur mon frère*, he recollected the birth of their friendship: “The war that divided our states terminated with the treaty at Tilsit...Your Majesty told me: I will be your second against England. That word from Your Majesty changed everything; the treaty at Tilsit was the corollary.” Detailing the Russians’ contravention of the treaty, Napoleon recalled his own willingness to accommodate by seeking peace at Erfurt. He explained that Alexander “[had] had two options, negotiation or war. Negotiation prevailed at Erfurt: why, this time, did [you] choose a different means?” After voicing this hurt and confusion, Napoleon finished by praising the tsar in hopes of regaining his friendship.

It remains for me to end by pleading with Your Majesty to believe that, in spite of the direction he has taken politically that influences so painfully our lives and our nations, the particular sentiments that I have for him are nonetheless safe from events, and that, if fortune should again favor my arms, he will find me, as at Tilsit and Erfurt, full of friendship and esteem for his beautiful and grand qualities, and desirous of proving it.⁵⁸

This sentimental letter further demonstrates Napoleon’s insecurity and desperation. Supplicating a rival in war certainly went beyond the normal customs that dictated how sovereigns corresponded.

There would be one final communication from the French emperor, this one written in Moscow in mid-September 1808. A massive fire had just enveloped the city. Many blamed the Russians for the conflagration. If there was any time for Napoleon to turn on Alexander and scold him, this was it. Yet his letter abstained from faulting the tsar, instead pleading with him as a jilted lover would—precisely as Napoleon had done in previous relationships. Commencing with *Monsieur mon frère*, he bemoaned the loss of three-quarters of the houses in Moscow and called the city “one of the most beautiful in the world.”⁵⁹ Addressing the rumor that Alexander had ordered the burning of the city, he continued, “If I supposed that these things were done by orders of Your Majesty, I would not have written this letter, but I hold that to be impossible due to his principles, his heart, the justice of his ideas.”⁶⁰ Finally, in spite of the irreparable damage done to both his diplomatic and personal relationship with Alexander, Napoleon again pleaded for a return to amity: “If Your Majesty still conserves for me his old sentiments, he will gladly receive this letter.”⁶¹ No reason other than personal goals can explain some contents of these final letters. Even when he had nothing else to gain politically from writing to Alexander in such a manner, Napoleon continued to do so.

His sense of betrayal remained long after the war with the Russians concluded. On St. Helena, Napoleon made a point of talking about the tsar. According to one of his companions, he reflected, “The Emperor of Russia is intelligent, pleasing, well-educated, can fascinate easily; but one has to be on one’s guard, he is a real Greek of the later Empire.”⁶² This line echoes the reference he had made earlier in speaking with Caulaincourt. It also epitomizes his views toward Alexander: in spite of the tsar’s treachery and his own humiliating defeat in war, Napoleon retained his old feelings toward his erstwhile friend.

Napoleon’s desire to gain and keep the friendship of Alexander came as a result of his own insecurity and desperation to be a coequal sovereign in Europe. His excitement during the Tilsit summit can be seen in his letters back to France, and his letters to Alexander from 1807 to 1812 were thick with tributes and supplications. Even as their interpersonal amity faded, Napoleon did not become angry or cut out the tsar. Instead, he intensified his pleading while displaying sadness and disappointment. As was the case on Alexander’s side, the friendship and affection were real, and arose out of Napoleon’s own idiosyncrasies. While his affection lasted far longer than Alexander’s, it was just as genuine.

Conclusion

Evidence shows that Alexander and Napoleon’s political and military aspirations cannot fully explain their relationship with one another.

While it would be foolish to ignore these altogether, it would be equally myopic to act as if the pair's emotional and intellectual idiosyncrasies had no impact on their interpersonal accord. This paper has demonstrated that their mutual appreciation was neither feigned nor simply a means to a political end. Recognition of each other's personal and intellectual assets permeated their writing, and often transcended the considerations and needs of their respective nations.

Alexander, who idolized the French revolutionaries in his youth, was predisposed to find his opposing emperor fascinating and charismatic. Yet his fundamental inconsistencies, in addition to the exigencies of the European geopolitical environment, led to a change of heart. Napoleon, eager to find and keep allies in his fight against England and earn the approval of the conservative sovereigns of the continent, was apt to see value in a friendship with Alexander. Even as their accord deteriorated, Napoleon continued to beg Alexander for his approval and for a return to their former relationship. As he failed, the French emperor began to resent this abandonment—even as he hoped that the Russian would change his mind. These inclinations and desires competed with and occasionally superseded their political objectives.

The significance of this friendship cannot be understated. The tortuous path taken by these two enigmas profoundly changed their own lives and helped to change Europe for good. In addition to affording him a new companion and a sense of legitimacy, the peace at Tilsit gave Napoleon real hope of establishing European hegemony. Eliminating a serious competitor on the continent, this accomplishment also heralded the zenith of the French Empire. Drawing this same conclusion, the editors of the *Correspondance Générale*, a massive collection of Napoleon's letters, chose an apposite title for the seventh volume: *Tilsit, l'apogée de l'Empire* [Tilsit, the height of the Empire].⁶³ The peace accords also gave Napoleon a free hand to send troops west and theoretically suppress a restive populace in Spain. Relieved of the Russian threat, he could afford to dream up grandiose schemes of joint operations in the East and establishing global dominance with Russia's support, too.

The collapse of the relationship and subsequent war spelled doom for the French. Thwarted by strategic mishaps, mass starvation, climatic conditions, and dogged Russian troops, the Grand Armée's precipitous decline began in Russia. When military victories ceased, Napoleon's domestic support slowly eroded. Though Napoleon would continue to reign for several years after his defeat, the decline of his friendship with Alexander—and the concomitant loss of an important personal and political ally—was a disaster. Lacking a second against England and his ever-strengthening enemies, all Napoleon could do was fume about his friend's betrayal. In spite of this visceral bitterness, however, he never

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stopped praising the fine qualities of his erstwhile companion. Inside him, the joy and harmony he had felt on that rickety raft on the Niemen never fully dissipated.

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“PURCHASERS OF THEIR OWN ‘KITH AND KIN’”

Southwest Borderlands Captive-Taking and the Limits of U.S.
Authority in New Mexico, 1849-1852

Dan Ahrendt



Image: George Catlin, *Comanche Village, Women Dressing Robes and Drying Meat*, 1834-1835, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, accessed [online](#).

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In April 1849, James S. Calhoun, a veteran of the U.S.-Mexico War and former state legislator, was appointed Indian agent for the provisional U.S. territory of New Mexico—a section of land that had shifting and ill-defined boundaries, but encompassed most of present-day New Mexico and Arizona.¹ Calhoun's appointment was part of an overhaul of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which had recently been transferred from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. The BIA was trying to establish an institutional apparatus to negotiate with the various Indian peoples who occupied the land acquired by the United States in the wake of the U.S.-Mexico War.

In 1849, Calhoun took a trip to Washington, D.C., in an attempt to learn more about New Mexico. However, to his probable chagrin, William Medill, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, informed him that "so little is known [in Washington] of the condition and situation of the Indians in that region that no specific instructions, relative to them can be given at present."² Medill told Calhoun that he was to furnish the Department of Indian Affairs with information about:

The names of the tribes, their location, the distance between the tribes, the probable extent of territory owned or claimed by each respectively, and the tenure by which they hold or claim it; their manners and habits, their disposition and feelings toward the United States, Mexico and whites generally and towards each other, whether hostile or otherwise; whether the several tribes speak different languages, and when different, the apparent analogies between them, and also what laws and regulations, for their government, are necessary, and how far the law regulating trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes...will, if extended over that country, properly apply to the Indians there.³

This run-on list should have overwhelmed Calhoun, signifying how out-of-touch the U.S. government was with the social, political, and economic life of the southwest borderlands. In the letter, Medill attached documents written by a few Anglos who did have experience in the area: correspondence from Charles Bent, a former governor of New Mexico; the report of William Emory, a lieutenant who traveled with the U.S. "Army of the West," which conquered New Mexico and California; and the notes of James Abert, an engineer who produced topographical maps of the Southwest. These documents probably provided little solace for Calhoun. For example, Bent's brief overview of Native peoples in New Mexico estimated that an astounding 37,000 Indians—not counting Pueblo peoples—lived in New Mexico in 1846.⁴ If Calhoun was a student of the Southwest, he might have felt a shiver creep down his spine as he read, perhaps knowing that Bent, one of the most culturally adept Anglos to navigate the messy

borderlands in the early nineteenth century, had been scalped and hung during a Taos revolt against U.S. rule in 1847.⁵ But Calhoun had little time to dwell on such ominous thoughts, because by May, he had already sailed down the Mississippi River to Missouri and was on his way over the wagon-wheel-hardened dirt of the Santa Fe Trail, headed for New Mexico.

Even if he had received a more extensive report from Medill, Calhoun could not have understood the complexity of the job he had accepted. In 1849, he entered a polyglot southwest borderlands made up of diverse peoples, in which captive-taking and captive exchange were central institutions of politics, economics, and social life.⁶ Captivity underpinned trade, labor exploitation, warfare, competition for territorial sovereignty, and outsider incorporation. Although captive-taking facilitated intercultural interactions and exchanges, it also exploited individuals on a vast scale. Calhoun's correspondence from his tenure as Indian agent for New Mexico (1849-1851) and as territorial governor of New Mexico (1851-1852) provides a window into the southwest captive exchange.

Scholars have written about southwestern captivity in contrasting ways. In *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, James Brooks argues that Indian captive-taking practices and Spanish colonial servitude meshed in the southwest borderlands, forming an intelligible slave system. He focuses on how incorporation into kinship structures moderated Southwest borderlands slavery and on how captives facilitated interethnic material, intellectual, and emotional exchange.⁷ However, in *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*, Ned Blackhawk conceptualizes southwestern slavery not as a manifestation of interdependence but as part of brutal violence that rippled outward from colonial centers in North America.⁸ By utilizing violence both as a subject and as a historical method, Blackhawk explores the enslavement of vulnerable Native peoples as part of his narrative of the traumatic, multi-century dispossession of Indians and appropriation of North America. I attempt to keep the interdependence and the violence of captive-taking in view simultaneously: to see the cross-cultural contact and interdependency that captivity networks facilitated, and to remember that these networks were exchanges of bodies that occurred under unequal relations of power and that resulted in devastating physical, emotional, and social trauma.

Although the U.S. was able to win a war against Mexico in the late 1840s and lay claim to much of what was becoming the American West, the expanding nation-state did not understand the influence that captive raiding and trading had on the outcome of the war. Moreover, with the dispersal of its conquering army, the U.S. did not have an adequate military force to exert anything other than a loose legal authority over the area north of the newly drawn U.S.-Mexico border. In this article, I document Calhoun's

futile struggles to understand and intervene in southwestern captivity. I argue that during the late 1840s and early 1850s, self-replicating practices of captive-taking and the captive trade defied U.S. governance and endured as central components of long-standing social relations of exchange and interdependence in the southwest borderlands. More broadly, I demonstrate that the U.S. in the mid-nineteenth century failed to understand the politics and economics of its southwestern territorial claims.

“Purchasers of their Own ‘Kith and Kin’”: The Historical Roots of New Mexico’s Captive Trade

In mid-August 1849, only a few weeks after arriving in Santa Fe, Calhoun joined an expedition into Navajo country.⁹ The expedition, headed by territorial governor John M. Washington and reinforced by U.S. troops, intended to pressure the Navajos to end captive-taking raids on the villages of New Mexico. Upon finally reaching the Navajo settlement, they were able to secure a meeting with head chief Mariano Martínez and second chief Chapitone, and—after a long day of discussion—sign a treaty. Among other goals, the U.S. representatives hoped to mitigate the damages of Navajo captive-taking raids, which had besieged New Mexican settlements with increasing vigor during the late 1840s. Testifying to this intention, Article V of the treaty demanded the return of “all American and Mexican captives.”¹⁰ In addition, perhaps as an unrecorded stipulation of the negotiations or a ritualistic sign of good will, Martínez presented four young male captives—Anto Josea, Teodosia Gonzales, Josea Ignacio Anañe, and someone identified only as Marecito—all of whom had been abducted by Navajo raiders from settlements in Mexico or New Mexico.¹¹

This was Calhoun’s first serious encounter with the thriving captive trade of New Mexico. If, as he departed from the canyon after signing the treaty with the Navajos, Calhoun harbored hope that captive exchange was coming to a close, he would soon be disabused of such naiveté. During his stint as Indian agent and then territorial governor, southwestern captive markets flourished and became Calhoun’s primary concern, appearing dozens of times in his correspondence. Nineteenth-century southwestern captivity was not a new phenomenon, but one that emerged out of Spanish colonial enslavement practices and Native captive-taking customs. A widespread market for captives expanded in New Mexico in the first decade of American occupation and in this market, captives provided productive and reproductive labor and facilitated trade and intercultural exchange, even as captive-taking raids produced landscapes of fear and trauma.

The Spanish New World expanded into the southwest borderlands during the sixteenth century, following expeditions led by Álvaro Núñez

Cabeza de Vaca in the 1530s, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado in the 1540s, and Antonio de Espejo in the 1580s.¹² Conquistador Juan de Oñate established the first Spanish settlement in New Mexico in 1598, attracting hundreds of Spaniards who hungered for silver and other precious metals, exploitable indigenous labor, and “heathen” Indian souls.¹³ Spanish colonists quickly realized that New Mexico was mineral-poor but land-rich, with villages of sedentary and agriculturalist Pueblo peoples, some of whom maintained regular trading relationships with the more nomadic Apache and Navajo peoples of the Rio Grande region.¹⁴ In New Mexico, as in other parts of the Americas, Indian enslavement was a central component of Spanish colonization.¹⁵ Spanish colonists captured and enslaved Pueblo peoples, as well as neighboring Apaches, Navajos, and Utes. While most captives labored for local Spanish conquerors, some were sent south to work in silver mines and large-scale farms in northern Mexico.¹⁶ The first Spaniards who arrived in New Mexico were predominantly men. Despite stigmas against interracial intimacy, many colonists took Indian women as concubines, as mistresses, and (rarely) as wives—usually by force, but sometimes peacefully, as part of diplomatic or economic exchanges with Native men.¹⁷ Colonists also used the *encomienda* system to extract tributary labor from Native settlements, appropriating land for farms and ranches and interjecting themselves violently into borderlands trade. By the late seventeenth century, Indians labored in New Mexican armies, fields, pastures, and households. Spanish exploitation of Indian labor was one primary cause of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, in which a group of Pueblo peoples led by a revolutionary religious leader named Po’pay rose up, killed hundreds of colonists, and drove the remaining settlers out of New Mexico, asserting Native autonomy in the area for a dozen years.¹⁸

In 1692, after Spaniards reestablished themselves in New Mexico, they turned increasingly towards the enslavement of those they called *indios barbaros* (“savage Indians”), most of whom lived in the Plains and Great Basin regions. New Mexicans conducted direct raids on indigenous settlements, using “just war” doctrines that sanctioned the enslavement of Indians who resisted Spanish rule or refused Catholicism.¹⁹ Some of the neighboring nomadic Indians began to participate in the supply side of this captive exchange, adopting technological innovations like horses and firearms and displacing Spanish violence outward onto other less powerful Indians, as well as back onto Spaniards.²⁰ New Mexicans justified their purchases of Indian captives from other indigenous captive-takers by framing it as *rescate* (“rescue”), whereby they agreed to ransom, baptize, detribalize, and educate the captives in return for ten to twenty years of servitude.²¹ In practice, many of these *indios de rescate* became exchangeable slaves, although some who were released or who escaped from bondage could achieve limited property and marriage rights, and protection against social and institutional ill-treatment.²²

Not all Indian captives were slaves for life; indeed, many eventually found themselves brought into Spanish societies, if only to the margins. For example, young Indian captives often appeared in Spanish legal documents and baptismal records as *hijos* ("children") or *criados* (literally, "those raised up"), terms that, although typically used as euphemisms for actual servants, suggest that some captives might have been considered liminal "kin."²³ In addition, because the Spanish baptismal process required a spiritual sponsor, baptized captives found themselves incorporated through the institution of *compadrazgo* (godparenthood).²⁴ Some former captives were even allowed to build their own social communities. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Indian captive-takers flooded the market with so many *indios de rescate* that they could no longer be completely absorbed as laborers into Spanish households, so groups of *indios de rescate* were sent to live among poorer outlying Spanish villages.²⁵ Thus, while most *indios de rescate*—especially children and young women—experienced abuse and exploitation, some did become full-fledged community members, even if, as Guitierrez argues, they were often unable to completely shed a "stigma of servility."²⁶

If *nuevomexicanos* captured Indians as part of larger colonial projects of dispossession, exploitation, and Christianization, the Indian peoples of New Mexico also participated in the capture and sale of indigenous and Spanish people. Before Europeans invaded North America, Native peoples had practiced captive exchange for a wide variety of purposes: out of revenge, for use as sacrificial subjects, or for reproduction and marriage.²⁷ Generally, pre-contact Indian captivity occurred on a small scale and was situated within particular cultural contexts. With the onslaught of Spanish colonialism—which involved the introduction of depopulating diseases, new technologies, and connections to global markets—captivity was commodified, systematized, and expanded. As Ned Blackhawk argues, changing practices of captive-taking and other manifestations of colonial violence rippled outward across North America like the waves from stones thrown into a lake.²⁸

It was into this complicated world of reciprocal raids and spectrums of bondage that Calhoun stepped. His early letters are littered with reports of stolen people, complaints about "Indian depredations," and requests for military reinforcements.²⁹ In March 1850, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Calhoun noted that Indians and Mexicans had not the "slightest objection to becom[ing] purchasers of their own 'kith and kin'" and anyone could find themselves "bought and sold as peons"—"peons" being "but another name for slaves, as that term is understood in our Southern States."³⁰ With his analogy to black chattel slavery in the U.S. South, Calhoun sought to bring southwestern captivity to the attention of distant politicians. However, as he would soon find out, garnering interest

and support from the federal government for his efforts to intervene in the captive trade was no easy task.

**“The Trading in Captives Has Ceased to be Regarded as a Wrong”:
Southern Plains Raiders, Indian Traders, and Article 11**

On March 22, 1850, James Calhoun received five Mexican boys at his office in Santa Fe. The captives, abducted by Apache or Comanche raiders during the previous five years, were brought to Calhoun by a group of traders. Reflecting on the event, Calhoun noted that “the trading in captives has been so long tolerated in this territory, that it has ceased to be regarded as a wrong; and purchasers are not prepared willingly to release without an adequate ransom.” Unless a treaty could be made with the Apaches and Comanches that would force them to “deliver up all captives, free of charge,” Calhoun argued that “the law to be passed by Congress for the release of captives, under the late treaty with Mexico” would have to include appropriations so that the captives could be ransomed from captors, fed, clothed, and delivered to known relatives.³¹

The “late treaty with Mexico” was the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the U.S.-Mexico War on May 30, 1848, forcing Mexico to cede more than half of its territory to the U.S. As territorial governor, Calhoun was presiding over a place that had been, until very recently, an active warzone—not only during the U.S.-Mexico War. Historian Brian DeLay argues that this war was preceded by a just-as-important series of ongoing conflicts fought between southwestern Indian peoples and the Spanish Mexican inhabitants of Mexico.³² According to DeLay, in the early 1830s, Comanches, Kiowas, Apaches, and Navajos abandoned their peace agreements with northern Mexican settlers and began conducting coordinated raids on Mexican towns and ranches, destroying property and killing or abducting scores of animals and people. Mexicans responded in kind, and the conflicts intensified during the 1830s and 1840s, with Indian raiding parties of more than a thousand warriors decimating much of the Mexican North and even reaching as far south as the cities of Guadalajara and Querétaro, just a few hundred miles north of Mexico City.³³ By the mid-1840s, the raids had “claimed thousands of Mexican and Indian lives, made tens of thousands more painful and often retched, ruined northern Mexico’s economy, stalled its demographic growth, and depopulated much of its countryside,” directly influencing the outcome of the subsequent U.S.-Mexico War by draining the Mexican nation-state of economic and military resources and justifying (in the minds of Anglo Americans) U.S. occupation of Mexico.³⁴

If the “late treaty” was the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the “law to be passed” was Article 11 of that document, which tasked the U.S. with pre-

venting future "incursions" into Mexico by the "savage tribes" who lived in the ceded territory.³⁵ It stipulated that the U.S. government would redeem and return any Mexicans held captive by these Indians, and would make it illegal for U.S. inhabitants to "purchase or acquire any Mexican...who may have been captured by Indians."³⁶ Article 11—perhaps the sole nominally good thing that came to Mexico out a conflict that stripped the nation of more than half of its territorial claims—signified the continued power and influence of Native peoples in the Southwest. Fulfilling this article of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was one of Calhoun's primary jobs as Indian agent and territorial governor, and in his efforts to do so, he was introduced to the central role that Southern Plains Indian raiders and traders played in the southwestern captivity trade.

Captive-taking and captive exchange was not limited to the borderlands of New Mexico, but rather reached out onto the southern regions of the Great Plains. By the nineteenth century, some Great Plains Indian groups (the Comanche, the Kiowa, and the Apache) had adapted to the introduction of horses and guns and became the principal suppliers of captives in the Southwest. When Calhoun arrived in New Mexico, Comanches had become the most populous and prominent group of Indians raiders in the region. Kiowa and Apaches peoples also became prominent captive-takers, but through different historical trajectories.³⁷ Comanches acquired horses from Utes in the late seventeenth century—an innovation that allowed them to hunt, travel, trade, and raid far more efficiently than their non-equestrian counterparts.³⁸ Comanche movement south from the Great Basin and east onto the Southern Plains in the early eighteenth century was predicated on raiding.³⁹ When they were not exchanging goods and people at New Mexican trade fairs, Comanches and their Ute allies led devastating attacks on Spanish, Pueblo, Apache, and Navajo communities, coming away from both the trades and the raids with more horses, goods, and captives.⁴⁰ Historian Pekka Hämäläinen argues that from about 1750 to 1850, the Comanches not only challenged encroachments by Spanish, French, Mexican, and Anglo American peoples but were in fact "the dominant people in the Southwest," establishing an extensive empire underpinned by overwhelming military power that eclipsed both European empires and other Indigenous societies in the borderlands.⁴¹

While recent scholarship suggests that livestock, rather than captives, served as the intended object of most Comanche raids, Comanches nonetheless captured, traded, and incorporated thousands of Euro-American and indigenous captives during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴² Comanches took mostly female and young captives for their value as salable commodities; as laborers to tend herds, prepare hides, and perform labor around camp; and as wives and children to replenish Comanche populations and enhance the status of warriors.⁴³ Patriarchal social motivations

drove captive-taking: Comanche warriors competed to acquire multiple wives—sometimes as many as ten or more—who could provide sexual services, process more hides, and increase the social prestige and political influence of their Comanche husbands.⁴⁴ According to DeLay, most captives eventually became “low-status kin who shared the rights and responsibilities of membership in Comanche communities,” thereby strengthening both Comanche economy and society.⁴⁵

Thus, the territory that the U.S. claimed from Mexico was not free for the taking, but rather under the contested control of Comanches and other powerful Native peoples. Though tasked with enforcing Article 11 in New Mexico, Calhoun faced a host of issues that impeded his ability to do so. First was the problem of preventing Indian raids into Mexico. The U.S. had nowhere near enough military outposts and soldiers to police a two-thousand-mile border. Indeed, Calhoun could hardly protect the citizens of New Mexico Territory from Indian raids, noting in August 1849 that because “the Indians [of the Southwest] generally, are in bad temper,” the “number of Troops [sic] are not sufficient here to keep upon them a proper check.” The problem was not just one of numbers: the majority of the soldiers stationed in New Mexico in 1849 were infantry troops, who, though they could defend “posts...and property,” were vastly less useful than mounted troops for staging effective military action against the equestrian Indians of the Southwest.⁴⁶

The difficulty of protecting New Mexicans with limited resources plagued Calhoun for his entire tenure in the territory. The U.S. prohibited the retaliatory raids that had long been the primary means by which *nuevomexicanos* defended themselves in the violent exchange economy of the southwest borderlands. During 1849 and 1850, Calhoun reported dozens of accounts of “Indian depredations” against New Mexican villages in which animals and people were killed or carried off by raiders. When he was finally appointed as territorial governor in February 1851, Calhoun called up a “Volunteer Corps” of civilians to prevent Indian depredations, and authorized the Pueblo Indians to make war on the raiders and “take their animals and such other property as they may have with them.”⁴⁷ However, the un-mounted, untrained, and disorganized soldiers were not much help against skilled raiders, and by July 1851, Calhoun again found himself requesting mounted troops and artillery to protect the settled villagers of New Mexico.⁴⁸

In addition to being poorly equipped, Calhoun’s volunteers were only authorized to defend settlements, not to mount offensive attacks—a fact that frustrated New Mexican citizens immensely. Indeed, on July 20, 1851, Calhoun received a petition written by members of the New Mexican legislature that attempted to impress upon him the true extent of the “dreadful evils of war which have been inflicted upon us by the savage Indians,” and

urged him to grant them the right to send organized raiding parties against Indians that would split up "all the Captives, and the other spoils that may be taken from them."⁴⁹

Perhaps even more troubling than the paucity of effective military troops was Calhoun's ambivalent relationship to the traders who sold the captives to him. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Mexican merchants who traded with Southern Plains Indians had become important intermediaries of the captive exchange economy in New Mexico. These Indian traders, sometimes called *comancheros* were, according to Josiah Gregg—a famous Anglo American Santa Fe trader—"usually composed of the indigent and rude classes of the frontier villages, who collect together several times a year and launch upon the plains," carrying "trinkets and trumperies of all kinds, and perhaps a bag of bread or pinole" that they would "barter away to the savages for horses and mules."⁵⁰ However Gregg might have characterized them, *comancheros* were deft navigators of markets, important cultural brokers, and the latest in a long tradition of people who facilitated exchange between different southwestern groups. *Comancheros* typically redeemed captives and resold them for profit, sometimes back to their families, but other times as common laborers to the highest bidder.⁵¹

In his correspondence, Calhoun roundly condemned these traders, primarily because they maintained productive relationships with Indian raiders who were hostile to the citizens whom he represented. In October 1849, Calhoun recalled encountering several traders who "travelled through the Apache Country" and "spoke of the Apaches as good people," notwithstanding that these Indians "had a number of Mexican captives."⁵² Outraged, he exclaimed:

Why is it that *these traders* have no fears, no apprehensions, and pass in every direction through country roamed over by Comanches, Apaches, Navajoes, and Utahs, unharmed in person or property, when these same Indians show by their conduct a determined and eternal hostility to all Mexicans and others, who remain quietly at home, and whose towns and children, and property of every kind are unsafe beyond the shadow of their own domicils [sic]?⁵³

Noting that the *comancheros* often supplied hostile Indians with arms and ammunition, Calhoun wagered angrily that "so long as these wandering merchants are permitted a free and unrestrained access to the wild Indians of this country, just so long are we to be harassed by them," and vowed to put an end to their activities.⁵⁴

Yet despite his rhetoric, Calhoun depended on these traders as he attempted to negotiate southwestern captive exchange networks as a newcomer with very few social connections. The vast majority of the

captives that Calhoun redeemed came from Indian traders. This highlights a paradox in captive redemption efforts: according to Article 11, Calhoun was tasked with redeeming all Mexican captives living among Indians and returning them to their pre-captivity families; yet in the act of purchasing the captives, Calhoun was incentivizing captive taking, both for captive-takers and for go-betweens like the *comancheros*. Beyond simply trading with *comancheros*, Calhoun sometimes empowered them as agents who could negotiate in his stead. In 1849, when he learned that a band of Apaches had killed Anglo American trader James White and abducted his wife Ann White, her daughter, and her enslaved black woman, Calhoun decided not to send a military expedition after the raiders. Instead, he hired a trader named Aguste Lacome, whom Calhoun described as “a daring, fearless, and withal, a discrete man”—a designation quite different from Calhoun’s earlier “wandering merchants” tirade.⁵⁵ Although Lacome was unsuccessful in his efforts to redeem either White or her daughter, the immediacy with which he was dispatched underscored Calhoun’s high confidence in his abilities.

Captive traders made excellent profits, sometimes acquiring vast quantities of goods and money when redeeming the children of rich Anglos or Mexicans. Other captive traders ransomed captives and never got around to returning them to their families, instead exploiting them as cheap laborers. Fowler Sandoval, a Mexican trader living near El Morro, seems to have passed a redeemed captive down to a family member named Diego Sandoval, possibly his son.⁵⁶ Captive traders made their livelihoods off captivity—a fact that should have made them strange bedfellows for someone like Calhoun, who was tasked with ending the captive trade.

Beyond his military impotence and his complicated relationship to traders, Calhoun simply lacked the funds necessary to fulfill Article 11. When Calhoun first traveled to New Mexico in 1849, the Secretary of the Interior appropriated a paltry 300 dollars for “the release of such Mexican captives as may be found among the Indians and for which demand might be made on the United States.”⁵⁷ As Calhoun would soon discover, \$300 was hardly sufficient for the redemption of more than a few captives: although the value of captives fluctuated, he reported in 1850 that “good looking” female captives in New Mexico were “valued from \$50 to \$150 each; males, as they may be useful, one-half less, never more,” a price differential that suggested the long-standing preference for female captives in the southwestern trade.⁵⁸

Money was necessary not only to pay traders who were not willing to part with captives without “adequate ransom,” but also to feed, clothe, and pay for the captives to be transported to the border of Mexico.⁵⁹ Calhoun simply could not afford all of these expenses. On July 15, 1850, in order to pay for the redemption and return of the thirteen captives that he had successfully redeemed, Calhoun had to borrow an additional

1000 dollars from Cyrus Choice, an Indian agent in New Mexico.⁶⁰ But by July 30, those funds were completely exhausted. Calhoun lamented that Congress had not yet made the necessary appropriations for the payment of the loan: he found the situation "exceedingly to be regretted; and really embarrassing," as he had promised Choice that the loan would be payable on sight.⁶¹ By this point in his cash-poor summer, Calhoun's assistants and agents were working for no pay. In an August 5 account of his yearly expenses, Calhoun reported that he was 2309 dollars in debt, excluding the 1000 dollars owed Choice, as well as various other smaller debts to other lenders in New Mexico.⁶² It took until he was appointed governor on February 28, 1851, for him to pay off the debts incurred during this first summer of captive redemption.

The futility of attempting to fulfill Article 11 was not lost on some observers of southwestern captivity. William Emory assured his readers:

No amount of force could have kept the Indians from crossing the line to commit depredations, and I think that one hundred millions of dollars would not repay the damages they have inflicted. Whole sections of country have been depopulated, and the stock driven off and killed; and in entire states the ranches have been deserted and the people driven into the towns.⁶³

And the landscapes of trauma and dispossession that Emory noticed were not healing. Throughout the 1850s, Indian raiders continued to prey on northern Mexico, in blatant disregard for the U.S. obligations in Article 11. Redrawn national borders meant that Mexican forces could not pursue the Indians back to their homelands because those lands were now claimed by the U.S., so in 1850, Mexican settlers in Durango and elsewhere threatened to sue the U.S. government for damages committed by Indian raiders since the end of the U.S.-Mexico War.⁶⁴ Though some in Congress briefly considered returning the conquered territory to Mexico, a less extreme option soon emerged. The U.S. obtained a release from Article 11's stipulation as a part of the Gadsden Purchase of 1854, in which the U.S. paid cash-poor Mexico 10 million dollars for nearly thirty-thousand square miles in present-day southern Arizona and southern New Mexico.⁶⁵ Thus, the U.S. was able to back out of Article 11 only six years after signing the treaty.

Calhoun, as a representative of the U.S. government that had a habit of underestimating Southern Plains Indian raiders, lacked the resources to fulfill Article 11. That his most successful redemptions depended entirely on New Mexican traders shows that he was unable to dismantle or bypass the basic structures of captive exchange. On the whole, Article 11 stood for U.S. miscalculation of the power and authority of Native peoples in the nineteenth-century southwest borderlands.⁶⁶ However, because it demanded the unconditional redemption and return of all Mexican captives, Article

11 also ignored the phenomenon of incorporation, whereby captives were brought into their captor societies as kin—another feature of the south-western captive trade that impeded Calhoun's efforts to fulfill his duties.

**He “Prefers to Remain, Notwithstanding His Peonage”:
Alienation, Incorporation, and the Blunt Tool of Captive Redemption**

Back in mid-August 1849, while on his expedition into Navajo country during his first month as Indian agent, Calhoun had encountered four young male captives. He returned three of the captives to their pre-captivity families, but the fourth, Anañe, elected to remain with the Navajos. Taken as a boy by a “roving band of Navajos” seventeen years before, he had been sold to an Indian named Waro, to whom he still belonged. At the time of his capture, Anañe's parents lived in Santa Fe, where he “supposed” they still resided, but did not know for sure. Calhoun reckoned that Anañe was not “under many restraints,” given that he “prefer[ed] most decidedly to remain with the Navajos, notwithstanding his peonage.”⁶⁷

Calhoun provided a description of the man who had been captured by unidentified Navajo raiders as a young child, sold to another Navajo, and raised up in a new society. At some point, Anañe married two women and had several children with them. Through this, he had acquired some cultural capital and economic standing in the new social space that he occupied. Although Anañe still described himself as living in a dependent relationship with an owner, he also seemed to wield a degree of authority over his life, refusing the offer of people who wanted to return him to the home of his pre-captivity parents. Anañe's is a story that suggests complicated choices made under coerced and semi-coerced circumstances, a story underpinned by relationships of dependency and reciprocity, and a story about changing notions of identity.

Southwestern captivity produced wide ranges of unfreedom, manifested itself in complex relationships of exchange and negotiation between captive and captor, and produced fluid understandings of identity and belonging. However, in his role as Indian agent and territorial governor, Calhoun was unable to account for these nuances of captivity. Captive redemption, which was Calhoun's principal tool of redress against captive exchange, exhibited a very narrow view of captivity, presuming that all individuals who were taken captive would remain visible as captives, would be purchasable, and would want to be returned to their pre-captivity societies. Calhoun's redemptions did little to intercede in the economic and cultural realities of southwestern captive exchange. In order to better understand who was taken captive, why they were taken, and how they experienced captivity—and to thereby further expose the shortcomings of redemption—it is important

to delineate the spectrums of alienation and belonging (from the perspective of captives) and of isolation and incorporation (from the perspective of captors) that dictated southwestern captivity.

Most of the captives that Calhoun redeemed were children taken between the ages of 6 and 12.⁶⁸ Young people were disproportionately represented among Calhoun's redeemed captives for a number of possible reasons; they were easier to capture, less likely to run away, and served as pawns in southwestern cycles of male-dominated exchange, competition, and revenge. James Brooks suggests that the various Indian peoples and Spaniards of the Southwest had similar—or at least conversant—patriarchal cultures, arguing that "native and Spanish men shared similar notions of honor, shame, and gender, with the control of women and children as a central proof of status."⁶⁹ In the violent exchange economy of the Southwest, if livestock was "capital on the hoof," young captives were manifestations of economic *and* cultural capital, simultaneously producing products, performing services, and serving as "objects of men's contestations for power."⁷⁰

Perhaps most important, however, young people were valued for their capacity to be incorporated into captor societies. Children—especially those between the ages of 5 and 12—seem to have been targeted in many Comanche raids because people at such a young age were quick learners of new languages and new cultures.⁷¹ Almost all captives were subject to some form of social incorporation, often finding themselves "assimilated to the kin nexus of their 'host' society in affinal or fictive terms"—which usually entailed adoption or marriage or both.⁷² Most nineteenth-century captives of Comanches experienced a spectrum of captivity, ranging from complete social acceptance and belonging via marriage and adoption, to a lifetime of labor as chattel slaves with no inherent rights or social standing. Degrees of belonging could depend on a Comanche's potential interest in making the captive a spouse or adoptee, on the captive's capacity to assimilate quickly into Comanche society, and on the captive's performance as a laborer or raider. Among Comanche peoples, incorporation could take years. Alienation-belonging spectrums were nested, functioning at all social scales, and captives could exist simultaneously as fictive kin to their adopted relatives and as servants or slaves to other Comanches. Comanche slavery was not permanent, and if a Comanche slave woman married a Comanche, she and her children acquired full-blood rights. However, Comanche captives generally maintained smaller kinship networks, held less social and political power than full-blood Comanches, and were—like *indios de rescate* in *nuevomexicano* social spaces—rarely able to shed the alienation associated with their servile status.⁷³

The entire process of captive-taking was an alienating one. Captives were abducted from their home societies and brought to foreign places

populated by strange people who spoke an unfamiliar language. Once they arrived in a captor community, captives often underwent a painful process of natal alienation, during which they suffered beatings designed to strip them of their former identities and test their potential for integration. Josiah Gregg noted that new captives of Comanches often faced the “scourgings and insults of the squaws and children,” as well as “a blow, a kick, a pinch, a bite, or whatever simple punishment [the Comanche women and children] may choose.”⁷⁴ Although sometimes random or malicious, such beatings often had the practical purpose of disorienting captives, erasing their previous sense of identity, and turning them into disassociated beings who could be more effectively brought into Comanche society.

All of the young captives that Calhoun encountered had lived in captor societies somewhere along a spectrum between belonging and alienation. Anto Josea and Teodosia Gonzales, both of whom were redeemed from Navajos in 1849, reported that they were “well treated.” In contrast, Manuel Lucira, also taken captive as a child in New Mexico by Navajo raiders and delivered to Calhoun in 1849, was apparently “badly treated” while in captivity. Lucira was also “sold several times,” which suggests that he was less a full member of his host society and more an exchangeable commodity.⁷⁵ Indeed, even if Josea and Gonzales were well treated, that they were for sale suggests that they were not fully incorporated. As anthropologist Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez notes, “although captive labor was precious and captives certainly had value as potential commodities, materialistic considerations were never sufficient to reverse true adoptions, and Comanches were generally reluctant to let acculturated captives go.”⁷⁶ Many—indeed, perhaps even most—captives who achieved social belonging in their captor societies were simply not for sale.

Some metrics of social belonging that mattered in Euro-American social spaces did not matter in Native ones. For example, most Indians of the Southwest seemed willing to incorporate captives regardless of what Euro-Americans thought of as “race” or “nation.” In 1847, while traveling through present-day southeastern Colorado, an Ohioan named Lewis Hector Garrard encountered a “genuine specimen of the thick-lipped negro,” who Garrard determined to be “a slave to a Cherokee Ross.”⁷⁷ Apparently, months or even years earlier, while traveling with a surveying party near the relocated Cherokee nation in Indian Territory, the man had been ambushed by a band of Comanches. The Comanche raiders killed everyone else, but took him prisoner. After holding him captive for “many months,” the Comanches, “having confidence in him, made him a brave.” With this change, the man began to accompany Comanche raiding parties to northern Mexico, where, in series of sustained raids, they captured hundreds of horses, mules, women, and children. For his prowess as a raider, the man was apparently “given a squaw,” a gesture that may have indicated his solidified social place within this Comanche band.⁷⁸

If they might have incorporated blacks, Indians also captured and incorporated young whites and Mexicans. In 1847, the German traveler Ferdinand Roemer noted running into a blond-haired, blue-eyed man named Lyons who was traveling with Comanches in Texas. Lyons had an eight-year-old Mexican boy riding on the horse behind him, whom the German visitor recorded as appearing "half-starved and shivering in the cold north wind, because of his scanty dress." Upon inquiry, Lyons informed Roemer that he had "caught [the boy] on the Rio Grande." According to the German, Lyons spoke these words "as if he was speaking of some animal."⁷⁹ Evidently, Lyons had so integrated himself into Comanche society that he took charge of a Mexican captive.⁸⁰

Just as captives were evaluated according to standards of usefulness that had more to do with Native values than Euro-American ones, so too did individuals make choices under the yoke of captivity, evaluating how they would perform in tense social circumstances. Some captive boys who accompanied Indian raids distinguished themselves through enthusiastic participation in warfare—a phenomenon that became something of a trope among southwest borderlands locals and newcomers alike. In 1828, José Ruíz, a Texan of Spanish descent, noted in a Mexican-government report on Indian tribes in Texas, that the "customs and habits of [incorporated captives] are as wicked, or sometimes even worse, than those of the other barbarians."⁸¹ Also hypothesizing about fierce Indian warriors who appeared to be former Mexican captives, Gregg stated that the combination of "the subtlety of the Mexican" and "the barbarity of the Indian" often produced "the most formidable savages."⁸² In light of Indian adoption practices, however, it seems logical that young captive boys would do everything in their power to prove themselves eager members of their new society.⁸³

Still, some captives who had earned privileges within captor societies did not seem to want to remain there. The "negro" that Garrard encountered seems to have earned his belonging within Comanche society. If a fierce warrior, the man was probably also adept at learning languages: Garrard noted that his words were "mixed with Indian terms." However, according to Garrard, the man "longed for other lands" and looked for every opportunity to leave his Comanche adopters.⁸⁴ He seized the chance when his Comanche raiding party was attacked by a party of Mexicans mounting a retaliatory raid. Escaping by hiding in the river, he slipped away and traveled north for many miles, finally encountering the Cheyenne camp at Big Timbers on the banks of the Arkansas River where Garrard was camped in January 1847. The man evidently hid and watched the village for a day to ensure that it was not occupied by Comanches before approaching.

This black man had created opportunities for himself in a particular group of Comanches, acquiring a wife and, presumably, some property. Nevertheless, he still sought other people and other places—and seems

shortly to have found them. While staying at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River in spring 1847, English traveler George Ruxton encountered an "American negro" who claimed to have been a former slave of Cherokees and a former captive of Comanches, and had just departed from Big Timbers.⁸⁵ It is likely that this "American negro" was the same man that Garrard encountered at Big Timbers. If so, it seems that he was captured and perhaps even re-enslaved by an Anglo American fur trader named William Tharp.⁸⁶

However, notwithstanding that state of coercion, the "American negro" always seemed to Ruxton to be "laughing, singing, and dancing, and cutting uncouth capers"—a description that reeks of European and Euro-American racialization, presenting the man as a silly, buffoonish character, but that nonetheless might suggest that he was pleased with his new situation.⁸⁷ Ruxton also reported that the man played the fiddle. Apparently, discovering an old instrument somewhere in Bent's Fort, he performed such songs as "Lucy Neal," "Old Dan Tucker," and "Buffalo Gals" at "all hours of the day and night" with enough skill that he became a regular member of the local fandango band.⁸⁸ He might have found community with Andrew, Dick, and Charlotte Green, three black slaves of the Bents who lived and worked at the fort.

Garrard's and Ruxton's accounts of this "negro" man paint a vivid, if fragmented, picture of an individual who was a particularly successful navigator of the southwest borderlands, adapting, achieving belonging, and deliberately choosing to move on to a new space where he faced further exploitation but also found further opportunity for social recognition. His experience cannot be neatly categorized by a slave/free dichotomy; instead, it was marked simultaneously by a nearly constant threat of coercion and by opportunities for advancement, re-creation, and acceptance. The institution of captive redemption as practiced by Calhoun left little room for people like this man, who actively made choices, constructed social networks, and reinvented themselves. Instead, captive redemption denied the existence of any process of incorporation by presuming that all captives needed to be rescued forcibly and returned to their pre-captivity societies.

The handful of captives who were redeemed by Calhoun were mostly young, male, and exchangeable. But these captives were not representative of the preponderance of people captured and traded in the mid-nineteenth-century southwest borderlands. Captives were rarely completely free or completely captive. Captivity produced new possibilities and foreclosed old ones; it motivated the learning of new languages and cultures and the forgetting of old ones; it ripped families apart and formed new ones. Calhoun could never have begun to address the multifaceted effects of captive-taking and captive exchange, handcuffed as he was by a clumsy and simplistic institution of captive redemption that wrongly presumed that

all captives were visible, that all captives were for sale, and that all captives would want to return to their pre-captivity families.

Conclusion: A Two-Hundred-Year-Old "Predatory War"

In 1851, near the end of his tenure as governor in New Mexico, Calhoun had made little headway in his struggle against captive-taking and captive exchange. In October, Calhoun reported that the "number of depredations" committed against New Mexicans by "our lords of the mountains and valleys" (probably Navajos and Utes) during the previous month had "not been exceeded in any previous months since I have been a resident of this territory."⁸⁹ In November, writing to Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Sumner, who commanded the U.S. Army in New Mexico, Calhoun requested military firepower and assistance, noting that he did not have the means to protect the civilians of New Mexico or to "get to the Indian country" safely to negotiate more treaties that could stem the flood of raids.⁹⁰ Sumner agreed to pass along one hundred rifles to the Volunteer Corps on the conditions that the arms be "immediately returned" to the regular U.S. troops upon request, and that they never be used to make "hostile incursions into Indian Country."⁹¹ Calhoun again bemoaned the lack of troops and the U.S. government's refusal to allow retaliatory raids, assuring Sumner that without adequate protection against Indian raiders, "our firesides must be rendered desolate before the spring season of the ensuing year is reached."⁹² Sumner again refused to grant Calhoun the ability to arm Mexicans for offensive raids against southwestern Indians, suggesting that "this is not the kind of warfare that" the US government wished to "to engage in."⁹³

Sumner had reasons for denying Calhoun. Writing to Adjutant General Roger Jones, Sumner noted that he prohibited Calhoun from arming New Mexicans because he wanted to prevent any "Mexican marauding parties from traversing the Indian country," a type of military conflict that ran against his notion of how people within the jurisdiction of a "civilized" and "orderly" country were supposed to conduct themselves. He argued that the "predatory war" between Indians and Mexicans, in which "they steal women and children, and cattle, from each other, and in fact carry on the war, in all respects, like two Indian nations," had been going on "for two hundred years...quite time enough to prove, that unless some change is made the war will be interminable."⁹⁴ In this letter, Sumner communicated his sense of the long-standing, self-reinforcing world of captivity in the southwest borderlands, with which Calhoun was now all-too-familiar.

Unlike Calhoun, however, Sumner refused to negotiate with the brokers of southwestern networks of exchange. Instead, he attempted to exercise authority in the Southwest through a different set of tactics that had been

formed and hardened on the bloody battlefields of the Black Hawk War in the upper Midwest during the 1830s, where Sumner had been promoted from first lieutenant to captain. These tactics were predicated on the overwhelming military force of the U.S. and envisioned the removal or annihilation of the Indian peoples who stood in the way. Sumner's unapologetically militaristic vision of U.S. colonization is evident in one of his earlier letters from October 1851, in which he suggested, in reference to the Navajo, that:

They have broken, and set at naught so many treaties, that it seems useless to treat with them. I think it will be better to let them feel, for a time that we have a grasp upon them that cannot be shaken off....If the large post established at the Cañon Bonito...does not effectively restrain those Indians, and put a stop to further depredations, nothing will do it but their entire extermination.⁹⁵

The "large post" that Sumner referenced was Fort Defiance, built in what is now northeastern Arizona, designed to project the force of the U.S. military into Navajo country. Sumner's words foreshadowed the Southern Plains Indian wars to come, in which the U.S. brought the full weight of its army to bear on the Navajos, Apaches, Kiowas, and Comanches in an effort to defeat, subjugate, and remove these Indians once and for all.⁹⁶ Fort Defiance was reestablished as Fort Canby in 1863 and served as the base for a ruthless military campaign that culminated in the infamous 1864 Long Walk, during which Navajos were forced at gunpoint to march to reservation land at the harsh and barren Bosque Redondo—an event that remains perhaps the most devastating and traumatic moment in Navajo history.⁹⁷

However, full U.S. conquest of the Southwest still lay years in the future. In the meantime, local Indian and Mexican captive-takers continued to dictate the dynamics of borderlands interactions. If any one group of people did dominate the Southwest, it continued to be the Comanches, who experienced a revitalization in their raiding and trading activities throughout the 1860s, and who continued to be a prominent force until their final military surrender in the Texas Panhandle in 1875. The Comanches' eventual decline was more due to outbreaks of cholera and smallpox, the decline of the buffalo herds, and the overwhelming influx of white settlers than it was to any particular military or political defeat.⁹⁸ The recession of a powerful, sovereign, and autonomous Indian Country in the Southwest was far from predetermined at mid-century.

The persistence of captivity in the southwest borderlands was one measure of the limited U.S. legal and political authority in the area. With the Peonage Act of 1867, the U.S. attempted to end labor coercion in the Southwest.⁹⁹ However, captives continued to be exploited throughout the nineteenth century, and perhaps even later: historian Estévan Rael-Gálvez has identified a relation-

ship of subservience in Colorado in 1934 that, if it was not the explicit enslavement of an Indian man in a Spanish household, certainly contained remnants of such slavery.¹⁰⁰ Calhoun and his successors displayed incomplete understandings of captivity in the Southwest—incomplete understandings that would come at the expense of the individuals who for generations to come continued to find themselves at the wrong end of relations of power and dominance, and caught within an especially tenacious system of labor exploitation.

In their attempts to change the long-standing practices of raiding and trading, Lieutenant Colonel Sumner and his superiors succeeded only in hamstringing *nuevomexicanos*, who suffered the impact of devastating Indian raids without official sanction for retaliation. In one of his last letters as governor of New Mexico, sent in April 1852—a letter that he had to dictate because he was bedridden with scurvy—Calhoun stated that as a result of Indian raids, New Mexico was “in a more critical condition than it has ever been before,” and wagered that the Santa Fe Trail was soon to become “so infested with Indians that it will be unsafe to travel except with large and well provided escorts.” Conditions were so dire, in Calhoun’s view, that every “American female” should be advised to leave the country, lest she be taken captive in the impending onslaught of raids. He helplessly asked whether the U.S. government would send more troops to protect *nuevomexicanos* from Native peoples—“for Heavens sake let us know or give us the opportunity for each one to look out for himself”—but he could do nothing more than plead.¹⁰¹ On May 6, 1852, Calhoun, who was stricken with illness and devastated by the news that his daughter had just passed away, departed from New Mexico on the Santa Fe Trail en route for Washington, D.C., and, he hoped, to his home in Georgia.¹⁰² He did not make it. On July 22, 1852, James Calhoun died and was buried near Independence, Missouri.¹⁰³

Calhoun’s task was difficult. He was sent to a complicated borderlands that he did not understand, a place where no group of people held complete dominance, a place of violence, interdependency, and flux. Historian Andrés Reséndez argues that Calhoun essentially accepted the captivity system of the southwest borderlands, doing nothing to prevent Anglos, Indians, and New Mexicans from “holding men, women, and children in peonage.”¹⁰⁴ Calhoun did nothing because he could do nothing; he was neither prepared nor equipped to exert control over the Southwest. His futile efforts to intervene in the captive trade show the extent to which captivity was ingrained in the social, political, and economic worlds of the borderlands. In mid-century New Mexico, the local particulars of captivity—knowing who might come and abduct you or your spouse or your children, how you would go about finding and redeeming a relative who was taken captive, and how you could adapt to captivity if you were captured and redemption never came—mattered a great deal more than the legal and political claims of a distant U.S. nation-state.

1. Fletcher Green, "James S. Calhoun: Pioneer Georgia Leader and First Governor of New Mexico," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (December 1955): 309-347, esp. 310-12 and 329-30.
2. Medill to Calhoun, April 7, 1849, in Annie H. Abel, ed., *The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun, while Indian Agent in Santa Fe and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New Mexico* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1915), p. 3.
3. Ibid.
4. Bent to Medill, Nov. 10, 1846, in Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 8.
5. For the Taos Revolt, see Ann Hyde, *Empires, Nations, Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2012), pp. 384-87.
6. With the term "southwest borderlands," I refer to a region that has become the present-day American Southwest and Mexican North, but that has long been a complicated zone of intercultural contact and exchange. Borderlands historiography dates back to Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), but has changed greatly since Bolton first attempted to produce a Hispanic counterpart to Frederick Jackson Turner's narrative of the U.S. frontier. I use the term "borderlands" to direct attention towards places and peoples that defied the limited frameworks of the modern nation-state. For an excellent account of how scholars have explored and understood what would become the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, see Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, eds., *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 1-32.
7. James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwestern Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
8. Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).
9. See Calhoun to Medill, August 15, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, pp. 20-30, for the expedition.
10. Calhoun to Medill, August 15, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 23.
11. Calhoun to Medill, October 1, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 29. I have rendered all names as Calhoun spelled them.
12. Brooks, pp. 45-48; Blackhawk, p. 21.
13. Brooks, 48-49; Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), pp. 116-17.
14. Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 101-112; Reséndez, pp. 116-18.
15. Gutiérrez, pp. 112-17; Reséndez, pp. 118-23.
16. Blackhawk, pp. 24-27.
17. Gutiérrez, pp. 103-04. For an exploration of the important roles women played in Spanish-Indian interactions in the Texas borderlands, see Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

18. For the Pueblo Revolt as an insurrection against Spanish colonial slavery, see Reséndez, *The Other Slavery*, pp. 149-71; see also Brooks, pp. 51-59; and Gutiérrez, pp. 131-40.
19. Brooks, p. 123, for quote; see also Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 26.
20. Blackhawk, pp. 22-27.
21. Brooks, pp. 123-25.
22. Hämäläinen, p. 27; see also Brooks, pp. 124-25.
23. Gutiérrez, pp. 180-81; see Brooks, p. 6, for the definition of *criados*.
24. Brooks, pp. 125, 230.
25. Hämäläinen, pp. 38-39; Reséndez, pp. 180-181.
26. Brooks, pp. 125-138, quote on p. 125; see also Gutiérrez, pp. 155-56 and 184-86, for poignant examples of exploitation of Indian women.
27. For scholarship that explores pre-contact and early colonial Indian slavery across North America, see, e.g., Allan Galloway, *Indian Slavery in Colonial America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Faces of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Daniel Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (October 1983): 528-559; and Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
28. Blackhawk, p. 8.
29. See, for example, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, pp. 50, 73, 160-61, 196, 228, 259-60.
30. Calhoun to Brown, March 15, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 161.
31. See Calhoun to Brown, March 31, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 181-83, for the details about the captives in this paragraph.
32. Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
33. For an effort to map the scope of Indian raids in Mexico, see Reséndez, p. 220.
34. DeLay, p. xv.
35. DeLay, p. xiii.
36. Ibid.
37. See Reséndez, pp. 181-86, 231-37, for captivity and Apache peoples; and DeLay, pp. 114-38, for captivity and Kiowa peoples. Although initially the worst victims of enslavement, the Plains Apache peoples eventually adopted the horse and became principal captive-takers.
38. Reséndez, p. 175.
39. Hämäläinen, pp. 23-25.
40. Blackhawk, pp. 36-40.
41. Hämäläinen, p. 2.
42. Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez, "A Different Look at Native American Depopulation: Comanche Raiding, Captive Taking, and Population Decline," *Ethnohistory* 61, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 391-418; see 391-98, for the argument that captives were not the sole, nor even primary, purpose of Comanche raids, as well as 397-98 for reports of the numbers of captives held by Comanches. See also DeLay, pp. 317-40; Reséndez, p. 222; and Hämäläinen, pp. 250-51, for other estimates of captives

taken and casualties caused during Comanche raids in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s alone.

43. DeLay, pp. 90-93.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-96.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

46. Calhoun to Medill, August 15, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 20.

47. "Proclamation," enclosed in Calhoun to Lea, March 22, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 301.

48. Beaubien to Calhoun, June 11, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 358.

49. Members of the Legislature to Calhoun, July 9, 1851, in Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, pp. 386-87.

50. Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies: Or, The Journal of a Santa Fé Trader, During Eight Expeditions Across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico*, 2 vols. (New York: H.G. Langley, 1844), 2: 54.

51. For more on *comancheros*, see Reséndez, pp. 228-30; DeLay, pp. 90-91, 110-11.

52. Calhoun to Medill, Oct. 15, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 51.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*

55. Calhoun to Medill, Oct. 29, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 65.

56. Calhoun to Brown, March 31, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 181.

57. Medill to Calhoun, April 7, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 4.

58. Calhoun to Brown, March 15, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, pp.

160-61. Calhoun might have had an incentive to over-value captives in an effort to get more appropriations from the U.S. government. However, when compared to the estimates of an Anglo veteran of the U.S.-Mexico War named Daniel Jones, Calhoun's numbers seem to be on the low end. Jones, who traveled through New Mexico during 1851, provided the slightly higher but still comparable estimate of \$100 for male captives and \$150-200 for female captives. See Daniel Jones, *Forty Years Among the Indians: A True Yet Thrilling Narrative of the Author's Experiences Among the Natives* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1960), p. 47.

59. Calhoun to Brown, March 31, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p.183.

60. Calhoun to Brown, July 15, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, pp. 226-27.

61. Calhoun to Brown, July 30, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 228.

62. Calhoun to Brown, August 5, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 248.

63. William Emory, *Report of the United States and the Mexican Boundary Survey, Made Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1858), p. 51.

64. DeLay, p. 302.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-34.

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 299.

67. Calhoun to Medill, October 1, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 29.

68. For example, Anto Josea was estimated to be 10 years old when he was purchased by Calhoun from the Navajo headman Martínez in 1849. Likewise, both

- Teodosia Gonzales and Refugio Picaros were estimated to be 12 years old when they were redeemed. For Josea and Gonzales, see Calhoun to Medill, October 1, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 29; for Picaros, see Calhoun to Brown, March 31, 1850, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 181.
69. Brooks, p. 34.
 70. *Ibid.*, p. 363.
 71. Rivaya-Martínez, "A Different Look," 363.
 72. Brooks, p. 17.
 73. For a summary of Comanche incorporation practices, see Joaquin Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches: Patterns of Captive Incorporation into Comanche Kinship Networks, 1820-1875," in David Adams and Crista DeLuzio, eds., *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Intercultural American Southwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 48-61.
 74. Gregg, *Commerce*, 2: p. 316. For scholarly analysis and other contemporaneous Euro-American's descriptions of the indoctrination process, see Hämäläinen, p. 254; and Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches," 50.
 75. Calhoun to Medill, Oct. 1, 1849, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 29.
 76. Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches," 54.
 77. Lewis Hector Garrard, *Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail*, ed. Ralph Bieber (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1938), p. 154. This "Cherokee Ross" is probably the famous John Ross, who served as Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation from 1828 to 1866, and owned hundreds of slaves.
 78. *Ibid.*
 79. Ferdinand Roemer, *Texas: With Particular Reference to German Immigration and the Physical Appearance of the Country*, trans. Oswald Mueller (Austin: Texian Press, 1983), pp. 242-43.
 80. Lyons appears in other accounts as well. For example, Dolly Webster reported encountering a blond-haired, blue-eyed captive who was apparently "taken while young, and raised by the Indians," and was "almost a savage." For Webster's quotes, see Benjamin Dolbeare, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Suffering of Dolly Webster, Among the Camanche Indians in Texas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 12.
 81. José Francisco Ruíz, *Report on the Indian Tribes of Texas in 1828*, trans. Georgette Dorn, ed. John Ewers (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1972), pp. 14-15.
 82. Gregg, 2: 314.
 83. See Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches," 59, for a discussion of how captives accrued social status by demonstrating bravery on the warpath.
 84. Garrard, p. 154.
 85. LeRoy Hafen, ed., *Ruxton of the Rockies* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), p. 267.
 86. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-66.
 87. *Ibid.*, p. 268.
 88. *Ibid.*
 89. Calhoun to Lea, Santa Fe, October 1, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 432.
 90. *Ibid.*, p. 433.

91. Sumner to Calhoun, Nov. 10, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 449.
92. Calhoun to Sumner, Nov. 10, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 447.
93. Sumner to Calhoun, Nov. 10, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 452.
94. Sumner to Jones, Nov. 20, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 445.
95. Sumner to Calhoun, Oct. 24, 1851, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 439.
96. For a still-classic account of the army's role in U.S. westward expansion, see Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1970); for a more recent reevaluation of the Indian Wars, see Peter Cozzens, *The Earth is Weeping: The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West* (New York: Knopf, 2016). For an account of the wars against Navajos, see Frank McNitt, *Navajo Wars: Military Campaigns, Slave Raids, and Reprisals* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972).
97. For more on the Navajo Long Walk, see Brown, pp. 23-26.
98. See Hämäläinen, pp. 292-342, for the decline of the Comanche empire.
99. For the Peonage Act of 1867, see William Kiser, *The Borderlands of Slavery: The Struggle Over Captivity and Peonage in the Southwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).
100. For evidence of the ways in which southwestern captivity and captive-based economies persisted, see Brooks, pp. 472-559; for "old Indian Luis" and his slave narrative, see Estévan Rael-Gálvez, "Identifying Captivity and Capturing Identity: Narratives of American Indian Slavery, Colorado and New Mexico, 1776-1934" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2002), pp. 1-26.
101. Calhoun to Lea, Santa Fe, April 6, 1852, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, pp. 514-15.
102. For the death of his daughter, see Calhoun to Lea, January 30, 1852, Abel, ed., *Official Correspondence*, p. 471.
103. Green, p. 310.
104. Reséndez, p. 246.

SECONDARY DISENFRANCHISEMENT OR A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY?

Aboriginal Experiences on the Victorian Goldfields, 1851-1869

Isabella Martin



Image: George Lacy, Australian gold diggings, 1852, drawing, pen and wash, National Library of Australia, accessed [online](#).

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For white miners, the Victorian gold rush is often described as an era in which, despite debauchery on the goldfields, “there was a democracy that helped to form the Australian spirit.”¹ For the thousands of Aboriginal people living in Victoria upon its onset in 1851, the gold rush is instead portrayed as highly destructive to Aboriginal land, health, and relations with settlers.² Scholars like Geoffrey Blainey have detailed the disastrous impact on Aboriginal livelihoods that stemmed from secondary land dispossession, an increased reliance on begging, and high mortality from disease and substance abuse.³ Yet, while this devastation is a vital part of gold rush history, focusing only on victimhood paints a one-sided picture that ignores indigenous autonomy, resistance, and survival by way of their participation in gold rush economies.

In recent years, scholars like Fred Cahir and Ian Clark have attempted to create a more realistic picture of indigenous experiences during the gold rush era. Using the accounts of miners and settlers, these historians demonstrate how Aborigines acted as trackers, miners, traders, pastoralists, and policemen during the gold rush, in order to reveal a history where both victimhood and autonomy are present on the goldfields.⁴ To continue within this framework, this paper investigates Aboriginal experiences and autonomy during the Victorian gold rush through the lens of colonial reforms and rhetoric. Due to the lack of primary documents from Aboriginal sources, their voice remains absent from the historical record during this period. However, Aboriginal autonomy can be assessed by using the accounts of miners, settlers, and historians who visited the goldfields, as well as reports from the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of Aborigines (CBA). While the gold rush initially provided opportunities for increased Aboriginal autonomy, increased government scrutiny during the 1860s—in response to Aboriginal participation in gold rush economies and existing conceptions of Aborigines as a “dying race”—acted to decrease Aboriginal autonomy overall.

This paper draws from three major primary sources to evaluate Aboriginal autonomy: the writings of gold digger James Bonwick, the book *Australia Visited and Revisited* by explorers Samuel Mossman and Thomas Banister, and CBA reports from the 1860s. Although Englishmen wrote all three works, their audiences varied. Bonwick was a schoolteacher and historian who arrived in Australia in 1841, where he spent his initial years teaching and writing his first of many textbooks.⁵ He left for the Victorian goldfields in 1852, hoping to find gold to pay off his debts, to no avail.⁶ Nevertheless, Bonwick released his *Notes of a Gold Digger* later that year for an Australian audience describing and sensationalizing his experiences for younger readers all while making his goldfield experiences somewhat profitable.⁷

Mossman and Banister's *Australia Visited and Revisited* (1853) had goals similar to Bonwick's: to educate and interest readers about the phenomenon of the gold rush and the characters that accompanied it. Mossman was a naturalist and travel writer, whereas Banister was an explorer and soldier, yet it was these varied backgrounds that allowed their book to extend outside the goldfield experience.⁸ In addition to the gold rush, *Australia Visited and Revisited* describes happenings throughout the entire colony, and pays special attention to descriptions of the landscape and the natural environment. Unlike *Notes of a Gold Digger*, *Australia Visited and Revisited* was published for an older London audience with the additional purpose of encouraging migration to Australia.⁹

Following these two pieces from the 1850s are reports from the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of Aborigines (CBA). The CBA was a government-sponsored organization, created in response to concerns about Aboriginal welfare in the 1850s that helped monitor Aboriginal welfare and distribute aid during the 1860s.¹⁰ It relied on "honorary correspondents" to do the majority of its on-the-ground work. These correspondents were important community members, such as pastoralists, police officers, or doctors, who lived in areas already visited by Aborigines.¹¹ Each correspondent sent in their own report, which the government compiled into a large report released annually. These reports were primarily meant for the other members of the CBA, and they record a variety of experiences about the failures or successes of each member's assigned site. Due to the paternalistic purpose of the CBA, the reports give far more detailed descriptions of Aboriginal actions and welfare than *Notes of a Gold Digger* or *Australia Visited and Revisited*.¹² However, all three rarely include Aboriginal voices, and instead describe Aborigines' conditions and experiences solely through a colonial lens.

Prior to the start of the gold rush in 1851, Aborigines in Victoria experienced significant disenfranchisement and decreased autonomy due to paternalistic attempts to control their movement and physical acts of land dispossession by the government. Initial settlement in Australia developed under a *Terra Nullius*, or "no man's land" doctrine, because colonists chose not to recognize Aboriginal property rights and systems of territorial possession.¹³ Due in part to the disregard for nomadic Aboriginal lifestyles and their "intangible" property system, settlers and government officials alike had a low opinion of Aborigines, whom they viewed as savages, describing them as "the most idle, wretched and miserable beings in the world."¹⁴ While proposing the placement of a penal colony in Australia, sailor and diplomat James Matra claimed that one of Australia's main advantages was that it was "peopled only by black inhabitants, who, in the rudest state of society, knew no other arts than such as were necessary

to their mere animal existence.”¹⁵ Because of white perceptions like this, Aboriginal dispossession was inconsequential to the British colonizers.

The fast-growing grazing and farming economies of Victoria helped further the initial wave of land dispossession. As settlers turned traditional hunting and foraging lands into pastures, they damaged Aboriginal forms of subsistence.¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, Aborigines were excluded from participating in these industries. Although most attempted to continue traditional ways of life, land dispossession forced some Aborigines to rely on begging and settler aid.¹⁷ Expropriation and the loss of subsistence was coupled with an influx of settler disease, which produced high rates of mortality and significantly reduced movement and autonomy.¹⁸ Influenced by pre-existing prejudices towards Aborigines, settlers saw climbing mortality rates and “moral degradation” through begging and substance abuse as evidence of Aborigines’ inability to adapt to civilization, prompting settlers to view Aborigines as a dying race.¹⁹ To try to remediate this “inevitable” extinction, the privately-sponsored Aboriginal Protectorate was formed in 1838 as an attempt to both “civilize” Aborigines and restrict their interaction with settler society until they could be fully assimilated.²⁰ To appease settlers who possessed former Aboriginal land and to prepare Aborigines for eventual entry into settler society, the protectorate attempted to relocate Aborigines away from towns. Despite this displacement, no land was allocated for Aboriginal resettlement.²¹ Attempts of assimilation were largely unsuccessful and due to a lack of government support, the Aboriginal Protectorate was dissolved in 1849, leaving Aborigines with minimal support.²² Thus, this first wave of land grabbing, movement restrictions, high mortality from disease, racist attitudes, and exclusion of Aborigines from settler economies had significantly undercut Aboriginal autonomy even before the gold rush. Colonial concerns about moral degradation and extinction, which would spur government-based paternalism in the 1860s, were present prior to the gold rush, and unsuccessful attempts to decrease Aboriginal autonomy—for the benefit of the colony and for the benefit of the Aborigines themselves—had already been made. Within this historical context, Victorian gold rush of 1851 provided an opportunity for Aborigines to gain economic independence and participate in new mining economies, as well as the pastoral economies from which they had been long excluded.²³

The 1850s were a period of government neglect regarding Aborigines, in part due to Victoria’s recent split from New South Wales in 1851. Between 1850 and 1858, only £12,000 were provided for Aboriginal assistance, of which only £10 went to medical aid.²⁴ This lack of assistance produced an outcry from those sympathetic to the Aboriginal condition. For instance, author R.L. Milne described “the basest meanness and dishonesty in our treatment of this unhappy race.”²⁵ Yet the paternalism that was prevalent from the 1860s on remained relatively absent during this

period.²⁶ Due to the lack of strict governmental control, Aborigines were able to visit the goldfields and participate in newfound mining economies. Upon visiting the Bullock Creek mines in 1852, historian-turned-miner James Bonwick remarked that “Even the Aborigines are wealthy in these times. I met a party of them...well clothed, with a good supply of food...one remarked with becoming expression of dignity ‘me no poor blackfellow now, me plenty rich blackfellow.’”²⁷ Meanwhile, Bonwick’s *Notes of a Gold Digger* detailed the contrast between the sense of freedom and possibility versus the sense of drudgery on the goldfields. Even though some may have been unlucky, “The wild, free and independent life appear[ed] the great charm. [Gold diggers] had no masters.”²⁸ Given the history of colonial sources restricting Aboriginal movement and livelihoods, it is unsurprising that the prospect of a more autonomous life appealed to some Aborigines, as well as to many settler men at home and abroad.

However, rather than the prospect of a more independent life, historian Fred Cahir argues that Aborigines’ early participation as miners, trackers, and guides was primarily driven by disenfranchisement due to loss of land from the gold rush.²⁹ Alluvial gold mining diverted streams used for fishing, felled forests used for hunting, and fractured Aboriginal nomadic territory, all of which limited traditional food supplies and thus undermined their autonomy.³⁰ Cahir describes this destruction as “secondary disenfranchisement” because Aborigines had already lost a great deal of land due to the aforementioned rise of grazing during Australia’s initial settler influx.³¹ This initial habitat loss was so widespread that those traveling to the colony in the 1850s viewed Australia’s pastoral landscape as “natural,” and its foreboding forests as “unnatural.” In *Australia Visited and Revisited*, naturalist-and-soldier team Mossman and Banister described the land near the Mt. Alexander diggings as “open forest-land...all the settler had to do in many places was to plough, to sow, and to reap, without clearing the land, and to depasutre [*sic*] his sheep on the uplands fresh to his hand.”³² Interestingly, they recognized that Australia’s landscape had undergone change before, but saw this change from ecologically native to pastoral habitats as a change from degraded to “natural.”³³ In describing their experience visiting a sheep station, Mossman noted the incredible productivity of the landscape, “where twelve years before the poor starved aborigines could scarcely find a few roots.”³⁴ Despite the decline in Aboriginal autonomy based on the initial depletion of a food supply—due to the destruction of traditional foodways and as seen through increased reliance on begging and governmental support, and starvation throughout the 1850s—colonization was still viewed as a naturalization and thus, an improvement of the landscape for all of its inhabitants.³⁵ Australia’s “natural” state represented the inherent monetary and moral prosperity that came from colonial pastoral work, rather than traditional Aboriginal land use.

This description of the productive, pastoral landscape stood in stark contrast to the “degraded” goldfields. Although the gold rush had just begun in 1851, according to Mossman and Banister, by 1853, “The excessive heat [was] much greater in consequence of all vegetation being destroyed. To convey an accurate idea of the desolation around you [was] almost impossible.”³⁶ However, this desolation was not restricted to the environment; Mossman and Banister also feared the gold rush would cause economic and moral degradation. Their celebration of pastoralism was a response to the fact that “The passion for gold has drained away the greater portion of the working population.”³⁷ This labor vacuum resulted in high wages for herders, which put landowners at risk.³⁸ Yet Mossman and Banister did not view this damage as permanent; they surmised that gold rush immigration would cause a demand for stock and raise its market value, “so that the pastoral property of the country, instead of being ruined by the gold discovery, will be more easily managed, more productive, and more marketable than ever.”³⁹

While the influx of goldseekers would take time, Mossman and Banister noted that Aborigines could help fill the labor vacuum. They did not discuss an Aboriginal presence in the goldfields, but they observed that “Many [Aborigines] have been made useful as constables, shepherds, stockmen, and otherwise.”⁴⁰ Mossman and Bannister encountered one settler who successfully employed Aborigines and “treated them just as he would treat a white man—he *paid them*; and thus he made it their interest to labor steadily; so that with him, and others who have acted as he has done, they have served well.”⁴¹ Mossman and Banister celebrated the economic opportunities the gold rush presented to Aborigines, claiming “It would not be the least interesting consequence of this wonderful discovery of gold in the midst of their own lands, if it were the occasion of saving the remnant of what we must call these interesting children of the forest.”⁴² However, they were adamant that simply allowing Aborigines to participate in gold rush economies was not enough. In order to reverse the Aborigines’ course as a doomed race, settlers had to “deal with them in the manner they [the Aborigines] themselves considered just.”⁴³ Thus, Mossman and Banister saw autonomy as inherently linked to both Aboriginal survival and colonial economic success.

In contrast to Mossman and Banister, the CBA viewed economic opportunity and autonomy as curtailing progress and endangering Aboriginal survival. Following an inquiry into Aboriginal welfare in 1858, the government created the CBA to take a more paternalistic approach toward distributing aid and monitoring Aboriginal “development,” restricting Aboriginal liberty “for their own good.”⁴⁴ This turn toward paternalism was heavily influenced by the fact that most settlers continued to view Aborigines as a dying race and their increasing alcohol consumption, their

lack of reliance on traditional methods of subsistence, and their trade with gold miners as indicative of further degradation. Because of this, two camps arose during the 1850s regarding the future of Aboriginal welfare. While some thought that nothing should be done for these near-extinct people, aside from providing basic comfort and conducting scientific observation, others, like those in the CBA, thought welfare should encompass education, evangelization, and employment, which could “help bring [Aborigines] out of ‘moral degradation.’”⁴⁵ While physical neglect that resulted from a lack of food, clothing, and medicine certainly did occur during the 1850s, this perception of negligence applied equally to the lack of colonial control over Aboriginal lives, both of which demanded redress. To settlers, Aboriginal survival depended on decreased Aboriginal autonomy and increased government control. Through an analysis of the six CBA reports released from 1861 to 1869, a pattern of waning autonomy becomes clear. Reformers saw initial increases in Aboriginal autonomy as a causing moral and physical degradation. This analysis also demonstrates that, despite the CBA’s “well-intentioned” efforts, the increase in governmental control and decrease in autonomy did little to save Aboriginal lives. The efforts used degrees of “European-ness” to measure Aboriginal success.

The actual distribution and surveillance efforts of the CBA were carried out by honorary correspondents, CBA members who lived on land commonly visited by Aboriginal people.⁴⁶ While these correspondents readily noted the increase of Aboriginal participation in gold rush economies throughout the 1850s and recognized the impact that land degradation had on Aboriginal autonomy by limiting their ability to hunt and fish, they failed to make the connection between the loss of these food sources and Aborigines’ increased reliance on settler economies.⁴⁷ George Armytage, among other correspondents, noted that many Aborigines on his station earned money by begging or “exhibiting their skill in throwing the boomerang and spear.”⁴⁸ Andrew Porteous, the correspondent from the Carngham district near the Ballarat diggings, employed members of the Wathawurrung tribe to work at his sheep station after the start of the gold rush, and mentioned that they successfully traded opossum rugs and baskets with miners and other Europeans.⁴⁹ Unlike Mossman and Banister, Porteous did not view this increase in economic independence as beneficial, claiming that “All [the Aborigines] receive, both for labor and opossum rugs, is spent on intoxicating liquors.”⁵⁰ These observations served as evidence for the supposed link between Aboriginal economic independence and moral degeneration that fuelled CBA rhetoric and conduct during the 1860s.

Like Porteous, most honorary correspondents had negative opinions of Aborigines’ success as pastoral laborers. In the first CBA report, Henry Godfrey commented, “Whenever they arrive on this station, those willing

to work are employed, but they are naturally too lazy and too inactive to exert themselves; you can never induce them...to reside permanently on any place by any offers of remuneration."⁵¹ To the CBA, this "natural state" prevented Aborigines from being productive workers and would ultimately lead to their demise: "If the Aboriginal is destitute of the qualities required for a higher position amongst his fellow men, his race will soon disappear, and the burden will grow lighter year by year."⁵² However, with proper European instruction, "the young can be trained to habits of industry, [and] there are numerous employments which they could follow with advantage to the State."⁵³ By blaming what they saw as negative Aboriginal behaviors on their "natural state," rather than on conscious choices, these honorary correspondents presumed a lack of Aboriginal agency. "The gross immoralities of the unreclaimed [*sic*] savage" would lead to their downfall, and the only measures that could reverse this were European control and decreased Aboriginal self-determination.⁵⁴

Unlike Mossman and Banister, the honorary correspondents never mentioned paying Aboriginal laborers fair wages. Instead, many correspondents viewed the high wages for pastoral labor, caused by the gold rush labor vacuum, as detrimental to Aboriginal success. They argued that high wages led to increased intoxication and suggested that wages for pastoral work should be replaced by rations to limit this "moral degradation." Dr. Gummow, the correspondent at Swan Hill, suggested that "Blacks [should] not do more work than would pay the settler well for rations for them all year round," effectively creating a system of dependence on participation in pastoral work.⁵⁵ CBA secretary Robert Smythe shared a similar view, arguing that the Parliament should have control of all the profits from the sale of baskets, rugs, and produce. Instead of paying Aborigines directly for their work, only those who demonstrated "diligence or skill, more than ordinary attention to duty," would be rewarded. Smythe was more direct than most CBA members in outlining his views on Aboriginal autonomy. In his sixth report, he advocated segregating Aborigines from white Australians, stating, "Improve [an Aborigine] as we may, it is doubtful whether he would ever be self-reliant and able to exert self-control."⁵⁶ Smythe thought that the Aborigines needed CBA control because they were inherently not autonomous, again reinforcing the connection between their "natural state" and the need for governmental control. Interestingly, he thought it was "humiliating to think that...blacks...should still be dependent on the bounty of the country," and advocated an ultimate goal of self-sufficiency through increased productivity.⁵⁷ Paradoxically, Smythe believed that the only course of action that would improve productivity and self-sufficiency was to limit Aboriginal economic independence and reduce their autonomy.

The primary reason white people criticized Aboriginal workers, limited their participation in gold rush economies, and restricted fair payment for

their work was to prevent drunkenness. Almost every honorary correspondent in all six reports mentioned alcohol as the main indicator of “moral degradation,” and a primary motivator for limiting Aboriginal autonomy.⁵⁸ Colonists interpreted the surge in intemperance as another sign that Aborigines were a dying race and that they needed European help to save them from themselves.⁵⁹ Many honorary correspondents blamed the “evil white men who frequent their camps at night for the sake of the women,” in addition to the Aborigines’ “natural state,” for encouraging alcohol consumption.⁶⁰ Recognizing this dual culpability, CBA Vice President Theo Sumner claimed that only “the strongest repressive measures will prevent the publican from pursuing his gains...by [exciting] the passions of the weak and ill-disciplined Aborigines by supplying them with spirits.”⁶¹ Thus, a settler selling alcohol to an Aboriginal person was his choice, but an Aboriginal person drinking alcohol was a result of Aborigines’ inability to “adhere to” the restraints of European civilization.⁶² The CBA did not see Aborigines as capable of self-rule to begin with and therefore, their actions necessitated CBA control.

Honorary correspondents also recommended that Aborigines be banned from the goldfields, which were seen as the source of much of this vice. Porteous, the correspondent near the Ballarat diggings, suggested the implementation of a pass system in which only Aborigines with goods to trade could visit the goldfields.⁶³ This scheme to limit the right to work was considered less successful than restricting the sale of alcohol, as “all their exertions are insufficient to prevent their wandering occasionally to the centres of population.”⁶⁴ The portrayal of Aborigine movement as “wandering” rather than purposeful reinforced the idea that Aborigines lacked agency and were “helpless children.” The CBA sought to improve conditions for Aborigines by attempting to restrict their movement to goldfields or by punishing those who enabled Aboriginal alcohol consumption, but these restrictions limited much of the autonomy Aborigines had gained from the gold rush. Because the Aborigines were already seen as a dying race, the “moral degradation” occasioned by alcohol use seemed inevitable. Aboriginal self-governance led to their demise, and thus needed to be limited.

The continued physical deterioration of Aborigines also contributed to the dying race narrative. Despite an increase in attention and funding, Victorian Aboriginal populations continued to decline. While the CBA was willing to admit failure in preventing alcohol consumption, honorary correspondents were reluctant to address their inability to stop Aboriginal physical demise. In an attempt to deflect attention from this failure, Vice President Sumner claimed, “The Central Board are dealing with a people enervated by sickness, and weakened by indulgence in the vice of whites...the older men and women are dying, not from present neglect,

but in consequence of past indiscretions; and there is abundant evidence to show that the lowest point has been reached.”⁶⁵ To Sumner, the Aboriginal deaths of the 1860s were not due to CBA failure, but to previous governmental neglect, as well as Aboriginal self-indulgence during those years. This again suggested that Aboriginal autonomy endangered their survival. By contrast, when discussing the “disappearance” of the Aborigines, Mossman and Banister stated, “We cannot think of these poor people without pain and deep regret; and sometimes a doubt crosses our mind, whether, nationally speaking, we have adopted the course towards them which was due to ourselves to have done.”⁶⁶ To them, it was the colonial project itself, rather than Aboriginal failure to adapt to the colonial project, that was to blame for Aboriginal demise. This aligned with their rhetoric that Aboriginal survival was predicated on Aboriginal freedom. For the CBA correspondents, while they were willing to admit the negative impact of government neglect on Aboriginal survival and thus highlight the need for the CBA, there was no connection between the overall colonial project and Aboriginal demise.

Despite their best efforts, the CBA generally failed to prevent further “moral and physical degradation” of Aborigines. Adult Aborigines continued to visit the goldfields, travel from station to station, purchase alcohol, and work for wages throughout the 1860s. When unable to limit Aboriginal autonomy, the CBA turned its attention toward “civilizing” Aboriginal children and attempting to limit the autonomy of future generations by removing children from their parents and raising them under European tutelage. This practice originated out of a need to care for those the CBA saw as “neglected black and half-caste children...who are utterly uncared for.” However, based on successes at the Coranderrk station, the CBA called for legislation to authorize “the removal of half-caste girls and orphans against the wishes of those persons who may have assumed charge of them,” arguing that without such laws the CBA would “not be able to...protect them from the perils which surround them.”⁶⁷ As they transitioned from taking charge only of those who were abandoned or orphaned to taking charge of half-castes, the CBA noted that “on enquiry, it was found that the blacks are very reluctant to give up their children.”⁶⁸ Due to failures in limiting Aboriginal autonomy, reformers thought that the removal of children was a last resort for race survival. Mr. Mitchell, the honorary correspondent at Tangambalanga, noted that “the Aborigines would have all been dead before now had it not been for [CBA] supplies...nothing more could be done for the Aborigines than is now being done, except the removal of the half-caste children to the school at Coranderrk.”⁶⁹ By 1869, this last resort was increasingly utilized; 36 children lived with Mr. Green, the honorary correspondent at Coranderrk.⁷⁰ The removal of children from their parents was the ultimate denial of autonomy, and it negated any autonomy Aborigines had gained during the gold rush period.

On November 11, 1869, the colony of Victoria passed the Aboriginal Protection Act, which enacted many of the paternalistic suggestions the CBA had been making for a decade. Under this legislation, the governor had full authority over:

Prescribing the place where any...aborigines shall reside. For prescribing the terms on which contracts for and on behalf of aborigines may be made with Europeans, and upon which certificates may be granted to aborigines who may be able and willing to earn a living by their own exertions. For apportioning amongst aborigines the earnings of aborigines under contract...[and] the net produce of the labor of such aborigines...For the care custody and education of the children of aborigines.⁷¹

The act was the first in a long line of laws that continued to destroy Aboriginal autonomy. It paved the way for legislation like the Aboriginal Protection Act of 1886, which legalized the forcible removal of mixed descent Aborigines to European households and schools—a practice that the CBA correspondents long advocated.⁷²

The CBA's attitude toward Aborigines as a dying race in the 1860s directly resulted in the legal restriction of Aboriginal independence, which stemmed from settler dismay over Aboriginal self-governance practiced during the gold rush. The gold rush provided a momentary increase in economic independence for Aboriginal people, who worked as pastoralists, traders, and miners. However, due to pre-existing prejudices held by those in positions of power—about the Aboriginal “natural state” and the impending demise of Aborigines—reactions to this increased agency came in the form of paternalism from governmental organizations like the CBA. This paternalism implied that Aboriginal demise was a consequence of their self-governance, and that the only way to ensure Aboriginal survival was to decrease their autonomy. Paternalism not only decreased Aboriginal autonomy in the short run, but it also paved the way for the massive human rights violations against Aborigines throughout the next century. While providing an initial opportunity for increased independence, the gold rush ultimately decreased Aboriginal autonomy.

1. Richard Cavendish, "The Australian Gold Rush Begins," *History Today* 51, no. 1 (February 2001): 50-51.
2. Victoria is a state located in southeast Australia with Melbourne as its capital. It became a separate colony in 1851, and this separation from the greater Australian colony is thought to be connected to the 1851 Ballarat gold discovery. "Defining Moments: Gold Rushes," National Museum Australia, <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/gold-rushes>, accessed December 5, 2018.
3. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963), and *Triumph of the Nomads: A History of Aboriginal Australia* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 1976).
4. Fred Cahir, *Black Gold: Aboriginal People on the Goldfields of Victoria, 1850-1870* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2012); Fred Cahir and Ian Clark, *A Critique of "Forgetfulness" and Exclusivity: The Neglect of Aboriginal Themes in Goldfield Tourism in Victoria* (Ballarat: University of Ballarat, 2001); Ian D. Clark, "The Northern Wathawurrung and Andrew Porteous, 1860-1877," *Aboriginal History* 32 (2008): 97-108.
5. Guy Featherstone, "Bonwick, James (1817-1906)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1966), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bonwick-james-3022>.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. "Mossman, Samuel (fl. 1850-1880)," JSTOR Global Plants, <https://plants.jstor.org/stable/10.5555/al.ap.person.bm000373582>, accessed December 3, 2018; Captain Thomas Banister, "Upgraded and Expanded Biographical Notes 1826-1835," The Western Explorers' Diaries Project, <http://www.explorationswa.com.au/the-volumes/western-australian-exploration-1826-1835/errata-western-australian-exploration-1826-1835/biographical-notes>, accessed April 3, 2019.
9. "Mossman, Samuel (fl. 1850-1880)."
10. Clark, "The Northern Wathawurrung and Andrew Porteous, 1860-1877," 97.
11. Ibid., 97-98.
12. James Bonwick, *Notes of a Gold Digger, and Gold Digger's Guide* (Melbourne: R. Connebee, 1852); Samuel Mossman and Thomas Banister, *Australia Visited and Revisited: A Narrative of Recent Travels and Old Experiences in Victoria and New South Wales* (London: Addey and Co., 1853).
13. Stuart Banner, "Australia: Terra Nullius by Design," in *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 40.
14. George Caley, *Reflections on the Colony of New South Wales*, ed. J.E.B. Currey (Melbourne: Landsowne Press, 1966), quoted in Banner, *Possessing the Pacific*, p. 20.
15. James Matra, "A Proposal for Establishing a Settlement in New South Wales (1783)," in *Historical Records of New Zealand*, vol. 1, ed. Robert McNab (Wellington: John Mackey, 1908), p. 36, quoted in Banner, *Possessing the Pacific*, p. 20.
16. Brian Cooke, "Effects of Pastoralism and Rabbits on the Economy and Culture of the Diyari People of North-Eastern South Australia," *Australian Economic History Review* 57, no. 1 (2017): 65-83, esp. 70; Alistair Paterson, "Early Pastoral Landscapes and Cultural Contact in Central Australia," *Historical Archaeology* 39, no. 3 (2005): 28-48, esp. 31.

17. Cahir, p. 121.
18. Jessie Mitchell and Ann Curthoys, "How Different was Victoria? Aboriginal 'Protection' in a Comparative Context," in *Settler Colonial Governance in Nineteenth-Century Victoria*, ed. Leigh Boucher and Lynette Russel (Acton: Australian National University Press, 2015), pp. 183-201, esp. p. 184.
19. Cahir, p. 112.
20. "Wurundjeri History of Yarra: The Protectorate," The Aboriginal History of Yarra, City of Yarra, 2019, <https://aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au/7-the-protectorate/>
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Cahir, p. 118.
24. Ibid., p. 121.
25. R.L. Milne, *The Argus*, March 17, 1856, quoted in Cahir, p. 121.
26. Cahir, p. 118.
27. Bonwick, p. 18.
28. Ibid., p. 23.
29. Cahir, p. 2.
30. Barry McGowan, "Mullock Heaps and Tailing Mounds: Environmental Effects of Alluvial Goldmining," in *Gold: Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia*, ed. Iain McCalman, Andrew Cook, and Andrew Reeves (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 85-102, esp. p. 87.
31. Cahir, p. 118.
32. Mossman and Banister, p. 34.
33. Ibid., p. 46.
34. Ibid., p. 76.
35. Mossman and Banister, p. 70; Cahir, p. 118; Duncan E. Cook, "Butzer 'Down Under': Debates on Anthropogenic Erosion in Early Colonial Australia," *Geomorphology* 331 (2019): 160-74, esp. 165.
36. Mossman and Banister, p. 45.
37. Ibid., p. 48.
38. Ibid., p. 47.
39. Ibid., p. 47.
40. Ibid., p. 128.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., p. 129.
43. Ibid.
44. Thomas McCombie, *Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Aborigines* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1858-1859), p. 5; Cahir, p. 125.
45. Cahir, p. 123.
46. It should also be noted that this system was the first step of many to confine Aborigines to reservations. Central Board of Aborigines, *Sixth Report of the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1869), p. 29.
47. The fourth report noted that settler eel netting was damaging stocks for Aboriginal use. In the fifth report, the CBA noted that fish stocks had been damaged by netting and that (traditionally hunted) bird populations were dwindling due to swivel gun usage by gold miners and colonists. This depletion was seen as damaging

- to both colonists and Aborigines. Both of these reports requested amendments to a colonial Fisheries Act. Central Board of Aborigines, *Fourth Report of the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1864), p. 11; Central Board of Aborigines, *Fifth Report of the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1866), p. 18.
48. Central Board of Aborigines, *Fourth Report*, p. 10.
49. Clark, p. 106.
50. Central Board of Aborigines, *Fifth Report*, p. 13.
51. Central Board of Aborigines, *Report of the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1861), p. 15.
52. Central Board of Aborigines, *Second Report of the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1862), p. 15.
53. Ibid.
54. Central Board of Aborigines, *Fourth Report*, p. 8.
55. Central Board of Aborigines, *Sixth Report*, p. 17.
56. Ibid, p. 19.
57. Ibid.
58. It should be noted that, in this context, autonomy refers to the ability to make choices for oneself. While spending money on alcohol was certainly detrimental to Aboriginal health and livelihood, for the purposes of this analysis, choosing to purchase alcohol is viewed as an exercise of autonomy.
59. Cahir, p. 113; Central Board of Aborigines, *Report of the Central Board*, p. 14.
60. Central Board of Aborigines, *Fifth Report*, p. 9.
61. Central Board of Aborigines, *Report of the Central Board*, p. 14.
62. Central Board of Aborigines, *Second Report*, p. 14.
63. Cahir, p. 123; Clark, p. 106.
64. Central Board of Aborigines, *Fourth Report*, p. 7.
65. Ibid., p. 14.
66. Mossman and Banister, p. 128.
67. Central Board of Aborigines, *Report of the Central Board*, p. 11; Central Board of Aborigines, *Fourth Report*, p. 10; Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).
68. Central Board of Aborigines, *Fourth Report*, p. 10.
69. Central Board of Aborigines, *Sixth Report*, p. 16.
70. Ibid.
71. J.H.T. Manners Sutton and G.W. Rusden, *An Act to Provide for the Protection and Management of the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria*, no. 349 (Melbourne: Parliament of Victoria, 1869), pp. 1-2, esp. p. 2.
72. F. Napier Broome, *The Aborigines Protection Act, 1886*, no. 25 (Perth: Parliament of Western Australia, 1886), p. 216.

PASSED OVER “SKETCHILY AND HASTILY”

Crusader Greed in High School Textbooks

Jacob Gonring



Image: Gustave Doré, *Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople in 1204*, 1877, accessed [online](#).

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In the early 2000s, students who read *World History: Patterns of Interaction* were introduced to the Crusades with an activity that had them imagine themselves as a lord's squire in medieval Europe. Their lord gave them the choice of either coming along on the upcoming crusade or staying behind to watch over the lord's possessions. If they chose to join their lord, the students were then supposed to weigh the pros and cons of that option. According to the textbook, embarking on a crusade was dangerous—taking them far from home—but provided an opportunity for adventure and riches. The textbook even told students that they knew another knight who, while on a previous crusade, “plundered towns and manors and acquired jewels and other precious objects.”¹ To many students and teachers who used this textbook, this claim of riches, which drove Europeans to “take the cross” (to embark on a crusade), would not seem out of the ordinary. For decades, even historians studying the Crusades supported such a claim.² Recent scholars of the Crusades, however, contest this outlook, asserting that crusaders were not motivated by the lure of marvelous riches. In fact, in the last few decades, historians have presented ample evidence to counter this long-standing notion of greed and a desire for wealth as the dominating forces that drove people to take the cross.³ While many in academia have begun to reject the notion of the “greedy crusader,” this shift has not yet reached the minds of the larger public. For the majority of people in the United States not in tune with the current academic discourse on the subject, the information that shapes their views of the Crusades likely comes from the last structured opportunity they had to confront the subject: the history classes they forcibly took in high school.

In this paper, I delve into the information the general public has received through high school textbooks pertaining to the role of greed in motivating the arms-bearing crusaders to participate in the nine Crusades between the eleventh and thirteenth century.⁴ By no means do textbooks fully reflect the information students learned and retained in their respective history classes. A student's comprehension of the Crusades was most likely shaped by their own interest in the subject or their reception of their instructor's approach and style to teaching the Crusades. Yet given how much these other factors may vary from classroom to classroom, or even student to student, textbooks provide a more consistent test for what information a high school student likely received about the Crusades.⁵ Textbooks are a unique and important medium for study because they have to provide information on a wider variety of topics than the academic sources from which they draw. To prevent overlong textbooks, textbook authors have to portray this information in the most concise way possible. In doing so, textbooks can intentionally or unintentionally reframe academic debates around complicated topics like the motivations of crusaders by oversimplifying the information they glean from academic sources, which in turn can mislead their readers.

The idea of greed as a motivating force behind the Crusades has been elevated to a place of increased prominence in textbooks over the last 150 years. This can be partially attributed to trends in historical analysis that came into vogue during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that shaped the textbooks created for public use. Yet, greed's prominence in textbooks also grew out of the fact that the medium of the textbook itself does not provide the room to grapple with the complexities of a topic like the Crusades that academic literature affords. Therefore, as textbook authors have devoted less space to discussing crusaders' motivations, they have inadvertently given greed more importance than it deserves.

Reconceptualizing Greedy Crusaders

To understand how greed's presentation in textbooks like *World History: Patterns of Interaction* has misled readers, one must first look at the arguments recent historians have made to discredit greed as a major motivating factor in the Crusades. Most crusaders did not leave records explicitly saying why they decided to take the cross, but the crusaders who did state their motivations did not indicate that gaining wealth from this effort was their goal. To answer the question of why people went on crusade in the first place, then, historians have had to look to crusaders' actions in their historical context and interpret motivation from there. One such idea, as displayed in *A History of the Crusades* by the prominent twentieth-century medieval historian Steven Runciman, was the theory that in the wake of the establishment of the practice of primogeniture, or the practice of passing all property to the firstborn son, the younger sons of nobles "had to seek their fortunes elsewhere," making "the opportunity to combine Christian duty with the acquisition of land in a southern climate... very attractive."⁶ Runciman and other historians have pointed to crusaders such as Baldwin of Boulogne and Bohemond of Taranto as evidence of these younger sons taking the cross out of hunger for land.⁷

More recent scholars, however, have disagreed with this "greedy younger sons" theory as a major cause of the Crusades. Thomas Asbridge, a historian specializing in medieval history at Queen Mary University of London, points out that even if princes like Bohemond or Baldwin were aware of the possibilities of riches that a crusade could bring, "for every crusader like Bohemond, there were countless more who, like Stephen of Blois and Robert of Flanders, already enjoyed secure possession of adequate, even expansive lordships."⁸ Jonathan Riley-Smith, a leading historian on the Crusades and former professor at Cambridge, takes this a step further, saying that "although the first crusade began the process by which western Europeans conquered and settled many of the coastal territories of the east-

ern Mediterranean, it is unlikely that this was planned from the start....An analysis of the individual crusaders about whom something is known bears out the conclusion that most crusaders left [the Holy Land] as soon as they could."⁹ Despite previous historians' attempts to portray crusaders as a mass of land-hungry European nobles, more recent scholarship seems to diminish and discredit lust for land as a motivating factor in the Crusades.

Another example of crusader greed frequently mentioned by twentieth-century historians is the prevalence of looting during the Crusades. Both on the way to the Holy Land and in the Holy Land itself, crusader armies pillaged and plundered, giving historians plenty of reasons to call crusaders greedy.¹⁰ More recent historians, however, see these episodes of looting as instances of *need* rather than greed. Riley-Smith describes crusading armies as having "no proper system of provisioning," meaning that "plundering was essential for their survival, particularly once they were far from supply points."¹¹ Norman Housley, a professor of history at the University of Leicester and an author of multiple books on the Crusading movement expands on this in his 2008 book *Fighting for the Cross*, where he outlines the frequent famines and supply shortages that crusaders faced while on campaign. Housley asserts that "much of the insatiable greed for which the crusaders were criticized by Greeks, Muslims and their own clerical companions was rooted in desperation."¹² Thus, even outright acts of seeking material gain reflect more the harsh reality of crusade campaigns and the inadequacies of their organization than an inherent desire on the part of crusaders to gain wealth.

Aside from these specific rebuttals of twentieth-century historians' arguments about greed as a motivating factor in the crusades, recent historians have emphasized that the very action of going on crusade was extremely expensive. According to Riley-Smith, the cost of taking part in a Crusade "could be at least four times a knight's annual income," with more wealthy crusaders facing an even greater financial burden because the Pope encouraged them to sponsor poorer people to come on crusade as well.¹³ In order to meet these demands, many nobles had to liquidate their assets and sell much of what they owned. Thomas Asbridge explains in his 2004 monograph *The First Crusade: A New History* that "the year 1096 saw a huge burst of activity, as hundreds of nobles sought to put their affairs in order, settling outstanding disputes with religious communities and disposing of an array of property in return for hard cash or equipment."¹⁴ Taking the cross, therefore, required crusaders to make an enormous and risky principal investment. To think that countless nobles believed that taking over a stretch of land thousands of miles away would produce profits that more than made up for that investment seems unrealistic. The evidence scholars do have of returning crusaders even shows that "among the returning majority none came back home laden down with riches."¹⁵ All of this evidence

makes the image of the knight who returned from crusade with “jewels and other precious objects” presented in *World History: Patterns of Interaction* as well as other textbooks appear to be a false depiction of the Crusades.¹⁶

A More Likely Motivation

Instead of greed, then, recent historians have emphasized piety and the desire for expiation of sins as the main driving forces behind combatants’ participation in the Crusades. In his article “Crusading as an Act of Love,” Riley-Smith explains how crusaders saw it as their Christian duty to rescue the Holy Land from the clutches of non-Christians. In the minds of medieval Christians, these lands belonged to Jesus Christ, and the best way to show devotion to him was to return the lands on which he trod to the hands of his followers.¹⁷ For as much as these crusaders saw taking the cross as a way to serve Christ and express their piety, concern for the salvation of their own souls drove them on crusade as well. As Asbridge explains, the Christianity of medieval Europe emphasized the punishments that sinners faced in the hereafter. People could try to avoid this punishment by joining monastic life or undertaking pilgrimage, but for the vast majority of the nobility, whose lifestyle was viewed as inherently sinful, no source of salvation seemed viable. Nobles therefore spent their lives anxious about the torment that awaited them until Pope Urban II declared that fighting in a “Holy War” to take back Jerusalem could cleanse the soul of sin. Suddenly the nobility could use their talents in warfare to save their souls, and the promise of such an opportunity “rendered the crusade almost irresistible.”¹⁸ And so, instead of asserting that greed motivated people to take up arms as historians of the past had argued, recent historians have concluded convincingly that personal piety as well as a desire to save one’s soul from the horrors of the hereafter motivated countless people to join the Crusades.

While academics have concluded that greed may not have been the motivating factor in driving people to take the cross that previous historians argued, misconceptions about its prominent role in the Crusades have not fully disappeared from the popular view of these events. In order to understand how the image of greedy crusaders has claimed a place in the public’s perception of the Crusades, one must look at the evolution of how one of the public’s common sources of information on the Crusades—the high school textbook—has presented the motivations of crusaders. Because the U.S. had not fully made the shift from private, classically focused academies attended only by society’s elites to the public high schools resembling those prominent today until the late nineteenth century, my analysis of textbooks and their representations of the Crusades will start there.¹⁹

The Development of Crusader Greed in Textbooks

Textbooks in the late nineteenth century largely depicted the Crusades as religiously motivated, emphasizing their connection to pilgrimage. P.V.N. Myers's *A General History for Colleges and High Schools*, published in 1889, began its section entitled "Causes of Crusades" with the importance of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, followed by a description of pilgrims being "insulted and persecuted in every way" after Muslims took control over the Holy Land.²⁰ These passages culminated in the claim, "if it were a meritorious thing to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, much more would it be a pious act to rescue the sacred spot from the profanation of infidels....this is the sentiment that for two centuries and more stirred the Christian world to its profoundest depths, and cast the population of Europe in wave after wave upon Asia."²¹ As Myers presented it, a deep desire to help pilgrims while simultaneously obtaining the expiation of sins associated with the act of pilgrimage drove people to take the cross. In fact, the only other motivation he emphasized was "the restless, adventurous spirit" of the people of Europe, which Myers did not give the same degree of importance as religion in his explanation of crusaders' motives.²² The idea that the Crusades were inherently tied to the religious devotion expressed through pilgrimage likewise appeared in an 1891 translation of Victor Duruy's *The History of the Middle Ages*. Originally published in French in 1865, George Burton Adams, a professor of Medieval History at Yale from 1888 to 1925, described it as "the most successful textbook on mediaeval history in any language." The fact that it was translated into English meant that it must have been fairly influential in the English-speaking world at the time, too. In it, Duruy described how medieval Christians obsessed over the Holy Land and prized the opportunity to go there on pilgrimage. Because of this, when the Seljuk Turks conquered Jerusalem in 1073 and pilgrimages were disrupted, all of Europe rose up in "cries of horror and hatred."²³ Neither Myers nor Duruy mentioned greed as a motivating factor in the Crusades. Instead, both depicted crusaders' motives as predominantly religious—namely their desire to undertake pilgrimage and protect the abilities of others to pilgrimage as well.

Greed was not entirely absent from the history lessons of the late 1800s, however. In 1885, Mary D. Sheldon-Barnes published a student edition of her textbook *Studies in General History*, with a teacher's edition a year later. Over the next forty years, almost 39,000 copies of the student edition were sold, showing its degree of popularity.²⁴ Barnes laid out her textbook quite differently than other textbook authors at this time. She gave a brief overview of the Crusades, and instead of laying out the specifics of the movement herself, Barnes provided seven different excerpts from primary source documents on the Crusades from which students were supposed to

draw their own conclusions. These included excerpts of Pope Urban II's sermon at Clermont from two different authors, one focusing on helping pilgrims and the other on material rewards, as well as the story of the Holy Lance and the riches crusaders obtained from defeating a Turkish army, a Papal Bull about debt forgiveness, and accounts of the delight of the crusaders as they seized Constantinople. At the end of the excerpts, she included a set of questions, the first of which was "name all the motives which, in your opinion, moved men to go crusading."²⁵ At no point in this book did Sheldon-Barnes expressly mention greed. Aside from mentioning in her overview that the Crusades were "immediately occasioned by the desire to rescue the Holy Sepulchre and protect pilgrims," she left it up to the students to interpret what motivated crusaders to take the cross.²⁶ As open-ended as this approach may seem, Barnes clearly had an agenda in selecting the excerpts that she did. In her teacher's edition, Barnes advised that students should determine that crusaders were predominantly motivated by a desire to help pilgrims, but that "crusading energy was due in part to other motives. They were strengthened by the love of adventure, the passion of warfare, the hope of salvation, the charm of license, and in many cases, perhaps, by the power which was given to escape from the burdens of debt and the legal consequences of the time."²⁷ This implied that Barnes wanted teachers following this instruction design to lead their students to a variety of conclusions about the motivations of crusaders. It is difficult to say if Barnes intended greed to be one of them, as the closest reference she made to this was "charm of license." Given the examples of crusaders obtaining riches in some of the primary sources she selected, though, this may have been one of her aims. Barnes also told teachers following her lesson plan that "if the teacher find himself behindhand with his work, but has been through the preceding period, he may pass over this study very sketchily and hastily," making it even more difficult to say whether greed came up as a motivating factor in classrooms that used Sheldon-Barnes's textbook.²⁸ Overall, then, the textbooks of America's early high schools paid little attention to greed as a motivating factor in the Crusades, and when they did, it was not given the same importance as other motivating factors. The authors devoted the majority of space in these textbooks to the Crusades' connection to pilgrimage and crusaders' religious motivations.

A quarter century later, the theme of pilgrimage remained strongly represented in textbooks, but mention of other motives, including greed, began to increase. In 1916, Roscoe Lewis Ashley began his textbook's section on the Crusades by devoting a full page to connecting them to the pilgrimage tradition.²⁹ After giving an overview of the Crusades and their effects, however, Ashley explicitly outlined the causes of the Crusades, stating that they were "due to religious zeal of the people and to the influence of the Papacy. To a less degree they were affected by the love of adventure and

conquest."³⁰ This style of depicting the Crusades as connected to pilgrimage and motivated by religion (but with material desires mixed in) continued through the 1920s. Hutton Webster's 1921 textbook *World History* began a section on the Crusades with: "the Crusades were first and foremost a spiritual exercise. They sprang from the pilgrimages which Christians had long been accustomed to make." Later, though, he included the caveat that "the Crusades were not simply an expression of the simple faith of the Middle Ages....[Crusaders] saw in an expedition against the East an unequaled opportunity for acquiring fame, riches, land, and power."³¹ William Edwards's *Notes on European History* from 1925 exhibited this same tendency. He also connected the Crusades to pilgrimage, saying that Peter the Hermit's call to arms in response to the Muslims' mistreatment of pilgrims was the primary motivator behind the movement. A few sentences later, however, Edwards departed from his focus on religious motivations, saying that "feudal nobles gladly embraced the opportunity of warfare and plunder which [the Crusades] afforded."³² In a final example from this period, Carleton Hayes and Parker Moon wrote in their section on the Crusades in their 1929 textbook *Ancient and Medieval History* that "Western Europe at this time was full of religious enthusiasm and moral earnestness," prompting the Crusades to help pilgrims obtain the benefits of pilgrimage. On the next page, the authors said, "in addition, there were worldly motives, such as love of adventure, desire to travel and see strange countries, ambition to acquire land and wealth, and longing to escape a life of routine and drudgery at home."³³ In each case, these early twentieth-century textbook authors continued to emphasize the connections of the Crusades to the practice of pilgrimage and the religious motivations of the crusaders. Yet the presence of other motivating factors, including greed, was increasing and taking up more space than in earlier textbooks.

By the mid-twentieth century, the attention given to other motives in textbook descriptions of crusaders' reasons for taking the cross had grown. In the process, discussion of motives became more complex and muddled. T. Walter Wallbank's *Man's Story: World History in its Geographic Setting* reflected this complexity. Published in 1951, *Man's Story: World History in its Geographic Setting* asserted that "undoubtedly some of the knights went on these expeditions, or Crusades, because they loved to fight or because they hoped to obtain land and riches in the Near East....At the same time there were countless men who went on the Crusades because it was a holy quest. They were inspired with the thought that they were fighting for Christianity and that any sacrifices made by a crusader would be amply repaid by the wiping away of his sins. Many looked at the Crusades as a means of expressing loyalty to the Church."³⁴ In attempting to present a myriad of causes for the Crusades, Wallbank condensed the religious motivations of the crusaders and gave other reasons, including greed, almost

equal space, making it seem as though religion and greed were almost on par in driving people to take the cross.

Edward McNall Burns approached this complexity in a different way. In his textbook *Western Civilizations: Their History and Their Culture*, first published in 1941 but popular enough to have been in its fifth edition by 1958, Burns depicted the materialistic motivations of crusaders as bleeding into their religious ones. His section on religious motivations stated that the Church waged “religious wars as a means of promoting unity” and to prevent the nobility from fighting each other.³⁵ He even reinterpreted the Crusades’ connection to pilgrimages by saying, “Not everyone who joined these mass migrations was inspired by religious ardor. Pilgrimages offered opportunity for adventure and sometimes even for profit. Besides, what better chance need one want to escape the responsibilities of life for a season and have a good time in the bargain?”³⁶ This depiction of carefree pilgrims differed from the descriptions of pilgrimage found in chronicles of the time.³⁷ While this passage may have looked like bad historical writing, it also showed the lengths to which authors like Burns had to go to in trying to encapsulate the complexity of crusaders’ motivations in what limited space they had. In trying to fit in a myriad of motivations, Burns blended crusaders’ religious motivations with their more materialistic ones, making it seem as though greed and redemption not only had equal bearing on sending crusaders to the Holy Land, but that the two were at times indistinguishable.

Another striking example of how the textbooks of the mid-twentieth century sought to include the various motivations of crusaders can be found in the work of Jack C. Estrin. In his 1957 textbook *World History Made Simple*, Estrin described the motivations that sent crusaders to the Holy Land by saying, “the Pope had assured salvation and blessedness on any who went and thus had a powerful appeal. Others sought to do Christian service. Serfs could hope to win their freedom, debtors, their freedom from debt, the landless and impoverished, a chance to repair their fortunes.”³⁸ Estrin could have left his section on motives at that, and in so doing would have still implied that religion was a major factor in motivating all crusaders while other motivations varied from person to person. Yet perhaps seeing this complexity as too much for a student to comprehend, Estrin boiled the complexity down into four factors: “In the breasts of the crusaders there mingled the ‘causes’ of God, Glory, Grandeur, Gold.”³⁹ For Estrin, the best way to make sure deference was given to other motives besides religion was to put them in one all-encompassing statement that placed a desire for wealth on equal footing with other motivations. Thus, by the mid-twentieth century, motives like greed had grown in prominence in high school textbooks, either striking a balance with religious motivations and connections to pilgrimage emphasized in past textbooks or taking up some of the space these motives used to occupy.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, greed had all but cemented itself as a major motivating factor for why people took the cross. T. Walter Wallbank exemplified this when he contributed to two new textbooks that were popular enough to be published in multiple new editions. The first, *Living World History*, was published in 1964 and gave two short sentences on crusaders' motivations: "the pope promised the crusaders forgiveness of their sins, a choice of fiefs in the land to be conquered, and freedom from their creditors. Many knights were moved to become crusaders because of religious idealism; others enlisted for adventure, to escape debts or the long arm of the law, or to gain wealth."⁴⁰ Wallbank's second textbook, *History and Life: The World and its People*, published in 1977, was equally brief when describing crusader motivations. He described the Crusades as stemming from the pope's promise of heavenly and earthly rewards, saying "Pope Urban promised crusaders forgiveness for their sins, freedom from debts, and a choice of fiefs in the lands to be conquered. The last promise was especially important for second sons of nobility who could not inherit landholdings in Europe."⁴¹ In both cases, Wallbank hardly differentiated greed as more or less a motivating factor in driving people to take the cross from any of the other factors he mentioned, a marked departure from his earlier attempts in *Man's Story* at balancing greed with crusaders' other motives.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, textbooks began to focus on greed more heavily than ever before. The spiritual significance of the Holy Land in the eyes of the medieval Christian fell by the wayside as textbook authors focused instead on the wealth Crusaders could gain. Multiple textbooks described knights being "dazzled" by the plunder and land available for the taking in the "rich Middle East."⁴² Some textbooks even portrayed crusaders as more motivated by greed than anything else. *The Human Expression: World Regions and Cultures*, published in 1992, bluntly stated that "many crusaders were more interested in easy wealth than in religion" as its only explanation of crusaders' motivations.⁴³ Other sources quickly pivoted from religious motivations to greed. In 1997, *World History: Connections to Today* devoted four sentences to crusaders' motivations, stating, "Religious reasons played a large role. Yet many knights hoped to win wealth and land. Some crusaders sought to escape troubles at home. Others yearned for adventure."⁴⁴ Likewise, *World History: Continuity and Change*, published in 1999, summed up the driving forces of the Crusade movement: "Some were inspired by faith and the hope of being cleansed of sin. Many knights sought more earthly rewards like land or plundered wealth....Some simply wanted the adventure"⁴⁵ These textbooks seemed to downplay the role of religion compared to their predecessors, saying "some were inspired by faith" while "many" sought wealth, thereby putting greed on par or above religion as a motivating factor.

The first decade of the twenty-first century brought more of the same emphasis on greed's role in motivating crusaders to take the cross. The *Glencoe World History* summed up crusaders' motives in two sentences: "These knights were mostly motivated by religious fervor, but some sought adventure and welcomed the chance to fight. Others saw it as an opportunity to gain wealth and a possible title."⁴⁶ *World History: Patterns of Interactions* started its section on the Crusades with "the Crusades had both economic goals and religious motives." Given this book's unrealistic story about a knight returning home with fabulous wealth from a previous crusade, this parity comes as no surprise.⁴⁷ The 2011 textbook *WORLD* went as far as to simplify crusaders' motivations into a single sentence: "many crusaders were undoubtedly inspired by a sincere religious zeal to preserve access to Christian holy sites, but many also looted captured cities and sacked the Orthodox Christian capital, Constantinople."⁴⁸ While *WORLD* only sold 3,100 copies after publication, this still meant that thousands of students used, and may continue to use, a textbook containing information that did not reflect recent trends in scholarship on the Crusades.⁴⁹ Almost 150 years after Myers and Duruy had not even mentioned greed in their textbooks, greed had become a mainstay in textbook descriptions of crusaders' motivations.

Crusader Greed as a Product of Trends in Historical Analysis

Over the last century and a half, then, greed steadily asserted its presence within the high school history textbook. This happened because of a combination of factors related to the way textbooks were created. The growing prominence of greed in these textbooks developed in part because of changes in views of the Crusades coming out of the scholarly sources that shaped them. Across this time frame scholars showed an increasing deference toward greed as a motivating factor in taking the cross. As Elizabeth Siberry, who specializes in the historiography of the Crusades, explains in *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, people writing on the Crusades in the nineteenth century had generally favorable views of crusaders, seeing them as heroic knights following a higher calling. Even for nineteenth-century historians who viewed the Crusades negatively, greed hardly surfaced in their characterizations of those who took the cross.⁵⁰ The authors of textbooks from the late nineteenth century would therefore not have seen greed enough in the academic literature that shaped their textbooks to deem it worthy of inclusion.

By the end of the nineteenth century, scholars became more critical of the Crusades and crusaders who participated in them. In his article "The

Historiography of the Crusades," Giles Constable, a former professor of medieval history at Harvard University, explains that historians shifted from a more favorable view of the Crusades in the nineteenth century to "a rising tide of criticism" in the twentieth century. This shift stemmed from authors being wary about "the consequences of European colonialism" and "the tensions between western and non-western societies."⁵¹ In viewing the Crusades through a critical and post-colonial lens, Crusade scholars cited the reasons for European colonialism, including a desire for financial gain, as the same reasons for the crusaders' quest in the Holy Land. This same view trickled down into textbooks. Jonathan Riley-Smith, the Cambridge historian, also explains that Crusade scholars' fixation on greed intensified with the growth of academic attention given to the notion of just war and obedience to orders in the wake of World War II and the start of the Cold War. As he writes in "The Crusading Movement and Historians," "it was hard to credit sincere men and women with an ideology as repugnant as crusading; it was easier to believe that they had been too simple-minded to understand what they were doing or to argue that they had been motivated, whatever they might have said, by desire for land or booty, although the latter explanation should have been hard to sustain."⁵² This view shaped the writings of historians such as Steven Runciman and Kenneth M. Setton, whose influential mid-twentieth century books on the Crusades contained depictions of crusaders as motivated by greed.⁵³ As greed filled academic writing, so too did the authors of textbooks find it important to include greed as a motivating force in the Crusades.

Crusader Greed as a Product of the Limitations of Textbooks as a Medium

Greed's prominence in textbooks was not simply a byproduct of post-war and post-colonial trends in history writing. Most twentieth-century historians who argued that greed motivated crusaders to take up arms still did not give greed the parity with other motives that contemporary textbooks do.⁵⁴ Instead, the image of the greedy crusader reached such a point of prominence in textbooks because of the limitations of the medium of the textbook itself. Because of the vast amount of material that textbooks have to cover, authors must convey information in the most concise way possible. In doing so, textbooks have intentionally or unintentionally reframed academic debates around the motivations of crusaders by oversimplifying information from academic sources, misleading readers as to what extent greed motivated crusaders.

Take, for example, the work of George Burton Adams, the medieval history professor at Yale from 1888 to 1925. In 1894, Adams published

the monograph *Civilization During the Middle Ages*, in which he devoted an entire chapter to the Crusades. His discussion of crusaders' motives spans just over three pages, in which he offers "three leading influences" for why people took the cross: "the love of military exploits and adventures[;] the theocratic ideas which were at the time advancing the papacy so rapidly to its highest point of power; and an ascetic conception of life and Christian conduct [held] by the great mass of men of all ranks."⁵⁵ In the following paragraphs, Adams weighs the strength of each of these motives, ultimately concluding that while the first two may have played a contributing role in motivating some crusaders, it was the religiosity of each crusader and of the era that was the "one decisive cause."⁵⁶ By devoting so much space to this explanation and engaging with scholarly debate on the causes of the Crusades, Adams's analysis shows how nineteenth-century scholarship balanced religious and material motives in compelling Crusaders to take the cross.

In 1901, however, Adams shifted his focus to writing for high school audiences, creating a textbook entitled *European History: An Outline of Its Developments*. In a departure from his previous work, Adams only devoted four sentences to crusaders' motivations, writing that "the crusaders themselves were personally influenced by two very strong motives. One was religious—the belief that pilgrimages, especially to such holy places as those in Palestine, would be the best penance for their sins. The other was the love of adventure and the enjoyment of personal combat, which is a little later so prominent a feature in the age of chivalry. Mingled with these motives were, even from the beginning, more selfish ones—the desire of the leaders to secure principalities for themselves from the conquests made, and motives of commercial gain."⁵⁷ Adams presented the Crusades once again as primarily motivated by religious devotion, but without the same depth of explanation of the importance of religion to the medieval Christian as his other work. At the same time, he presented desire for land and "commercial gain," aspects that reflected greed, without much further discussion other than implying that they were not as important in driving people to take the cross as religion or adventure. In having to present a much more concise depiction of crusaders' motives in his textbook, Adams stripped away all the nuance of his monograph and, intentionally or not, gave the motivations he previously minimized a greater degree of importance. The stripping away of nuance in favor of presenting concise information occurs in the creation of any textbook, and this push for concision in explaining crusaders' motivations is apparent in textbooks from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first centuries. An increase in coverage of non-Western history, the addition of review sections at the end of chapters, or even the simple fact that newer textbooks contain over a century's worth of new events that these older textbooks did not have to fit in likely forced authors

to favor concision over nuance. Regardless, shrinking discussion of crusader motivations has reframed students' understanding of the Crusades. So, while postwar and post-colonial trends in history writing have elevated greed's importance, the limitations of the medium of the textbook are also at fault. In having to eschew nuance for concision, textbook authors have inadvertently given greed a level of importance greater than Crusade scholarship allows.

Conclusion and Next Steps

After a century and a half of crusader greed filling high school history textbooks, changes in the way that students are taught about crusaders' motivations appear to be on the horizon. Some textbook authors have already adopted ideas promulgated in recent scholarship and denounced the idea of greed driving crusaders, including Felipe Fernandez-Armesto in his 2011 textbook *The World: A History*.⁵⁸ But the publication of such new textbooks only tells a part of the story. School districts need to buy and implement these newer textbooks in order to change the public's mind on crusader greed. Given that many schools continue to use textbooks that are decades old, it may take some time before textbooks containing information that does not reflect current scholarship on crusader greed are no longer used in classrooms.⁵⁹ Until then, perhaps teachers would do well to take a nod from Mary Sheldon-Barnes. Instead of relying on textbooks to teach their students about what motivated people to take the cross, teachers should have students engage with primary sources and draw conclusions on their own. This way students would not only be free from the constraints of their textbooks, which by the nature of the medium can oversimplify information, but would also have an opportunity to engage in the same methods of analysis and argument as professional historians. More than that, by pointing out the inherent flaws in textbook portrayals of complicated subjects such as Crusaders' motivations, this kind of analysis may inspire students to think more critically about what their textbooks teach them and recognize the dangers associated with passing over historical events, in the words of Mary Sheldon-Barnes, "sketchily and hastily."⁶⁰

1. Roger Beck, *World History: Patterns of Interaction* (Evanston: McDougal Littell, 2003), p. 340.
2. Giles Constable, "The Historiography of the Crusades," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), pp. 1-22; Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Crusading Movement and Historians," in *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, ed. John Riley-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-14.
3. See Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Early Crusaders to the East and the Costs of Crusading, 1095-1130," in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas F. Madden (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 155-71; Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Norman Housley, *Fighting for the Cross: Crusading to the Holy Land* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
4. This analysis focuses on participation in the Crusades as a whole, referring to the series of military campaigns in the Holy Land between 1096 and 1291, rather than any individual crusade or any crusades in Europe at the time. I have omitted discussion about the motives of other groups, specifically the Papacy and merchants.
5. Even the study of textbooks presents limitations, as finding data on their usage is difficult. Most publishing companies did not disclose how many copies of a particular textbook they sold. Determining how long a specific textbook was used in a classroom is even more difficult, as most districts do not keep track of these statistics. Yet the publication and distribution of this material indicates that students used these textbooks at some point, and the transmission of misleading information to students through a medium so commonly used in schools is worth investigation.
6. Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades: The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 92.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 147.
8. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, p. 68.
9. Riley-Smith, "Early Crusaders to the East," pp. 160-161.
10. For a discussion of how crusaders looted their way through Europe as they marched towards Constantinople, see Joshua Prawer, *The Crusaders' Kingdom: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 12; Kenneth M. Setton, *A History of the Crusades: The First Hundred Years*, ed. Marshall W. Baldwin (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1955), pp. 274, 294.
11. Riley-Smith, "Early Crusaders to the East," p. 163.
12. Housley, *Fighting for the Cross*, pp. 150-155, 164.
13. Riley-Smith, "Early Crusaders to the East," pp. 163-164.
14. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, p. 76.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Beck, *World History*, p. 340.
17. Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an Act of Love," in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, pp. 31-50, esp. p. 36.
18. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pp. 74-75.
19. William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School* (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1999), pp. 16-17.

20. Phillip Van Ness Meyers, *A General History for Colleges and High Schools* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1889), pp. 438-39.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Victor Duruy, *The History of the Middle Ages*, trans. Emily H. Whitney and Margaret D. Whitney, ed. George B. Adams (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1891), pp. iii, 265-66.

24. Chara Haeussler Bohan and James A. Chisholm, Jr., "Mary Sheldon-Barnes: An Educator's Life in Historical Context," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 6, no. 2 (2011): 85-94, esp. 93.

25. Mary D. Sheldon-Barnes, *Studies in General History: Student Edition* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Company, 1885), pp. 296-335.

26. Ibid., p. 296.

27. Mary D. Sheldon-Barnes, *Studies in General History: Teacher's Edition* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1886), p. 99.

28. Ibid., p. 94.

29. Roscoe Lewis Ashley, *Medieval Civilization: A Textbook for Secondary Schools* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), pp. 441-42.

30. Ibid., p. 451.

31. Hutton Webster, *World History* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1921), pp. 187-88.

32. William Edwards, *Notes on European History: The Break-Up of the Roman Empire to 1494* (London: Rivingtons, 1925), pp. 564-65.

33. Carlton Hayes and Parker Moon, *Ancient and Medieval History* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929), pp. 649-50.

34. Thomas Walter Wallbank, *Man's Story: World History in its Geographic Setting* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1951), p. 161.

35. Edward McNall Burns, *Western Civilizations: Their History and their Culture*, 5th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1958), p. 342.

36. Ibid.

37. For descriptions of the hardships pilgrims faced, see Housley, *Fighting for the Cross*, pp. 151-55.

38. Jack C. Estrin, *World History Made Simple* (New York: Made Simple Books, 1957), p. 101.

39. Ibid.

40. Thomas W. Wallbank and Arnold Schrier, *Living World History* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1964), p. 150.

41. Thomas W. Wallbank, *History and Life: The World and its People*, Teacher's annotated ed. (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1977), p. 201.

42. Anatole G. Mazour, John M. Peoples, and Theodore K. Rabb, *People and Nations: A World History* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), p. 265. Also see Anatole G. Mazour and John M. Peoples, *World History: People and Nations* (Austin: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1993), p. 250; Larry S. Krieger, Kenneth Neill, Steven L. Jantzen, *World History: Perspectives on the Past* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1992), p. 241.

43. Paul T. Welty and Miriam Greenblatt, *The Human Expression: World Regions and Cultures*, 4th edition (Lake Forest: Glencoe, 1992), p. 452.

44. Elisabeth Gaynor Ellis, *World History: Connections to Today* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 220.
45. William T. Hanes, *World History: Continuity and Change* (Austin: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1999), p. 290.
46. Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Glencoe World History: Modern Times* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005), pp. 306-07.
47. Beck, *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, p. 344.
48. Craig A. Lockard, *WORLD: To 1500* (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2011), p. 251.
49. Valerie Hartman, email to author, March 29, 2019. Valerie Hartman is a representative for Cengage Learning.
50. Elizabeth Siberry, "Crusade Historiography," in *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 1-38.
51. Constable, "The Historiography of the Crusades," pp. 2-3.
52. Riley-Smith, "Crusading Movement and Historians," p. 5.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
54. For example, Kenneth Setton argues that the "ordinary knight was savage, brutal, and lustful...he was in his way, devout...and was deeply interested in the welfare of his soul." See Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, p. 15.
55. George B. Adams, *Civilization During the Middle Ages: Especially in Relation to Modern Civilization* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), p. 263.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 263-67.
57. George Burton Adams, *European History: An Outline of Its Developments* (New York: Macmillan, 1901), pp. 209-10.
58. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *The World: A History* (Boston: Pearson, 2009), p. 311.
59. Josephine Sedgwick, "25-Year-Old Textbooks and Holes in the Ceiling: Inside America's Public Schools," *New York Times*, April 16, 2018.
60. Sheldon-Barnes, *Studies in General History: Teacher's Edition*, p. 99.

PROHIBITION AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

A Rebellious Campus Largely Unaffected

Griffin Wray



Image: Rathskeller Men's Lounge, creator unknown, ca. 1927-1933, accessed [online](#).

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It is safe to say that the state of Wisconsin is well-known for its inhabitants' love of alcohol. Likewise, that reputation extends to the students of the state's flagship institution of higher learning: the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Historically known as a party school, incoming students look forward to a campus that provides endless opportunities to drink, and these expectations are fully-justified. According to a 2018 report by University Health Services, not only are UW-Madison students more likely to drink than students at other universities, they are more likely to become "high-risk" or "problematic" drinkers by mid-first semester, consume alcohol in university housing, and go out on Thursday nights.¹ While these facts are indicative of a reputation that the university administration has long been eager to shake off, they show that drinking, like it or not, is a pillar of university life in Madison.

Thus, when tracing UW-Madison's history, a major question arises: just how did the university fare under the federal ban on alcohol from 1920 to 1933, and what did the students have to say about it? While the idea of Prohibition-era America brings to mind mobsters, speakeasies, flappers, and the large-scale failure of the well-intended Volstead Act, an oft-overlooked but intriguing part of Prohibition's legacy is its effects on the lives of college students and the administrators watching over them. Though historians have studied college life in the 1920s, they have often done so through the lens of evolving youth social norms and the establishment of university life as it is recognized today. That is not to say that they have not delved into Prohibition's effects and the responses by students, but they have only done so as a part of larger narratives of youthful rebellion. By analyzing UW-Madison specifically, this paper illuminates this broader social narrative through a detailed case study of utmost relevance. Reports from UW-Madison throughout the 1920s indicate that the university did more than contribute its share of rebellion, and often drew comment from outsiders surprised by the heavy and open drinking habits of its students. A 1927 *New York Times* article reported that of a hundred universities surveyed about the drinking habits of their student bodies, "Princeton and the University of Wisconsin were the only large universities in the country reporting any appreciable amount of drinking."² With the advent of the Roaring Twenties and the modern university, historian Paula Fass writes, "administrators and professors [came] face-to-face with an unwieldy body of heterogeneous students and a youth culture largely dominated by leisure habits."³ At UW-Madison, "leisure habits" certainly seemed to dominate. Unlike at other universities however, drinking was more than just a form of rebellion; it was an accepted part of college life independence.

Rebellion, of course, still factored into the choices of Madison's students. On a campus known even before Prohibition for its raucous behavior, the advent of temperance in Madison seemed to encourage more,

not less, drinking, much to the chagrin of the university administration and to the delight of local and national newspapers looking for sensational stories. An edition of the student newspaper, *The Daily Cardinal*, noted, "without a doubt, Prohibition has been an incentive for young folks to learn to drink...the Eighteenth Amendment has accomplished nothing but the ruination of our gastronomic organs, our taste, and our one time respect for federal law."⁴ Though Wisconsin reported "one percent of its student body to be hard drinkers," it conceded that 73 percent were "occasional tipplers."⁵ Although those engaging in some of the more outrageous behavior tended to be male and members of Greek organizations, drinking patterns for the rest of the student body did not appear to be harmed by Prohibition's enactment.

For some enterprising students, Prohibition offered an opportunity not just for rebellion but for business, allowing them to make extra money off the liquor trade, or in the case of one co-ed, to pay for school. Whether at fraternity parties, speakeasies, in dorms, or even on hayrides in surrounding communities, liquor seemed to be readily available for any student finding themselves in need of a drink. Even "Soft drink establishments [in Madison]" dispensed "beverages of a harder variety than the name implies."⁶ And drinking right beside the students in those speakeasies (and even fraternity houses) were their own professors and fellow citizens of Madison. The casual and continued drinking by students throughout the 1920s was reflective of the overall cultural disdain for Prohibition throughout Wisconsin. According to historian and retired UW-Madison professor Booth Fowler, outright refusal to enact enforcement bylaws led to Prohibition's obsolescence in the state by 1927.⁷ For a university like UW-Madison, the 1920s were as one would expect: very wet.

Despite the inseparable relationship between students and drinking, campus life in Madison was not immune to the debate surrounding alcohol and the alleged evils it brought upon society. As the national temperance movement grew in the nineteenth century, its influence was felt even at the highest levels of UW-Madison's administration. When university president John Bascom sought to have John Olin promoted during his tenure in the 1880s, the Board of Regents rejected his nomination, "partly at least on the charge of his prohibitionist activities."⁸ This was as much a repudiation of Olin's prohibitionist leanings as it was of Bascom's.⁹ Bascom, who was not a native of Wisconsin, had long advocated temperance, and this clash with the Board of Regents shows, at least at the state level, a culture of acceptance regarding drinking.

Yet the debate surrounding temperance was quite literally present among the student body as well. On February 18, 1887, a debate between the Athena and Hesperia literary societies was held over the question, "Is legal prohibition a true remedy for the evils arising from the traffic in alcoholic liquors in the United States?"¹⁰ Whether an indication of prevailing

pro-temperance attitudes or mere skill, the Athena society won, arguing for prohibition.

Evidently a hot topic, the temperance movement on campus was one largely championed by female students. As it was elsewhere in the nation, the push for prohibition was invariably tied to the suffrage movement. Women and children were seen as the biggest victims of “demon rum,” suffering physical abuse and other traumas at the hands of intoxicated men.¹¹ Various societies and causes promoting temperance arose on campus, especially in the years leading to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and the eve of World War I. The Madison chapter of the Intercollegiate Prohibition Society was founded in 1917 “with the avowed purpose of waging a war on ‘demon rum’ among fellow students.”¹² When the campus chapter of the Women’s Self Governance Association, founded in 1897, handed out a booklet to incoming freshmen women in the fall of 1921, the code of conduct found within described the “Wisconsin woman” as “thoughtful of her obligation to help establish and maintain high social and moral standards. To this end . . . She refuses to associate with men who have been drinking.”¹³ This code of conduct can be analyzed in two ways. First, it imparted the duty of fighting the degeneracy caused by alcohol on its female adherents, making clear that the fight for women’s rights and the fight against alcohol were one and the same. Second, the timing of its publication indicates that although Prohibition had begun the year before, students were still drinking. Of the five items on the list to which the “Wisconsin woman” was to adhere, avoiding men who had been drinking was number four, and 2,000 female students even pledged to boycott any functions where male students were intoxicated.¹⁴ Yet historian Nicholas Syrett notes that “drinking in mixed-sex groups—at parties and dances, in cars and fraternity houses—was almost fully accepted by young people.”¹⁵ Clearly, there were still a large number of both men and women to whom Prohibition meant little.

As active as they may have been, student-led attempts to restrict alcohol consumption on campus belie the general student body’s feelings towards alcohol. While the editor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s *Daily Illini* warned in 1921 that “drinking must not become open and offensive to student society,” students in Wisconsin viewed things differently.¹⁶ At UW-Madison, the 1921 edition of the yearbook *The Badger* featured an entire page entitled “Requiem” that was dedicated to the “memory” of the “fallen King”:

Not long ago, in the mellowness of moonshine on the shores of our own Lake Mendota, there could be seen happy, hearty groups, encircling the oaken kegs from which flowed a brew as sweet as walnuts, as smooth and soft as seafoam! Here, indeed, was good-hearted beatitude, wholesome magnanimity! But now—the mental vacuity

and weariness of the tea dancer, evidenced by the half-closed eyes, the amorphous expression, the languid smile. "That it should come to this"! Does all this seem immoral to you who used to read the obituary columns, and knew Old Ethyl was the author? Well, you are probably right. But the evil has passed into oblivion, and therefore can be jested about. Anyway, we think that in this memorable year of the King's death we should not begrudge his memory a few pages. So grant us our suit for forgiveness. And you, O loyal host of the fallen King! Does our light treatment of this grave subject offend you? The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but deep in our hearts we are in utmost accord with you—and even as we jest we wipe away a surreptitious tear.¹⁷

The entire "obituary" is a work of satire, but the tongue-in-cheek approach is telling. The faux-mourning approach to the ban on alcohol illustrates a lack of gravity students saw in the situation. Moreover, the authors bemoan the fall of alcohol, "the King," and the potential rise of "tea dancing." A form of couples-dance found at tea and garden parties, "tea dancing" was regularly mocked because of its associations with sobriety and the proper social conduct of older generations.¹⁸ When a college student drinks, noted Dartmouth's student newspaper, "it is usually to parade his drunkenness—at a football game, at a dance, during a vacation, at a social gathering—and it is on such occasions that a shocked older generation is most liable to see youth in action."¹⁹ Thus, "tea dances" and similar social gatherings were seen as the exact sorts of societal conventions a student might avoid or enhance by drinking alcohol. Additionally, the reference to alcohol as "Old Ethyl" suggests that the authors viewed alcohol more as an over-inflated boogeyman than an actual problem.

The overall flippant attitude towards Prohibition was, to a great degree, reflected by student conduct, and did not go unnoticed by the administration. Even prior to Prohibition, the university had sought to reign in raucous student behavior that included hazing, fights, academic dishonesty, and even riots. Following the First World War, dean of men Scott Goodnight, noted that "The passion for diversion, for extremes, for extravagances, for dissipation was more marked than at any time."²⁰ With the advent of Prohibition, such behavior (or at least accounts detailing it) seemed to increase. Goodnight further noted, "Although Madison was dry at the time neighboring village bars were doing an immense business and drinking was unusually prevalent among the men students."²¹

Though drinking at sporting events and among male students was common, Paula Fass writes, "In the early twenties, there was a clear code of limitations on drinking that reflected traditional attitudes toward propriety and drinking....drinking at dances and in the company of women was not [permissible.]"²² The early twenties in Madison seemed to differ from this

assessment, however. A 1921 letter to professor Michael O'Shea from an unknown author reads, "We hear of drunken debauches, girls removing their garments and dancing almost naked at a sorority house. We hear of wild parties at Middleton."²³ Though perhaps a sensational account, parties were often held in Middleton and other surrounding communities, and in a 1922 report, a doctor at the university student clinic stated, "after each week end of social activity there was an increase in the number of excuses for sickness from University classes."²⁴ Such an increase in excuses fits Syrett's characterization of student drinking habits, where, at least for male students, "the goal was often all-out, falling-down drunkenness."²⁵ According to the anonymous letter to Professor O'Shea, female students were not exempt from similar debauchery either.

What truth there is to any of these claims may be found various editions of *The Badger* and the glimpses of student life it provides. Two pages in the 1921 edition contain four humorous pictures of students (some clad in fraternity letters) drinking. The first depicts several men seemingly passed out or heavily inebriated while crowded around a barrel, holding glasses "of Brown October Ale" and an apt quote from Miguel de Cervantes: "I drink when I have occasion, and sometimes when I have no occasion."²⁶ On the same page is a photo of four male students, listed as "T.N.E.s" (Theta Nu Epsilons), posing for the camera in formal attire, all with glasses in hand. In an even more blatant display of debauchery and good cheer, the following page features a photo of what can at best be described as a recently-trashed fraternity house, complete with stained walls, a torn poster, a floor littered with debris, and nine students posing around a heavily bottle-laden bar.²⁷ Below, a photo of an individual costumed as a beer bottle walking in a parade is simply captioned with the admonition, "Keep Your Tears off the Page" (reminiscent of "King Alcohol's" obituary).

What is evident from these photos is that students, and fraternity members, in particular, did not care if they were seen drinking or what the effects of alcohol had on them, and very much planned on continuing to drink. In fact, these students appeared to delight in their reputation as drinkers and partiers. They could often be found in Madison's "Latin Quarter." This area, bounded by campus to the west, University Avenue to the south, Lake Mendota to the north, and the city to the east, was steadily populated by Greek-letter societies following the Civil War, and had gained its name by the end of the 1890s.²⁸ Best-known today as Langdon for the street that runs through it, this area is still home to almost all of UW-Madison's fraternities and sororities, as well as the wild reputation that once earned it the name Latin Quarter. The Latin Quarter's growth and reputation can be attributed to increasing student enrollment and a slow response by the university to expand its student housing. Students flocked to the area to join in the emerging Greek-life community and the

freedom that such living offered.²⁹ By the turn of the century, its infamous reputation was solidified, and Prohibition simply brought a tighter watch around an area already known for its parties and hijinks (though a curious editorial by *The Capital Times* in 1923 defended the inhabitants of the Latin Quarter and placed the blame for the propagation of liquor on the university's failure to enforce its ban).³⁰

One memorable event occurred on the night of November 22, 1923. Police, having been on the lookout for a car connected to a Chicago bootlegging ring for weeks, finally apprehended the auto on its way to none other than the Latin Quarter, at the corner of University Avenue and Lake Street. Arresting the driver, they discovered 2,500 dollars-worth of liquor intended for distribution among the student population.³¹ Such events, coupled with the area's reputation, brought increased scrutiny throughout the 1920s. Madison Judge A.C. Hoppman declared in 1921, "these men... were either insane or drunk, and there is every evidence of the latter."³²

In seemingly all news reports relating to the Latin Quarter, dean of men Scott Goodnight made an appearance. Dean Goodnight was a regular fixture in the Latin Quarter and wherever alcohol flowed. Throughout Prohibition, Goodnight was the university's chief guard dog against the evils of liquor, doing his best to reign in fraternal debauchery on campus. He often took it upon himself to police the Latin Quarter personally, breaking up parties wherever he believed there was alcohol. A typical beat in 1921 yielded the following results: "On the night of August first, Monday, I surprised a dancing party in the Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity."³³ The party violated university rules by being unchaperoned, unregistered, and in the middle of the week, but strangely lacked any citations for alcohol violations. Nevertheless, Greeks and other partygoers had to be on constant lookout for the dean.

Goodnight would later write an article in the *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* in 1929 titled "Goodnight Weighs the Fraternity." Among the article's concerns was the "Failure to Dyke Gin Tide," one of the fraternity system's "glaring faults."³⁴ Goodnight made the unfavorable comparison between the "fraternity problem" and the "liquor problem," apologizing to "the fraternities at the outset for such an invidious comparison. (At least of some fraternities.)"³⁵ This qualification of "at least of some fraternities" likely meant either that many fraternities would take pride in the comparison or that there were only select few to which Goodnight actually needed to apologize. Goodnight did, however, list positive aspects of Greek life, such as good living conditions and relationship building. But he decried hazing, financial instability, below-average academic performance, and of course, drinking, as negatives that seemed to outweigh the positives.³⁶ Bluntly chastising the "alumnus who returns at Homecoming time with a bottle on the hip and who makes an ass of himself before the young actives

of his old chapter," nowhere did Goodnight mention any official or legal ramifications for such behavior.³⁷ Goodnight's criticisms were largely concerned with the overall effects that the fraternity system and its drinking habits had on those involved as well as its effects on the university's overall performance and reputation, rather than the actual breaking of any laws. Goodnight, despite his accession to some of the positive aspects of Greek life, was still a strong advocate for Prohibition, lamenting, "Would that [the debauching sway of John Barleycorn] might be completely eradicated from our civilization!"³⁸ Yet, try as he might, there would be no end to drinking in fraternities.

Fraternities, supposedly the worst offenders in terms of alcohol consumption, were not alone in their excessive drinking habits. An anonymous letter sent to *The Daily Cardinal* in 1931 called out the hypocrisy of school officials indicting fraternities for alcohol consumption while seemingly ignoring the rest of the student body. The letter claimed that an unnamed underclassman was not only drinking in his dorm room in Adams Hall, but actually running a bootlegging business out of said room.³⁹ The author explained that "The student 'has been known to have as many as three cases of whiskey in his room at one time,'" and went further to assert that over half the residents of the men's dorms were known to keep liquor in their rooms.⁴⁰ "Why then," the author asks, "should fraternities receive so much unfair publicity when they are no more responsible than institutions of the university itself?"⁴¹ It was a fair question, given the public perception of the student body's drinking habits.

Despite the reputation Greek life had, and Dean Goodnight's best attempts at stopping alcohol consumption, a column headed "Faculty, Students Are Non-Committal" appeared in *The Capital Times* chronicling the campus-wide reaction to the 1931 Wickersham Report, which had ultimately labeled Prohibition a failure. The article describes a "wringing wet Wisconsin with a university in which men and women students drink freely," where "University faculty and student leaders...received the report noncommittally, with concern, or with amusement, but not one ventured a denial or defense."⁴² Whether they supported or opposed Prohibition, no one could say that they were surprised by the report's findings. To those unfamiliar with Madison's drinking culture, "the most surprising thing about drinking here is the openness of it," as one outsider told the paper, where "a fraternity serves wine to members and professors at the same time and nothing happens."⁴³ The mocking anti-temperance pages found throughout UW-Madison yearbooks of the 1920s thus appear to be an accurate reflection of local attitudes about drinking.

Students were even so bold (or perhaps simply so unafraid) as to tell their stories of defying Prohibition in print. A piece featured on the front page of *The Capital Times* in 1931, supposedly written by a co-ed at

UW-Madison, details her work as a bootlegger in order not only to pay for school but to support her family as well.⁴⁴ Declaring that she never delivered to fraternities, as to do so would be too dangerous (because fraternities were under greater scrutiny), she instead ran her business out of her home, entertaining the likes of fraternity brothers and state prohibition agents.⁴⁵ Perfectly encapsulating the sentiment toward Prohibition shared not only by the students in Madison but the country as a whole, the co-ed shared her thoughts on the illegality of her trade: "If I am violating a law, it is a law which violates a higher law, so that puts me on the right side, after all."⁴⁶

Like the enterprising underclassman in Adams Hall, the bootlegging co-ed saw an opportunity not simply to partake in the drinking but to capitalize on it. Such innovations were recognized in the satirical pages of student publications (such as the anonymous letter to *The Cardinal* about the Adams Hall bootlegger, which would no doubt be seen by some as something of an honorable mention), and most, if not all, references to drinking found in yearbooks continued to address Prohibition in a mocking, witty manner. Enterprising, well-to-do students (such as those aforementioned tea-dancers) were portrayed as sober and boring, while those who did poorly in class (and life in general) were often portrayed as drinkers. In a satirical blurb found amidst advertisements in the 1932 edition of *The Badger*, a fictional recent UW-Madison graduate named "Trygve Bjornstead Oloffursen" conducted research, feeding cows "a diet of soapbubbles and licorice scraps," producing a "better quality of milk than one fed solely on lemon marmalade and maple syrup."⁴⁷ The author then lamented, "If only our school would attract more boys of Oloffursen's calibre [sic] instead of so many gin gargling, girl crazy, rich men's sons who drag the fair name of Wisconsin through the mud until it is on the lips of every speakeasy operator in the middle west."⁴⁸ That the humorously decried miscreants were labeled "girl crazy, rich men's sons" likely alluded to fraternity members, but the piece overall is a lampoon of strict, uptight characters such as Scott Goodnight, who wholeheartedly believed in temperance and the evils of drinking. Utilizing every stereotype at their disposal, the author portrayed the ideal Wisconsin man as one who strictly abstained from alcohol and followed the noble (and ridiculous) pursuits of dairy science under an outlandish but conceivably familiar name to Wisconsinites. When looking at statements from prohibitionists like Scott Goodnight, however, the motivation behind the students' mockery of Prohibition becomes clear.

As noted before, Dean Goodnight had legitimate concerns regarding Greek life. However, in a 1923 edition of *The Capital Times*, he filled an entire editorial column of the front page, from top to bottom, dissuading fraternities over the summer from even considering hosting social events involving alcohol. Ominously, he warned that any fraternity would "be held responsible and its house closed if a scandalous drinking affair takes place

on the premises.”⁴⁹ The heading of his piece—“Goodnight Hits Frat Drinkers”—evokes an image of a strict, totalitarian university administrator. Yet such strong statements from Goodnight were often deflated by the muted support from other faculty, including UW-Madison’s president Glenn Frank. When asked to comment on the Wickersham Report, President Frank benignly stated, “The university is simply a cross section of the parts of the country from which its students come, and naturally the university reflects the standards of those other communities.”⁵⁰ Clearly, although there were those such as Dean Goodnight who saw it as imperative to stop students from drinking, the message from the university’s highest office was not one that shared the same concern.

In an interesting departure from the tongue-in-cheek approach students took in their satirical writings, a column from “The Snaily Cardinal” section of the 1932 edition of *The Badger* was titled “Thetas Sacrifice Saturday Beers.”⁵¹ It detailed a fictional account of the girls of Theta foregoing “their usual Saturday night beers” and instead donating the money saved to a loan fund, to the delight of the house janitor, who complained of having to pick up all the bottles. Interestingly, the piece does not depict alcohol negatively or as a substance leading to social degradation. The humor of it is derived instead from the image of a group of sorority girls regularly spending their Saturday nights drinking large amounts of beer, much to the chagrin of the house janitor. This underlines the integration of drinking into student life at UW-Madison, perhaps more so than overt displays of campus drinking or jaunts to a speakeasy in Greenbush. The casual manner of the piece suggests that even though at times under heightened scrutiny, drinking was still understood of as a regular and commonplace activity out of the public eye, something other than an “event.” The idea of “usual Saturday night beers” evokes relaxed behavior surrounding a substance that at the time was the object of great social awareness. Like the co-ed bootlegger, the image suggests that drinking among female students was more commonplace than co-ed temperance advocates would have liked people to believe.

The beer supplied to these fictitious co-eds, or to any of the many real speakeasies, likely came from the Italian Greenbush neighborhood, bounded by Park, Regent, and West Washington Streets.⁵² The “comparative ease with which liquor [could] be bought in Greenbush” was well known.⁵³ UW-Madison alum, Paul Gangelin, writing for *Smart Set* in 1923, noted the following:

No longer can one take one’s liquor decently and congenially over the bar at Ferdie’s, Hausmann’s, Pete Hammacher’s, or the Silver Dollar, but one can go a few blocks south of University Avenue, and there, in the land of the beneficent bootlegger, demand of Tony (or Mrs. Tony if Tony happens to be serving a sentence) the cup that not only cheers but also yells and raises the very devil.⁵⁴

Students indeed would have had to ask for “Mrs. Tony”; on January 19, 1921 a Mr. Tony Patterson of 812 Regent St. was arrested “following a raid on the Italian settlement on the west side ... and arraigned in superior court charged with violation of the liquor laws.”⁵⁵

In the 1931 report released by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, the Wickersham Report, it was found that in Greenbush (or simply the Bush, as it was commonly known), there was “an attractive young Italian girl” who was “queen of the bootleggers,” catering “exclusively to a fraternity house clientele.”⁵⁶ This “queen of the bootleggers” was Jennie Justo, the daughter of an Italian family deeply involved in bootlegging and other crimes. Operating a speakeasy complete with tables and a private room out of the basement her home at 921 Spring St., she was much loved by students.⁵⁷ “Alleged to have served drinks to many students there,” Jennie also catered to “members of a certain fraternity ... bringing their co-ed friends there for liquid refreshments.”⁵⁸ When released from prison in 1932, students gave her flowers and sang to her.⁵⁹ In later years, they often invited her to attend class reunions.⁶⁰ Her establishment was only one of a multitude found near campus. Other speakeasies could be found on Park, Regent, University, and even State. Often raided by the police, such establishments would only be out of business a short while until their proprietors were out on bond, or not at all, if they had a family member take over while they were in jail.⁶¹

Amidst the widespread drinking and the student body fondness for Greenbush, there were some students who were not so enthralled. Those students, not as eager to partake in drinking, found friends in the rising second iteration of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK), and the illegal liquor trade conducted in the Bush by its Italian populace made it a clear target for raids conducted by students with KKK ties. The honorary UW-Madison student chapter of the KKK was chartered in 1920, and its new recruits seemed eager to assist in the fight against alcohol. Strongly Protestant and anti-Catholic, student Klansmen “played junior G-men in the Greenbush neighborhood,” as historian Stuart Levitan writes.⁶² In 1921 student members conducted surveillance, purchased liquor, and reported those sales to federal liquor control agents, and assisted in a nighttime patrol that led to eight arrests and the seizure of 300 gallons of liquor.⁶³ Even with ties to the booze-loving fraternities of the Latin Quarter, those students in the campus KKK appeared to shun the conventional campus love for Greenbush and Jennie Justo. As the 1920s progressed, however, the student KKK waned, and by 1924 (the very year it appeared in *The Badger*) the group changed its name to Kappa Beta Lambda (Klansmen Be Loyal), and finally to Delta Sigma Tau in 1926 as it further deteriorated with Prohibition.⁶⁴

In 1926, Wisconsin voted to amend the Volstead Act (meant to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment that established Prohibition) to allow for the

production and sale of beer containing 2.75 percent alcohol, and in 1929 voted to repeal the actual enforcement provision of the act, effectively ending prohibition in Wisconsin.⁶⁵ In 1933, the same year that Prohibition was repealed at the federal level, Der Rathskeller began serving beer in Memorial Union, a reflection of the deep-seated drinking culture in Wisconsin and also a victory “hurrah” of sorts over Prohibition. For students on the campus of UW-Madison, however, Prohibition had been at most an inconvenience. Despite the efforts of administrators like Scott Goodnight, alcohol was still readily available to a student body that really had no desire to quit. It is clear from their own publications that students did not take the ban on alcohol seriously and often flaunted it purely as a rejection of authority. They mocked temperance and Prohibition throughout the decade that it was enforced with aptly named pieces such as “Ode To Temperance”: “Oh, let me twang my lute and sing/A joyful serenade!/John Barleycorn is dead! (And yet I do/hate lemonade.)” and “Down with the sinful cocktail and/The Maraschino cherry!/A malted milk is better far/(But isn’t very merry).”⁶⁶ Students did not see alcohol as the evil that Prohibitionists did, and carried on as though life were no different. A UW student writing about his home town of Viroqua may very well have been writing about Madison: “There is no Prohibition. Either the people have not heard of the great mistake of 1918 or they are deliberately disobeying it.”⁶⁷ While student newspapers at other universities, such as *The Cornell Sun*, warned against drinking as “an offense to good manners and good decency,” *The Daily Cardinal* proclaimed, “Students drink in the spirit of braggadocio. It is the natural reaction of youth to rules and regulations.”⁶⁸ The casual nature of drinking at UW-Madison, as noted by many and evidenced by the relaxed attitude of students, suggests that in Madison, opposition to Prohibition was more than what historians argue was a rebellious form of youthful revolution. To students in Madison, Prohibition was simply a joke.

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68. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful*, p. 316

Editors' Biographies

John Douglas (Editor-in-Chief) is in his last year as an undergraduate; his majors are accounting and history. John is fortunate enough to have the opportunity to return to the *ARCHIVE* editorial board for a second year. He studies the cultural, intellectual, and social history of Central Asia, the Middle East, and Russia, and works primarily in the 19th and 20th centuries. His research focuses on 19th- and 20th-century Muslim reform movements; 20th-century Islamist movements; and the evolution of Muslim identity during the 20th century. He is currently working on a senior thesis under the supervision of Professor David McDonald, which questions how academics of the Judeo-Christian West received Jadidism, a 20th-century Muslim reform movement in Central Asia. Those receptions in turn help to illuminate the broader ways in which "Western" academics conceptualize the evolution of Central Asian Muslim identity during the 20th century.

Samuel Bertsch is a senior majoring in history and political science with a certificate in Southeast Asian studies. As a student of Southeast Asia, Sam decided to spend a semester at the National University of Singapore, a decision he made in part to familiarize himself with the region and to get a true sense of its politics. His historical interests focus on post-World War II U.S. foreign policy (the covert realm, specifically), along with colonial and post-colonial Southeast Asian history. He is currently working on a senior thesis (under the supervision Professor Alfred McCoy) that focuses on the individuals who helped shape U.S. foreign policy objectives in South Vietnam during the 1950s and 1960s.

Isabelle Cook is in her second year, studying history and Russian. This is her first year as an *ARCHIVE* editor. Her academic interests focus on the Second World War, the Cold War period, and the Soviet Union. She has just entered the advanced level of her Russian studies, where she has the opportunity to read *Crime and Punishment* in its original language. Outside the classroom, Isabelle loves to read the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and biographies of monumental leaders. She is a member of UW's Model United Nations team, a barista at Colectivo Coffee, and the manager of the UW Men's Rugby Club. Having spent part of her life in the European Union, Isabelle hopes to live abroad again upon graduating; she hopes to work for the government or pursue a career in academia.

Grant Haxton is a senior triple majoring in geography, history, and political science, and proudly refers to the greater Los Angeles area as home. He has taken interdisciplinary courses on Europe and the United States, and has earned a certificate in European Studies, which has allowed him to

study abroad in both Croatia and Greece. This past fall, Grant explored the migration history, political economy, and urban development of Europe and the U.S. in his History 600 seminar, "Migration and Me: Researching Family Stories." Outside academia, Grant has interned in a state legislative office in Madison and a congressional office in Washington, D.C. as a part of the university's "Wisconsin in Washington" program. He is also an active member of the university's club water polo team; he is the club's former co-president and team's former co-captain. Upon graduation this spring, his interests in politics, international relations, and cross-cultural dialogue will serve him well as he enters the Army's Officer Candidate School next fall.

Jack Kelly is a senior double majoring in history and journalism. His academic interests include the development of single-party states, Depression-era pugilism, and the role and impact of the media in elections. Jack currently works as a reporting and engagement intern for Wisconsin Health News, a news organization dedicated to covering healthcare, healthcare policy, and general health news in Wisconsin. He has previously held multiple positions with *The Daily Cardinal*, UW-Madison's independent student newspaper, and has also reported for a variety news organizations in both Illinois and Wisconsin. Following graduation this May, Jack will attend graduate school at Northwestern University to receive a master's in Journalism; he will specialize in Media Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Hilary Miller is a senior studying political science, history, and Jewish studies. Her academic interests include diasporic Jewish affairs, Israeli politics and society, genocide studies, and the history of antisemitism. Her capstone research focused on the 1948 assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte carried out by radical Jewish terrorists. Hilary is a former Editor-in-Chief of *ARCHIVE*, an editor for *Sifting & Winnowing: An Undergraduate Journal of Political Science, Public Policy, and Law*, and the founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Avukah: UW-Madison's Undergraduate Journal of Jewish Studies*. She has previously interned for the Consulate of Israel to the Midwest and the American Jewish Committee. Hilary is currently the Communications and Development Intern for the Louis Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law. After graduating, Hilary wants to pursue a career in global Jewish advocacy with the specific aim of combating antisemitism.

Marissa Miller is a senior finishing her studies in anthropology, archaeology, and history. Her interests focus on the history and archaeology of the high medieval through the early modern period of the Celtic-speaking west. She is currently working on a senior thesis that investigates the Tudor period in Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland through the experiences

and reactions of the intellectual elites known as the Gaelic learned service families. This topic came to her while studying abroad at the National University of Ireland—Galway. Her other research includes two archaeological excavations on an island off the west coast of Ireland, a place known as Achill Island. During the 2017 season, she helped excavate the exterior of a Middle Bronze Age roundhouse where she found the remains of a *fulacht fia* (burnt mound), used for cooking in the Late Bronze Age. She returned to Achill as a supervisor during the 2018 season to excavate the remains of a nineteenth-century, pre-Famine house in the abandoned village of Keem. After graduation this spring, she will attend graduate school at the University of Glasgow to receive a master's degree in Conflict Archaeology and Heritage.

Jake Price is a senior double majoring in economics and history with a certificate in environmental studies. While he considers himself to be a history generalist, the majority of his studies focus on American economic and land development and their contemporary political and social implications. His academic interests also include studying the global effects of British and French colonialism; he is particularly interested in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Outside the discipline of history, Jake has worked as a policy intern for Wisconsin State Senator Lena Taylor, researching the environmental and economic effects of acid mining in the state, along with criminal justice reform. Following graduation this spring, Jake plans to move back to California and work in state government with hopes of focusing on both housing and environmental policy. Jake hopes to attend graduate school and earn a law degree and a master's degree in Urban Planning.

Owen Tortora is a junior double majoring in history and political science with an interest in public policy. His academic interests include United States History from the mid-20th century to the present, particularly mid-twentieth-century American foreign affairs. Owen is currently an intern for Wisconsin State Representative Jill Billings; he conducts policy research, drafts memos on a variety of issues, and engages in constituent relations. Outside of the classroom, Owen plays a crucial role in the Hoofers Ski and Snowboard Club, an organization for which he will serve as president next year. A proactive member of the club, Owen has directed a resale event (the largest of its kind in the Midwest), as well as serving as the director of all local ski trips. Upon graduating next fall, he hopes either to work as a legislative aide for the Wisconsin State Assembly or to work in governmental relations with an environmental organization. Regardless of his career path, during that time Owen will prepare to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE); he hopes to attain a master's degree in Public Policy.

Susan Lee Johnson is Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and author *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush*, which won the Bancroft Prize in American History and Diplomacy as well as the W. Turrentine Jackson First Book Award from the Western History Association. Susan recently completed final revisions on a second book manuscript that is under contract with University of North Carolina Press, a book still in want of a title. In the early 1980s, Susan worked on the editorial staff of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* and is thrilled to be back in the publishing world again, working with such a terrific group of editors. Next fall, Susan will join the faculty at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, filling the Harry Reid Endowed Chair for the History of the Intermountain West.

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