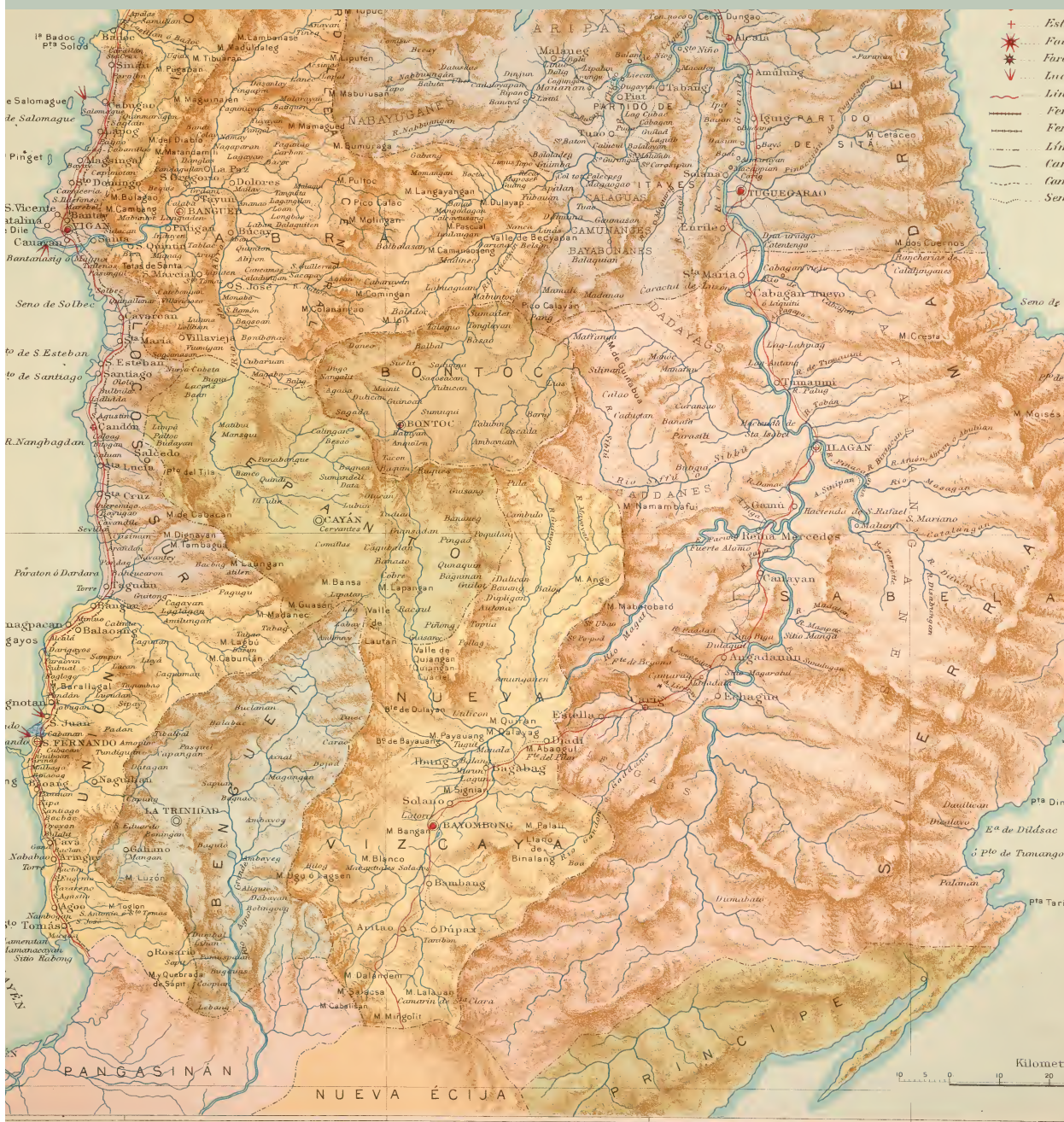




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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Behind great events lies something that cannot be captured by the date of a battle or the artifacts of a ruin: the power of ideas. From the grand manifestos that spurred mass movements to the formative beliefs that motivated individuals, the seemingly ethereal realm of ideas forged the world we inhabit today.

In America, a country of so many intellectual traditions, ideas have undergirded much of our national evolution. Ethan McCoy, Brown University '14, traces the afterlife of one of our most venerable classics, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. McCoy investigates the ways *Walden* has been invoked in twentieth-century debates on politics, national culture, and societal norms. Moving from books to maps, Mary Caple, Concordia University '14, examines how American images of the Philippines in the Spanish-American War played into imperial ideology. While fleets and armies may have won the war, cartographic depictions and the tenets they reflect set those forces in motion.

Across the Atlantic, Sophie Gould '15 explores the clandestine press in Vichy France. The printed word and attendant shifts in popular opinion, she argues, were among the most effective weapons of the French Resistance. Furthermore, we must consider ideas within the networks of influences that produce them: Chaitanya Singhanian '16 situates the Hindu nationalist Vivekananda amid his mentors and contemporaries. He highlights both the intellectual context that created this visionary, and the pragmatism that set him apart.

The role of ideas can perhaps best be seen in the beliefs that drive individuals. Antonia Woodford '14 offers a new perspective on Sherman Kent, one of the CIA's founding fathers. We witness Kent's years at Yale, where a callow youth developed the broader outlook that would make him one of the foremost players in American foreign policy. More recently, Joy Chen '15 considers the battle over the Equal Rights Amendment, demonstrating how Yale professor Thomas Emerson bridged the political worlds of constitutional thought and the grassroots activism of the era's feminist and anti-feminist movements.

As we reflect on the the power of ideas, the words of Isaac Newton spring to mind. Approaching our fifth anniversary, we at the *Review* truly stand on the shoulders of giants. We owe our continued growth to our editors of years past, particularly our graduating seniors. Thank you to current editors Jacob Anbinder, Margaret Coons, John Hayashi, and Gene Kim and to former editors Katherine Fein and Andrew Giambrone. We on the editorial board, dedicated to showcasing those who shaped the past, would not be where we are today without those who shaped our own publication. We hope you will appreciate the hard work they have put into the *Review* as you read this, their final issue.

Sincerely,

Jacob Wasserman, Editor in Chief
Spencer Weinreich, Managing Editor

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FROM THE HINDU MAN TO INDIAN NATIONALISM

VIVEKANANDA'S POLITICAL REALISM

Swami Vivekananda was one of the key figures of the nineteenth-century Hindu Revival: he was instrumental in shaping Hinduism into a potent political force and in introducing the religion to Western audiences. But, Vivekananda was hardly an isolated figure. Chaitanya Singhanian '16 juxtaposes Vivekananda's approach with those of his mentor, Ramakrishna, and of his contemporary, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, as well as wider currents of nineteenth century Indian political thought. This insightful essay challenges traditional readings of the relationship between Vivekananda and Bankim, at once arguing for greater affinities between the two and refocusing the differences to highlight the former's *realpolitik* and the latter's romanticism.

By Chaitanya Singhanian, TC '16
Written for "Europe and Empire"
Professor Amanda Behm
Faculty Advisor: Vasudha Dalmia
Edited by Noah Remnick and Samuel Becker

Words marked with asterisks are defined in a glossary at the end of the essay.

“Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, ‘Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children.’ ”

- Aurobindo Ghose^{1*}

INTRODUCTION: VIVEKANANDA IN 19TH CENTURY CALCUTTA

The 19th century saw the rise of a new class in Bengali society, the *bhadralok** (literally ‘gentlemen’), many of whose members knew their Greek, English and German classics better than their British counterparts. After “European and Hindu Gentlemen” founded Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817 as “an institution for giving a liberal education to the children of the members of the Hindu Community,”² sections of Bengali’s upper caste Hindus were schooled to create, anticipating the latter explicit policy of Macaulay, “a class of persons Indian in colour and blood, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.”³ But, the *bhadralok* soon developed characteristics the English did not foresee. As the century progressed, this class, created to act as the colonial administration’s “most trusted allies,” started to demand privileges till then considered exclusive to the British elite.⁴ Despite receiving educations imported from Oxford and Cambridge, Calcutta’s the *bhadralok* class found increasingly unfulfilling what they perceived as “the Western proclivity for the mere pursuit of self-interest.”⁵ By the 1870s, this English-educated *bhadralok* replaced the landed elite as leaders of anticolonial nationalist thought.

The shadow of a perceived decline in Bengali society hung over the minds of the *bhadralok* in the mid 19th century and, as Tanika Sarkar and Mrinalini Sinha argue, motivated the *bhadralok*’s shift to the center of anticolonial discourse.⁶ Silting in the Ganga and the colonial state’s attacks on Bengal’s ecology lowered agricultural productivity.

¹ Aurobindo Ghose. *Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda*. 1940. Reprint, Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, 1955. 41-2.

² “Presidency Alumni Association Kolkata: History.” *Presidency Alumni Association Calcutta*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Mar. 2014. <<http://presidencyaluminal.com/History>>.

³ Macaulay, Thomas B. “Minute on Education by the Hon’ble T. B. Macaulay, Dated the 2nd February 1835.” *South Asia: Some Good Sources by Professor Frances W Pritchett, Columbia Univ*. 15 Mar. 2014. <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mea/ac/pritchett/oogenerallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html>.

⁴ Mrinalini Sinha. *Colonial Masculinity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995. 21. Hereafter cited as *Sinha*.

⁵ Chatterjee, Partha. *Lineages of Political Society: Studies in Postcolonial Democracy*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011. 64.

⁶ Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*; Tanika Sarkar. “The Hindu wife and the Hindu nation: Domesticity and Nationalism in nineteenth century Bengal.” *Studies in History* 8, no. 2 (1992): 213-235. Hereafter cited as *Sarkar*, “Hindu wife and Hindu nation.”

Malnutrition resulted, weakening the Bengali body and exposing it to disease. A series of epidemics in the early 19th century – malaria, cholera and smallpox outbreaks – devastated Bengal. Both the Bengali body and the Bengali landscape, to the eyes of the *bhadralok*, were in decline.⁷ While this bodily and ecological decline occurred around the *bhadralok* in the mid 19th century, imperial policy following the Great Uprising of 1857 weakened the *bhadralok* themselves. After 1857, colonial administrators shifted local alliances away from the *bhadralok* towards landed classes and religious leaders, whom they saw as the driving forces behind the 1857 revolt. British business acumen prevented the Bengali *bhadralok* from entering the new, emerging capitalist economy, forcing most of its members to seek employment as clerks in colonial offices⁸ – as ‘*babus*,’ “native clerk[s] who write English.”⁹ Sarkar notes that the “degeneration of the body of the Hindu male babu...became the most significant sign of the times.”¹⁰ The *bhadralok* member saw this decline affecting the Bengali landscape, his fellow Bengalis and his own self.

English education at this time of perceived Bengali decline created two trends in Bengali thought that shaped the direction in which the *bhadralok* took anticolonial discourse. First, it conflated this perception of decline with the British theory of Indian emasculation. Since the early 19th century, English historians had been constructing a theory of Bengali decline, but this theory was gendered. It traced Indian history as a fall from a glorious ancient Vedic* civilization, exemplary of Greek masculine virtue, to the Bengali effeminate weakness of the 18th and 19th century. Increased emasculation over millennia caused this decline. Bengal fell to Britain, this theory posits, because Bengalis became weak and feminine, akin to politically disenfranchised English women.¹¹ The *bhadralok*, observing decline in their own age, embraced this theory. The conflation of this theory with perceived decline positioned, in the *bhadralok*’s mind, effeminacy as the Bengali’s fundamental flaw and the object of Bengali reform.

Second, as Partha Chatterjee argues, the 19th century marks the return of the vocabulary of morality into mainstream Bengali political discourse after a millennium-long hiatus. Since the liberal defense of imperial rule, grounded in a civilizing mission, was a moral justification and colonial officers criticized Indian rulers as morally bankrupt, English education reintroduced moral language into political debates.¹² One effect of this change was that for the first time, educated colonial subjects were able to rally against imperial rule using the imperialists’ political and moral lexicon. But, another subtler effect more radically shaped the trajectory of Bengali anticolonial discourse: to the Bengali *bhadralok* studying Indian classics alongside their Western counterparts, the Indian tradition contained spiritual and moral reflection missing in the Western classics. If Bengal’s flaw was its effeminacy and

⁷ Sarkar, “Hindu wife and Hindu nation,” 218-222.

⁸ Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, 4-6.

⁹ Yule, Sir Henry. “Baboo.” *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive*. Ed. William Crooke. New ed. London: J. Murray, 1903. *Digital Dictionaries of South Asia*. Web. 21 Mar. 2014.
<<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/hobsonjobson/>>.

¹⁰ Sarkar, “Hindu wife and Hindu nation,” 220.

¹¹ Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, 14-17.

¹² Chatterjee, Partha. *Lineages of Political Society*, 60.

weakness, then, its strength was the “powerful spiritual appeal of Indian dharma.”¹³ Thus, to the *bhadralok* member’s mind in mid 19th century Bengal, the Bengali was weak, passive and effeminate but idealistic and spiritual, while the British was strong and worldly but materialistic and self-interested.

Narendranath Datta, later known as Swami Vivekananda, was educated in this Calcutta, which believed in this characterization of Bengali and British. Born in 1863 as a member of the *bhadralok*, Vivekananda spent the years 1871 to 1884 in college as one of Calcutta’s arguably most academically accomplished student, immersing himself in English and Continental literature, metaphysics, epistemology and political philosophy, as well as the Indian classics. But, over time, he found himself pulled to religion and became a disciple of the mystic saint Ramakrishna Parhamansa,* “a priest in a Kali temple north of Calcutta [who]...cast an almost hypnotic spell over the Calcutta intelligentsia (including staunch ‘rationalists’).”¹⁴ Following Ramakrishna’s death, he refashioned Ramakrishna into a demi-god and established the proselytizing Ramakrishna Mission to solve, through spirituality and social work, the problems of effeminacy and passiveness that his East faced. As such, Vivekananda profoundly influenced the trajectory of religious—and even, as I shall argue, political—discourse in early 20th century India.¹⁵

EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP ON VIVEKANANDA

Vivekananda left behind a large body of writings and speeches. Soon after his death, these works were assembled into volumes, published, and distributed at his Mission centers across the country.¹⁶ In such a context, Aurobindo’s remark, that Vivekananda’s “definite work...is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy,” may sound surprising. Yet, this comment may perhaps provide the most accurate account of Vivekananda’s deeds and legacy. Since he tailored his words to his audience, Vivekananda’s letters and speeches constantly contradict each other, painting vastly different portraits of the same man. The diversity of thought in his works have made him, unlike his late 19th century nationalist colleagues, easy material for appropriation by left, center, and right religious and political narratives: he is simultaneously considered “against what he called religiously inspired ‘fanaticism,’” and “the apostle of Hindutva.”¹⁷

Primers on modern Indian history paint divergent portraits of Vivekananda. Writing that “Vivekananda, who gained international fame, preached the twin messages of self-strengthening and social service,” Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal focus on ‘self-strengthening’ as a secular and non-gendered concept and ‘social service’ as an act of charity, lacking

¹³ Chatterjee, Partha. *Lineages of Political Society*, 64.

¹⁴ Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 92.

¹⁵ Sen, Amiya P. *Swami Vivekananda*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2000.

¹⁶ Vivekananda. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1970. Hereafter cited as *CW*.

¹⁷ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2011.93. Hereafter cited as *Bose and Jalal*, *Modern South Asia*. Vinay Lal. *The History of History: Politics and Scholarship in Modern India*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2003. 256.

political connotations.¹⁸ In contrast, Barbara and Thomas Metcalf state, “Vivekananda mixed patriotism with a cult of manly virtue and evocations of Hindu glory,” emphasizing the gendered nature of his empowerment and the religious fervor behind his patriotism.¹⁹ A third voice, Sinha, notes like the Metcalfs that Vivekananda’s advocacy is gendered, calling him “a great proponent of cultivating a ‘manly’ physique,” but still relegates him with Bose and Jalal to the word of the “social and religious reformer.”²⁰ Almost seventy-five years later, Aurobindo’s words continue to ring true: “we perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where.”

Nevertheless, scholars agree about Vivekananda’s significance in the development of nationalist thought leading up to the Swadeshi movement,* the first major pre-Gandhian anticolonial movement in Bengal, at the turn of the century. As Andrew Sartori writes, “Vivekananda...stood alongside Bankim [Chandra Chattopadhyay]* as the other great ideological precursor of Swadeshi thought.”²¹ Much has been written about Vivekananda’s thoughts on Hinduism, religion, and the spiritual East versus the materialist West, largely as pedagogic or philosophical ideas detached from historical context. But, by and large, Vivekananda has always been considered “the other” – chiefly to Bankim – in academic study of late 19th century Bengali politics and the anticolonial movement. Few scholars of South Asian history have undertaken comprehensive studies of his political thought: the goals of his domestic political program, the ideology behind it, the means through which he planned to bring this project to fruition, or the impact it had on Indian nationalism.

Among the few comprehensive studies of Vivekananda in historical context are the fourteen pages on him at the end of Sumit Sarkar’s *An Exploration of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Tradition*.²² Despite Vivekananda’s appropriation by the Hindu right and position in the eyes of many scholars as the founder of Hindu fundamentalism in South Asia, he finds a sympathizer in Marxist scholar Sarkar, who depicts him as socialist, relatively secular, and anti-caste – all notions that Jyotirmaya Sharma’s recent study on Vivekananda’s religious thought would vehemently contest.²³ Sarkar argues that Vivekananda “had no particular prejudice about Islam,”²⁴ drawing a contrast with his wife Tanika Sarkar’s well-known work which traces the intellectual lineage of anti-Muslim sentiment and Hindu nationalism to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s later novels and religious tracts.²⁵ Tanika Sarkar classifies the major works Bankim produced in his last five years – *Anandamath*, *Debi*

¹⁸ Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 92-3.

¹⁹ Barbara Daly Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf. *A Concise History of Modern India*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2006. 150. Hereafter cited as *Metcalf and Metcalf*.

²⁰ Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, 21.

²¹ Andrew Sartori. *Bengal in Global Concept History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 151. Hereafter cited as *Sartori*.

²² Sumit Sarkar, *An Exploration of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Tradition*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1996. 67-81. Hereafter cited as *Sarkar*, RVT.

²³ Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Cosmic Love and Human Apathy: Swami Vivekananda’s Restatement of Religion*. Noida: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2013. Hereafter cited as *Sharma*.

²⁴ Sarkar, RVT, 78.

²⁵ Sarkar, RVT, 21 contains a reference to Bankim’s anti-Muslim sentiments, suggesting that he is in agreement with his wife on this matter.

Choudhurani, *Sitaram*, *Dharmatattva* and *Krishnacharitra*—as containing Bankim’s “seemingly unambiguous agenda of a triumphalist Hindu people.”²⁶ Collectively, Sumit and Tanika Sarkar seem to draw the boundary between Bankim and Vivekananda at the former’s anti-Muslim and Hindu nationalist agenda, which the latter lacked. Bose, who also considers Vivekananda’s departure from Bankim to be Vivekananda’s religious inclusiveness, is more explicit: he positions “Swami Vivekananda, who...preached the equal truth of all religions [and] held on the whole a positive assessment of Islam,” as first among “the creative writers, nationalist ideologues and political revolutionaries of the early twentieth century [who] did not agree with Bankim’s attitude towards Muslims.”²⁷ Bose and the Sarkars, thus, present Vivekananda’s nationalism as less militant or religiously charged than Bankim’s.

This essay will make two primary arguments. First, through a comparison of Bankim’s final work, the *Krishnacharitra* (1892),²⁸ and Vivekananda’s religious writings and sermons, it will argue that the shifts in Hindu identity which Vivekananda and Bankim yearn for are far more alike than scholars believe. Both envision a Hindu identity metamorphosed from what they see as effeminate and unworldly to the masculine embodiment of strength and Greek virtue, in line with the Western classics with which both are so familiar. Second, this essay will attempt to shift the point of departure between Vivekananda and Bankim’s thought from Vivekananda’s supposed “positive assessment of Islam” to his political pragmatism. The strong Hindu nation and Hindu empowerment, for Bankim, are romantic ideals rather than components of a rational political agenda. Bankim has no intention of or strategy for propagating this idea. In contrast, Vivekananda’s ideal of Hindu empowerment²⁹ is a component of his larger political project, itself part the larger rise of nationalism as a creed in the late 19th century. Unlike Bankim, Vivekananda seeks to empower the Indian masses—and has a plan to do so. Vivekananda uses religion as his means for empowerment, not because of a romantic attachment to it but because of his conception of religion as the sole—and most effective—medium for disseminating ideas, specifically his notion of empowerment through physical strength, among the masses in India. As such, Vivekananda is not only the first Bengali nationalist to use religion as a political tool, but also the first to recognize the importance of mass empowerment.³⁰ While he is regarded as a reformer of

²⁶ Tanika Sarkar. "Imagining Hindurashtra: The Hindu and the Muslim in Bankim Chandra's Writings." *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*. Ed. David E. Ludden. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996. 163.

²⁷ Sugata Bose. "Nation as Mother: Representations and Contestations of 'India' in Bengali Literature and Culture." *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India*. Ed. Bose and Ayesha Jalal. Oxford: OUP, 1997. 63-4.

²⁸ Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. *Krishna-Charitra*. Trans. Pradip Bhattacharya. Calcutta: MP Birla Foundation, 1991. Print. Hereafter cited as *KC*. Note: dates for *KC* vary among secondary literature; 1886 is often provided. However, only the first part was published in 1886; the final work was published in 1892. See Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta*, pp. 301, for details.

²⁹ "Empowerment" is certainly anachronistic as a descriptor for Vivekananda’s social and political goals. Nevertheless, I agree with Tapan Raychaudhuri that “empowerment” is the English word best suited to describe Vivekananda’s ultimate objective. See Tapan Raychaudhuri, "Swami Vivekananda's Construction of Hinduism," 10.

³⁰ Tapan Raychaudhuri. "Swami Vivekananda's Construction of Hinduism." *Swami Vivekananda and the Modernization of Hinduism*. Ed. William Radice. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1998. 15-6.

religion, he reforms religion not out of ethical or ideological concerns, but rather to political ends. Gandhi picks up both tools Vivekananda innovates, which prove invaluable to the 20th century nationalist movement.

PART I: MAKING HINDU MEN: KRISHNA AND CHAITANYA IN THE WRITINGS OF BANKIM AND VIVEKANANDA

Both Bankim and Vivekananda create unique genealogies to determine the origins of Bengal's weak and effeminate state. The dominant narrative in Bengal blamed the British for effeminacy, proclaiming it as a sign of Bengal crumbling under colonial dominance.³¹ But these two thinkers trace Bengali's effeminacy to the transformation of Krishna,* the chief Hindu deity worshipped in Bengal, popularizing by the devotional bhakti movement,* led in Bengal and Eastern India by the medieval bhakti saint Chaitanya.* Bankim presents this argument in his monumental nonfiction study of Krishna, the *Krishnacharitra*, while discussing Krishna's primary consort, Radha.* Though Bankim considers previous literary works—the *Bramhavaivarta Purana** and Jayadeva's long poem*—responsible for shifting Radha to “the focal point of this new Vaishnava creed,” he blames Chaitanya for popularizing this creed through his bhakti songs: “Adopting this creed, Sri Caitanya Deva preached a new path of devotion based on longing for the beloved... establish[ing] sway over the lives of Bangalis.”³² As Kaviraj rightly notes, to Bankim, Chaitanya's Krishna “is not too different from the *babus* produced by Hindu College.”³³

Bankim rejects Chaitanya's “new path of devotion” based on “longing for the beloved” and contrasts to it his conception of the true Krishna, the Krishna found in classical epics, to him the authentic ancient works. This Krishna “is of this world, a householder, statesman, warrior, dispenser of punishment.” As a “householder”—traditionally contrasted with a monk—he is involved with worldly, human matters rather than spiritual-romantic affairs. But he is not just a householder: he is a “statesman, warrior, dispenser of punishment;” he is an *active* householder and inhabits the political world. An active leader, he enforces morality: “the killing of Jarasandha* etc. is the bounden duty of the ideal statesman and justice.” This Krishna, says Bankim, is “the ideal of each and, all in all, the ideal of consummate manhood.” Through this statement, he suggests that “longing” and “devotion” are feminine, whereas “statesm[e]n, warrior[s], dispensers of punishment” represent “consummate manhood.” Moreover, he claims that the ideal is fundamentally masculine; “manhood” is the ideal characteristic for a Bengali. Thus, the ideal Bengali possesses two qualities: masculine strength and activeness in worldly affairs. That—and not love or devotion, represented by Radha—is Krishna's defining characteristic and thus all Bengalis' “bounden duty.”³⁴

Vivekananda's take on Bengal's fundamental problem resembles Bankim's diagnosis.

³¹ Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, 11. I will return to the significance of this departure—its blaming an indigenous tradition for what is typically perceived as a consequence of colonial rule—very soon.

³² *KC*, 139.

³³ Sudipta Kaviraj. *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India*. Oxford: OUP. 1995. 95. Hereafter cited as Kaviraj.

³⁴ *KC*, 227.

That Vivekananda, like Bankim, rejects Chaitanya's Krishna tradition is particularly noteworthy, given that Chaitanya represents the ideal for Vivekananda's guru, Ramakrishna.³⁵ While Vivekananda's rejection of Chaitanya is implicit in his refashioning of Ramakrishna (discussed later), he explicitly rejects Chaitanya in discussions at his Calcutta residence. The diary of Surendra Nath Sen, a frequent visitor to Vivekananda during his stays in Calcutta, describes a discussion Vivekananda led about "the way of worshipping God as husband, as in vogue with some followers of Shri Chaitanya." Vivekananda's "*bons mots* were raising laughter," Surendra notes, suggesting that Vivekananda, as the masculine teacher, considers laughable and mock-worthy the devotional bhakti mode of worshipping Krishna that Chaitanya preached. Yet someone's question interrupts these quips: "Do you think [Chaitanya] was not a great saint?" Vivekananda first claims that he "mould[ed]" his own life after Chaitanya's "burning ideal of renunciation of wealth and lust," employing a characteristic strategy of refashioning previous saints: that Chaitanya advocated the renunciation of "lust" is a skillful partial interpretation of his teachings. When pressed further, Vivekananda leads disciples to make distinctions between "which of the ideas preached by Shri Chaitanya we should take up...so that we may not fall into errors." In the ideas of Chaitanya that Vivekananda discards we see the parallels between him and Bankim. Like Bankim, Vivekananda pointedly attacks Chaitanya's "great ideal of love—the Radha-prema with which he used to remain intoxicated day and night, losing his individuality in Radha." When questioned again, he says,

Look at this nation and see what has been the outcome...through the preaching of that love broadcast, the whole nation has become effeminate—a race of women! The whole of Orissa has been turned into a land of cowards; and Bengal, running after the Radha-prema, these past four hundred years, has almost lost all sense of manliness!³⁶

In addition to having a common target of criticism—Radha—Vivekananda's claim that devotion causes a "loss [of] individuality" suggests that bhakti causes a loss of action at the individual level, an idea contained in Bankim's depiction of the Chaitanya-free ideal of Krishna as the "statesman" and "warrior." Instead of being active or prominent as individuals, since Chaitanya's time Bengalis have simply walked one common path of devotion. In keeping with Bankim's depiction of the Chaitanya-free ideal as a "warrior," Vivekananda calls the Chaitanya-influenced "cowards." Finally, like Bankim, he concludes the discussion on an explicitly gendered note: "Bengal...has almost lost all sense of manliness." In Vivekananda's portrait of Chaitanya, we find the two claims Bankim makes: first, bhakti is feminine and yields "a race of women," whereas pre-Chaitanya traditions, when people were not "cowards" but were "individuals," embraced a "sense of manliness." Second, the solution is a departure from "intoxication" and a move towards "individuality,"

³⁵ Mahendra Nath Gupta. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. 1942. Trans. Swami Nikhilananda. Reprint, Madras: Ramakrishna Math. 1944. 981. *Hereafter cited as Gupta, Gospel*. As Sumit Sarkar notes, the Gospel is perhaps the only source on Ramakrishna's life not affected by Vivekananda's recreation of him. I shall discuss this issue—Vivekananda's rejection of Ramakrishna—soon.

³⁶ Surendra Nath Sen. Private Diary. Jan 24 1898. *CW*.

“manliness,” and “courage,” since this Chaitanya-inflicted transformation is tragic.

Vivekananda and Bankim’s unique theories of the origins of Bengal’s emasculation yield this gendered notion of empowerment, which seeks to produce active, worldly, engaged and bold citizens. While Vivekananda, unlike Bankim, does yet not position the opposite of Chaitanya as the ideal, his refashioning of his guru Ramakrishna indicates how highly he prioritizes this strengthening.

PART II: THE NATIONALIST IDEAL: VIVEKANANDA’S BHAGAVAN RAMAKRISHNA AND BANKIM’S BHAGAVAN KRISHNA

In many ways, Vivekananda and Ramakrishna’s worldviews represented polar opposites. During Vivekananda’s short four-year association with Ramakrishna (1882-1886) – of which only the final two years constituted regular association – he seldom agreed with any of his teacher’s views and would often taunt him for “going to the Kali temple.”³⁷ Vivekananda joined the illiterate Ramakrishna’s ashram as the son of a wealthy attorney, a member of the elite Hindu reform society the Brahmo Samaj, and a student of the English and German classics. He was not, however, unusual among Ramakrishna’s students: most disciples came from the English-educated *bhadralok* class.³⁸ Ramakrishna’s influence reached wide in Calcutta: Bose and Jalal write, “Ramakrishna ...cast an almost hypnotic spell over the Calcutta intelligentsia (including staunch ‘rationalists’).”³⁹ Sarkar speculates that the lack of fulfillment the *bhadralok* experienced in the British-dominated late 19th century Calcutta sphere is partly responsible for Ramakrishna’s influence; as we shall later see, even Bankim – the embodiment of the dissatisfied *bhadralok*⁴⁰ – visited Ramakrishna and once invited him home. While the disagreements between Vivekananda and Ramakrishna seem to end in the final months of Ramakrishna’s cancer, Sharma rightly notes that “Vivekananda would invariably agree in order not to cause the ailing Ramakrishna any grief;” each time, after Vivekananda left Ramakrishna’s presence, “he would affirm his own position clearly.”⁴¹ Ultimately, the teacher sought Chaitanya while Vivekananda sought a pre-bhakti Krishna.

After Ramakrishna’s death, Vivekananda – who strangely was Ramakrishna’s favorite disciple, always addressed as “my own” by his guru⁴² – proclaimed himself inheritor of Ramakrishna’s legacy and deliberately re-constructed the image of this influential saint. His refashioning of Ramakrishna parallels Bankim’s re-creation of Krishna: both sought to turn their subjects into rational, strong, masculine, and societally active ideals. Since Sharma provides an excellent overview of this refashioning of Ramakrishna in his essay “Ramakrishna’s One-fourth,” I shall not analyze the entire process of this re-formulation. Instead, I shall point out some noteworthy features and compare them with Bankim’s Krishna, and then examine some critical primary sources that Sharma does not discuss.

Ramakrishna’s love of Kali reveals the strength of his bhakti devotion, which rejected

³⁷ Sharma, 103.

³⁸ Sarkar, *RVT*, 4.

³⁹ Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 92.

⁴⁰ Kaviraj, 22.

⁴¹ Sharma, 113.

⁴² *Ibid*, 103.

worldly activity and embraced femininity. He spent his entire life in service of and conversing with Kali, of whose importance he patiently tried to convince Vivekananda throughout their association.⁴³ Kali, as the embodiment of Shakti, is the ultimate representation of feminine power. Love of Kali, to Ramakrishna, represented “real bhakti” – ‘real devotion;’ “real bhakti” was all Ramakrishna sought from his prayer. In a moving prayer, he tells Kali, “Here Mother, take Thy sin; here, take Thy virtue. I don’t want either of these; give me only real bhakti.” He goes on to reject “dharma*” and “adharma,” “knowledge” and “ignorance,” and “purity” and “impurity.”⁴⁴ Thus, his sole mission was to attain devotion to this feminine power. In this process, he experimented with many forms of worship. Among these experimental forms was one in which he dressed and acted as a woman for six months, wearing a wig and gold ornaments. He sought union with Krishna like the gopis,* until “in moods of deep ecstasy he began to feel as if he was Radha.”⁴⁵ Radha represented, to Ramakrishna, the “highest embodiment of mature or ‘ripe’ bhakti”⁴⁶ – Radha’s devotional style is the ideal.

By turning away from Radha, Kali and bhakti at large, Vivekananda rejects the fundamental premise of Ramakrishna’s faith. He embraces the masculine Virata rupa* of Krishna as the object of worship.⁴⁷ Virata is the embodiment of Krishna in all his might, as the hyper-masculine, all-powerful, cunning statesman-philosopher-God of the *Mahabharata* (which Bankim holds as the source for the ‘authentic’ Krishna).⁴⁸ This shift from a feminine to masculine deity is a shift towards strength and activity, just like Bankim does with his Krishna. Moreover, Vivekananda argues that Ramakrishna is “the concentrated embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation, catholicity, and the desire to serve mankind.”⁴⁹ But, Ramakrishna rejected all scripture and knowledge. “Catholicity,” as Sharma argues, is a problematic descriptor. Finally, Ramakrishna absolutely rejects the desire to serve mankind and argues that man is incapable of solving the world’s problems.⁵⁰ That the “desire to serve mankind” is the last and most prominent descriptor is significant, for Vivekananda is positioning Ramakrishna as an active individual, just like Bankim’s Krishna. As Sarkar notes, Vivekananda turns Ramakrishna into a call for active service.⁵¹ Finally, Vivekananda exalts Ramakrishna as divine, a charge the latter would outright deny. By deifying Ramakrishna, Vivekananda strengthens his feeble body. This strengthening is particularly vivid in the contrast between Ramakrishna’s famous photograph and the statue later constructed based on this photograph at the Ramakrishna Mission: in the marble statue, his face becomes more shapely, his eyes more stern, his arms grow thicker, and the slouch of his back disappears.⁵²

⁴³ Ibid, 105.

⁴⁴ Gupta, *Gospel*, 817.

⁴⁵ Sharma, 80.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 77.

⁴⁷ Sharma, 136; “The future of India,” *CW*, Vol. III.

⁴⁸ “The future of India.” *CW*, Vol. III.

⁴⁹ Swami Vivekananda to Shivananda, Letter, *CW*, Vol. VII. 1894.

⁵⁰ Gupta, *Gospel*, 666-676.

⁵¹ Sarkar, *RVT*, 11.

⁵² Unknown, “Ramakrishna Paramhansa,” photograph, 1885. *Wikimedia Commons*, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ramakrishna.jpg> (accessed December 8, 2013). Unknown, “Sri

We thus reach an image of Ramakrishna much like Bankim's image of Krishna: active, a mover and shaker, a divine ideal for mere mortals, the embodiment of wisdom and perfection. Vivekananda and Bankim both stress the same two gendered qualities: activeness and strength.

Before we leave Bankim and Vivekananda's similarities, it is important to probe this common ideal: why do two thinkers who may appear to be at the opposite ends of Calcutta by the time they are writing (Bankim is a bureaucrat, while Vivekananda is a traveling saint) produce nearly the same ideal Bengali men? While the gendered discourse in Calcutta is part of the answer, that they trace the problem to medieval devotional religion and that their solution thus centers on religion may be especially tied to their relationship with Ramakrishna, the extreme representation of the effeminate Bengali.

Bankim, too, met with Ramakrishna. This meeting occurred in 1884, right before Bankim began to think and write about Krishna the following year. Their conversation begins:

Ramakrishna (*smiling*): "Bankim! ("Bankim" literally means "bent" or "curved") Well, what has made you bent?"

Bankim (*smiling*): "Why, sir, boots are responsible for it. The kicks of our white masters have bent my body."

Ramakrishna: "No, my dear sir! Sri Krishna was bent on account of His ecstatic love. His body was bent in three places owing to His love for Radha."

Bankim presents a cynical and charged attack on imperial rule, "the kick of our white masters have bent my body." In addition to introducing 'the body' into the conversation, this remark suggests that the Bankim of 1884 blames the "white masters"—in line with the mainstream Calcutta discourse—for the Bengali body's degeneration. But Ramakrishna rejects this charge and instead lists nearly every aspect of Krishna that Bankim later rejects. In addition to "his love for Radha," Ramakrishna mentions Krishna's physically "small stature," and his effeminate nature. As Ramakrishna rambles, Bankim asks one question: "Sir, do you preach?" to which Ramakrishna replies with an attack on the concept of "preaching." Similarly, Ramakrishna rejects "charity" in this conversation—he turns down any purposeful or active tasks that Bankim suggests. Thus, we find in this conversation most qualities that Bankim wants to dissociate with Krishna: his physically "small stature," "love for Radha" and lack of purposeful activity.⁵³ Perhaps this interaction plants in Bankim's mind the idea of blaming Krishna and Ramakrishna's idol Chaitanya—rather than the "white masters"—for the Bengali's bodily degradation. Perhaps, then, Ramakrishna's extreme femininity may have contributed to both Bankim and Vivekananda's shifts towards masculinity. Despite his active desire to stay away from any human activity, Ramakrishna may have also served to accidentally sowed the ideas that shape the trajectory of the Swadeshi movement and Indian

Ramakrishna," photograph. *Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Missions*,

<http://www.belurmath.org/BelurMathPhotogallery/index.html#137.JPG> (accessed December 8, 2013). *Note:* this marble status was built after Vivekananda's death, but is representative of his transformation of Ramakrishna.

⁵³ Gupta, *Gospel*, 666-676.

nationalism to come.

PART III: POINT OF DEPARTURE—THE ROMANTIC AND THE PRAGMATIST: BANKIM'S IMAGINATION OF BHAGAVAN KRISHNA VS. VIVEKANANDA'S CONSTRUCTION OF BHAGAVAN RAMAKRISHNA

As I have argued thus far, both Bankim and Vivekananda wish to see a more worldly, active, and strengthened Bengal. Both locate this idea of empowerment in the Western tradition, and seek to combine it with Indian spirituality to create the ideal Bengali. Most narratives of Bengali intellectual history hold Bankim responsible for recognizing the need for “a cultural ideal in which the industries and the sciences of the West can be learnt and emulated while retaining the spiritual greatness of Eastern culture”⁵⁴—i.e., an ideal that combines Indian spirituality with Western material worldliness—as well as “propounding” this ideal among the Bengali people by spreading the idea of masculine Hindu empowerment.⁵⁵ But, I shall argue in this section that Vivekananda, not only Bankim, constructs this ideal and spreads it across the Indian mind at large. Even if we concede that Bankim was also propounding similar ideas in his widely admired novels, he was, unlike Vivekananda, not a preacher or a mass leader; Vivekananda directly spreads his ideas among the masses. While Bankim is pessimistic, Vivekananda is strategic: he tailors his solution to his milieu; he creates a plan for spreading his constructed ideal, and ties it to a pragmatic project of transforming the Indian’s passiveness. Vivekananda is a political innovator because he is the first Bengali nationalist to use four characteristically political tools: (i) knowledge control (through his construction of Ramakrishna), (ii) religion to political ends, (iii) a grassroots movement, and (iv) addressing the masses. He sees the importance of politicizing the masses—he is the first Bengali nationalist to pragmatically conceive of the masses as part of any project to transform India’s future. While Bankim’s political project is purely a romantic vision driven by a desire to recreate past glory, Vivekananda’s is a pragmatic attempt to re-conceptualize and construct a new religion that will empower his India.

Despite its attacks on Western scholars, Bankim’s *Krishnacharitra* adopts a fundamentally Western rationalist methodology, scientifically weeding out any ‘superstitious’ or ‘non-historical’ representations of Krishna in Hindu literature. Kaviraj is right to question Chatterjee’s claim that Bankim’s thought is orientalist by drawing attention to the distinction between rationalism and rationality;⁵⁶ nevertheless, even if Bankim does not embrace ‘the European rationalist tradition,’ his application of rational methods to Krishna’s representation is influenced by European thought. Although his undertaking is, then, Western-influenced, its motive is not ‘scholarly’ as he himself claims. The very first chapter, “The Aim,” reveals the deeper intention behind this political project: a romantic

⁵⁴ Partha Chatterjee. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*. Minneapolis: University of Minn. Press, 1993. 73. Hereafter cited as Chatterjee, *NTCW*.

⁵⁵ Kaviraj, 104.

⁵⁶ Kaviraj, 103-4. Kaviraj writes, “Rationalism is a western doctrine historically bound to the specific trajectory of the Enlightenment...Rationality does not consist in accepting as infallible the historically contingent, fallible, ethnocentric conclusions of a certain type of western philosophical theory out of which the ideology of colonialism arose.”

imagination of cultural reform through the removal of the dominant Chaitanya narrative of Krishna's life. Bankim's heartfelt passion for this project is palpable in his rhetorical questions as he writes,

Krsna pervades this land...[b]ut, then, how do they regard God? They think he was a thief as a child—he used to eat stolen cream and butter; as a youth he was a philanderer who seduced innumerable milkmaids away from their marital loyalty; in maturity, a swindler and a knave...Is this the nature of the divine? He who is immaculate essence, who is the source of all purity, whose name removes impurity and evil; for him to perpetrate all sins on assuming human form: is this appropriate to that Divine Nature?⁵⁷

Before Bankim begins to talk about this project as objective “research...[of] the ancient records,” he writes, “I myself firmly believe that Krsna is the Divine himself.” “The Aim” is fundamentally ideological and personal: he aims to rescue his beloved Krsna from the “sinful” medieval narratives. He seeks the perfect fulfillment of a personal vision. Indeed, he proclaims a few sentences later,

The fruit of [my research] is that I have found out that all the sinful tales about Krsna current among people are baseless: and that on eliminating the romantic fiction about Krsna created by the romancers what remains is utterly unalloyed, wholly pure, exceedingly sublime. I have realized that such an ideal character filled with all qualities, free from the touch of all sin, exists nowhere else: not in the history of any country, not in any nation's literature.⁵⁸

Striking are the perfection of his ideal Krishna—“all the sinful tales about Krsna current among people are baseless”—and his Krishna's unparalleled, impossible to rival nature: “such an ideal character filled with all qualities...exists nowhere else.” His language is lofty; he gives ‘the fruit’ of his research grand consequences through his flowery words. It is as if a fantasy has come to reality. Yet Bankim fails to realize that he, as an attorney, is imposing his Western legal training and Western rationalist methods on medieval Hindu narratives of Krishna, for the ironically patriotic purpose of proving India better. In the end, Bankim can see only his lofty imagined vision—nothing else.

Chatterjee notes that many literary critics have presented this argument: Bankim's “intellect was attracted by the rationality, historicity and scientific temper of the European Enlightenment...but his heart remained in the mysterious, dreamy world of the past.” Chatterjee himself rejects this argument, based on his claim that Bankim reformulated Hindu religion as he did because he saw his reformulation as “a rational and modern religion suitable for the nation.” But, Bankim offers little evidence that he is pragmatically attempting to formulate modern religious discourse—unlike Vivekananda, he never ties this search for a new religion to any project of modernity. He does not construct a new religion with an eye to the future. Instead, when he shows that the “sinful tales...are baseless,” he leaves as valid

⁵⁷ *KC*, 21.

⁵⁸ *KC*, 22.

only the most ancient texts such as the *Mahabharata** and draws his ideal Krishna from these ancient works, indicating that he seeks a return to the past. It does seem that “his heart...kept pulling him back towards the imaginary authenticity of a glorious Hindu past,” as literary critics argue; “he mistook a relation between the present and the past for a relation of the present with the future.”⁵⁹ If Bankim’s project were an attempt to construct a modern religion that would empower Bengalis and improve their future, he would try to either propagate his ideal Krishna among Bengali people or show how his ideal Krishna solves problems of his era. However, as he himself notes in his dialogue *Dharmatattva*, “Hindu are not going to accept your Hinduism” – if anything, he is deeply pessimistic about the prospect of his modern era accepting his formulation of the Hindu ideal.⁶⁰ Yes, Bankim’s Hindu ideal is a product of his milieu, as its gendered nature and formulation as a response to colonial rule indicates, but it is not a solution tailored to his milieu, as his pessimism over its acceptance suggests. He never attempts to sell this ideal to his Bengal – he thinks that task is impossible.

This yearning for the past is a romantic ideal, one that leads Bankim to “deep intellectual loneliness.” Kaviraj rightly notes that Bankim has no means of spreading this ideal other than his “permanent army of actors propounding his theory in the terrain of the *babu*’s imagination through his novels.” However, while Bankim does “propound” some theories through his novels, he never indicates that he uses his novels as propaganda. Each novel, even in the later Bankim, represents a vastly different worldview, in contrast to the relative coherence we find in the ideas of his later essays. Tanika Sarkar is right when she says that each novel represents a romantic, creative project.⁶¹ Nonetheless, even if Bankim uses his novels, as Kaviraj claims, to spread ideas, this final conception of Krishna does not appear in his novels, since it is formulated in an essay after he writes his most influential novels like *Anandamath*. Contrary to Kaviraj’s claims, we cannot hold Bankim responsible for actually planting and spreading the ideal man of the *Krishnacharita* through the Bengali mind.⁶²

Vivekananda bears the responsibility of “propounding” masculine empowerment across the Indian mind. Like Bankim, he finds his theory of empowerment and construction of his ideal to be based off his understanding of the ancient Greeks, whom he sees as having a “charming appearance, [being] perfectly formed, and [having] strong muscles and great vigor.”⁶³ He too he finds himself in a project that is a creation of his Western education. However, unlike Bankim, by crafting an intricately planned political program, Vivekananda solves not only the problem of the Western origins of his ideas but also the challenge of pragmatically selling his ideas to the masses. To discern this point, we shall examine some letters that Vivekananda wrote to fellow Ramakrishna disciples when he takes over Ramakrishna’s legacy.

In 1895, Vivekananda and his colleagues were preparing ceremonies honoring Ramakrishna and planning to eventually launch the Ramakrishna Mission and Math.* In

⁵⁹ Chatterjee, *NTCW*, 79-80.

⁶⁰ Kaviraj, 104.

⁶¹ Conversation with me, Yale University, New Haven, CT. April, 2013.

⁶² Kaviraj, 103-4.

⁶³ Sharma, 125-7. See Sharma for more details about the Greeks’ influence on Vivekananda.

early 1895, Vivekananda wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda,* in whom he saw “an organizing power,” telling him to read this letter once every day. After beginning with a paragraph about the importance of organizing into a proper movement – “but now we want organization” – he provided a bulleted list of tasks to accomplish and beliefs to propagate. The very existence of this bulleted list indicates a deep, conscious effort to doctor, standardize and disseminate a specific image of Ramakrishna. Among the items he includes is the claim that “from the date that the Ramakrishna Incarnation was born, has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age).” That such beliefs are the opposite of Ramakrishna’s teachings did not bother him; he sought to construct Ramakrishna as a savior. Not “Savior of India merely,” he says, but a global savior of humankind. He aims to replace mainstream discourse across religions with “*the Religion* taught by Shri Ramakrishna” – to propagate this construction of Ramakrishna across the country. He is thinking like a political realist: he seeks religion as the medium for propagating his ideas.⁶⁴

This realism is particularly evident in Vivekananda’s discussion of books about Ramakrishna, which reveals his efforts to control knowledge production. Throughout this letter, at multiple points, he proposed changes to books that other Ramakrishna disciples had written. For example, the list of changes he proposed to one book is:

Ask Akshaya to write these few points in the third section of his book, “The Propagation of the Faith.”

1. Whatever the Vedas, the Vedanta, and all other Incarnations have done in the past, Shri Ramakrishna lived to practice in the course of a single life.
2. One cannot understand the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Incarnations, and so forth, without understanding *his* life. For he was the explanation.
3. From the very date that he was born, has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age). Henceforth there is an end to all sorts of distinctions, and everyone down to the Chandāla will be a sharer in the Divine Love. The distinction between man and woman, between the rich and the poor, the literate and illiterate, Brahmins and Chandalas – he lived to root out all. And he was the harbinger of Peace – the separation between Hindus and Mohammedans, between Hindus and Christians, all are now things of the past. That fight about distinctions that there was, belonged to another era. In this Satya-Yuga the tidal wave of Shri Ramakrishna's Love has unified all.

Tell him to expand these ideas and write them in his own style. (*emphasis in original*).

This passage reveals, first, Vivekananda’s desire to emphasize the historically unique nature of Ramakrishna: he practices in the course of one life all incarnations’ deeds, something unprecedented. Second, Vivekananda sought to tie all of Hinduism to Ramakrishna: “one cannot understand [fundamental scriptures] without understanding *his* life.” Third, we notice the unifying project: Vivekananda appeals to all religions of the world and segments of society in order to propagate Ramakrishna. This unifying project is not born from a belief in the equality of all religion – Sharma discredits this view that Bose and Jalal, among others,

⁶⁴ Swami Vivekananda to Swami Ramakrishnananda, letter, “LXXV,” 1895, in *CW*.

hold about his secularism.⁶⁵ Rather, the unifying project arises because of its political expedience: it widens the population base to which the Ramakrishna Mission appeals. Furthermore, the very fact that Vivekananda comments on all books written about Ramakrishna is crucial: he thus controls knowledge. While advising Ramakrishnananda on answering questions from the public, he writes, in italics, “*You must not identify yourselves with any life of [Ramakrishna] written by anybody nor give your sanction to any.*” The image of Ramakrishna the Savior he propagates is carefully doctored.⁶⁶

Finally, unlike Bankim, Vivekananda has a plan for propounding his ideas through the Indian mind. In addition to using religion as his means, doctoring an image of Ramakrishna, and controlling knowledge about him, he will spread his ideas through a grassroots movement led by a vanguard-like group. Vivekananda is a strategic organizer: he believes that “the faculty of organization is entirely absent in our nature, but this has to be infused.”⁶⁷ He assigns tasks to people based on their skills: he gives Ramakrishnananda, in whom he sees an “organizing power,” the bulleted list of overarching tasks and driving beliefs to propagate. Gangadhar, whom “some zamindars* in Rajputana respect,” is told to “get some money from them as bhiksha,* then he is a man.” Akshaya, whom Vivekananda sees as “the future apostle for the masses of Bengal,” he carefully nurtures: he writes to chosen people to mentor Akshaya and introduces him to such people as the chief minister of an important state.⁶⁸ Indeed, in every letter Vivekananda addressed to a member of his core team, he is strategic: he adapts his writing style and sense of humor to what will most effectively persuade that team member, he tailors tasks to that member’s abilities, and provides incentives based on that member’s preferences. On his instructions, the core group motivates enthusiastic believers to serve as what we might consider grassroots workers: he tells Ramakrishnananda, “You must ask those numerous people who are now paying heed to Shri Ramakrishna’s teachings, to help you.” He runs a door-to-door campaign: “Go from village to village and proclaim to all Shri Ramakrishna’s teachings...go and spread his teachings from door to door.” Even this process is strategic: to recruit Muslims, he tells Swami Akhandananda that “instead of saying ‘He [God] is manifest in special objects,’ we should say ‘He is ever manifest as Love in all beings.’”⁶⁹ The structured nature of Vivekananda’s propagation of his ideas, thus, show his skills as a political organizer—he recognizes, perhaps unlike leaders of the Indian National Congress at this time, the importance of recruiting a team of grassroots workers and persuading them of his vision.

Some might suggest that Vivekananda seeks to disseminate a particular image of Ramakrishna out of devotion to him or to maintain his original legacy. But, the disparity between this construction of him and the real person puts pressure on this claim. In addition, a passage from a letter to Swami Brahmananda, written in the same year as the previous letter, suggests otherwise:

⁶⁵ Sharma, 159-162.

⁶⁶ Swami Vivekananda to Swami Ramakrishnananda, letter, “LXXV,” 1895, in *CW*.

⁶⁷ Swami Vivekananda to Alasinga Perumal, letter, “XI,” 1894, in *CW*.

⁶⁸ Swami Vivekananda to Haridas Viharidas Desai, letter, “VIII,” 1892, in *CW*; letter LXXV, above.

⁶⁹ Swami Vivekananda to Swami Akhandananda, letter, “CXXXVI,” 1897, in *CW*.

Granted that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a sham, granted that it has been a very serious mistake, indeed, to take refuge in him, but what is the way out now? What if one life is spent in vain, but shall a *man* eat his own words?...If I do not appeal to his name, whose else shall I? It will be time enough to seek for a big Guru in our next birth; but in this, it is that unlearned Brahmin who has bought this body of mine for ever.⁷⁰ (*emphasis in original*).

In this astonishing letter, Vivekananda concedes that Ramakrishna might have been “a sham,” becoming his disciple might have been “a very serious mistake.” He calls Ramakrishna an “unlearned Brahmin,” drawing a contrast between himself as educated and Ramakrishna’s illiteracy. While some sense of loyalty might make him “appeal to his name,” this sentence more importantly suggests that Ramakrishna’s name is an empty medium for Vivekananda to “appeal to” as he sees fit; there is nothing particular about Ramakrishna that makes him the appropriate medium other than that Vivekananda has already “spent” his life with Ramakrishna. Thus, Ramakrishna is a hollow figure for Vivekananda to dress up as necessary for his political project.

PART IV: THE INNOVATOR: POLITICAL PRAGMATISM AND MASS POLITICS

“Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached”

- *Katha Upanishad* I.3.14. Vivekananda’s favorite *shloka*.⁷¹

So far, I have argued that Vivekananda is a political innovator because he uses knowledge control, grassroots political organization methods, and religion as tools for his larger project. But a question we must ask of Vivekananda’s pragmatic politics is why he uses religion as a political medium. Is his project religious and apolitical, as many claim? A speech delivered in Madras in 1897 provides answers. In this speech, while comparing Europe and Asia, Vivekananda says, “In Europe, political ideas form the national unity. In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity.” This parallel between “political ideas” and “religious ideals” shows that Vivekananda himself sees his mission as political. He is, ultimately, working “national unity,” a political concept, indicating the political nature of his use of religion. He says that working with religion provides “the line of least resistance;” political ideas are most accepted if presented as religion. His use of religion is strategic. He speaks further,

We have seen that our vigour, our strength, nay, our national life is in our religion. I am not going to discuss now whether it is right or not, whether it is correct or not, whether it is beneficial or not in the long run, to have this vitality in religion, but for good or evil it is there; you cannot get out of it, you have it now and for ever, and you have to stand by it, even if you have not the same faith that I have in our religion...That is the life of our race and that must be strengthened. You have withstood the shocks of centuries simply because you took great care of it, you

⁷⁰ Swami Vivekananda to Swami Brahmananda, letter, “LXXIII,” October 1895, in *CW*.

⁷¹ *Repeatedly mentioned in letters, such as* “The Education that India Needs,” *CW*. 1897.

sacrificed everything else for it.⁷²

Finally, we see the nationalist in Vivekananda emerge. Religion is the perfect medium because Indians are willing to “sacrifice everything else for it.” If Indians are to dedicate themselves to changing their beliefs and very nature, to strengthening themselves, only religion can persuade them.

Vivekananda’s political innovation goes beyond his use of knowledge, his techniques of organization, or his recognition of religion as the perfect medium for spreading his ideal. Unlike every major nationalist in the Bengali tradition—Rammohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Debendranath Tagore, Bankim—he understands the importance of stepping beyond the *bhadralok*, and moving on to the masses. He identifies the nationalist’s audience.

This same speech continues to emphasize the importance of the masses for any transformation of India. Vivekananda says, “My idea is first of all to bring out the gems...stored up in our books”—which to him means his ideal propagated through religion—“and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India.”⁷³ The idea of reaching out to the masses is not reserved solely for public speeches: the letter to Ramakrishnananda that lays out Vivekananda’s program and plan also emphasizes the masses. His conception of “the masses” is truly universal, as he indicates by calling Ramakrishna “Savior of women, Savior of the masses, Savior of all, high and low.” He writes later, “Akshaya must...go from village to village...go and spread [his] teachings from door to door,” showing his seriousness about spreading to the masses his ideal. He identifies, in this letter, India’s “two great evils...trampling on the women, and grinding the poor through caste restrictions.”⁷⁴ We know that Vivekananda sees women as weak, and Sharma’s work indicates that he is in favor of caste structures,⁷⁵ but he puts away his personal views for his mission, indicating that Vivekananda’s focus on the masses is not a result of his own socialist agenda, but because of the political importance of involving the masses in a movement of empowerment.

As a realist, Vivekananda formulates concrete plans for empowering the masses. He proposes in his speech in Madras, “teach the masses in the vernaculars, give them ideas,” while simultaneously “raise your condition [by] study[ing] Sanskrit.” He explains, “ideas must be taught in the language of the people...at the same time, Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race.”⁷⁶ Thus, the study of Sanskrit serves to empower the people, to give them confidence through the study of their own classics, as opposed to the study of the colonizer’s classics. The simultaneous study of the vernacular serves to provide the people with “ideas”—probably Vivekananda’s own ideals. He implements this method of study through the Ramakrishna movement that his mission runs.

⁷² “The Future of India.” *CW*. 1897.

⁷³ “The Future of India.” *CW*. 1897.

⁷⁴ Swami Vivekananda to Swami Ramakrishnananda, letter, “LXXV,” 1895, in *CW*.

⁷⁵ Sharma, 181-85.

⁷⁶ “The Future of India.” *CW*. 1897.

POSTSCRIPT: VIVEKANANDA'S POLITICAL LEGACY

“Crowned with victory, on Wednesday next you should remain at Station, Vivekananda’s book in hand.”

— One Bengali revolutionary writing to another, Exhibit 215 in the Barisal conspiracy case⁷⁷

20th century nationalists constantly quibbled over their interpretations of Vivekananda’s complex religious thought. The quibbling over his religious legacy continues today, with certain left, center and right narratives positioning him as their poster-child. Vivekananda’s political legacy, on the other hand, has received and still receives little attention, partly because of his own intentional positioning of himself as apolitical. But, as Amiya Prasad Sen notes, Vivekananda possessed a “keen interest in contemporary political developments” and “a degree of political acumen.”⁷⁸ Indeed, in 1895, when discussing the end of the commercial era with friends, Vivekananda declared, “The next great upheaval which is to bring about a new epoch will come from Russia or China” (when pressed to explain, he claimed that the inevitable ascendancy of the laborer over commercial interest would occur in these autocratic states).⁷⁹ Any examiner of Vivekananda’s place in the legacy of Indian history quickly realizes that he is far from an apolitical historical agent. His impact on 20th century Indian political and nationalist thought and action is profound.

By the early 20th century, Vivekananda’s ideas were in wide circulation. Nationalist leaders across the nation—moderates and extremists, elite and mass leaders, violent and nonviolent—referenced his works. The Rowlatt Committee, a sedition committee appointed by the British Governor-General in 1918 to study Indian revolutionaries’ links to Germany and Bolshevik Russia, wrote in its report, “The *Bhagavad Gita*, the writings of Vivekananda, [and] the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi, were part of the course” which revolutionary groups had designed to train new recruits.⁸⁰ Vivekananda sat at the heart of revolutionaries’ curriculum: clearly, his notion of Hindu empowerment inspired violent political activity.

The influence of Vivekananda’s thought has now shifted from the revolutionaries to the Hindu right. The contemporary Hindu right often quotes the Aurobindo extract I began with. Without noting that this extract appears in a book about Dayananda Saraswati, in a comparison in which Aurobindo praises Saraswati over Vivekananda, they use this quote—among others, including a blatant mistranslation of the French in Tagore’s comments about Vivekananda⁸¹—to show Vivekananda’s importance.⁸² But, Vivekananda’s current appropriation by the Hindu right is not surprising, given the gendered nature of his notion

⁷⁷ Rowlatt, Sir Sidney Arthur Taylor. *India: Sedition Committee 1918 Report*. Rep. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1918. 114-5. Hereafter cited as Rowlatt Committee report.

⁷⁸ Sen, Amiya P. “Gandhi and Vivekananda.” *Mahatma Gandhi and His Contemporaries*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2001. 190.

⁷⁹ Sister Christine, “Swami Vivekananda as I saw him,” *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1983.

⁸⁰ Rowlatt Committee report, 23

⁸¹ Rabindranath Tagore et Romain Rolland: *lettres et autres ecrits*. Paris: Michel, 1961. 195.

⁸² “Influence|Swami Vivekananda” *Gujarat Government’s Portal on Vivekananda*. Accessed December 11, 2013. <<http://vivekananda.gujarat.gov.in/influence.aspx>>.

of empowerment. He makes for a particularly useful tool for the right because of his general reputation in India as a patriotic, spiritually pure, secular and even socialist individual, a depiction of him found in nearly every popular textbook on Indian history or political thought.⁸³

If Vivekananda's thought influenced revolutionaries and later the right, his political methods influenced mainstream nationalist leaders like Gandhi. Vivekananda seldom appears in Gandhi's 99-volume collected works by name, and when he does, Gandhi tends to be critical of him. But, as Amiya Sen rightly argues,⁸⁴ this criticism is most probably a result of Gandhi's "reverence for Ramakrishna," and it not "appear[ing] to [Gandhi] that Vivekananda was as much a devotee as Ramakrishna."⁸⁵ Gandhi disagreed with Vivekananda's version of Hinduism: in this same letter where he compares Vivekananda to Ramakrishna, he praised Tulsidas, a medieval bhakti poet who Vivekananda would have rejected.⁸⁶ Further, Gandhi disagreed with Vivekananda's embracement of Western modern machinery and strength in his notion of empowerment.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Gandhi wrote in this letter, "Our duty lies in learning anything we can from [the lives of] such persons." Gandhi appears to have learnt much, politically, from Vivekananda—or at least recognized the importance of the same political tools that Vivekananda used.

Each of the four tools that feature in Vivekananda's political project—(i) knowledge control, (ii) religion to political ends, (iii) a grassroots movement, and (iv) the masses—lie at the core of Gandhi's political action. Like Vivekananda, Gandhi created his own version of Hinduism, and often fitted Hindu texts into his mold. Second, he saw religion as fundamentally linked to politics and a key tool for transforming the Indian society. Third, he constructed a powerful grassroots movement that formed the foundation for his anticolonial action. Finally, his recognition of the masses' centrality to political action remains among his most significant contributions to Indian politics. Gandhi shifts the Indian National Congress* towards organized discourse and mass mobilization. Inspiring the masses, central to Vivekananda's project, stands as a cornerstone of Gandhi's political realism. We lack evidence to show that Gandhi adopts these ideas from Vivekananda; nevertheless, we are certain that Gandhi read Vivekananda and attempted to learn from him. The parallel between the two's political tools is significant in itself: Vivekananda introduces these tools to the mainstream nationalist narrative at a time when they are used by few.

⁸³ For an example, see Vrajendra Raj Mehta, *Foundations of Indian Political Thought*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1992. 161-175.

⁸⁴ Amiya Sen, "Gandhi and Vivekananda."

⁸⁵ Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. 50. New Delhi: Publ. Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1994. 126.

⁸⁶ Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. 50. New Delhi: Publ. Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1994. 127.

⁸⁷ Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. 41. New Delhi: Publ. Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1994. 468-9.

GLOSSARY

- *Aurobindo Ghose* (1872-1950): Bengali Civil servant in the colonial government, then nationalist, freedom fighter and philosopher, and later spiritual leader.
- *Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay* (1838-1894): Bengali novelist, poet, intellectual and Civil servant. Among the most influential thinkers in 19th century Bengal.
- *Bhadralok*: the English-educated class that began to emerge in Bengal in the early 19th century. Literally “gentlemen.”
- *Bhakti Movement*: a post-Vedic devotional movement in Hindu thought that began circa 4th century AD. Bhakti leaders traveled from place to place singing praises of love for a personal god. God was to be seen as a personal beloved figure rather than an almighty being. Flourished in North and East India, including Bengal, in 14th through 17th century.
- *Chaitanya*: 15th to 16th century Bhakti saint in Eastern India. Preached love and devotion to Krishna and depicted Krishna as a relatively human figure. Radically transformed Vaishnavism in Bengal.
- *Dharma*: central concept in Indian religions. Roughly translated as ‘law’ or ‘duty.’ Behavior in accordance with dharma is considered ‘right behavior.’
- *Gopi*: Literally means ‘cowherd girl.’ Here, refers to the maidens Krishna grew up with as a youth. Act as lovers of Krishna in literature.
- *Great Uprising of 1857*: a series of spontaneous rebellions and uprisings across the Indian territories controlled by the British East India Company, in which Indian soldiers in the British army, landowners, peasants, regional kings and queens, and other participated. Led to the transfer of power from the East India Company to the British Crown and the exiling of the last Mughal Emperor.
- *Indian National Congress*: a political party founded as a moderate reformist society by members of the British and Indian elite in 1884. The Congress soon moved to the center of Indian nationalism. Gandhi transformed the party in the early 20th century to shift its focus from the elite to the masses.
- *Jayadeva*: Sanskrit poet and author of 13th century medieval epic, *Gita Govinda*, an important text in the Bhakti movement.
- *Kali*: a fierce and powerful warrior-like form of Hindu goddess Durga, popular in modern Bengal.
- *Krishna*: a late incarnation of Vishnu and a central figure in Sanskrit literature and the Vaishnava tradition. Known for his playfulness, worldliness, power and practical wisdom.
- *Mahabharata*: one of the two most important epics in Sanskrit literature, typically dated between the 4th century BC and the 4th century AD. Krishna is a central character, and is given a comprehensive biography in the epic. He recites the famous *Bhagavad Gita* in this epic.
- *Radha*: The gopi closest to Krishna, typically his consort, depending on the narrative. Central object of worship in the bhakti movement.
- *Ramakrishna Paramhansa* (1836-1886): Mystic and priest at the Dakshineswar Kali Temple a few hours outside Calcutta. Although born a poor brahmin, became one of the most influential saints of his time.

FROM THE HINDU MAN TO INDIAN NATIONALISM

- *Ramakrishna Mission and Math*
- *Swadeshi movement*: A political and economic in Bengal from 1905 to 1911 movement aimed at reversing British Viceroy Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal on religious lines. First major, pre-Gandhian anticolonial movement that was driven by a focus on self-sufficiency and the rejection of colonial products and methods of thought in favor of their domestic counterparts. *Swadeshi* means 'of one's own [nation]' or 'self-sufficiency.'
- *Swami Ramakrishnananda*: the religious organization Vivekananda founded in 1897. Held devotion to Ramakrishna and social service as core beliefs. Most of its literature is written by Vivekananda.
- *Vaishnavism*: branch of Hinduism centered on worship of Lord Vishnu.
- *Vedas*: A collection of worship hymns that constitutes the oldest Sanskrit literature and Hindu scriptures. Literature and thought from this time period is generally described as *Vedic*.
- *Virat rupa of Krishna*: also known as 'Vishvarupa,' the form Krishna adopts while telling Arjun the *Bhagavad Gita* in the *Mahabharata*. In this form, the whole universe is considered to be contained in Krishna.
- *Zamindars*: landlords of large estates that typically relied on taxes from peasants for income.

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TITLE IMAGE

- Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi. *Photo of Swami Vivekananda at Jaipur (Between 1885-1895)*. C. 1885-1895. Photograph. *Wikimedia Commons*. 13 Mar. 2014. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Swami_Vivekananda_Jaipur.jpg>.

DEFENSE DE LA FRANCE

EDITION DE PARIS
9 JUILLET 1943
N. 35

JOURNAL FONDÉ EN JUILLET 1941

DANS L'ÉGLISE DE FRANCE

DANS l'Assemblée le clergé des provinces a voté la guerre contre la population. Ce vote a été la preuve que la population, la France, n'est pas une masse indifférente, qu'elle a une conscience, qu'elle a une âme, qu'elle a une voix. Elle a dit non à la guerre, elle a dit non à la violence, elle a dit non à la mort. Elle a dit non à la guerre, elle a dit non à la violence, elle a dit non à la mort.

Nous ne pouvons pas nous laisser le droit que nous avons de nous défendre. Nous ne pouvons pas nous laisser le droit que nous avons de nous défendre. Nous ne pouvons pas nous laisser le droit que nous avons de nous défendre.

Les deux des deux se sont soulevés les uns contre les autres. Les deux des deux se sont soulevés les uns contre les autres. Les deux des deux se sont soulevés les uns contre les autres.

DE GAULLE

VOLONTÉS DE LA FRANCE

Le discours du général de Gaulle du 20 avril, définissant les principes directeurs de la politique française de demain, a rencontré partout une approbation totale. Nous en apportons ici le témoignage solennel.

Au-delà des idées exposées par le Chef de la France Combattante se forge l'Unité de la Patrie. Non pas une répétition de ces vagues unions nationales, dont le régime ancien nous donnait l'exemple, mais une unité solide pour la réalisation immédiate d'un programme constructif et précis.

Il est significatif de voir les « hommes de gauche » accepter sans réserve l'affirmation du respect des forces morales et religieuses, comme de voir les « hommes de droite » se rallier à ces projets de réformes économiques et sociales qui sont pourtant révolutionnaires au sens le plus strict du mot.

En fait, c'était surtout des dignitaires primaires, des hommes de lettres, des clients, des clients, qui disaient Français. Sur le fond du problème, la plupart pensait de même.

Où, il est vrai que la majorité des Français voit l'avenir d'une véritable démocratie — et non pas cette ture de démocratie que fut le régime ancien. Démocratie, pour la réparation des pouvoirs. Il faut un pouvoir fort et stable — et qui gouverne. Il faut un pouvoir représentatif réel de la volonté populaire — et qui est de fait un pouvoir judiciaire indépendant — et qui est de fait un pouvoir judiciaire indépendant.

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RÉSISTANCE

"Le Nouveau Journal de Paris"

MAINTIENS ALLEMANDES

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DEFENSE DE LA FRANCE

FONDÉ LE 14 JUILLET 1941

EDITION DE PARIS 21 AOUT 1944 - N° 43

TROIS ÉTUDIANTES UN MÉDECIN

un professeur et une infirmière

FORMENT
UN ATELIER...

OTIZ, dans le silence de la France...

OTIZ, dans le silence de la France...

sur les feuilles d'albumin peut se faire, soit à la machine à écrire, soit sur presse à typographie. Mais il faut avant tout une bonne machine à écrire. Mais il faut avant tout une bonne machine à écrire.

d'apprentissage pour former un typographe capable de travailler rapidement. Mais il faut avant tout une bonne machine à écrire. Mais il faut avant tout une bonne machine à écrire.

...DE
TYPOGRAPHIE

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MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD? LIBERATION AND THE CLANDESTINE PRESS IN FRANCE, 1940-44

During World War II, the Gestapo tried in vain to prevent the French Resistance from using one of its most effective weapons: the printed word. Delving into the complex and often internally fractured world of resisters in Vichy France, Sophie Gould's 15 chronicles the history of *Libération*, a clandestine newspaper behind one of the major Resistance movements. Designed to serve as "propaganda in the good sense of the word," *Libération* and its fellow underground publications, Gould argues, became a key part in the shift of popular support away from Vichy regime. By involving average readers in the cause and by both supporting and being supported by de Gaulle, *Libération* used the pen to aid the sword.

By Sophie Gould, BR '15
Written for "The Dark Years:
Collaboration and Resistance in Vichy France, 1940-45"
Professor John Merriman
Edited by Noah Remnick and Emily Yankowitz

France's defeat in the summer of 1940 happened suddenly, leaving many Frenchmen feeling disoriented. Almost overnight, an armistice put northern France under German occupation and established a new supposedly "neutral" French government in southern France, headquartered in the town of Vichy. While some Frenchmen embraced the new Vichy regime, praising its leader, Maréchal Pétain, as the savior of French dignity, others responded with indifference, going about their daily lives with the wait-and-see attitude known as *attentisme*.¹ It was not until almost 1942 that a "consciousness of collective action and collective identity"² emerged in opposition to the status quo on a scale large enough to be understood as The French Resistance with a capital "R." Nevertheless, the seeds of this opposition were planted early during the summer of 1940 when graffiti,³ stickers, and tracts began to appear in the southern, unoccupied zone, demonstrating the refusal of some Frenchmen to accept defeat.⁴ Soon, resisters grew more sophisticated in their propaganda efforts, and opposition newspapers emerged in the fall of 1940, with many more established in 1941. By the end of the war, periodicals had been published under more than 1,100 titles.⁵ One of the most significant clandestine newspapers in the southern zone was *Libération*, which attained an estimated circulation of over 150,000 copies per month by 1944.⁶ *Libération* led the way among other newspapers in strengthening public opposition to the Vichy regime and support for Charles de Gaulle.

UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINS

Beginning in the summer of 1940, Frenchmen found themselves without reliable access to accurate local, national or world news.⁷ In the northern zone, the French press was put under the direct oversight of Propaganda-Abteilung, an organization controlled by Joseph Goebbels, the German Minister of Propaganda.⁸ Any newspapers that had continued printing for 15 days under the German occupation were shut down,⁹ and those that survived generally expressed hostility toward Britain as well as support for Pétain and the armistice.¹⁰

¹ Raymond Kuhn, *The Media in France* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 18.; H.R. Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France: A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone 1940-1942* (Oxford University Press, 1978), 79.

² Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 79.

³ Laurence Thibault, ed., *Imprimeurs et éditeurs dans la Résistance* (La Documentation Française, 2009), 70.

⁴ Pierre Albert, "The Journalism of the French Resistance: An underground war of words," tr. Claude-Jean Bertrand. *Media Studies Journal*, Vo. 14, No. 2. (Spring/Summer 2000).

⁵ Albert, "The Journalism of the French Resistance."

⁶ Laurent Douzou, "Le Journal 'Libération': Les fonctions et les caractéristiques d'une feuille clandestine" (presented at a colloquium on La Presse Clandestine 1940-1944 in Avignon, France, June 20-21, 1985), 120.

⁷ Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 16.

⁸ Emmanuelle Benassi, "Le journal Défense de la France," tr. Matthias R. Maier, *Musee*

Virtuel de la Résistance, February 2012. Accessed Nov. 20, 2013.

http://www.museedelaresistanceenligne.org/pageDoc/pageDoc_theme.php?id_expo=44&id_ssthem=349

⁹ Albert, "The Journalism of the French Resistance."

¹⁰ Martyn Cornick, "Fighting Myth With Reality: The Fall of France, Anglophobia and the BBC," in *France at War in the Twentieth Century: Propaganda, Myth and Metaphor*, eds. Valerie Holman and Debra Kelly (United Kingdom: Berghahn Books, 2000), 74. Also, Olivier Wieviorka, "Between Propaganda and Telling the

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In the southern zone, newspapers were subject to censorship from the Vichy authorities. Alexandre Varenne, founder and director of one of the three daily newspapers in Clermont-Ferrand, paraphrased the demands of the censor thus: “Publish everything I send you, in the form that I require, or I will shut you down.”¹¹ The system, he said was one “of an occupying power, not of a regular government.”¹² As a result of Vichy’s censorship, French newspapers began to look nearly identical to one another and found themselves rapidly losing the people’s trust. In November 1940, police in Clermont-Ferrand reported that townspeople believed that all French newspapers were under German control.¹³ The people’s rejection of existing newspapers as a source of reliable information created a vacuum that underground papers like *Libération* would rush to fill.

Clandestine publications in France were not a twentieth century invention. Rather, the tradition of producing underground periodicals was a “well-established political reflex in France”¹⁴ that traced back to at least the sixteenth century and experienced a boom during the French Revolution.¹⁵ Though the clandestine papers in the 1940’s varied in tone, political identification and purpose, some similarities are visible from the beginning. The first goal of the early papers was to express defiance — both through the very existence of the illegal newspapers and through the words that they published — and “shake public opinion out of its apathy.”¹⁶ As early as November 1940, *Liberté*, the first clandestine newspaper in the southern zone, displayed a quotation from Marshal Foch, a World War I soldier: “a people is only conquered when it accepts defeat.”¹⁷ The second aim of the clandestine press was to counteract German and Vichy propaganda.¹⁸ Ultimately, as the founders of *Défense de la France* said, the mission was to “restor[e] popular morale, and by doing so morally re-enter France in the war.”¹⁹ Later in this paper, I will attempt to shed light on whether the clandestine press accomplished these goals.

It is important to note here that, though the word “newspaper” is used to describe these publications, the goals of these papers did not lend themselves to the kind of objective, arms-length reporting that we expect from reputable newspapers today. Rather, as will be discussed later, clandestine newspapers were a kind of propaganda themselves — the founders of *Défense de La France* said they were creating “propaganda in the good sense of

Truth: The Underground Press during the Occupation 1940-1944,” in *France at War in the Twentieth Century*, 111.

¹¹ John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 143.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 144.

¹⁴ Kuhn, *The Media in France*, 19.

¹⁵ Louise Rosenblatt, “France,” in “The Underground Press of France, Belgium, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands,” *Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, Vo. 2, No. ¾ (June 1945), 6.

¹⁶ Henri Michel, *The Shadow War, Resistance in Europe 1939-45*, tr. Richard Barry (London: Andre Deutsch, 1972), 98.

¹⁷ *Liberté* (25 Nov. 1940) as quoted in Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁸ Michel, *The Shadow War*, 98.

¹⁹ Leaders of *Défense de la France*, as quoted in Benassi, “Le journal Défense de la France.”

the word”²⁰ – and thus were often highly polemical in tone. Clandestine papers aimed to capture and shape public opinion rather than accurately represent it.

LIBÉRATION BEGINS

Founded in July 1941, *Libération* was the brainchild of a small group of like-minded individuals led by Emmanuel d’Astier de la Vigerie, an impetuous aristocrat-turned-journalist with left-wing political views.²¹ He was once described by the resister Georges Groussard as “a man capable of giving himself, body and spirit, to an idea, to a cause, with never-relenting enthusiasm.”²² In this respect, d’Astier was not unusual. The individuals who founded clandestine newspapers came from diverse backgrounds, but most were rebellious characters who felt robbed of their freedom of expression. They also had a strong sense of patriotism (but then again, so did the Pétainists, though the preferred means to that end differed greatly between the two groups) and a willingness to take risks to protest the status quo.²³

Founding *Libération* was not d’Astier’s first act of resistance. In the fall of 1940, driven by “anger and disgust [...] to do something different from everyone else,”²⁴ he and several others – including Jean Cavaillès, Jean Rochon, Lucie Aubrac, Marcel Zerah and Édouard Coniglion-Molinier – had attempted to begin a movement they called La Dernière Colonne that would expose and punish collaborators.²⁵ They began by distributing tracts and posters in Lyon, Clermont-Ferrand, Vichy, Nice, Marseille, and Nîmes. But the fledgling resistance group, lacking experience, was crushed in February 1941 when police arrested several members and issued a warrant for d’Astier’s arrest.

Undeterred, d’Astier went into hiding and plotted his next step: starting an underground newspaper.²⁶ Founding a clandestine paper was a strategic move because it allowed d’Astier to build upon the propaganda activities of La Dernière Colonne in a more formal and methodical manner. The action component would come out of the newspaper’s symbiotic relationship with the resistance movement, *Libération-Sud*.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

By 1944, almost every major underground newspaper was pushing for replacing the Vichy regime with a provisional government headed by Charles de Gaulle. But most newspapers did not arrive at this conclusion immediately. Indeed, as historian John Sweets has stated, the “seemingly uniform outlook” of newspapers by 1944 “obscures the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Laurent Douzou, *La Désobéissance: Histoire du mouvement Libération-Sud* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1995), 34.

²² Georges Groussard, as quoted in Douzou, *La Désobéissance*, 34.

²³ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 70-78.

²⁴ Emmanuel d’Astier, as quoted in Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 71.

²⁵ Douzou, “Le Journal ‘Libération,’” 117.

²⁶ “Emmanuel D’Astier de la Vigerie,” Fondation de la Résistance. Accessed November 25, 2013. http://www.fondationresistance.org/pages/rech_doc/?p=portraits&iIdPortrait=9

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contrasting ideological and political views of the movements' founders." So where did *Libération* fall on this diverse spectrum?

In many ways, *Libération* was similar to other clandestine papers. Beginning with its first issue in July 1941, the newspaper spoke directly to the French people: "This newspaper will familiarize you with truths that your government, under orders from Germany, is obliged to hide from you."²⁷ The first item on its agenda was to get France to "emerge from our sordid, vanquished state," "choose between the struggle and inertia," and "work to accelerate an already certain victory that our complicity is delaying."²⁸

But *Libération* was distinctive in that it precociously arrived at the conclusions that other papers would take much longer to reach. Though another newspaper, *Liberté*, had previously accused Prime Minister Pierre Laval of "collaborationist politics"²⁹ as early as November 1940, most resistance papers initially emphasized anti-German rather than anti-Vichy themes.³⁰ *Libération* was the first non-Communist publication to focus on the internal enemy and explicitly condemn not just Laval but the entire Vichy government.³¹ *Libération* accused Vichy of turning France into a German ally, orienting the French economy toward helping the German war effort and allowing the country to serve as a buffer zone between Germany and the Allies.³² *Libération* also disparaged Vichy's program of internal reform known as the *Révolution nationale*, accusing the regime of hoarding power and appointing itself as a "professor of morals."³³

Moreover, while other clandestine newspapers initially abstained from blaming Pétain for the crimes of his government (*Combat* even displayed a quotation from Pétain on its masthead until early 1942³⁴), *Libération* held Pétain personally responsible for collaboration as early as its second issue in August 1941:

For over a year [Pétain] has staged the most grotesque and odious of comedies in this town of petty operas. He has dishonoured himself by infamous legislation, by the statute against the Jews, by concentration camps, by his sniveling Legion, and by all the filth in which he looks for and periodically rejects his ministers...³⁵

The directors of *Libération* were even more anti-Pétainist than they revealed in their editorials: Jean Rochon once encouraged d'Astier to scale back *Libération's* anti-Pétain rhetoric, saying "[Pétain's] an old fool, but it's too early to say that!"³⁶

While precociously condemning Pétain, *Libération* was also an early supporter of Charles de Gaulle, the general who led the Free French Forces during World War II and

²⁷ *Libération*, July, 1941, tr. Sophie Gould

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ *Liberté*, November, 1940, as quoted in Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 138.

³⁰ Rosenblatt, "France," 11.

³¹ *Libération*, July, 1941, tr. Sophie Gould.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-44* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 38.

³⁵ *Libération*, August, 1941, as quoted in Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 138.

³⁶ Jean Rochon, as quoted in Douzou, "Le Journal 'Libération,'" 122, tr. Sophie Gould.

became president of France following the war. In his diary on June 19, 1940 – the day after de Gaulle’s first radio address to the French people – d’Astier scribbled, “De Gaulle is right. Pétain and Weygand are wrong. The demand is disgraceful.”³⁷ Though de Gaulle and his *La France Libre* (Free French) movement based in England were not *Libération*’s initial focus, the general’s name did appear in the newspaper’s pages with increasing frequency as time went on. In its fifth issue (January 1942), the paper wrote: “We must take care not to forget the other Frenchmen who have...represented, outside of France, the highest ideals of the national resistance. *Libération* salutes the grand French chief, General de Gaulle, who, at a time when other generals doubted France’s destiny, knew to see the future beyond the immediate contingencies, and became the symbol of our country’s relief.”³⁸ Beginning in April 1942, the front page of *Libération* often bore a quotation from de Gaulle: “Our only goal is to give a voice to the French people,”³⁹ and every issue after February 1943 displayed the phrase, “Only one leader: de Gaulle. Only one struggle, for our liberty.”⁴⁰ Indeed, *Libération* began accepting financial support from de Gaulle as early as 1941.⁴¹

Libération was also on the forefront of a stylistic shift among clandestine newspapers. As H.R. Kedward has argued, while early resistance propaganda sought to provide readers with information on people and events outside their immediate surroundings, *Libération* exploited “rumors, emotions and prejudices” to provoke a specific reaction to the facts rather than merely presenting the information. As Olivier Wieviorka asserts, clandestine newspapers embraced this moderately editorialized approach in order to “construct a meaning contradicting interpretations placed on them by the enemy” and counter the enemy’s mythology.⁴² One result of this was the shift in the connotation of the word “collaboration.” While the word initially meant diplomatic co-operation, it quickly took on derogatory, even treasonous, connotations. Though *Libération* cannot claim credit for this semantic change, the paper used the word in a pejorative way from its first issue onwards.⁴³ Though there was not always a need to embellish or polemicize the truth – often the contrast between the “official” version of events and reality spoke for itself⁴⁴ – the extent to which clandestine newspapers distorted the truth indicates that these should be understood as propaganda rather than as sources of information. The tone of *Libération*, especially when exaggerating the importance and resources of its associated resistance movement,⁴⁵ supports this categorization.

Finally, *Libération* was also decidedly the most politically left-leaning newspaper among the non-Communist papers in the southern zone. D’Astier made a deal with the trade union leader Léon Jouhaux to refrain from admitting communists into the paper’s leadership

³⁷ Emmanuel d’Astier, as quoted in Douzou, *La Désobéissance*, 36.

³⁸ *Libération*, January, 1942, tr. Sophie Gould

³⁹ *Libération*, April 1943, as quoted in Douzou, “Le Journal ‘Libération,’” 122.

⁴⁰ *Libération*, February, 1943, tr. Sophie Gould

⁴¹ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 113.

⁴² Wieviorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth,” 112–15.

⁴³ *Libération*, July, 1941, tr. Sophie Gould.

⁴⁴ Olivier Wieviorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth: The Underground Press during the Occupation 1940–1944,” in *France at War in the Twentieth Century: Propaganda, Myth and Metaphor*, eds. Valerie Holman and Debra Kelly (United Kingdom: Berghahn Books, 2000), 114.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 121.

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in return for Jouhaux's help in recruiting trade unionists and socialists. In its fourth issue (December 1941), *Libération* published an appeal to trade unionists written by Jouhaux, and the paper began to attract the readership of many working-class Frenchmen with trade union or socialist affiliations.⁴⁶

A CORRESPONDING MOVEMENT

Libération cannot be examined in isolation from the resistance movement Libération (which was sometimes referred to as Libération-Sud to distinguish it from the Libération-Nord movement in the northern zone.⁴⁷) The leaders of this movement were the same group of people who had founded the newspaper, and the two projects were inextricably intertwined. In fact, the Libération movement did not truly exist until the first issue of *Libération* was published.⁴⁸ In this way, *Libération* provides a good case study for the way that many resistance movements were born out of clandestine newspapers.

From *Libération's* very first issue, the founders viewed it as more than a newspaper. Not only would the paper contain facts, but it would also enumerate tasks that readers should do. "Therefore this newspaper will not be a piece of paper, but an act,"⁴⁹ they wrote. Moral reform in France, they went on, would not happen with decrees, with laws or with discourse but "by action and through action."⁵⁰ But how was the paper to inspire, organize and direct this activity? The founders sought to create a community of *Libération* readers who would take the newspaper's words and turn them into action. They thus confidently subtitled the newspaper, "Organ of the Directory of French Liberation Forces."⁵¹ *Combat* later showed a similar mentality in saying, "Our newspaper is not meant for those who, comfortably ensconced in an armchair, would read it on the sly and then hasten to burn it for the sake of caution."⁵² The ultimate goal of resistance newspapers was to inspire action.

Having learned from the failure of La Dernière Colonne that founding a movement was no easy task, d'Astier and his cohorts now relied on *Libération* to spark and expand their resistance movement. First of all, *Libération* gave the Libération movement publicity and a platform from which to speak to the French people. In this way, the newspaper served as the "mouthpiece" of the movement.⁵³ *Libération* also lent legitimacy and credibility to the movement. Producing an illegal newspaper was an arduous task that required careful planning, hard work and significant risk at every stage — from newsgathering, to editing, to printing to distribution. Each issue was therefore hard proof of the creators' knowledge, efficiency and commitment to the cause, and furthermore showed that the movement had

⁴⁶ King, "Emmanuel d'Astier and the Nature of the French Resistance," 33.

⁴⁷ "Emmanuel D'Astier de la Vigerie," Fondation de la Résistance.

⁴⁸ Thibault, ed., *Imprimeurs et éditeurs dans la Résistance*, 70.

⁴⁹ *Libération*, July, 1941, tr. Sophie Gould.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² *Combat*, February 1942, as quoted in Albert, "The Journalism of the French Resistance: An underground war of words."

⁵³ Michel, *The Shadow War*, 94.

some infrastructure. *Libération*'s association with *Libération* would thus prove to be a major recruiting advantage for the movement.⁵⁴

The newspaper also provided structure and durability for the movement. Becoming part of the movement was simple — an individual had only to help distribute the newspaper. The first issue proclaimed: "We are asking each of our 15,000 readers to spread this newspaper around them, to pass on each issue TO 10 OF THEIR KIN. They will have then worked with us toward our communal LIBERATION."⁵⁵ In its second issue, *Libération* expanded its list of instructions to include asking readers to boycott collaborationist newspapers and German propaganda films; leave public places when Germans arrive; boycott restaurants, hotels, and stores showing complaisance toward the Germans; slow down or sabotage industries working for the Germans; draw swastikas on the buildings of companies working for the Germans; multiply and diffuse anti-German and anti-collaborationist tracts; publicly celebrating the victory of the Marne on September 6; and, of course, distribute *Libération*.⁵⁶ As the paper's circulation increased and more people read *Libération*, more people were drawn into the movement. In this way, as Laurent Douzou argues, the newspaper and the movement interacted — the progress of one reinforced the other.⁵⁷

This complex relationship between newspaper and newspaper-born movement was not unique to *Libération*/Libération: in the south of France, *Le Franc-Tireur* and *Combat* both had corresponding movements,⁵⁸ while the northern zone offers examples such as *Défense de la France*. Founded with ideological missions, bound to individual resistance movements, and increasingly loyal to the larger French Resistance — which can be understood as the sum total of all resistance efforts in France — these newspapers had political agendas that sometimes led them to publish exaggerations and falsehoods rather than the truth. As Olivier Wieviorka summarizes, "to raise the morale of civilians, to rally and mobilize them, the weapon of truth was sometimes a very mediocre resource, and propaganda a strong temptation."⁵⁹ This propaganda would sometimes take the form of downplaying Allied defeats, lionizing the smallest victories and denying the extent of French support for Pétain.⁶⁰

Clandestine newspapers similarly tended to make unsubstantiated claims about the importance, effectiveness, and infrastructure of the Resistance. When encouraging those who had refused to work in Germany under Vichy's Relève (Relief) system to join the guerrilla bands of resisters known as the Maquis, for example, *Libération* wrote, "Don't worry. YOU WILL HAVE WEAPONS AND YOU WILL HAVE LEADERS,"⁶¹ displaying unwarranted optimism about the organization and resources of the Resistance. A year later, giving similar advice for evaders of the Service du Travail Obligatoire (Mandatory Labor Service), *Défense de la France* likewise said, "In every region, in every commune, set up

⁵⁴ Douzou, "Le Journal 'Libération,'" 119.

⁵⁵ *Libération*, July, 1941, tr. Sophie Gould.

⁵⁶ *Libération*, August, 1941, tr. Sophie Gould.

⁵⁷ Douzou, "Le Journal 'Libération,'" 119.

⁵⁸ Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 201.

⁵⁹ Wieviorka, "Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth," 112.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Libération*, April 1942, as quoted in Wieviorka, "Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth," 121.

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fighting centers linked to each other. We shall then organize them and we shall arm them,” despite the fact that the *Défense de la France* movement had no ability to make good on its promises.⁶² The clandestine press showed a similar idealism about the guerrilla bands of resistance fighters known as the Maquis. On November 11, 1943, when the Maquis succeeded in “occupying” the town of Oyonnax, the clandestine press portrayed the act as a huge military victory, despite the ragged nature of the Maquis as well as the fact that there had been no German troops in Oyonnax to begin with.⁶³ Nevertheless, in an article titled, “Oyonnax, here we are!” (a mocking reference to the Pétainist phrase “Marshal, here we are!”), *Libération* described the operation using vocabulary such as “troops,” “an army worth of the name,” and “columns.” Likewise, *Le Franc-Tireur* used the terminology “military leaders” and “a disciplined army.”⁶⁴ Thus we can see how the newspapers’ propaganda efforts, which often superseded their desire to inform the French people, stemmed from their connection with both the ideology and the action of the Resistance.

THE NEWSPAPER, THE MOVEMENT, AND THE LARGER FRENCH RESISTANCE

In 1941, resistance newspapers and their corresponding movements in the southern zone began to consolidate. In December, *Liberté/Liberté*, led by François de Menthon, and *Vérité/Vérité*, led by Henri Frenay, fused to form *Combat/Combat*. Though *Libération/Libération* had been invited to join this union, d’Astier chose to retain the autonomy of both his newspaper and his movement.⁶⁵

Despite its early desire for independence, however, *Libération/Libération* nevertheless slowly became integrated with other resistance entities as de Gaulle — working through Jean Moulin, a resister who was trusted both in London and in France and acted as a go-between between the Free French and the various resistance movements in France⁶⁶ — sought to unite resistance efforts in France into one centralized movement under his command. As early as the fall of 1941, de Gaulle sent Yvon Morandat, a resister, by parachute into France to establish contact with resistance organizations and offer them funding. (Morandat became a member of *Libération*’s directing committee and helped subsidize the movement.) In April 1942, Moulin established an underground Bureau d’Information et de Presse in France to provide French clandestine newspapers with information from London on the war effort and propaganda focusing on de Gaulle’s Free French movement.⁶⁷ The bureau was a boon for the clandestine press, enabling newspapers to gather information much more easily and efficiently. Thus both the *Libération* movement and *Libération* began to accept help and funding from London in the interest of furthering their goals. This shift benefitted both entities greatly because neither had revenue streams (clandestine newspapers

⁶² *Défense de la France*, March 1943, as quoted in Wieviorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth,” 121.

⁶³ H. R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942-44*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 65.

⁶⁴ *Libération*, October 1943, and *Le Franc-Tireur*, December, 1943, as quoted in Wieviorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth,” 120.

⁶⁵ “Emmanuel D’Astier de la Vigerie,” Fondation de la Résistance.

⁶⁶ King, “Emmanuel d’Astier and the Nature of the French Resistance,” 28.

⁶⁷ Isabelle Tombs, “Scrutinizing France: Collecting and Using Newspaper Intelligence during World War II.” *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2002, 116.

were distributed for free.⁶⁸) As *Libération* had been anti-Pétain and pro-de Gaulle from the beginning, support from the Free French did not force the newspaper to alter its message. At little cost, *Libération*/Libération now received financial support from de Gaulle's organization.

Meanwhile, the Liberation movement began cooperating with other movements at Moulin's encouragement, joining with the Combat movement and the Franc-Tireur movement to form the United Movements of the Resistance in 1943.⁶⁹ In May of that year, the Libération movement joined the National Council of the Resistance, a group organized by Moulin which grouped all resistance movements under the leadership of de Gaulle's Free French movement.⁷⁰ Gradually, resistance circles grew larger and larger. Everything from individual acts, to militant groups, to large-scale movements like Libération came to comprise one massive French Resistance.

LIBÉRATION'S EXPANDING FOOTPRINT

Experience, support from London, and the looming threat of the Gestapo spurred the clandestine press to become more professional over time. While staff members had dabbled initially in every stage of the production process, they soon began to have differentiated functions as the tasks of newsgathering, writing, editing, printing, and distribution were separated. Along with specialization, decentralization also helped improve the efficiency of the clandestine press. After a particularly devastating raid on *Libération*'s printer in August 1942, Julien Meurillon, the paper's new printing and distribution manager, decided to relocate and fragment the paper's printing.⁷¹ Indeed, Meurillon reorganized the paper so well that, when the Gestapo simultaneously raided two *Libération* printers (one in Auch and one in Montelimar) in December 1943, the raids did not delay the production of the next month's issue.⁷² Thus we can see how *Libération* quickly became more efficient. Between July 1941 and October 1943, the paper's circulation increased from 10,000 issues per month to 120,000 issues per month.⁷³

Furthermore, the team that produced *Libération* had enough excess manpower and resources to expand its services. *Libération* launched regional editions of its newspaper⁷⁴ and also printed forged identity documents to help resisters in both the United Movements of the Resistance (in the southern zone) and the Movement of National Resistance (in the northern zone).⁷⁵ More importantly, the *Libération* team began to publish the *Cahiers de Libération* — booklets that aimed to start the conversation about what post-war France would look like. The publication of the *Cahiers* marked a significant departure from

⁶⁸ Albert, "The Journalism of the French Resistance."

⁶⁹ John F. Sweets, Review of *La désobéissance: Histoire d'un mouvement et d'un journal clandestins: Libération-Sud* by Laurent Douzou. *The American Historical Review*, Vo. 101, No. 4, October 1996, 1227.

⁷⁰ Albert, "The Journalism of the French Resistance." This movement had changed its name to the Fighting French Forces, and would later be renamed again as the Interior French Forces.

⁷¹ Thibault, ed., *Imprimeurs et éditeurs dans la Résistance*, 70-71.

⁷² Douzou, "Le Journal 'Libération,'" 120.

⁷³ Thibault, ed., *Imprimeurs et éditeurs dans la Résistance*, 71.

⁷⁴ Douzou, "Le Journal 'Libération,'" 116.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 4.

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Libération initial conception of its purpose. Two years earlier, for example, in its first issue, *Libération* had made it clear that the questions of tomorrow were not yet of any concern:

We have no doctrine. We do not want to have one today. To construct a political system on a collection of doctrines, it's necessary to have a base, a substructure, the geographic and economic configuration of a state, the elements of a nation. Yet, today, this base does not exist... Tomorrow, political doctrines... Today, the goal: EMERGE FROM OUR SORDID, VANQUISHED STATE.⁷⁶

By 1943, however, it was clear that the leaders of *Libération* believed the time had come to think about tomorrow, and they wanted to shape the conversation. The first issue of the *Cahiers*, which appeared in September 1943, announced the purpose of these booklets:

We have believed, at *Libération*, that more is needed. It's necessary, in the darkness, under this threat, that French thought look toward these themes of tomorrow, that debate begin about economic and social problems, about international political problems, that alongside the writings of the resistance — *Combat*, *Le Franc-Tireur*, *Libération* — which are an act of war, there should be new writings in which French thought determines itself for acts of peace. Here is why we offer to the intellectual elite, constrained to be quiet, a platform. Here is why appears — under a terror that diminishes light — the *Cahiers de Libération*.⁷⁷

The launch of the *Cahiers* was evidence of just how far *Libération* had come since its beginnings.

THE QUESTION OF IMPACT

Did clandestine newspapers merely record pre-existing Resistance sentiments, or did they actually convince and mobilize the French people? Historians of the clandestine press have consistently acknowledged the challenges of this question: Olivier Wieviorka, for example, writes, “For lack of sources describing the way the underground press was received — and therefore the effects it had — the reply to this question has something of a mission impossible about it.”⁷⁸ Even French citizens who lived through the war disagree about the impact of the clandestine press. Henri Cordess from Montpellier, for example, attested that he did not think the clandestine press was particularly important in promoting the Resistance, because “attitudes had hardened before the arrival of the first Resistance papers.”⁷⁹ In contrast, Louis de la Bardonnie of Saint-Antoine-de-Breuilh said the clandestine press was “vitally important[...] because not everyone owned a wireless.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *Libération*, July 1941, tr. Sophie Gould.

⁷⁷ *Les Cahiers de Libération*, September, 1943, 6.

⁷⁸ Wieviorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth,” 122.

⁷⁹ Henri Cordess, as quoted in Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 280.

⁸⁰ Louis de la Bardonnie, as quoted in Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 252.

It is clear that the rise of the clandestine press corresponds chronologically with the rise of the Resistance, but that fact alone is not enough to prove causation. Indeed, as John Sweets asserts, many Vichy officials reported the two trends as separate from one another: “Most of their biweekly and monthly reports on public opinion stated that opposition propaganda had failed to disturb the calm resolution with which people were going about their business. Yet those same reports detailed a steadily growing disenchantment with the Vichy regime and an unremitting hostility to the Germans.”⁸¹ However, these officials may have had an incentive to refrain from making the connection between resistance propaganda and public opinion — either they were in denial, or they wanted to tell their Vichy superiors what those superiors wanted to hear. Indeed, there were a handful of French policemen that did explicitly connect the rise of underground newspapers to the rise of the Resistance.^{82, 83} In 1943, a member of the French police wrote:

Through their unanimously anti-German activity, the newspapers [...] continue to enjoy the sympathy of those whom they are reaching illegally [...] the simple fact that the so-called Gaullist newspapers attack the Government and make it responsible, with the Germans, for all the current evils, is sufficient to ensure for all these disparate documents a considerable number of informants, writers, sellers and readers. All these people see their illegal activity as continued participation in a war which they have never stopped believing to be just and finally victorious.⁸⁴

In this passage, a French policeman thus credits the clandestine press with intensifying anti-Vichy sentiments in France. Similarly, Vichy’s Control of Public Opinion Service published a document in 1943 stating that “antinational” propaganda had been an “undeniable success.”⁸⁵

Though Vichy officials may have disagreed on the impact of the press, there are several reasons to believe that underground newspapers played a significant role in the Resistance. To begin with, the underground press posed enough of a threat to make the Germans worried. The German Military Commander in France wrote that anti-German propaganda “creates an atmosphere in which people are disposed to fight against Germany, a fight which tends to get fiercer as economic and social hardships increase and the French grow more impatient. Combatting this anti-German propaganda is a task of political significance.”⁸⁶ The Germans thus directed both time and resources toward putting a stop to

⁸¹ Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 202.

⁸² Direction of the Sûreté, “Les publications gaullistes editees en France pendant l’année 1943, 18 January 1944, AN F1A3758, as quoted in Wiewiorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth,” 123.

⁸³ Service de contrôle de l’opinion publique de Vichy, as quoted in Claude Levy and Dominique Veillon. “Aspects Generaux de la Presse Clandestine” (presented at a colloquium on La Presse Clandestine 1940-1944 in Avignon, France, June 20-21, 1985), 31.

⁸⁴ Direction of the Sûreté, “Les publications gaullistes editees en France pendant l’année 1943, 18 January 1944, AN F1A3758, as quoted in Wiewiorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth,” 123.

⁸⁵ Service de contrôle de l’opinion publique de Vichy, as quoted in Claude Levy and Dominique Veillon. “Aspects Generaux de la Presse Clandestine” (presented at a colloquium on La Presse Clandestine 1940-1944 in Avignon, France, June 20-21, 1985), 31.

⁸⁶ German military commander in France, as quoted in Wiewiorka, “Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth,” 123.

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD?

the clandestine press — going so far as to raid *Libération's* printers — and punishing those involved in creating it.⁸⁷ On December 18, 1942, a German ordinance declared that creating or distributing tracts without authorization would be punishable by forced labor, imprisonment or — in particularly grave cases — the death penalty.⁸⁸ In addition, the Germans tried to harness the power of the underground press for their own purposes. At least once in France, they created a fake clandestine newspaper designed to earn the people's trust and subsequently discredit the Resistance.⁸⁹ Together, the repression of the clandestine press and the creation of fake papers demonstrate that Germans believed underground newspapers were effective enough to endanger the status quo.

Furthermore, the Free French and the Allies also considered the clandestine press to be effective, as evidenced by their financial and organizational support for the newspapers. In September 1942, the Free French gave the *Libération* movement 438,000 francs — a large portion of which was likely spent on the newspaper. *Combat* received 1.2 million francs, and *Le Franc-Tireur* received 120,000 francs.⁹⁰ The Bureau d'Information et de Presse, established in 1942, was also significant. As Kedward argues, "In organizational terms it was a recognition of the vital significance of journalism and communication in the growth of the Resistance and a rationalization of the underground Press as a sector of activity on its own, manned by professionals."⁹¹ The Allies also valued the clandestine press for its informational qualities — the British began to collect resistance newspapers from the beginning of the war in order to glean insight on what was happening in France.⁹²

Finally, it is worth looking at numerical data. The number of clandestine newspapers in France by the end of the war, along with their soaring circulation numbers, indicates that there was probably a strong demand for the product.⁹³

CONCLUSION

All told, the clandestine press likely played a relatively moderate role in shaping the trajectory of the Resistance. Despite its early and consistent opposition to the Vichy regime, *Libération* should not be credited with changing the minds of the French people and convincing them to resist. Instead, it is more likely that newspapers like *Libération* were instrumental in reinforcing French people's existing concerns about the Vichy regime — concerns that had already risen in response to Vichy's autocratic policies and the deteriorating quality of life in France.⁹⁴ Furthermore, through its use of language and its connections to resistance movements, the clandestine press helped legitimize the Resistance and consolidate public support for de Gaulle. As Olivier Wieviorka argues, the French underground press helped unify public opinion, an accomplishment that may have spared

⁸⁷ Michel, *The Shadow War*, 99.

⁸⁸ Thibault, ed., *Imprimeurs et éditeurs dans la Résistance*, 11.

⁸⁹ Rosenblatt, "France," 4.

⁹⁰ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years*.

⁹¹ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 224.

⁹² Tombs, "Scrutinizing France," 107.

⁹³ Michel, *Shadow War*, 99.

⁹⁴ Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 202.

France the kind of civil war that occurred in Greece in the aftermath of the German-Italian occupation.⁹⁵

Libération and other clandestine newspapers did not create the Resistance, but they undoubtedly made important contributions to the rise of public opposition against the Vichy regime. Without this public opposition, the Resistance could not have occurred, and the Resistance – while not very significant in military terms for the future of France – was paramount from a moral perspective.⁹⁶ The existence of the Resistance restored the dignity of France in the eyes of the Allies,⁹⁷ and, for the French people themselves, resurrected the self-respect their nation had lost as a result of the armistice.⁹⁸

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⁹⁵ Wiewiorka, "Between Propaganda and Telling the Truth," 123.

⁹⁶ M. R. D. Foot, *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism* (Granada Publishing, 1978), 319.

⁹⁷ Roderick Kedward, "The Resistance in France," *History Today*, Vo. 34, No. 6 (1984).

⁹⁸ Foot, *Resistance*, 319.

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THOREAU LIVES ON WALDEN'S TWENTIETH CENTURY LEGACY

The poet Robert Frost wrote that Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* "surpasses everything we have had in America." In his essay, Ethan McCoy, Brown University '14, directs our attention to *Walden*'s long and complex afterlife. He follows the book's fortunes through the economic booms and busts, political conflicts, and social upheavals of the twentieth century, demonstrating how readers have understood, interpreted, and manipulated *Walden* to comment upon times and places far distant from the Concord, Massachusetts of 1854. This is a timely reminder of the power of art in public discourse and of the long historical roots of current debates on consumerism, the environment, and the good life.

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Since its publication in 1854, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* has become a part of the American literary canon — widely read, discussed, and interpreted for the past 150 years. But *Walden* has been more than just a relic of a time gone by, occupying a place on a reader's bookshelf a world apart from the present. Rather, Thoreau's magnum opus has been regarded as a timeless work whose themes — of simplicity, individualism, and connection to nature and one's spirit — have been reclaimed, applied, and championed by Americans. In the latter half of the twentieth century, from the centennial celebration of *Walden*'s publication in 1954, through the counterculture movement of the 1960s and the energy crises of the 1970s, and up through the environmental movement of the past forty years, the lessons of *Walden* have generated discussion among the American public. Numerous writers, environmentalists, critics, and teachers have articulated fears and concerns about their age, whether it be overconsumption of natural resources or a disconnect with the wild world, and channeled Thoreau to tackle these pressing issues. In the postwar United States, more than a century after Thoreau left Walden Pond, the lessons of *Walden* were, and continue to be, very much alive for many Americans, living on as trans-historical solutions to myriad contemporary societal and environmental issues a world apart from Thoreau's.

The story of Thoreau at Walden Pond has been told time and again. A native of Concord, Massachusetts, not too far from nearby Boston, Thoreau was a Harvard-educated writer, abolitionist, naturalist, and leading thinker of the transcendentalist movement. While working in his father's pencil factory in 1845, twenty-eight year-old Thoreau decided to leave his job to build a small cabin on a plot of land owned by friend and fellow transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson in the woods near Walden Pond. Famously, Thoreau built his cabin with only twenty-eight dollars, and lived in the woods for two years, carrying out his experiment "to front only the essential facts of life," living simply and deliberately among the ecosystems around him.¹ During that time, Thoreau cultivated his philosophy about living alone in the woods, writing reflections that culminated in *Walden*. Thoreau's time in the woods centered on his triumphant motto to "simplify, simplify" — to live neither excessively nor luxuriously, to prohibit conveniences and superficialities from clogging the mind.² Living simply required restructuring one's connection with the wilderness into a relationship characterized by respect and adulation. In such a connection with the natural world, Thoreau found "there was pasture enough for my imagination" and he could be "intoxicated by the air he breathes."³ In this way, Thoreau found in his years at Walden Pond the opportunity to get in touch with both mind and spirit, as well as the natural world around him. He found spiritual independence and self-reliance, actively pursuing and discovering what he found to constitute a meaningful existence for man on earth.

For readers of *Walden* in the twentieth century, such themes and ideas were timeless, trans-historical lessons that could be implemented to better the individual and society in any time period. One 1962 *New York Times* article acknowledged the stark differences between the mid-twentieth century and Thoreau's era, but argued that *Walden* was important then and always because the "marvels throughout his work keep it fresh forever."⁴ Mary Pitts, a

¹ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854; reprint, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1910: 118.

² *Ibid*, 120.

³ *Ibid*, 288, 114.

⁴ Winfield Townley Scott, "Walden Pond in the Nuclear Age," *The New York Times*, May 6, 1962.

member of the Thoreau Society, similarly wrote of *Walden's* relevance to everyone, identifying his “real audience” as “all of mankind, in any prospective age.”⁵ In this way, *Walden's* maxims possess I universality in both time and space, allowing readers at any time to lay claim to Thoreau’s ideas and interpret them within the context of their own world. The timelessness of Thoreau’s philosophy — along with his apt prose, beautiful descriptions of his surroundings, and own self-reflection — have helped his text remain a vital work and “central reference point” for the American people.⁶ For Americans from the 1950s onwards, it is hardly surprising, then, that Thoreau and *Walden* emerged as a source of knowledge and wisdom to be sought in the face of what they considered serious threats to American society.

Walden entered popular discourse in the postwar years primarily in response to the increasingly dominant trends of mass production and consumption in the 1950s. In the years following the return home of overseas troops during World War II, the United States entered a period of economic prosperity defined by mass consumption and improved living standards, as families gained the power to purchase appliances like refrigerators, televisions, and automobiles.⁷ But while this age of consumerism kickstarted the American economy and facilitated social mobility, many remained wary, arguing that consumption was eclipsing traditional American values. Writer Sterling North opined in a 1951 op-ed for *The Washington Post*, “We live in a lush world of things, gadgets, possessions — proud impediments which have nearly destroyed our ability to feel and think.”⁸ E.B. White wrote three years later of a modern world that “has got almost completely out of hand,”⁹ while another *Post* article that same year referenced the “vexing train of social effects that were to flow from the booming growth of American industry.”¹⁰ For these individuals, the age of consumption was not defined by economic prosperity, but by a spiraling out of control — a capitalistic chaos transforming America into a materialistic society out of touch with larger, more important metrics of what it meant to live a “good life.”¹¹ For these skeptics, the nation and its values of freethinking, thoughtful individuality had become masked by price tags and department store catalogues.

In facing the challenges brought on by this age of spending, some thinkers turned fondly to *Walden* in search of answers to society’s ills — just as Thoreau turned to nature when he escaped to Walden Pond one hundred years earlier. For these individuals, Thoreau’s succinct mottos to “simplify, simplify” and “live deliberately” did not exist in a vacuum of the past; rather, it offered messages of immediate relevance to the “evils” of mass consumption. The same 1954 *Post* article argued that Thoreau was a “visionary” who lived

⁵ “Thoreau’s *Walden* in the Twenty-First Century,” *The Concord Saunterer*, 12 (2004): 10.

⁶ Lawrence Buell, “Henry Thoreau Enters the American Canon,” in *New Essays on Walden*, ed. Robert F. Sayre, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992: 48.

⁷ “The Rise of American Consumerism,” PBS: American Experience. Accessed 20 November, 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americalexperience/features/general-article/tupperware-consumer/>

⁸ Sterling North. “The Lessons of *Walden*: Thoreau’s Advice Gains Value in Complex World,” *The Washington Post*, June 17, 1951.

⁹ E.B. White. “A Slight Sound at Evening,” In *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Walden*, Ed. Richard Ruland, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968: 32.

¹⁰ Theodor Schuchat, “*Walden*, 100 Years Old, Still Has a Word for the Wise,” *The Washington Post*, August 9, 1954.

¹¹ “The Rise of American Consumerism.”

“ahead of his time,” his messages better suited to twentieth-century society than a romantic vision of an America of only nascent urbanization in the 1850s.¹² This language of trans-historicism came through in North’s writing as well. He asserted that *Walden* was so relevant to postwar American society that its messages comprised “news of no less importance than I will read this evening in the paper.”¹³ White went so far as to claim that a century after its publication, *Walden*’s “cry, ‘Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!’ has the insistence of a fire alarm.”¹⁴ These writers framed *Walden*’s ideas in the context of contemporary issues. *Walden* spoke not only to Thoreau’s time, but also — and perhaps more so — to the twentieth-century age of consumerism and the dangers it posed; a society defined by new inventions, mass spending, and standardization prevented Americans from living as freethinking individuals in touch with their spirits and natural environments. Then, more than ever, did they believe *Walden* was a piece of American heritage with utmost importance for the present.

While these writers sought to remind Americans of Thoreau’s messages and their timely relevance to the onslaught of excess in the 1950s, others adopted a more critical tone, lamenting that, despite *Walden*’s popularity and readership, the importance of its ideas had been lost or forgotten over the years. In a *New York Times* column written in commemoration of *Walden*’s one-hundredth anniversary, acclaimed social and literary critic Waldo Frank criticized his generation for having “decided that this ‘collector of wild-life,’ this ‘romantic anarchist,’ could teach us nothing.”¹⁵ The column asserted that *Walden* had become a reference point for only a select group of American literary scholars, an “heirloom to be stored in mental attics or at best museum-pieces periodically dusted off by the critics,” while everyday Americans had dismissed Thoreau as “irrelevant and unreal.”¹⁶ An article published that same year in the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* claimed that the contemporary climate of the United States reflected a progression of values in American culture that had withered away Thoreauvian ideals. “As far as the face of this land is concerned in 1954,” it said, “*Walden* might just as well never have been written.”¹⁷ This colorful yet vehement article did not pull any punches, adding that modern luxuries had coddled and spoiled Americans in a way that hearty, rustic Thoreau — and his nineteenth-century peers — had not been. In these pieces, the authors’ tones differed significantly from those of contemporaries like White and North. All agreed that *Walden* was relevant to their time, but while the former celebrated Thoreau and the beauty and wonder of his ideas, the latter expressed grief and anger, chastising the American people for forgetting one of their nation’s foremost writers and thinkers. To them, society had consigned *Walden* to a static existence, leaving it on the bookshelf to collect dust while the world of mechanized and industrialized growth exploded around it.

Whether admiring or despairing of *Walden*’s legacy, or lack thereof, in postwar United States, thinkers who turned to Thoreau for guidance arrived at similar conclusions —

¹² Schuchat, “*Walden*, 100 Years Old, Still Has a Word for the Wise.”

¹³ North. “The Lessons of *Walden*.”

¹⁴ White, 32.

¹⁵ Waldo Frank. “Thoreau’s *Walden*: One Hundred Years Later.” *The New York Times*, August 8, 1954.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Raymond Adams. “Witnessing *Walden*.” *The Thoreau Society Bulletin*, 48 (1954): 2.

Walden's lessons must be adapted and applied to the pressing problems of the 1950s. "Witnessing *Walden*," the same article that lambasted Americans for rendering the text moot, simultaneously implored these same individuals to not only remember Thoreau when pondering the challenges of modern life, but to also embrace and apply his lessons. The article claimed that Americans must all be witnesses to Thoreau's "fearless" work; one was to be "not merely an observer...but one who knows and one who testifies" — "a very active thing."¹⁸ In this way, a 1950s reader of *Walden* was meant not just to enjoy or reflect on the text, but also to actively engage with Thoreau, grappling with his tenets of simplicity, self-reliance, and spirituality to solve the madness of the consumerist age. North adopted a similar view, saying that Americans must do like Thoreau and "shut out the caterwauling of humanity and listen to the music of the universe."¹⁹ Additionally, a *New York Times* article commemorating *Walden* asserted that "to build upon it, we must know how to adapt it to our uses. We must naturalize the fire of *Walden* into light on our own world."²⁰ For these thinkers of the 1950s, embracing and adopting the lessons of *Walden* did not mean asking individuals to abandon their lives, families, and responsibilities to make off to the woods, build a cabin, and live off the land. Rather, they saw *Walden* as an inspiration for Americans to shift their modes of thinking and self-awareness, to regain a connection with their spirituality, nature, and the real pleasures of life that had been corrupted by the unprecedented influence of consumerism in postwar society. *Walden* was a teaching tool many believed could encourage a chaotic American society to re-evaluate the human condition.

Postwar affluence altered not only consumption patterns but also the physical landscape, as the 1950s saw rapid suburbanization. In the years following soldiers' returns home, an increasing demand for housing by reunited families with young children — coupled with the efforts of government and private developers, and the development of automobiles and highways — meant suburbs "multiplied at breakneck speed," beginning the process by which suburban areas came to be more populated than cities and rural areas.²¹ This shift in lifestyle, which has since defined the American experience for many individuals, included a shift in individuals' interactions with the environment. Families moved into homes in low-density plots with more open spaces and a new and "easy relationship with the outdoors."²² Suburbanization in the postwar years moved Americans physically closer to nature, providing them with more open space, lawns, and green areas — greater access to a humanized piece of the landscape and the outdoors.

But not everyone embraced this transition, and for some, Thoreau played a role in their critiques. In a *Boston Globe* "Letter to the Editor," a writer from Thoreau's hometown of Concord discussed how *Walden* had "meaning for today," especially because of the nation's time of "heedless expanse," playing off Thoreau's words in criticizing his world of

¹⁸ Adams, 4.

¹⁹ North, "The Lessons of *Walden*."

²⁰ Frank, "Thoreau's *Walden*: One Hundred Years Later."

²¹ Becky M. Nicolaides and Andrew Wiedes, Editors, *The Suburb Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2006: 257.

²² Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985: 240.

“heedless expense.”²³ In “Witnessing *Walden*,” Adams pointed out how the ways in which Americans enjoyed nature in the new suburbia clashed with Thoreau’s message. He voiced his displeasure at seeing individuals “going to the wilderness with a portable radio in one hand and a cooler of beers in the other,” pointing out that they only exert themselves enough to “go on the paved roads merely to the edge of nature, using lush cars to get even so far.”²⁴ For people like this, Adams surmised, “what Thoreau had to say about the virtues of sauntering and the values of wilderness is mere nonsense.”²⁵ And in his 1954 *Times* piece, Frank lamented how the growth of expansive suburban plots was controlling and privatizing the wilderness. In this way, if anyone in the 1950s wanted to do as Thoreau had done and “build himself a hut in somebody’s woods a few miles out of town,” Frank pointed out, “he would find he had tangled with more regulations than if he had rented an apartment on Main Street.”²⁶ Thus, these writers viewed suburbanization’s expanse and its movement of Americans closer to nature in a negative light. They saw the process as a development that encroached on the wilderness and shifted how Americans interacted with the natural world. Suburbanization, in their eyes, was thus a tragic irony. It physically moved people out of cities and closer to the natural world, but at the same time reoriented Americans’ relationship with the wilderness, distancing them from the messages of *Walden* and limiting any inclinations to view the world around them as Thoreau did.

While the United States was expanding into a suburbanized society of mass consumption, the 1950s also marked the beginning of the Cold War, when U.S. nationalism and anti-communism reached a zenith. Within this sphere of concern, readers of Thoreau too found space to interpret and reclaim *Walden* as a nationalist text, ascribing another layer of importance to its contemporary value to society. These individuals selectively interpreted *Walden*, appealing to the spending and luxuries of the postwar years — against which Thoreau likely would have railed — as the cornerstone of a patriotic argument in favor of capitalism. These writers found in Thoreau’s rugged living conditions and individualistic spirit a patriotic message for their present battle, overlooking his implicitly anti-capitalist messages to fit their Cold War-informed rhetoric. For example, in “Witnessing *Walden*,” Adams wrote of how Thoreau’s “idea of America was not a place of comfort and special protective treatment,” but rather represented what America should be — a land of thoughtful, democratic, and independent individuals in touch with the great American outdoors.²⁷ Overconsumption and unnecessary luxury and excess were viewed as anti-American traits, while Thoreau’s rusticity and emphasis on simple living were ascribed a nationalistic bent.

Similarly, the 1954 *Times* article that criticized Americans for revering *Walden* as an “heirloom” highlighted Thoreau’s patriotic appeal to explain why society needed to hear his words, more than ever, in the postwar years. Since *Walden* was “American in substance, firmly matriced in American experience, composed in an American language luminous as it is

²³ W.B. Conant, “What People Talk About: Thoreau’s Message.” *The Boston Globe*, July 13, 1944.

²⁴ Adams, 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Frank, “Thoreau’s *Walden*: One Hundred Years Later.”

²⁷ Adams, 3.

solid,” the book provided the grounds upon which “a noble nation may rise.”²⁸ Thoreau’s time in the woods embodied the American ethos — characterized by hard work, self-determination, and individual will; *Walden* became part of the American literary canon not merely because of its author’s nationality, but also because of its American values, ideals, and messages. The patriotic value of Thoreau owes perhaps less to the American landscape from which his work draws inspiration, and more to something distinctly American in his transcendental ideology and writing, as discerned by his twentieth-century readers. In the 1950s, as the United States became mired down in an ideological battle with communism and the Soviet Union, *Walden* remained alive and pertinent, gaining meaning as an American text that contemporary writers believed reasserted American virtues in a period of hyper-nationalism.

Frank’s nationalistic interpretation of *Walden* — as a text championing individual, hard-working ruggedness — was closely linked with another interpretation that regarded the book as an affirmation of the masculinity to which American men should aspire. McCarthyism and the anti-communist hysteria of the 1950s had gendered, sexualized undertones; operating under the assumption that homosexuals were mentally weak and susceptible to communist brainwashing, the government targeted, investigated, and fired homosexual federal employees during the Lavender Scare.²⁹ During this time, heteronormative conceptions of masculinity defined gender divisions, and in popular belief, “homosexuality took on a cringing female role.”³⁰ Men were expected to be strong, masculine breadwinners; those who were not, such as homosexuals, were seen as feminine and weak. In this context, the gendered aspects of Frank’s interpretation of *Walden* — and the ways the book could benefit 1950s Americans — take on new meaning. Frank wrote of how American life was too cushy and luxurious, but did so by feminizing this lifestyle. He complained, in the case of one modern luxury, that “bubble baths are symbolic in that they are tepid, perfumed, and bubbly like the physical lives of bathers,” and that the rugged and outdoorsy Thoreau lived without “pamperings.”³¹ In this way, Frank found *Walden*’s Thoreau to be a “manly man” of the outdoors who lived off bare essentials — a far cry from the twentieth-century comforts that coddled, and weakened, men. Thus, Frank, who himself was a left-winger and belonged to the American communist party, presented a nationalist interpretation of *Walden* that emphasized a masculinized and patriotic connection to the environment, and was in fact in line with wider conceptions of gender and the environment at the time. Thoreau — a man who left a job in manufacturing out of appreciation for nature and its aesthetic beauty — fit norms of feminine interaction with the natural world more closely. But in the context of the early Cold War years and the Lavender Scare, the Thoreau of *Walden* could be reclaimed as a figure of nationalistic masculinity, a reminder of how

²⁸ Frank, “Thoreau’s *Walden*: 100 Years Later.”

²⁹ “The 60th Anniversary of The Lavender Scare: Don’t Forget About LGBT Workplace Discrimination,” Human Rights Campaign, accessed December 14, 2013, <http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/the-60th-anniversary-of-the-lavender-scare-dont-forget-about-lgbt-workplace>.

³⁰ James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005: 65.

³¹ Frank, “Thoreau’s *Walden*: One Hundred Years Later.”

strong, free-thinking American males were – and should be – better suited to roughing it in the woods than reclining in the bathtub.

As the 1960s rolled in, and the baby boomers of the 1940s and 50s grew older, the counterculture movement emerged as a way for a primarily younger generation to rebuke aforementioned norms of postwar American society. The counterculture faction was a multifaceted movement that sought to go against the grain of various societal conventions that frustrated many of the baby boomer generation. This included protests against the Vietnam War, demands for racial equality and women's rights, support for sexual liberation, and experimentation with drugs and new forms of self-expression that challenged rigid postwar conformity. Often synonymous with counterculture was the hippie movement, which emerged in the latter half of the decade under the mantra of "flower power" and sought, through sit-ins, peaceful protest, and visual expression, to embody a life of love, brotherhood, and "dropping out of bourgeois society."³² Much of the rhetoric of the hippie movement revolved around renegotiating a relationship with nature that, contrary to norms of mainstream suburban life, included finding peace and harmony with every part of the natural world – from the flowers, to the squirrels, to fellow human beings. At the "be-in" in Central Park in 1967, urban hippies made "animal calls" and sought to attain harmony with flowers; some even removed their clothing in a symbolic attempt to return to man's original, natural state as a being who loved and cherished, rather than abused, the land.³³ The counterculture and hippie movements encouraged dissidents to renounce the norms of American society and actively *not* conform, while at the same time embracing environmental symbolism and harmonious connection with nature. Thus, it was logical that Thoreau, and specifically his messages in *Walden*, continued to remain a prescient text during this time.

Walden emerged again as a trans-historical, living text in public discourse in the 1960s, as thinkers explored how Thoreauvian ideals related to, inspired, or misled the aims of the counterculture movement. Perhaps most relevant to the counterculture movement was Thoreau's individualism. For a movement grounded in non-conformity and rejection of cultural norms seen as restraining individual expression, a man who left his life working in a pencil factory to discover himself in the wilderness was a relevant idol indeed. A series of publications in 1962, commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of Thoreau's death, pointed to the pertinence of *Walden* in specific regard to the counterculture movement. An article about the teaching of *Walden* in schools noted that Thoreau's individualism was relevant to the times because it spoke out, just as counterculture hippies did, against "regimented American culture, in which people are pathetically engrossed in wearing the same clothes, living in the same kind of houses, joining the same organizations, driving the same cars as their neighbors."³⁴ Reminiscing about the 1960s in *Bostonia Magazine*, philosopher and academic Alfred Tauber characterized the era as "an array of personal emancipations" that created "a climate where (Thoreau's) ideas could flourish."³⁵ In this way, as historian Cecilia Tichi argues, in the 1960s, "the newer countercultural consciousness

³² Peter Braunstein and Michael Doyle, *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960's and 70's*, New York: Routledge, 2001: 79.

³³ Don McNeill, "Central Park Rite is Medieval Pageant." *The Village Voice*, March 30, 1967.

³⁴ Leo Bressler, "Walden: Neglected American Classic," *The English Journal*, 51 (1962): 17.

³⁵ Alfred Tauber. "Henry Thoreau as a Mirror of Ourselves." *Bostonia* (2001-2002).

found expression in *Walden Pond*” and the ideas of individualism Thoreau found in his time there.³⁶ For these individuals, the countercultural lifestyle actively embraced *Walden*, making Thoreau “more alive than ever.”³⁷ Countercultural advocates reclaimed Thoreau and his grand work for themselves in the 1960s, embracing the book as a hundred-year-old inspiration for how individuals could break free from the conformity of their own time and reclaim their individual spirituality.

In this new era of laying claim to *Walden* in the 1960s, Thoreauvian ideals had particular salience for the younger generation of baby boomers entering adolescence. The article advocating that *Walden* be taught in schools made particular note of this connection between Thoreau and a rebellious generation of youth; for this thinker, *Walden* was so important to teach in high school during the 1960s given students’ “own rebellion against authority, their own thirst for adventure, and their own desire for contact with pristine nature.”³⁸ In this way, the “spirit of rebellion which permeates *Walden*” was thought to find particularly receptive ears among adolescents.³⁹ Tauber reflected on his teenage years in the 1960s as a Thoreauvian, claiming that *Walden* “inspired a generation of American students.”⁴⁰ These viewpoints are corroborated by Tichi’s argument that *Walden* connected uniquely with youth in the 1960s: “to the generation rebelling against bourgeois customs and the industrial system, Thoreau was a head of clear diagnostic insight.”⁴¹ Thus, *Walden* became increasingly significant for a demographic it had yet to encounter in its one hundred years on the bookshelf. A youthful audience appropriated *Walden*’s ideas to fit their own rebellious goals, channeling Thoreau’s challenge to the status quo to fit their own, while educators saw the value in introducing the text to an age group seeking meaning and clarity in their own existence. A new generation of readers found in Thoreau a solution to their own problems, reaffirming *Walden*’s position as a prominent work of literature whose message continued to find receptive ears in American intellectual and spiritual life.

A number of hippies laid claim to Thoreau as one of their leading inspirations. A seminal 1967 *Time* cover article, titled “The Hippies,” that sought to investigate and reveal the strange hippie culture to a mainstream American audience, claimed that “the hippie philosophy borrows heavily from Henry David Thoreau.”⁴² The article went on to cite hippies who tried “to live the Waldenesque good life on the bare essentials,” living in communes and growing their own basic, humble foodstuffs rather than conforming to the “complicating wants” of consumerist culture.⁴³ But not everyone agreed on *Walden*’s relevance to the counterculture movement. While the *Time* article linked hippies’ to Thoreau through their simple lifestyle, critics elsewhere turned to other aspects of the hippie movement to refute counterculture’s claim to *Walden*. In a public lecture in 1968, for example, Rutgers University English professor William Channing disputed “the idea that

³⁶ Cecilia Tichi, *Embodiment of a Nation: Human Form in American Places*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001: 55.

³⁷ Winfield Townley Scott. “Walden Pond in the Nuclear Age.” *The New York Times*, May 6, 1962.

³⁸ Bressler, 14.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 17.

⁴⁰ Tauber, “Henry Thoreau as a Mirror of Ourselves.”

⁴¹ Tichi, 81.

⁴² Robert Jones, “The Hippies,” *Time*, June 7, 1967.

⁴³ *Ibid*.

Thoreau, the idol of many of today's young rebels, was a hippie,"⁴⁴ claiming that while Thoreau did drop out of "accepted patterns of living to seek ways of living life more fully," hippies' claims to be doing the same were only "superficial" in their resemblances to Thoreau.⁴⁵ Referencing hippies' affinity for drug use as self-expression, Channing pointed out the difference between Thoreau's intoxication from "morning air" versus hippies' "artificial stimulants and mind-expanding drugs."⁴⁶ He reasoned that hippies' means of self-discovery and self-expression were twisted appropriations of *Walden*, resulting in a psychedelic, distorted, and insincere connection with nature. Channing's reading of *Walden* would have found a welcoming audience in the Christian, more conservative strand of environmentalism, which eschewed the flower power, self-liberation aspects of hippie culture in favor of appreciation of the beauty and wonder of God's natural world as something to respected, rather than indulged in. For Channing and this more conservative branch of environmentalists, the hippies were wrong to claim Thoreau as a forefather.

Yet, writings from years after the height of the hippie movement pushed back against Channing's dismissal of the hippies' claim to *Walden*. A 1981 *Boston Globe* article titled "The Survival of *Walden*" focused on how hippies had learned from Thoreau how to subsistence farm and support themselves outside of mainstream capitalistic culture — and that they had merely "added marijuana to Thoreau's diet."⁴⁷ While this simply downplayed the importance of mind-alteration in interpreting Thoreau, Tichi argues that drug use, especially of psychedelics, would have appealed to Thoreau, thus justifying hippies' claims. Tichi points to moments in which Thoreau's writings on natural imagery followed free association and resembled the documented sensations of tripping. Referring to passages in *Walden* about sand flowing down an embankment ("like the slopes of lava") and Thoreau's own body ("is not the hand a spreading palm leaf with its lobes and veins?"), Tichi argues that Thoreau's "intense sensate experiences were directly comparable to — even identical with — those of a hallucinogenic."⁴⁸ In this mode of thinking, Tichi sees a connection between hippies' appreciation of nature and psychedelic experiences. Contrary to Channing, this connection is not seen as inhibiting one's process of self-discovery in nature, but rather as embodying the ways Thoreau viewed and expressed his relationship with the natural world. In this argument, then, hippies' claim to Thoreau was logical on multiple grounds. In *Walden*, they found an example of someone who lived simply off the earth, renounced his society and dropped out of it, and discovered his spiritual self within nature in a narrative of vivid and colorful experiences — experiences compatible with the ways hippies discovered drug use as a means to experience the world around them.

Debates over how best to apply the lessons of *Walden* to contemporary issues continued into the 1970s. While critics of the previous two decades looked to Thoreau as an opponent of consumerism, overconsumption, and mainstream capitalistic culture, others denied that there was a place in the modern world to apply Thoreau's principles developed at Walden Pond. In 1971, historian and literary critic Quentin Anderson wrote in the *New York*

⁴⁴ "Rutgers Professor Contends Thoreau Was Not a Hippie," *The New York Times*, January 5, 1968.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Peter Anderson, "The Survival of *Walden*," *The Boston Globe*, September 13, 1981.

⁴⁸ Tichi, 86.

Times that Thoreau could not, “in the present, suggest a mode of living for those around us.”⁴⁹ Anderson addressed the massive popularity of *Walden*, acknowledging how it had solidified its place in the American literary canon. But he argued that Thoreau had been taken out of the context of *Walden* and transformed into “a figure who would fulfill our fantasy” and provide an “answer to our emotional need.”⁵⁰ In Anderson’s eyes, this Thoreau “cult” appropriated *Walden*, reframing it as an idealized, utopian world away from the daily inconveniences of modern, industrial, and prosperous society. Anderson further advocated that it would “be wiser to cherish Thoreau only as a figure in the past”⁵¹ — as a childhood fantasy, a man of a simpler time in America’s history. For Anderson, *Walden* remained an American classic — a valuable work to be read in the twentieth century — but he was skeptical of its ability to impact individuals who lived in a world vastly different from Thoreau’s. Anderson’s critique of *Walden* as a static and historical, rather than alive and trans-historical, text placed him among the minority in the public discourse revolving around Thoreau’s role for the contemporary nation. As more individuals wrote about *Walden*’s legacy in the following decades, this would continue to be the case.

In the decade following Anderson’s column, the energy crises in the United States in 1973 and 1979 reaffirmed the salience of Thoreau’s environmental ethos of simple living. In 1973, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) — whose member nations were predominantly Muslim countries of the Middle East — enacted an oil embargo against the United States. The five-month embargo increased gas prices by thirty-seven percent and severely limited energy supply in the United States, forcing gas stations to close and Americans reliant on oil to ration personal usage.⁵² After the embargo ended, problems did not cease immediately; prices at the pump continued to rise and the nation entered an economic recession. During this crisis, a literary and photographic essay published in the *Boston Globe* in 1974 turned to *Walden* for help, urging Americans to be mindful of Thoreau’s message to “simplify, simplify” in such a challenging time. The piece juxtaposed quotations of *Walden* and an essay by an anonymous writer with photographs from a Concord artist depicting a solitary flautist in lush greenery, exasperated-looking men sitting in traffic, and a silhouetted, faceless figure walking along a wooded trail. The essay described how Thoreau “urged man to follow the lessons of nature and spurn the seductive marvels of new technology”; with Americans struggling to power their automobiles and industry (“ravages” of technology), it was crucial for Thoreau’s “whispers to reach our ears.”⁵³ For this essay, Thoreau’s messages to live simply and deliberately, to “front only the essential facts of life,”⁵⁴ spoke directly to the need to conserve during the energy crisis. The essay argued that, in a time of crisis, Thoreau’s philosophy inspired Americans to discover meaning and understanding themselves and the world around them. For the anonymous writer, turning

⁴⁹ Quentin Anderson, “Thoreau on July 4,” *The New York Times*, July 4, 1971.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Brian Resnick, “What America Looked Like: The 1970s Gas Crisis,” *The Atlantic*, May 31, 2012.

⁵³ “The Living Vision of Henry Thoreau,” *The Boston Globe*, October 13, 1974.

⁵⁴ Thoreau, 118.

to Thoreau was not just a suggestion, but rather an urgent exhortation. “Can we afford not to listen?” the essay rhetorically, yet dourly, closed.⁵⁵

Later in the decade, in 1979, the United States again saw oil prices rise and gas pump lines grow when the political turmoil of the Iranian Revolution disrupted Iran’s oil production and exportation, including to the United States. Though the consequences were not as severe as in 1973, impacts and tensions were still felt throughout the nation, and again came insistent calls to conserve, simplify, and scale back. One 1979 *Washington Post* article again drew upon *Walden* to call attention to the nation’s energy-related dangers, citing Thoreau’s “uncanny relevance to the daily headlines.”⁵⁶ In the article, writer Colman McCarthy reasoned that the pains of the energy crisis and economic struggles were especially devastating for Americans because of the “obsession with consumption” embedded in the nation’s culture.⁵⁷ For Americans to free themselves from this cultural affliction, and best weather the energy crisis, Thoreauvian simplification, conservation, and unfussy living were the perfect antidote. Yet, McCarthy’s argument was more nuanced and harkened back to the patriotic interpretations of *Walden* voiced in the 1950s. In addressing the widespread belief that standard of living was related to the comfort of daily life, technologies individuals could use, and the leisure they could afford, McCarthy pointed to *Walden* as evidence of a Thoreauvian, American standard of living that was not about “fluff or consumption,” but about having “fruitful and worthy lives based on the human spirit.”⁵⁸ Framing contemporary issues in terms of Thoreau’s philosophy, simplifying lifestyles, reducing consumption, and conserving resources would not precipitate “national humiliation to lower our standard of living,” but would – in a different, and more spiritually and patriotically worthwhile way – better it.⁵⁹

McCarthy not only advocated Thoreauvian modes of thinking to confront the tensions of the 1970s gas crisis, but he also pointed to specific ways Americans had responded to the problem, and perhaps unknowingly, channeled and revived a Waldenesque spirit. Of President Jimmy Carter’s leadership in navigating the nation through the crisis, McCarthy wrote, when he “calls on the country to go easy on energy, take up walking and get by on the smaller and the lesser, he repeats the message drummed out by Thoreau 150 years ago: We must be a nation of conservers, not consumers.”⁶⁰ This analysis came after Carter clearly stated his intention to conserve energy, protect the environment, and avoid the “wasteful use of resources,” as part of his “Ten Principles” laid out in a 1977 address to the American people.⁶¹ Written two months before Carter’s famous “Crisis of Confidence” speech, McCarthy’s comparison would come to prove even more perceptive. In that speech, Carter declared that the energy crisis was not just about powering industry and everyday appliances, but was also about “the very heart and soul and spirit of our nation”;

⁵⁵ “The Living Vision of Henry Thoreau.”

⁵⁶ Colman McCarthy. “Thoreau’s Timely Message: Today’s Energy Problems Give *Walden* an Uncanny Relevance.” *The Washington Post*, May 18, 1979.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ “Proposed Energy Policy – Jimmy Carter,” PBS: American Experience. Accessed 10 December, 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaneexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-energy/>

citizens needed to rediscover the American tenets of hard work and individualism and learn that “piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.”⁶² Though Carter never mentioned Thoreau or his legacy in the American worldview, the ideas of *Walden* were alive in his call to challenge the necessity of luxuries in order to find fulfillment, focusing attention instead on living a spiritually and morally gratifying life of hard work and determination. Additionally, McCarthy found real examples reflecting Thoreauvian thought in real policy. Pointing to a report from the Council on Environmental Quality titled “The Good News About Energy,” McCarthy quoted the governmental report’s conclusion that the nation could “do well, indeed prosper, on much less energy than most people imagine.”⁶³ Referring to the report as an “update on Thoreau,”⁶⁴ McCarthy took a more optimistic tone than others who had attempted to fit *Walden* into the modern, industrialized world. Instead of imploring others to channel Thoreau in contemporary circumstances, he found real moments of change that he believed embodied the Thoreauvian ethic – changes that were bringing the themes and philosophies of *Walden* to fruition.

As problems of overconsumption, fossil fuel reliance, and environmental degradation worsened in the years following the Carter era, McCarthy’s optimism may have been misplaced. But in the past thirty years, as the dangerous realities of environmental issues such as anthropogenic climate change, pollution, and deforestation have become more pressing, the grassroots environmental movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has grown significantly – and with it, appeals to *Walden* as a vital, didactic, and relevant environmental work. In 2004, the late John Updike penned a column commemorating the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of *Walden*’s publication; Updike lauded the book for its place as a canonical and widely known piece of the American experience, a “totem of the back-to-nature, preservationist, anti-business, civil disobedience mindset,” whose author was “so vivid a protestor, so perfect a crank and hermit saint, that the book risks being as revered and unread as the Bible.”⁶⁵ Updike suggested that these facets of *Walden* were the core of the American fabric, and, given rising concerns about environmental crisis, made *Walden* more than ever pertinent as an environmentalist work. In this light, not only was *Walden* “one of the great testaments of American individualism,” but it also served to “reconcile us, after centuries of hazy anthropocentricity, to Nature as it is, relentless and remorseless.”⁶⁶ For Updike, Thoreau was the benchmark for appreciating and cohabitating with Nature (with a capital “N”), exemplifying a symbiotic and respectful relationship between man, his spirit, and the wild. Even though Updike was not an environmentalist, the realities of the nation’s greatest challenges in the new millennium gave Thoreau and *Walden* a layered salience for him. *Walden* was both a classic text about individualism and free will that, in Updike’s eyes, “contributed most to America’s present

⁶² “Crisis of Confidence – Jimmy Carter,” PBS: American Experience. Accessed 10 December, 2013.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-crisis/>

⁶³ McCarthy, “Thoreau’s Timely Message: Today’s Energy Problems Give *Walden* an Uncanny Relevance.”

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ John Updike, “A Sage for All Seasons,” *The Guardian*, June 25, 2004.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

sense of self⁶⁷ and came with an ecological character most necessary in a new era of environmental danger.

Twenty-first century activists and academics have argued for *Walden's* importance as an environmentalist inspiration for modern times. Bill McKibben, an author who has emerged as a grassroots environmental leader through campaigns for carbon footprint reduction and coal divestment, wrote of his belief that everyone “should read Thoreau in the twenty-first century because that’s the century he was writing for.”⁶⁸ Laura Dassow Walls, a scholar of nineteenth-century literature, saw *Walden's* greatest value in its ability to bridge the gap between the “two cultures” of sciences and the arts, merging “the particulars of natural, physical reality” and “shared human meaning.”⁶⁹ In this way, she believed *Walden* could help the world solve its environmental crisis by showing how scientific information could inform human’s philosophical, humanistic, and spiritual modes of thinking as well. Thoreau’s work as a naturalist at Walden Pond did not prevent him from developing his own philosophies about what it meant to live a spiritually fruitful life. In a time when scientific data about climate change and rising sea levels has remained somewhat disconnected from our values and sense of self on a mainstream level, Walls was perceptive in advocating a reading of Thoreau’s *Walden* as a solution to this discord.

In fact, Thoreau’s ecology may even now have a direct scientific influence on Americans’ attempt to better understand climate change and its consequences. Researchers for the past ten years have been conducting research into the flora of Walden Pond, and are turning to Thoreau’s writing about his environment at the pond as a point of comparison to see how the ecosystems there have changed in accordance with changes in the localized climate over the past 150 years. The project has already yielded interesting results; researchers have found that “common species are flowering seven days earlier than they did Thoreau’s day,” and fourteen of the twenty-one types of flowers Thoreau documented are no longer there.⁷⁰ Seeking to increase our understanding of the impacts of climate change, and how such changes have affected local ecosystems, this research has given *Walden* yet another layer of importance for modern times. The planet is facing environmental challenges wholly unknown in Thoreau’s time. Yet for many, his work in *Walden* as a thinker, naturalist, and writer is more relevant than ever — inspiration to help us navigate our world and ourselves in such a trying time.

From the mid-twentieth century through the present, Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* has continually been rediscovered, reread, and reclaimed as an inspirational and didactic American work in the face of myriad contemporary issues. From overconsumption to capitalistic conformity, the energy crisis and climate change, numerous writers and thinkers have appealed to *Walden* to remind Americans of transcendentalism, individualism, and the connection between spirit, self, and nature. In this way, *Walden* has been, and remains, a cornerstone of the American literary canon. It is widely assigned and read in schools across the country; the Walden Woods are state-owned conserved lands, and the

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ “Thoreau’s *Walden* in the Twenty-First Century,” 8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁰ Cornelia Dean, “Thoreau is Rediscovered as a Climatologist.” *The New York Times*, October 27, 2008.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/28/science/earth/28wald.html?pagewanted=all>.

pond is visited by thousands of tourists, nature-lovers, swimmers, and Thoreauvian pilgrims every year.⁷¹ There is even a *Walden* video game in production that will allow players to virtually experience the world of Thoreau and “cultivate through the gameplay their own thoughts and responses to the concepts discovered there.”⁷² Thoreau’s classic has been enshrined as a timeless, living text over the latter half of the twentieth century, and as we continue to face environmental and societal problems that will test our understanding of ourselves and our nation, the import of *Walden* will only strengthen. What remains to be seen, however, is when American society at large will be ready to answer the myriad calls of Thoreauvians.

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⁷¹ Mary Blake, “Walden Pond: Thoreau’s Habitat Draws Thousands of Visitors a Year.” *CBSBoston*, June 27, 2013, <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2013/06/27/walden-pond-thoreaus-habitat-draws-thousands-of-visitors-a-year/>.

⁷² Alison Flood, “Walden Woods Video Game will Recreate the World of Thoreau.” *The Guardian*, April 26, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/apr/26/walden-woods-game-world-thoreau>.

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TITLE IMAGE

[“I Do Not Propose to Write an Ode to Dejection, but to Brag as Lustily as Chanticleer in the Morning, Standing on His Roost, If Only to Wake My Neighbors Up.’ – Page 92”]. 1854. Title page illustration. *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods*. By Henry D[avid] Thoreau. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854. *Wikimedia Commons*. 13 Mar. 2014. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Walden_Thoreau.jpg>.



SHERMAN KENT AT YALE

THE MAKING OF AN INTELLIGENCE ANALYST

As rumors and revelations concerning America's intelligence apparatus swirl around us, new questions are being asked about the people directing the covert operations of our government. In this essay, Antonia Woodford '14 investigates the background of one such figure: Sherman Kent '26 GRD '33. Before becoming one of the founding fathers of the Office of Strategic Services and its successor, the Central Intelligence Agency, Kent was a Yale student and professor. Woodford traces his initially lackluster years as a student, his work as a French historian, and the seeds of his intelligence career. She offers a fascinating account of how a major player in twentieth century international affairs was shaped, personally and intellectually, by his time at Yale.

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INTRODUCTION

“Someday I will kill a frog. There should be a bounty put on them—say 50 francs a head. All the dead frogs of the last war should be counted and the Germans indemnified at this rate. The civilized nations of the world should stand the bill—Germany could use the money to get ready to kill the rest of them.”¹

- Sherman Kent, private diary, March 1, 1932

Sherman Kent, Yale Class of 1926, grew famous as “the father of intelligence analysis.”² In 1941, as the United States prepared to enter World War II, he left his job as a Yale history professor to conduct intelligence research for the U.S. government, and went on to build a storied career in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and its successor agency, the CIA. At a time when the U.S. had no established intelligence apparatus, Kent was part of a team of scholars that formulated an approach to gathering and analyzing critical information about nations around the world.³ He directed the Europe-Africa division of the OSS during the war, producing the first serious U.S. intelligence reports before the invasion of North Africa, and later spent ten years leading the CIA’s Office of National Estimates, which produces all estimates of other nations’ capabilities and likely actions. Ambitious and hardworking, Kent applied the methodology of history to produce crucial, penetrating reports, and he formulated a theory of intelligence in his 1949 classic *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, in which he argued that intelligence analysis should be kept separate from policymaking to avoid biasing researchers.⁴ He was so influential that a school of intelligence analysis at the CIA today bears his name.⁵

That part of Kent’s story has been told before. It is celebrated in CIA publications and histories of U.S. intelligence strategy. But before Kent made a name for himself in Washington, D.C., he was a longtime fixture at Yale. Except for trips he took to France for research, Kent lived and worked at Yale nearly without interruption from 1922 to 1941 as an undergraduate, a graduate student, and finally a professor of French history. Over those 19 years, he transformed from an average student, disdainful of the world around him, to a thoughtful historian, eager to use his knowledge and the methodology of history to rigorously analyze international affairs.

One of seven children, Kent was born on December 1, 1903 in Chicago. His father, a politician, moved the family to Washington, D.C. and then to California. Kent had a very close relationship with his parents, and after leaving home he wrote them letters frequently. While his professional life came to demand secrecy, in his correspondence from 1922 to 1941 Kent was a candid, humorous, irreverent, and sometimes offensive writer. He wrote at

¹ 1931-1932 diary, March 1, 1932 entry, Sherman Kent Papers, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.

² Anthony Olcott, “Revisiting the Legacy: Sherman Kent, Willmoore Kendall, and George Pettie – Strategic Intelligence in the Digital Age,” in *Studies in Intelligence* 53, no. 2 (2009), 21.

³ Robin Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-1961*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 60-115.

⁴ Winks, 83-85, 325, 450.

⁵ Jack Davis, “Sherman Kent and the Profession of Intelligence Analysis,” in *The Sherman Kent Center for Intelligence Analysis Occasional Papers* 1, no. 5 (2002).

length about what mattered to him, which at first was football and how not to fail out of school, and later was his research and how to cope with a Europe at war. This paper follows his time at Yale through those letters—written as often as every other day, and preserved in a collection of his father’s papers—as well as two of his diaries and a memoir, all held in archival collections at Yale.

A paradox that emerges from these documents is that Kent, far from being an internationalist, could be extremely critical and derisive of foreigners in his youth. Though he chose to study French history as a graduate student, he inveighed against the French both to his parents in letters and privately in his diary; the opening quote above is one of his most strongly worded outbursts. He was equally vocal about disliking other groups of people, whether they were women who rejected him or nuns and Jews in general. But by the time Kent began working for the government, at least some of this intolerance had faded; his initial intelligence work aimed to help the U.S. better understand foreign affairs and bring about peace. Despite his conflicted relationship with the French during his time as a student, in the 1960s he went to Paris to brief French President Charles de Gaulle on the Cuban missile crisis.⁶

As this paper explores, Kent grew from a troublemaking student into a serious academic at Yale, and by following European politics at home and abroad he acquired a more international perspective on people and events than he had brought to Yale as a freshman. His scholarly interests also shifted from his own narrow specialty--nineteenth-century French electoral reform--to ways to apply history to the present: he joined the CIA to be in the company of other scholars equally serious about using academic knowledge to solve global challenges.

DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS

“Now when you get it right in the neck that way, believe me it crimps your high ideals. When your best efforts net you a 35% I tell you it is one awful blow...I’ve been doing rottenly this term already.”⁷

- Sherman Kent, letter to his mother, February 25, 1923

Kent did not attend Yale because of his academic merit. He attended because nearly all the males in his family before him—his father, two grandfathers, seven uncles, one cousin, and three older brothers—had gone to Yale.⁸ As Kent recalled six decades later in his memoir, *Reminiscences of a Varied Life*, he was a mediocre student. He had failed final exams in English and French as a senior at the prestigious Thacher School, a preparatory

⁶ Winks, 454-455.

⁷ February 25, 1923 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.

⁸ Lord Oswald Bates, ed., *History of the Class of 1926: Yale College* (New Haven: Class Secretaries Bureau, 1926), 193-194.

school in California that his family also had a history of attending, and Yale accepted him only on the condition that he pass make-up exams in the fall of 1922.⁹

So from the time Kent stepped into his dorm room in the Berkeley Oval, the quadrangle on the present site of Berkeley College where many freshmen lived, self-doubt plagued him. Not only did New Haven strike him as a “nasty cloudy rainy part of the world” compared to his native Kentfield, California, but he also fretted about his ability to survive academically.¹⁰ While his peers in the Class of 1926 proudly festooned their rooms with large blue “YALE 1926” banners, Kent bought one that read only “YALE”; he feared he would be held back a year, or even forced to drop out.¹¹

Kent struggled that first year. He wrote in his memoir that he had a “fundamental inferiority complex,” and that an “air of gloom” hung over him.¹² His “best efforts” at studying for his fall final exam in freshman history earned him a 35 percent, he wrote to his parents, and he could not figure out how to improve.¹³ By his second semester at Yale, he had been put on probation.

His parents worried, too. Kent’s father, William Kent of the Class of 1887, wrote to professors he knew at Yale asking them to watch out for his son. “If you can, keep an eye on Sherman, and let us know how he is getting on,” he wrote to former classmate Robert Corwin, then chairman of admissions at Yale.¹⁴ The extent of his son’s difficulties led William to blame Yale itself, which he thought had gotten worse under President Arthur Twining Hadley’s tenure, which lasted from 1889 to 1921. “I feel sure that if he fails to connect with college matters, it is the fault of the college,” he told Corwin.¹⁵

William penned a similar letter to German professor Gustav Gruener, another former college friend. “Our fourth boy, Sherman, is having a hard time in the Freshman class,” he wrote to Gruener in February 1923. “I wish you would look him up. He is the finest kind of a youngster, with balance and excellent judgment and sense. [But] he is not apt at book learning.” If any of Kent’s older brothers had struggled at Yale, William wrote, he would have rebuked them for not trying hard enough. But Kent was a young man of such “quality,” he told Gruener, that Yale’s curriculum “must have something wrong with it.”¹⁶ Gruener did reach out to Kent, but with considerably less sympathy than William intended. “[Gruener] said that he didn’t really believe I was crazy, but still...any one who couldn’t do History...” Kent fumed in a letter home to his mother, describing his conversation with the professor. “I don’t think I’ve been so sore at anyone since S. D. [uncle Sherman Day Kent, Class of 1883] last gave me a talk.”¹⁷

⁹ Sherman Kent, *Reminiscences of a Varied Life: An Autobiography* (Washington, D.C.: E.G. Kent, c. 1991), 69.

¹⁰ April 1, 1925 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹ *Reminiscences*, 70, 78.

¹² *Reminiscences*, 70, 77.

¹³ February 23, 1923 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁴ February 5, 1923 letter from William Kent to Robert Corwin, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵ February 5, 1923 letter from William Kent to Robert Corwin, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁶ March 13, 1923 letter from William Kent to Gustav Gruener, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁷ April 20, 1923 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

By the end of the year, Kent scraped by and earned passing grades in all of his classes except history. History 10, a yearlong course on European civilization that Gruener teased him for not being able to grasp, was a required course, and he would need to retake it as a sophomore.¹⁸ Ironically, Kent eventually majored in history, earned a Ph.D. in history, and taught History 10 himself for several years in the 1930s. “That for more than a decade the better part of my salary was earned teaching the freshman class...these very same rudiments of history, always did seem a bit of poetic justice to me,” he remarked with satisfaction in his memoir.¹⁹

Kent entered the university during a time of great change. Yale was making a push to raise academic standards and revitalize intellectual life, which had languished with the rise of extracurricular activities, and especially college sports, since the 1870s.²⁰ In 1920, the college had introduced a new common curriculum for freshmen, and students who could not maintain passing grades—16 percent of students in the Class of 1924, the first under the new policy—dropped out.²¹ Yale also underwent a substantial physical transformation between 1921 and 1935, erecting new Gothic-style buildings to house and teach a larger student body.²²

The 886 incoming students in the Class of 1926 made it the largest incoming class in Yale history.²³ To Yale historian George W. Pierson, that class in particular symbolized Yale in its era of transition. Kent’s cohort excelled “in irreverence, in ungoverned individualism, and in the capacity for causing discomfort,” Pierson wrote in his history of Yale in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁴ Members of the class were boisterous and eager to make their voices heard—they staged four riots during freshman year, one of which landed the whole class on probation—but at the same time were thoughtful and sincere.²⁵

Kent fit in with the rabble-rousing crowd, and his pleasures in freshman year came far from the classroom. He kept rifles in his dorm room’s window seat, which he and his roommate, another boy from the Thacher School, used to shoot at cats in the courtyard below. In California, he had often hunted cats for fun at Thacher and at home with his brothers. “I suppose among the five of us,” he said of him and his brothers, “we had disposed of a fair sample of the cat population of northern California.”²⁶ Yale, however, prohibited firearms. After campus police nearly caught him with guns during the spring of his freshman year, Kent stopped the hunting. Still, for his antics and humor, he became a campus personality. At graduation, his classmates voted him “most original,” “most entertaining,” “most popular campus character,” and “wittiest.”²⁷

¹⁸ April 12, 1923 and May 2, 1923 letters from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers; *Reminiscences*, 77, 91.

¹⁹ *Reminiscences*, 77.

²⁰ Brooks Mather Kelley, *Yale: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 298.

²¹ George W. Pierson, *Yale: The University College 1921-1937* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 147.

²² Pierson, 112.

²³ Pierson, 144.

²⁴ Pierson, 149.

²⁵ Pierson, 150.

²⁶ *Reminiscences*, 82-84.

²⁷ *History of the Class of 1926*, 405.

Kent was also passionate about athletics, particularly football, and often wrote home with detailed accounts of the varsity games he attended. He played on Yale's B squad freshman year, until his probation barred him from participating, and he played on an informal Class of 1926 football team as a sophomore.²⁸ William, ever the watchful father, approved of Kent's Yale spirit but responded to news of his sports injuries with warnings against "unnecessary disfigurement."²⁹

ACADEMIC AWAKENINGS

"Professor Allison sparked an interest in me for which I owe him more than any other of my instructors...In the fullness of time, when it came to drawing up the program for the rest of my life, my choice of the academic field can be attributed to this interest that John Allison kindled in me."³⁰

- Sherman Kent, *Reminiscences of a Varied Life*, 1986

Despite his inauspicious beginnings, over time Kent grew less frivolous and improved in his studies. Partly, he just grew savvier. "If you get to know your profs so as you can kid each and every one, you won't flunk unless you are terrible dumb," he confided to his mother in a letter. But he also took courses that sparked his interest instead of those that sapped his morale.³¹ A fateful moment came during his junior year, when he took professor John Allison's class on the history of the Middle Ages. A talented lecturer, Allison was so inspiring to his students that Pierson compared him to King Nestor in *The Iliad* giving advice to younger warriors.³² The professor's charm worked on Kent: the once-reluctant student gushed to his mother that Allison's class "is one of the best courses I ever took. He's one of the few profs I ever had who can make 50 minutes go so fast that one hasn't time to even pull out his watch."³³ Allison was "thrilling," "a delight," and "one of the greatest teachers on the whole Yale faculty."³⁴ It was thanks to him that Kent chose to major in history.³⁵

Kent also grew more interested in political events happening beyond Yale's campus—glimmers of what would consume him in his post-Yale career. Freshman year, his letters home complained of cold weather and the "extremely rotten" food in Commons.³⁶ Junior year, he still reserved plenty of hatred for Commons, but also eagerly described his class on socialism and political conversations with a classmate's family who had fled

²⁸ October 6, 1922, April 12, 1923, and Oct 29, 1923 letters from Sherman to his parents, William Kent Family Papers; *History of the Class of 1926*, 193.

²⁹ Jan 26, 1923 letter from William Kent to Sherman, William Kent Family Papers.

³⁰ *Reminiscences*, 78.

³¹ Undated 1923 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

³² Pierson, 536.

³³ September 1924 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

³⁴ *Reminiscences*, 78.

³⁵ *Reminiscences*, 101.

³⁶ October 6, 1922 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

Leningrad during the Russian Revolution.³⁷ In senior year, he elected to take courses in American Politics and Principles of Government, classes that opened new horizons in his thinking.³⁸ Kent told his father his government professor “[had] a virgin field to work on in [his] mind.”³⁹ In his senior year, Kent also took a class with future Yale president Charles Seymour, a historian who became his most important role model besides Allison. Seymour taught modern French history and had diplomatic experience serving on peace commissions during World War I; Kent later sought his advice when entering government himself.⁴⁰

Still, Kent struggled to keep up his grades. “It is aggravating [sic] and also a blow to my intellect that I haven’t the brain or the ability to carry a hard program,” he wrote to his father after landing back on probation in junior spring.⁴¹ That spring, his grades dropped because he took an extra course credit, a less embarrassing situation than failing freshman history. But his inability to perform as well as he would like nagged at him, especially as his younger brother Roger, in the Class of 1928, earned stellar grades.⁴²

As the end of college loomed, Kent had yet another source of worry: what to do after graduation. Thanks to his privileged background, he had never needed to think carefully about where his life would lead him. He knew growing up that he would go to the Thacher School, like the rest of his family before him, and that from Thacher he would go to Yale. But the route to pursue after college was less clear.⁴³ He thought he might go to law school, as many of his relatives had done, but the idea of teaching also appealed to him.⁴⁴ From November of his senior year until late that spring, he agonized over the decision.

“As to next year, I am going to try to teach at an Eastern [prep] school,” he announced to his father in a letter in November, “and if I can’t see the work I will promptly go into law.”⁴⁵ Kent never asked his parents for advice in his other letters home during college, but in his post-college choice he seemed anxious for approval. Teaching was a less prestigious career than law, or going from law into politics as his father had done, and he tried to justify his choice while keeping law as a backup option. “Stanleigh [a friend] has said that a little practice in teaching and studying is a great help and asset in the law, and that time spent in such pursuits is not by any means lost,” he assured his father.⁴⁶

In January 1926, with no post-graduation offers of employment from the Choate School or other prep schools he had contacted, Kent turned to Allison for advice.⁴⁷ The professor who had inspired him to study history once again gave him a novel idea: graduate school. “His advice was to go direct into the graduate school next year and thus maintain a

³⁷ March 14, 1925 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

³⁸ December 6, 1925 letter.

³⁹ October 8, 1925 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁴⁰ October 8, 1925 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers; *Reminiscences*, 101-102.

⁴¹ April 17, 1925 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁴² December 7, 1924 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers; Dana T. Bartholomew, ed., *History of the Class of 1928: Yale College* (New Haven: Class Secretaries Bureau, 1928), 272.

⁴³ *Reminiscences*, 107.

⁴⁴ February 23, 1923 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁴⁵ November 26, 1925 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁴⁶ November 26, 1925 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁴⁷ *Reminiscences*, 108.

certain prestige of being a new Yale graduate,” Kent wrote to his father. He would apply to Yale’s graduate program, since his low grades made admission elsewhere unlikely.⁴⁸ “After one year he says I can pretty well tell whether I’ll like the business or not, and in case I want to quit and study law, my advancing years wouldn’t be so noticeable in that field...I’d like very much to know what you think of the project.”⁴⁹

The elder Kent responded with a stern letter a few weeks later. “I have always had a very definite idea that at the time a man makes the break from college into the world he ought to knuckle down to a definite task and not scatter and spatter in amateur doings,” he told his son. Unless his son had made up his mind “to tackle the teaching game” at a prep school, he should go into law. Graduate study, William implied in the letter, was dilettantism, “postponing definite life work.” Law would instead give Sherman the opportunity for “splendid constructive work” and “fine mental discipline,” and could also provide an avenue into politics later on.⁵⁰

After all this admonishment, William tried to end his letter positively. If Sherman did want to teach at a prep school, his father said, he should not worry too much about the “underpaid initial years” and trust that eventually, even in a poorly paid profession relative to law, he would make enough money to have a family.⁵¹ But this advice only underscored the letter’s overall message: law was the only sure stable, well-paid path. It could hardly have been a less assuring response to Sherman’s plan of going to graduate school, which his father quickly dismissed.

But Sherman was not so easily dissuaded. “Apparently my last letter was a bit vague,” he wrote to his father. “You thought I wanted to take a general course in the Graduate School next year. I don’t, I want to start studying History.” He explained that waiting a year before starting a Ph.D. program would be “much more detrimental” than waiting a year before going into law. “As I feel now there are few things I would less rather do than study law,” he added bluntly. “Mr. Allison says that to get a good start in Graduate work one should go directly into it—other profs have given similar advice. That is what I should like to do.”⁵²

Perhaps his father wrote a scathing reply—after all, his son appeared to trust the opinions of Yale faculty more than his family—or perhaps he made a more convincing argument in favor of law. In either case, when Kent wrote home a few weeks later, he vacillated again. “Law has always been in the back of my head as something to do in case I shouldn’t like studying to be a prof,” he told his father, and he had doubts about his ability to teach well. “I’d rather study History than Law—of this I am certain,” he continued. “But here is where the light dawns, I’d rather be a Lawyer than a prof.” He would choose law, Kent said, because he was more likely to enjoy the job he would get afterward. He also gravitated towards law as preparation for a possible career in politics. “I’m hoping this solution ends the awful row in my mind,” Kent wrote. “My! That’s a weight off my chest.”⁵³

⁴⁸ *Reminiscences*, 109.

⁴⁹ January 26, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁵⁰ February 11, 1926 letter from William Kent to Sherman, William Kent Family Papers.

⁵¹ February 11, 1926 letter from William Kent to Sherman, William Kent Family Papers.

⁵² February 27, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁵³ March 17, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

He had spoken too soon. A few months later, with final exams over and a diploma in hand, Kent enrolled in the Yale graduate school to study history.⁵⁴

THE MAKING OF A HISTORIAN

“I’ve been doing lots of interesting work, all in stuff I don’t much care about. But it’s as [medievalist] Mr. [Sidney] Mitchell says — anything you know about gets interesting.”⁵⁵

- Sherman Kent, letter to his mother, October 14, 1926

Kent entered graduate school eager to study history but critical of both his peers and the peoples whose history he studied. “I’m really enjoying my work a lot this year — tho [sic] I can’t say as much for the company of my associates,” he wrote to his father in the fall of 1926.⁵⁶ For the first time in his educational career, some of his classmates were female, and Kent resented their presence. “The lady students...are about as obnoxious as could be gleaned from a group of earnest young women,” he complained. “This coeducation gripes me. Conversations must always be proper, feet cannot be put on the tables, coats must be worn.”⁵⁷ (He did not complain about them in letters to his mother, a women’s rights activist.)

Before returning to New Haven, Kent had spent the summer in Europe with his sister, Adaline (“Addie”). They spent several weeks biking through the French countryside, gambled in casinos in Monte Carlo, and ended up in Paris, where Kent took French history and literature classes at the Sorbonne.⁵⁸ During this trip, his first extended stay in France, he hoped to improve his French and get a head start on learning material for his Ph.D. exams.⁵⁹ His father, now apparently resigned to his son’s graduate school plans, encouraged Sherman to observe “history in the making” by paying attention to political events in Europe.⁶⁰ “You will get a much more vital picture of history by meeting the people that are making it than you could by reading something that people have written about it,” he advised.⁶¹

Kent followed France’s efforts to deal with a financial crisis in 1926 especially closely. He admired Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré, and even mailed home a copy of a speech Poincaré delivered that he thought his father would appreciate. He also eagerly described France’s deteriorating political situation. “This government seems to be in one of the greatest messes ever,” Kent wrote his father that July. “There are lots of socialists and their representatives don’t want to do anything but yell and vote down.”⁶² As he watched events unfold up close, with government gridlock and “people...becoming frankly hysterical,” Kent

⁵⁴ *Reminiscences*, 107-109.

⁵⁵ October 14, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁵⁶ October 20, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁵⁷ October 20, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁵⁸ 1926 diary, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁵⁹ June 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁶⁰ August 12, 1926 letter from William Kent to Sherman, William Kent Family Papers.

⁶¹ June 1, 1926 letter from William Kent to Sherman, William Kent Family Papers.

⁶² July 30, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

enjoyed speculating about France's future. He noted that royalists and fascists jockeyed for power, propounding their views on newspaper editorial pages. The socialists had taken over the parliament chamber and sung the anthem of the First International. He thought parliamentary democracy might collapse and wondered "what shape the revolution will take," since he thought revolution seemed inevitable.⁶³

A month later, Kent commented that his projections had been too "wild."⁶⁴ Poincaré had convinced the French to accept higher taxes and a devaluation of the franc, so averting any imminent crisis.⁶⁵ He predicted that France would follow the path of Italy under Mussolini and become a dictatorship, possibly under Poincaré himself. "As it was he was dictator for a few days, tho [*sic*] the Frenchmen never would have admitted it," he wrote to his father.⁶⁶

Interestingly, for the first time in letters home, Kent expressed disdain for the French—the very people whom he would study for the rest of his time in academia. "Frenchmen in general annoy me, with their dislike of air, and water; English and Americans; their wrath over the debt settlement; their tremendous pride in some matters, and absolute lack of pride in most.—and their fool latin [*sic*] temperament," he wrote to his father.⁶⁷ In a short diary he kept that summer, Kent criticized many Frenchmen he met, frequently referring to them as "frogs." He ordered a drink "while being jabbered at by a crazy, wild-eyed and [wild]-haired frog lady," he wrote on July 8. Two days later: "A mannerless and indignant frog makes a row because I don't wear a coat."⁶⁸

Kent returned to the U.S. in October 1926 and moved into a room next to the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity house on York Street.⁶⁹ He had been a member of "Deke" in college, as had his father before him, and went there for his meals as a graduate student.⁷⁰ He soon settled back into the rhythms of university life. In his first year, he took another course with Allison, on modern French political history, as well as classes on the Middle Ages, the British Empire, and diplomatic history.⁷¹ The graduate school curriculum required that he study a broad range of time periods and countries, even though Kent "long[ed] for European Diplomatic stuff," he told his father.⁷²

During this time, Kent developed his skills as a historian. Small research projects consumed his attention. He took pride in uncovering the intricacies of foreign events, and in challenging the very professors he looked up to most. "Since a lot of diplomatic correspondence has [just recently] come out, my work is as nearly original as one can get,"

⁶³ July 30, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁶⁴ September 6, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁶⁵ Kenneth Mouré, *Managing the Franc Poincaré: Economic Understanding and Political Constraint in French Monetary Policy, 1928-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 4.

⁶⁶ September 6, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁶⁷ September 6, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁶⁸ 1926 diary, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁶⁹ Today, the Yale Alumni Association building stands in its place.

⁷⁰ October 1926 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers; *History of the Class of 1926*, 193.

⁷¹ *Reminiscences*, 110-111; October 9, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁷² October 20, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

he told his mother proudly about a paper he wrote for Seymour.⁷³ He had found new documents that he thought contradicted Seymour's reading of the French-Italian accord of 1898-1902.⁷⁴ "I am pretty sure I'm right," he boasted. "You see it's not a case of me vs. Seymour but me plus a lot of new information vs. Seymour. It has been wonderful fun doing this."⁷⁵ In Allison's class, Kent likewise took satisfaction from finding a serious error in a "first class" history book on the French King Louis Philippe.⁷⁶ The French historians Seymour and Allison remained his favorite professors, and they must have influenced his choice of nineteenth-century France as his specialty. He also thought their rise up the ranks of the university—Seymour became provost in 1926, and Allison became chairman of the History Department—might improve his own job prospects at Yale.⁷⁷

Kent also began to reflect on what the purpose of history, and of historians, should be. Unsurprisingly for someone who started off as a poor student, Kent thought history should be accessible and dramatic to appeal to non-academics. He criticized the head of Yale's graduate program in history, whom he said conceived of the "Historical brotherhood"—history students and professors—as a "closed corporation."⁷⁸ Kent thought historians should prioritize accuracy first and public accessibility second. "I hate the idea of plain scholarship," he wrote.⁷⁹

Often, Kent worried about the practicality of his work. "Scholarship seems to be an intensely selfish type of amusement, and History the most ludicrous pursuit imaginable," he had written to his mother in the spring of his senior year. "The patching [of facts] is fun, but the people you tell your discoveries to are not any happier."⁸⁰ Over the years, he grappled with the question of how to make his work as a historian more meaningful. He feared that academia would pigeonhole him, enough to exchange his job for wider-ranging, yet historically-relevant, work for the government later in life. In his first years of graduate school, Kent also continued to feel insecure about his academic performance. "I'm not at all sure I'm doing good work," he wrote to his mother in the spring of 1927, and he wondered if he should abandon the discipline.⁸¹ Sometimes he wondered if he was simply in graduate school because of inertia: "I'm beginning to think I just can't leave," he wrote in early 1928. "I expect to become more and more like a Connecticut Co. trolley car which hasn't fire enough to jump its track."⁸²

When his father died in March of 1928, Kent grew particularly pessimistic. He lost a tremendously important figure in his life, whom he admired greatly and in many ways emulated. He traveled home to attend William's funeral, and upon returning to Yale he

⁷³ February 27, 1927 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁷⁴ February 20, 1927 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁷⁵ February 27, 1927 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁷⁶ February 20, 1927 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁷⁷ October 20, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁷⁸ February 20, 1927 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁷⁹ February 20, 1927 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸⁰ March 19, 1926 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸¹ Undated 1927 letter ("Sunday") from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸² February 23, 1928 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

wrote his mother much more frequently. His letters in this period do not describe his immediate reaction to the loss, but they reveal a new wellspring of concern about his future.

That spring, Kent anxiously waited to learn if he could teach history at Yale the following year. He knew there was a vacancy in the department, but he worried that his “relatively bad scholarship” would hurt his chances of getting it.⁸³ “I don’t know about the job yet, and it’s wearing on my nerves something scandalous,” he wrote to his mother in January, then chided himself for lacking the patience for scholarly work.⁸⁴ After William’s death, as a job offer failed to materialize, the routine of classes and research deeply frustrated Kent. Perhaps recalling his father’s exhortation to stop “pottering” and choose a “constructive” career, he told his mother that he had “a big desire to jump into teaching or some other active life.”⁸⁵

His professors advised him to start work on his thesis or go abroad for research, but Kent could not shake off a sense of aimlessness, as if graduate school had stopped him from maturing. “I can’t help but feel like sort of a dead beat in dodging the responsibilities one should naturally assume at my age,” he wrote to his mother.⁸⁶ A few months later, he hinted he might leave New Haven to teach elsewhere. “Six years is a long time to potter about in one place,” he said.⁸⁷

To take his mind off school, Kent returned to Europe for the summer. Again he watched European politics with interest, and remarked in particular upon attitudes towards Mussolini in Italy. He found it frustrating, he told his mother, that he did not know enough Italian to talk politics with “the lads in black shirts” – the Blackshirts, Mussolini’s fascist paramilitary squads. Mussolini’s efforts to impress the Italian public with the “magnificence” of his army struck Kent. English speakers in Italy called Mussolini “George,” he reported to his mother, because they were too afraid to criticize him in public by his last name.⁸⁸

Just a few weeks before the start of the academic year, Kent received good news: Yale needed another instructor for freshman history. In the fall of 1928, Kent put aside his research and threw himself into teaching.

SPLEEN

“I am going to try to make this a diary – that is a kind of journal in which I can write of things done and things heard. I am going to try to write it well tho [sic] I am sure that the profanity and obscenity herein expressed will make its publication impossible. Of that I am glad.”⁸⁹

- Sherman Kent, private diary, May 22, 1931

⁸³ January 22, 1928 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸⁴ January 22, 1928 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸⁵ February 11, 1926 letter from William Kent to Sherman and March 23, 1928 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸⁶ March 24, 1928 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸⁷ June 5, 1928 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸⁸ August 13, 1928 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁸⁹ 1931-32 diary, May 22, 1931 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

Between 1928 and 1933, in both his letters and a private diary, Kent sharply criticized many of those around him. He disparaged women, Jews, the government, the faithful, the mentally ill, and foreigners—especially the French. Kent had always been a jokester, so perhaps he found it entertaining to make particularly vicious remarks. But his statements also must have had some true beliefs behind them, even if they were exaggerated. Now employed, Kent felt more secure and self-confident, and with this confidence came a sense of self-righteousness. The rest of the world, it seemed, was now open for his criticism.

“Girls are lousy,” he wrote in his diary in May 1931. “They were put on earth to fulfil [*sic*] two functions—e.g. sexual and social—and to fulfil [*sic*] those two things together and not separately one by one...If girls can’t fulfil [*sic*] both of the above functions, say the hell with them—let their popularity with me rest on my interest at trying to get them to bed.”⁹⁰ Later in the same entry he divulged his true source of frustration with women: they were too reluctant to have casual sex with him. Women “of our class”—for Kent associated only with women from a similarly privileged background as his—should stop being prudish and learn to use birth control, he argued. “Why can’t they laugh and lie down,” he wrote.⁹¹

Kent hardly mentioned his relationships with women in his letters home, apart from describing dances at nearby women’s colleges on weekends. He had a girlfriend in the summer of 1928, and she went off to France when he began teaching in New Haven, but the start and end of that relationship never made it into his letters.⁹² It seems likely that he did not understand women very well, and resented his inability to attract them.

In his diary, he lashed out at a woman who rejected him: “She is the killer type, the competitor type...I think she collects admiration, and it must be male admiration as a kid collects stamps, unscrupulously...The lure is spread artfully, the victim is collected—then shelved.” Kent wrote that he felt “tantalized,” then “tortured.” He concluded that the woman in question, who remained unnamed, was too brainless to realize they should be together. “What you need is a man’s mental equipment, which God knows you haven’t got and can never attain, you sleezy ape.”⁹³ At other times he wished women would lose the capacity to think entirely. (For then, how could they rebuff him?) “If I were God then I’d create/An Eve who couldn’t cerebrate,” he wrote in his diary, trying his hand at poetry. “If I were God I’d take the mind/And make it part of Eve’s behind/I’d dull its glint and kill its glow/This evanescent source of woe.”⁹⁴

Kent was similarly vicious towards religious people who had done him no personal harm. He believed nuns were “feeble minded,” and engaged in debates about religion with them only to belittle their thoughts in letters home afterwards. Evidently equating their intelligence level and their looks, he wrote that he had never seen a nun “who didn’t look like the ‘before’ ad to some patent medicine.”⁹⁵ Priests earned his scorn as well: he described a rector of an Episcopalian church whom he met in Paris as “the most despicable bastard that

⁹⁰ 1931-32 diary, May 23, 1931 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁹¹ 1931-32 diary, May 23, 1931 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁹² *Reminiscences*, 115.

⁹³ 1931-32 diary, undated entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁹⁴ 1931-32 diary, undated entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁹⁵ April 2, 1927 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

the earth has produced.”⁹⁶ In a self-congratulatory tone in his diary, Kent made fun of the “puritanical bastards” going to Church on a Sunday morning, knowing he himself had had more fun getting drunk the night before.⁹⁷

His criticism sometimes bordered on support for eugenics. After watching a professional wrestling match with a friend, Kent declared he had lost faith in humanity. “I don’t know when I’ve seen mankind at a lower ebb,” he wrote to his mother. “The wrestlers couldn’t have got into the ring if they hadn’t the physique of a power plant, and the mind of an ape.” If this was what “unenlightened” people looked like, Kent continued, it was useless to educate them. Instead, “they should be exterminated.”⁹⁸ A couple months later, he told his mother about a conversation he had with a friend about the value of human life. He professed that he would like to establish “a system of execution and sterilization” to “bring back the survival of the fit.”⁹⁹ This time, the object of his hate was not wrestlers but the mentally insane. “Wouldn’t it be great to be a dictator?” he asked.¹⁰⁰

Kent considered Jews incompetent and undesirable, though they remained a source of frustration rather than an object of hatred. He cursed the “little jew boys” who worked at the Yale law library and could not find the books he wanted.¹⁰¹ He rented his graduate school apartment from a “Sheeney” whom he called “very ignorant” and eager to overcharge him for the apartment’s furniture.¹⁰² On a train back to New Haven from New York, he complained that his compartment was “a little Jerusalem,” and that Jews talked business, drank copiously, played cards, and disturbed the other passengers with their noise.¹⁰³

Viewed in the context of his time, many of Kent’s views are not particularly surprising. In the 1920s Yale College was all-male, and though some women attended the graduate school, men dominated the university’s culture. (Women, Kent noted in one letter, could eat at Mory’s only during the summer.¹⁰⁴) Yale also discriminated against Jews in college admissions.¹⁰⁵ Kent’s talk about exterminating mentally unfit people stands out today, but his comments would not have shocked many of his contemporaries. America’s eugenics movement peaked in the 1920s, when many Americans favored using selective breeding to rid society of “undesirable” elements. These beliefs permeated academia, including elite institutions like Yale, and certain professors actively promoted them. The economist Irving Fisher, who taught at Yale until 1935 and whom Kent may have known, played an important role in the movement.¹⁰⁶ Still, the fierceness with which Kent expressed his views is striking.

⁹⁶ 1931-32 diary, May 24, 1931 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁹⁷ 1931-32 diary, May 27, 1931 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

⁹⁸ January 19, 1930 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

⁹⁹ May 31, 1930 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰ May 31, 1930 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁰¹ 1931-32 diary, May 23, 1931 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

¹⁰² October 20, 1926 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁰³ January 6, 1927 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁰⁴ Undated 1930 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁰⁵ Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005).

¹⁰⁶ Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003), 75, 103.

His letters and diaries between 1928 and 1933 contain many more hateful remarks than his other correspondence, suggesting that he had an especially harsh, bitter frame of mind during these years.

Kent also had little faith in the U.S. government, a government that in ten years he would praise and eagerly serve. “True foreign occupation and rule would be a little less foreign and more satisfactory than ours to-day,” he wrote to his mother in 1930, announcing that he would never fight to defend the government or the state. He saw the U.S. as controlled by political machines, made up by “unthinking” people of foreign origin. On the contrary, he thought, German occupation would be a “boon.”¹⁰⁷

But Kent reserved his strongest invective for the French. When he visited France in the summer of 1929, he devoted most of a long letter home to describing a “nasty little French boy” he saw on the street. Kent thought the boy, dressed in a green silk suit with a lace collar, exemplified French decadence and effeminacy, and he gleefully noted that the child sported a black eye. “The little frog is a bird—I’ll bet his mother wept a week over that eye, not because it hurt the child, but because it was harmful to his general effect,” he wrote. “When he gets over it I think I’ll bribe some little wop to give him another—it is his only redeeming feature.”¹⁰⁸

Kent’s attitude begs the question of why he would choose to specialize in nineteenth-century French history..¹⁰⁹ Other than being the focus of his academic role models, as well as his European vacation destination of choice, France seems to have appealed very little to Kent. Yet he disdained other fields even more. “[American historian Wallace] Notestein...thinks that it is foolish for me to go into French history when all my interests are really elsewhere,” Kent wrote his mother in 1930. Notestein suggested that he switch to American history and conduct research in the West, but Kent dismissed the idea. “I’ve always held U.S. history in low repute,” he wrote, “and altho [*sic*] I really don’t care much about France anymore, I can hardly see dodging it for something I inwardly scorn.”¹¹⁰

From February 1932 to May 1933, Kent lived in Paris, where he did archival and completed a draft of his dissertation. During this time he denounced the French as frivolous, overly sophisticated, and inefficient. Kent thought the French did not know how to enjoy or cope with “any but the most refined things,” and were thus “fools” in crisis situations.¹¹¹ Their “no-hurry philosophy of life,” such as the tendency to start work later in the day and take long breaks, exasperated him, particularly when he was trying to do research or fix up his Parisian apartment.

After several days of trying to get a mechanic to install heating in his apartment, Kent exploded: “Someday I will kill a frog. There should be a bounty put on them—say 50 francs a head. All the dead frogs of the last war should be counted and the Germans indemnified at this rate. The civilized nations of the world should stand the bill—Germany could use the money to get ready to kill the rest of them.”¹¹² It was a jarring statement for him to make,

¹⁰⁷ January 28, 1930 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁰⁸ August 3, 1929 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁰⁹ February 23, 1930 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹⁰ Undated 1930 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹¹ May 6, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹² 1931-32 diary, March 1, 1932 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

particularly since France suffered one of the highest casualty rates during World War I—upward of 70 percent.¹¹³

Kent also described the French as racially inferior compared to other European peoples. The English, he wrote on a trip to Britain, “seem a much more reasonable race than the French.”¹¹⁴ The Germans, he wrote from Munich, were “cleaner, healthier and happier than the frogs.”¹¹⁵ Bavarians were “informal and pleasant,” unlike the French, who were “all refined, polite, educated, and unexciting.”¹¹⁶ He lamented that the French had qualities “which make race hatred almost as natural as breathing.”¹¹⁷

In the diary he kept from 1931 to 1932, Kent stopped writing entries about his daily activities, instead preferring long diatribes against the French. He ridiculed them for delighting in “simple pleasures,” describing in minute detail how an entire French family gathered to watch a young boy publicly urinate. He dedicated another entry to criticizing *eau*, the French word for water. By his description, French *eau* was not truly water but rather a “funny liquid” filled with “lime and lizards and hair,” completely unsanitary but used by the uncivilized French population for drinking and washing.¹¹⁸ He filled additional pages of his diary with crude poems: “*Voici Boulevard St. Germain/Ou se trouve le merde de chien/C’est en joli endroit...*” he wrote in French. (“Here is the Boulevard St. Germain/Where one finds dog shit/It’s a nice place.”)¹¹⁹

Kent’s struggles with his dissertation, which would run to more than 500 pages, only increased his distaste for Paris. He expressed loathing for the employees of the Bibliothèque Nationale, the site of most of his research. “Let me explain...what lousy ignorant unpleasant human baboons they are, how they lack brains, manners, kindness, humanity, and breeding,” he wrote in his diary. “Let me excoriate them as the foulest layer of the foulest layer of the filthiest scum on world civilization—as the meanest, surliest, most unpleasant kind of frog.”¹²⁰

Overall, Kent’s long stay in Paris seemed to trigger an unusually negative and hostile frame of mind. He arrived in the City of Light during a bitterly cold winter, spent a long time hunting for an apartment, and then an even longer time trying to get the apartment heated, a process that wore on his nerves. He had to navigate the French bureaucracy to access various archives, and then found the archives confusing and the librarians unhelpful. Despite his knowledge of French history, Kent never had a complete grasp of the French language, and he felt ill at ease without Americans nearby.¹²¹ Though he did see colleagues and old friends from time to time, he bemoaned the “gradual departure of all white male company” when

¹¹³ Charles Sowerwine, *France Since 1870: Culture, Society and the Making of the Republic*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 112.

¹¹⁴ April 2, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹⁵ July 27, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹⁶ August 2, 1932 and April 27, 1932 letters from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹⁷ August 2, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹¹⁸ 1931-32 diary, March 8, 1932 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

¹¹⁹ 1931-32 diary, undated entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

¹²⁰ 1931-32 diary, October 24, 1932 entry, Sherman Kent Papers.

¹²¹ February 11 and 24, 1932 letters from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

those friends returned to the U.S.¹²² The fact that Kent was used to living a comfortable life, surrounded by people he knew in familiar environments, made the adjustment to life in France even more difficult.

His caustic words may also have reflected a frustration with the state of his career. Kent was doing well at Yale by the early 1930s—his students in freshman history praised him, and his department promoted him while other professors lost their jobs during the Great Depression—but life in Paris seemed like one hurdle after another.¹²³ His interest in France dwindled, yet he needed to slog through enough archives to complete the dissertation that would earn him a Ph.D. In time, having returned to the U.S., Kent's criticism mellowed.

THE INTRIGUE OF WORLD POLITICS

“I suspect we are watching a war at brew, I hope we have sense enough not to rescue France a second time.”

- Sherman Kent, letter to his mother, August 2, 1932

During the time he spent abroad for research, Kent traveled extensively in Europe. He grew even more fascinated by international affairs and made observations about the German, French, and Italian governments on the ground. He also continued to make dire predictions about how Europe might, once again, be drawn into war. These thoughts would stick with him back in New Haven, as his interests shifted from probing narrow nineteenth-century research topics to understanding current events.

Though Kent had joked about how Europe should pay Germany to kill the French, tensions between France and Germany truly concerned him. France had been unnecessarily harsh on Germany in the postwar settlement of World War I, he thought, demanding reparation payments that would leave Germany “exhausted” and unable to recover.¹²⁴ In the early 1930s, he noted, France interpreted every move Germany made as a “menace” to its security, while the Germans thought the French wanted to oppress them even more. “The Germans...say that the frogs are not really afraid, but are using fear as a dodge to increase all their armed forces and are really getting ready to attack Germany,” Kent wrote to his mother. (He crossed out “us” in his letter and replaced it with “Germany,” suggesting that he identified much more with the Germans than with the French.) But the Germans, he continued ominously, “regard the French fear as so unreasonable and mean and contemptible that they are losing their feeling of being too weak to fight.”¹²⁵

When Kent attended dinner parties with French people, he had to restrain himself from provoking political conflicts. The French, he wrote to his mother, could think of France “only as the defender of humanity” against Germany.¹²⁶ He called France a “contemptible” nation and asserted that he had “not a vestige of respect” for its foreign policy.¹²⁷ If a war

¹²² September 3, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹²³ Pierson, 284.

¹²⁴ August 2, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹²⁵ August 2, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹²⁶ October 9, 1932 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹²⁷ January 20, 1933 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

broke out, he thought it would be France's fault, and he did not think the world should come to France's aid. Still, his sympathy for Germany did not extend to its new leadership. After Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933, Kent remarked: "May something awful happen to him. I don't suppose the world has ever seen a more half-baked ignoramus delegated of the leadership of the state."¹²⁸

In Italy, Kent commented on displays of military might and celebrations of Mussolini. He found the town of Siena "full of uniforms and black shirts" as Italians there commemorated the fascist March on Rome. "It seems as if about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the people pay the bills to keep $\frac{3}{4}$ bearing arms and jazzy military costumes," he told his mother.¹²⁹ In Florence, he found military parades "depressing," noting that children as young as eight or ten years old took part. He saw their eagerness to march around and salute as yet another indication that war was brewing. "You begin to feel that the whole country is just mobilized for trouble, and can hardly wait for gun fire to jump in and show off in true Latin fashion," he wrote.¹³⁰

Kent became less skeptical of the American government and U.S. politicians after 1933, when President Franklin Roosevelt took office. He thought Roosevelt was a strong-willed, brave, "wonderful" man, comparable to Woodrow Wilson and to God.¹³¹ In this regard, it seems he finally agreed with the French, for he reported to his mother that "the frogs are wild over Roosevelt, and are happy to lay the blame for every national and international calamity at the door of 'OVAIRE [Hoover], as they call him."¹³² By the end of the decade, Kent was professing "reverence" for the federal government and said he would be "thrilled and flattered" to be on the federal payroll.¹³³

After finishing a draft of his dissertation, Kent returned to the U.S. in May 1933. He resumed teaching that fall, and found Yale much changed as it dealt with the Great Depression. The university lowered admissions standards as it received fewer applications for enrollment, and the less-prepared students irked him. "I get discouraged when I see how much [they have] to learn...and I say 'to hell with you,'" Kent wrote his mother.¹³⁴ The university also increased class sizes, forcing Kent to learn how to lecture rather than lead seminars, and a decreased budget made him and other professors fear for their jobs.¹³⁵ He felt "sour" and "disgusted" by the new residential colleges Yale built, which he thought should be part of an effort to improve Yale's academics rather than simply an investment in more luxurious student housing.¹³⁶ While Kent still loved Yale, he began to tire of academic life. "There are times when this whole game of education becomes a burden," he wrote to his

¹²⁸ April 5, 1933 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹²⁹ April 21, 1933 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³⁰ April 30, 1933 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³¹ March 14, 1933 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³² March 14, 1933 from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³³ *Reminiscences*, 187.

¹³⁴ February 2, 1934 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³⁵ May 30, 1934; Oct 1, 1934; and March 21, 1935 letters from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³⁶ February 19, 1934 and March 8, 1934 letters from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

mother. "I get so sore about living in a dormitory and being hailed by students at any hour of the day that I get ready to answer the doorbell with a six shooter."¹³⁷

Meanwhile, the unfolding situation in Europe continued to fascinate Kent. In the 1934-1935 academic year, he began teaching a new course on liberal and national movements in the nineteenth century, which likely prompted him to think more about political undercurrents in Europe.¹³⁸ After Germany invaded Poland in the fall of 1939, he felt sure the rest of Europe would go to war. At last he no longer blamed the French for creating conflict, and instead thought the U.S. should help France and Britain fight against Germany.¹³⁹ The war also spurred him to rethink his values and the meaning of what he was doing in life. The destruction in Europe, he told his mother, "come[s] close to destroying all the things I have laboriously built up to replace my vague and youthful notions of God."¹⁴⁰ His letters and campus activities from this period reflect a renewed preoccupation with the European conflict and what his role could be as a historian.

Starting in 1939, Kent chaired a committee to assemble war-related literature and propaganda for a collection in the Yale library.¹⁴¹ The committee sought to collect as much German propaganda as possible from the years before the outbreak of open hostilities in Europe, and its work became close to an obsession for Kent.¹⁴² The collection soon threatened to "completely engulf" his teaching and research, he wrote to his mother, but he thought it was crucial to save the material so future generations could see it.¹⁴³ At an annual convention of the American Historical Association in late 1940, Kent and two historians from Princeton delivered a speech called "The Historian in Time of Trouble." The speech touched upon historians who, in times of war, were inspired to take on new and important work. Kent's portion discussed how the Revolution of 1830 in France set historian Thomas Babington Macaulay to work on the 1832 Reform Bill in England and made Alexis de Tocqueville leave for America to study democracy.¹⁴⁴

In thinking about how historians reacted to the onset of war in the past, Kent also seems to have considered how he should react to World War II. He did not doubt the usefulness of the historical method, but his research topics in nineteenth-century France seemed increasingly irrelevant. "Goodness, how remote and useless this sort of research appears in the light of our crisis values," he wrote. "Damn the war."¹⁴⁵

¹³⁷ January 28, 1934 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³⁸ May 30, 1934 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹³⁹ May 30, 1940 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁴⁰ May 30, 1940 from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁴¹ September 14, 1939 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁴² *Reminiscences*, 183.

¹⁴³ October 30, 1939 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁴⁴ October 18, 1940 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁴⁵ March 12, 1941 from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

THE ROAD TO WASHINGTON

“It fair makes you gasp...When we really get to the job we’re paid for, I suppose it will be the very best damn job in the United States.”¹⁴⁶

- Sherman Kent, letter to his mother, September 12, 1941

Kent’s return to New Haven from France and his growing fatigue with the routines of teaching coincided with his decision to start a family. In the summer of 1933 in California, he reconnected with one of his sister Addie’s friends, Elizabeth Gregory. He had met “Beth” at Addie’s wedding in 1930, when he thought she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, but they had fallen out of touch.¹⁴⁷ Kent never discussed Beth in his letters, but he visited her in the summers of 1933 and 1934, and when she moved to New York in the fall of 1934 he began seeing her more frequently. They married in California in December 1934 – Kent took a few days off from grading exams to make the trip during Yale’s winter break – and then moved back to New Haven.¹⁴⁸ In May 1938, Beth gave birth to their first child, Serafina.¹⁴⁹

Beginning in 1935, the content of Kent’s letters to his mother shifted. When he was not sharing his thoughts on the European situation, he wrote about Beth, about setting up their new house in New Haven, and eventually about their child. Family life demanded a lot of his attention, especially as he struggled to make ends meet on his professor’s salary. Kent became an assistant professor in 1937, which raised his salary to \$3,500 (\$57,000 today), but once Serafina was born and Beth became pregnant with a second child, money again was tight.¹⁵⁰

Then, in August of 1941, Kent received an unexpected call. A historian from the University of Pennsylvania, Conyers Reade, invited him to join a new bureau within the government called the Office of the Coordinator of Information, or COI. Reade was “almost stone deaf” and spoke unintelligibly, so their phone conversation left Kent perplexed; “My guess is that he is mobilizing historians to furnish historical data for some U.S. government (propaganda?) agency,” Kent wrote to his mother.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, he was intrigued enough to travel down to Washington, D.C. for more information.

There, he learned that President Roosevelt had demanded the urgent creation of a secret intelligence organization, one that would gather information from abroad and analyze it. “It seems that there is a very enormous great deal of information coming in to various governmental agencies...and yet there is no one with the training or desire to coordinate the dope for purposes of high policy,” Kent explained to his mother.¹⁵² Roosevelt had tasked Colonel William Donovan with assembling a team of scholars who could do such work, and Kent was one such scholar.

¹⁴⁶ September 12, 1941 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁴⁷ *Reminiscences*, 162, 138.

¹⁴⁸ *Reminiscences*, 162, 167, 170-172.

¹⁴⁹ May 17, 1938 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵⁰ February 12-13, 1937 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵¹ August 20, 1941 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵² August 27, 1941 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

Kent's initial skepticism turned to excitement. "Apparently the lure of the work has been enough to get the real top men in history, geography, and economics from all over the country," he told his mother.¹⁵³ If he accepted, he would work alongside the nation's leading historians as second in command in the COI's Western Europe research division. He conferred with Seymour, Allison, and other colleagues at Yale and found them enthusiastic. Seymour, by that time Yale's president, "rather urged me to take the job," Kent wrote.¹⁵⁴ In particular, Seymour noted the value of getting involved in the group's "early developmental stages," as an early start would be beneficial if he built a career there.¹⁵⁵

But financial matters complicated the decision. Kent would need to move to Washington immediately, while Beth and his two children remained in New Haven temporarily. He told the COI that he could not take the job unless he received sufficient compensation. To his surprise, the COI made him an even better offer: instead of joining the Western Europe division, he could be first in command of a new unit, researching the Mediterranean area. This made him eligible for a higher civil-service salary of \$5,600 a year (about \$89,000 today). Kent accepted in a heartbeat.

From his first days in Washington, D.C., the job challenged Kent in a new way. "I've been new to many jobs before, but I've never been new to a new job," he wrote in a letter to Beth. "I've never been set down...to do something, anything, and not knowing how to do it, been unable to find anyone who has more dope than myself."¹⁵⁶ Kent had to build his division up from scratch, taking care of everything from recruiting a team of able scholars to figuring out what their work should entail.¹⁵⁷ Though he found the early groundwork tedious, he told his mother that once he began real research "it will be the very best damn job in the United States."¹⁵⁸

Kent stayed in the COI, whose name changed to the Office of Strategic Services, until 1946. He spent the fall of 1946 teaching at the National War College in D.C., then returned to Yale for a few years in 1947. He also started writing a book based on his experience in the OSS, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, which he published in 1949; the book is reputed to be the "intellectual forbearer" of all subsequent academic literature on intelligence.¹⁵⁹ In 1950, during the Korean War, Kent again left Yale for Washington, this time to work for the Office of National Estimates in the CIA. When Yale president Whitney Griswold told Kent he would have to return to Yale or leave permanently, he chose the latter.¹⁶⁰ He resigned from the university in 1953, and his career in the CIA lasted until 1967.

¹⁵³ September 12, 1941 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵⁴ August 27, 1941 letter from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵⁵ *Reminiscences*, 187.

¹⁵⁶ September 6, 1941 letter from Sherman to his wife, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵⁷ *Reminiscences*, 188-196.

¹⁵⁸ September 12, 1941 from Sherman to his mother, William Kent Family Papers.

¹⁵⁹ Douglas Dearth and Virginia Shope, "Strategic Intelligence and National Security: A Selected Bibliography," U. S. War College Library, September 1992. Accessed at <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA256389> on April 28, 2013.

¹⁶⁰ *Reminiscences*, 245.

From then on, the former irreverent Yale and critical professor of French history would be associated with, and defined by, the CIA. Still, he considered his Yale years—going back as far as his time as an undergraduate—the most formative time of his life.¹⁶¹ At Yale, he gained the passion for scholarship that he would apply to intelligence strategy, and through both personal experience and direct observation he came to understand his feelings toward the world around him. His rancor towards the French from his graduate days faded, and as he watched Europe march towards war he became increasingly internationalist in his political views. In an ironic twist, he spent his retirement years in archives in Paris, rekindling his knowledge of French history. What he said of his classes as a Yale junior in 1924, he may have said to sum his entire career: “Despite all these growlings, I like it all immensely.”¹⁶²

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¹⁶¹ *Reminiscences*, 105.

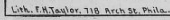
¹⁶² October 14, 1924 letter from Sherman to his father, William Kent Family Papers.

SHERMAN KENT AT YALE

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TITLE IMAGE

- [United States] Department of State. ["Photograph of Bearer: Sherman Kent"]. 1932. Photograph. Sherman Kent Papers, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.



85

THE AMERICAN IMPERIAL PUZZLE

I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and I told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States...and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President!

- William McKinley, 1899¹

...And there the islands stayed for years after McKinley died, shot on the grounds of Buffalo's Pan American Exposition in September, 1901. By examining the ways in which cartographic imaginations of the Philippines were rendered into an American image at the turn of the twentieth century, then made and used by Americans both at home and abroad, one sees the power of the map girding martial, political, and bureaucratic imperial might. Maps were a keystone of imperial discourses as the nation's sphere of influence stretched over and into the Philippines. In domestic news media, maps of the Philippines fashioned the unbroken silhouette of the archipelago into a new piece of an American jigsaw puzzle of states and islands, retaining a complete image of the Philippines while skimming away the nationalist undertones of that same picture of the islands as iconography for a native Filipino anti-American struggle. By the same token, the visual rhetoric of mapping provided a means with which to fracture the image of the Philippines and its peoples, neutralizing claims of Filipino national sovereignty by depicting a stretch of islands characterized by a long-standing heterogeneity in race, tribe, and religion. By breaking the Philippines' image and putting it back together through various means of constituting and reading the world's spaces on a page - popular and governmental, both in the hands of bureaucrats and Americans perusing the daily paper - one sees that map-makers created a new way of imagining the geographic place and configuration of the Philippines in the world. A place in which American power was justified, inevitable, and naturalized.

ABSTRACT

In the following essay, I take these two techniques of representation - showing the whole and its parts - to examine the mutually constitutive nature of text and context in American cartography and the "new imperialism", both in the metropole and on the ground in the Philippines. In doing so, I aim to gesture towards larger issues of the place of mapping, knowledge, and science in imperialism and the American incursion into the Philippines. I do not doubt that a more nuanced and in-depth examination of the shifts in the role and power of maps, mapping, and the creation of 'mappable' knowledge during this time would be a fruitful way to think with what Paul Kramer calls "the imperial" frame and shed new light on Filipino and American histories.² I also think it important to note here that a more thorough investigation would necessarily include cartographies, geographies, or depictions of space, broadly construed, by Filipinos outside the Jesuit Order during the war years. While Filipino voices are (conspicuously) absent from this essay, room for further analysis would include

¹ General James Rusling, "Interview with President William McKinley (1899)," *The Christian Advocate*, January 22, 1903, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5575/>.

² Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): 1348-1391.

commentary on Filipino cartographies themselves as well as on the kinds of knowledge (ethnographic, economic, etc.) presented below and on American maps and mapping as well. In short, there are many more paths to explore. Just as the “Map of the Greater United States” described below displays stepping-stones across the Pacific between North America and Asia, this essay portrays only one of the channels through which power and knowledge flowed back and forth across the ocean.

A PALATABLE IMAGE OF THE PHILIPPINES: MAPS IN THE POPULAR PRESS

Maps of the Philippines in the American popular press reflected both the pressing, immediate issues of war in 1898 as well as a longer standing trend of “cartographic determination,” in which the archipelago was rendered legible as a part of American holdings through its depiction alongside Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the continental U.S.. A selection of those maps from the late nineteenth century that James Akerman calls “public forms of cartography” illuminates how these images from American news familiarized the country’s public with the technologies, techniques, and results of their incursion into a far-off cluster of islands. This provided a means to incorporate them into a way of understanding what the new American empire looked like and meant.³ It was through these maps, featured prominently on front pages and in special supplements, that an image of a unified Philippine archipelago – one of blanketing American control rather than native national self-determination – was created in the imperial geographical imaginary.

As Commodore George Dewey and the American Asiatic Squadron made their way into Manila bay in late April 1898, media coverage of the Spanish-American war grew to a fever pitch. D. Graham Burnett and Raymond Craib write that “the popular press, particularly the ‘yellow journals’ such as William Randolph Hearst’s *Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer’s *World*, escalated their sensationalist coverage as they competed for market share. The author of a volume printed in 1898 aptly wrote that ‘in no war that ever took place did the press go so extensively into the enterprise of reporting...The sums of money spent in the newspaper enterprise were enormous.’”⁴

Immediately after Dewey’s victory, American dailies took advantage of the fact that printing technologies had evolved to the point that including visuals in newspapers could be done without financial consequences, giving an edge in a competitive market. In 1898, newspapers from the *New York Times* to Keokuk, Iowa’s *Evening Press* outlined the topographical, military, and geographic landscapes of the Philippines. In his book *Maps and Politics*, Jeremy Black supplies a useful way to examine the different facets of empire that these maps rendered legible to the American public. He writes:

The choice of what to depict is linked to, and in dynamic relationship with, issues of scale and purpose, and the latter issue is crucial. A map is designed to show certain

³ James R. Akerman, “Introduction,” in *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire*, ed. James R. Akerman (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 3.

⁴ Murat Halstead, *Full Official History of the War with Spain* (New Haven: Butler & Alger, 1899), 20, quoted in D. Graham Burnett and Raymond B. Craib, “Insular Visions: Cartographic Imagery and the Spanish-American War,” *The Historian* 61, no. 1 (September 1998): 108.

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points and relationships, and, in doing so, creates spaces and spaces in the perception of the map-user and thus illustrates themes of power.⁵

This connection between what is depicted and power is illustrated in the ways that differing captions instructed readers to interpret a map that was printed in Keokuk's *Evening Press* and Trenton, New Jersey's *Daily True American* in the early days of May 1898 (fig. 1).⁶ The map itself is a simple, hand-drawn outline of the major islands in the Philippine archipelago, including their bays and larger cities, and could be found on a page of newsprint amongst other articles detailing the latest military action overseas.

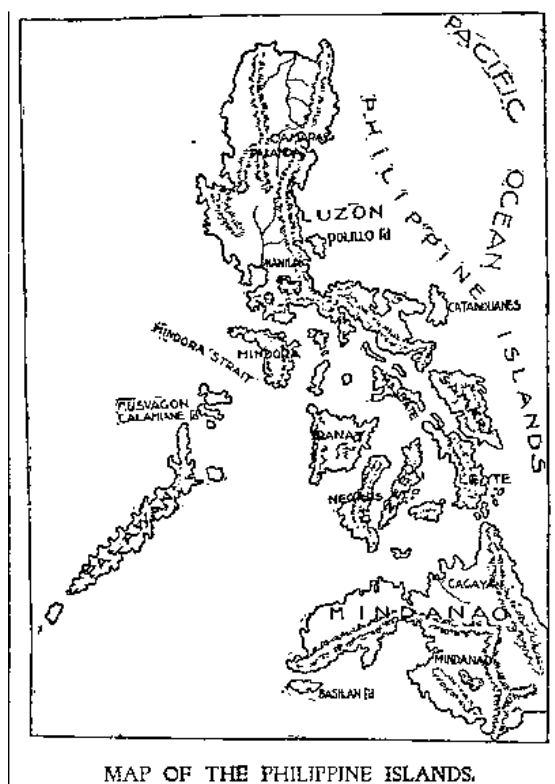


Figure 1. *Source*: “Map of the Philippine Islands,” The Evening Press, May 3, 1898, Tuesday Evening edition; also appears as “Map of the Philippine Islands,” Daily True American, May 6, 1898. Google News Archives, <http://www.news.google.com/newspapers>.

While both maps are titled “Map of the Philippine Islands,” the caption in the *Evening Press* relates the map to military points of interest and gives a sense of scale for the isolated map of the islands:

⁵ Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 12.

⁶ “Map of the Philippine Islands,” *The Evening Press*, May 3, 1898, Tuesday Evening edition, Google News Archives, <http://www.news.google.com/newspapers>.; “Map of the Philippine Islands,” *Daily True American*, May 6, 1898, Google News Archives, <http://www.news.google.com/newspapers>...

Three miles southwest of Manila is Cavite; at both places are located land forts and batteries. It was against the latter that Commodore Dewey's fleet had to contend in connection with the Spanish fleets. To the west and just north of the Bay of Manila is Subic [sic] Bay, where Dewey's squadron was previous to entering Manila bay.⁷

If lack of expertise, time, or money resulted in leaving the map plain instead of illustrating this directly through added visuals on the map, here we have the clearly intended takeaway for the paper's readership: that the near-blank map might build a battlefield in the eye of the beholder. This map of the Philippines was meant to summon images emphasizing the importance of the American armed forces, victory, or infrastructure, as in a *New York Times* map from May 1 that portrayed the necessity of American control of cable lines for Dewey's cause.⁸

MAP OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

Above is an accurate and comprehensive map of the group of islands known as the Philippines. Of these, the most important is Luzon, of which Manila is the capital. A glance at the map shows the city of Manila is located on the east side of the bay of the same name. Three miles southwest of Manila is Cavite; at both places are located land forts and batteries. It was against the latter that Commodore Dewey's fleet had to contend in connection with the Spanish fleets. To the west and just north of the Bay of Manila is Subic bay, where Dewey's squadron was previous to entering Manila bay.

Figure 2. Source: "Map of the Philippine Islands," *The Evening Press*, May 3, 1898, Tuesday Evening edition. Google News Archives, <http://www.news.google.com/newspapers>.

The map as it appeared in *The Daily True American* painted a different picture.

MAP OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

There are so many islands in the Philippines that the exact number is unknown. There are nine very large ones—Luzon, Panay, Zebu, Leyte, Bohol, Negros, Samar, Mindanao and Mindoro—with more than 1,200 smaller ones. They have an entire area of over 120,000 square miles and a population of about 7,500,000. And here again is found the old story—Spanish officials have ruled with a rod of iron, and the worm has turned. Manilla, the capital of the Philippines and the chief city of Luzon, contains a population of 330,000, principally Spanish creoles, Chinese half breeds and the original natives. The bay of Manilla, the largest and finest in the world, could offer anchorage to the united fleets of Europe.

Figure 3. Source: "Map of the Philippine Islands," *Daily True American*, May 6, 1898. Google News Archives.

⁷ "Map of the Philippine Islands," May 3, 1898.

⁸ "Map of the Philippine Islands To Which Dewey's Fleet Is Proceeding," *The New York Times*, May 1, 1898, New York Times Article Archive, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FooD11FF3A5D11738DDDA80894DD405B8885FoD3>. See Illustrations appendix for image.

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This latter map, printed on May 6, 1898, is more forthright in portraying *The Daily True American's* expansionist position. Rather than speaking directly to what is depicted in the accompanying map, the caption speaks more broadly to the possibility of American growth in the Philippines. Here, the simple image is meant to convey much more, geographically, socially, and politically, than what is shown on the page. Playing on the sensationalist rhetoric that characterized newspapers' coverage of the war as they competed for market share, the copywriter insinuates a gap in knowledge that might be filled by American expertise: "There are so many islands in the Philippines that the exact number is unknown." The blank map is turned into a triumphalist commemoration: "here again is found the old story—Spanish officials have ruled with a rod of iron, and the worm has turned" (fig. 3). The blank map suggests the possibility that wartime naval occupation will usher great commercial opportunities for America: "The bay of Manilla [sic], the largest and finest in the world, could offer anchorage to the united fleets of Europe."⁹

European cartographers, as well as scientists, poets, and playwrights, detailed the power of maps for centuries. The protagonist in Christopher Marlowe's play *Tamburlaine* famously demanded "Give me a map; then let me see how much is left for me to conquer all the world."¹⁰ In the accompanying text to his 1777 timeline of the "great men" of history, Joseph Priestley guaranteed that just a "few minutes' inspection of [his] chart [would] give a person a clearer idea of the rise, progress, extent, revolutions, and duration of empires than [one] could possibly acquire by reading."¹¹ As the branches of American empire reached across the Pacific in new directions, maps played a key role in pulling the Philippines into the rhetorical orbit of the United States. Maps of the nation increasingly included its new possessions, forgoing geographic accuracy or context through labels or keys for a unified image of what an 1898 *New York Evening Journal* image called the "Greater United States" (fig. 4).¹² Maps of this sort ranged in complexity — from the *Journal's* simply drawn map of the world in which the Hawaiian and Philippine islands are circled like stepping stones spread across the Pacific, to the elaborate *Evening Post* map of *The West Indies* (fig. 5).

⁹ "Map of the Philippine Islands," May 6, 1898.

¹⁰ Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, Part II (V.iii.123-39), quoted in J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 277.

¹¹ Joseph Priestley, *A Description of a Chart of Biography* (Warrington: 1764), 8, http://books.google.ca/books?id=w5QBAAAAQAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

¹² "Map of the Greater United States," *New York Evening Journal*, December 5, 1898, in David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 95.

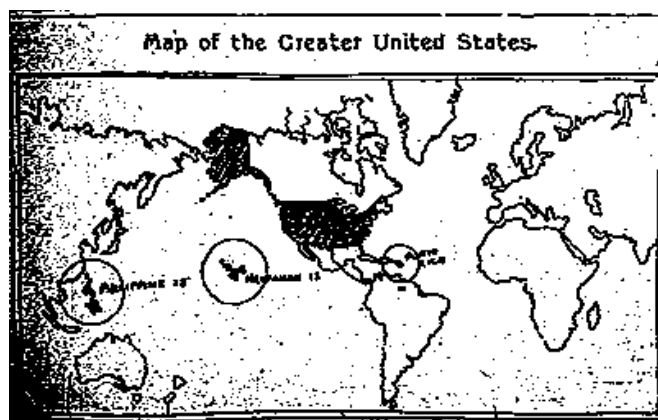


Figure 4. Source: "Map of the Greater United States," *New York Evening Journal*, December 5, 1898, in David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 95.

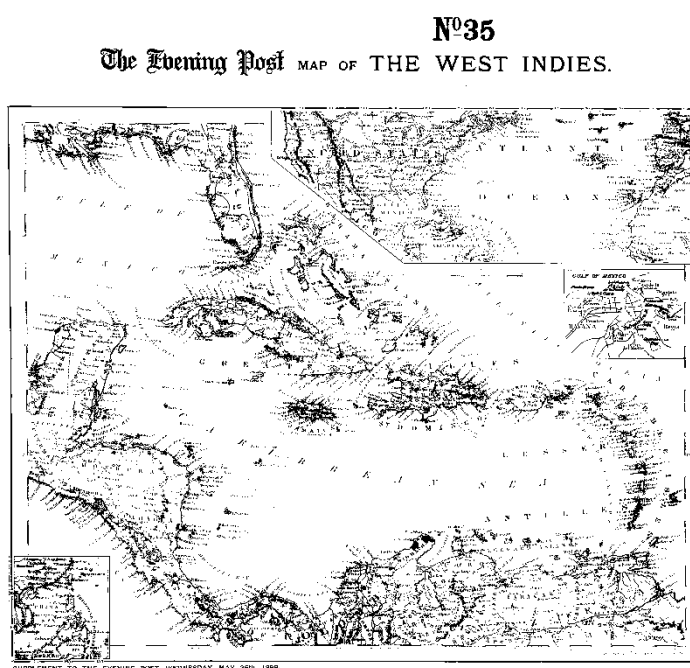


Figure 5. Source: "The Evening Post Map of the West Indies" (New York: Evening Post Publishing Company, 1898), Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library, <http://maps.bpl.org/id/m8737>.

The supplement to the May 25, 1898 edition of New York's *Evening Post* is an especially elaborate example of this kind of map in the popular press. The *Evening Post* and other New York City papers, including the *Herald* and the *Press*, advertised the supplement widely, capitalizing on the public frenzy for news of the advancement of American armed

forces overseas.¹³ This “Great War Map,” as one announcement put it, was made in response to the “general interest in the geographical locations of the countries, islands, and bodies of water figuring or likely to figure in our war with Spain [...] The map is complete and comprehensive, enabling you to trace the movements of the fleets in any waters they are likely to traverse.”¹⁴ While the pigmentation of the image – the United States in blue, Spain, the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico in yellow, and other areas in green, beige, and pink – prefigures the *Journal’s* explicit grouping together of America with its territories, the map provides a glance at looming expansion “at one view”. This kind of imperial map is, in Thongchai Winichakul’s words, an “anticipat[ion] of spatial reality,” “a model for, rather than a model of, what it purport[s] to represent.”¹⁵ Rather than representing imminent American holdings as spread out across the globe, the map uses inset and various levels of magnification to locate these places as close as possible. Even more so, all political units included are dwarfed in comparison to the looming figure of the blue nation. As McKinley called for seventy-five thousand new war volunteers, members of the public who had paid their three cents for the day’s copy of the *Journal* participated themselves in constructing an image of American empire.¹⁶

In their essay “Insular Visions: Cartographic Imagery and the Spanish-American War,” Raymond B. Craib and D. Graham Burnett demonstrate how American political elites shaped a national “geographic imaginary that equated proximity with destiny,” fuelled by the power of maps.¹⁷ Amid debates surrounding the annexation of Texas, one influential columnist and businessman, referring to the cartographic image of the continent, called the soon-to-be state “artificially broken off” from its rightful place.¹⁸ Because of their proximity to the metropole, John Quincy Adams saw Cuba and Puerto Rico as inevitable additions to the United States in some shape or form given the correct circumstances; they were “natural appendages to the north American continent.”¹⁹ Without *geographical* proximity, however, it was left to mapmakers to create an image of the Philippines in the same light. These maps, and others circulating amongst the American public including the War Map Publishing Company’s 1898 “Strategic Map of Our War with Spain” (see page 85) enabled the rhetorical application of Adams’s “ripe apple” policy to a place over seven thousand miles across the water from Los Angeles.²⁰

¹³ *The Evening Post*, May 21, 1898, Fulton History: Old New York State Historical Newspapers; *The Evening Post*, May 24, 1898, Fulton History: Old New York State Historical Newspapers; *New York Herald*, May 25, 1898, Fulton History: Old New York State Historical Newspapers; “War Map Advertisement,” *The New York Press*, May 25, 1898, Wednesday Morning edition, Fulton History: Old New York State Historical Newspapers, <http://www.fultonhistory.com/fulton.html>.

¹⁴ “War Map Advertisement.”

¹⁵ Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994), 310.

¹⁶ Burnett and Craib, “Insular Visions,” 113.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 101–102.

²⁰ “Strategic Map of Our War with Spain” (War Map Publishing Company, 1898), Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, <http://www.loc.gov/item/98687203>.

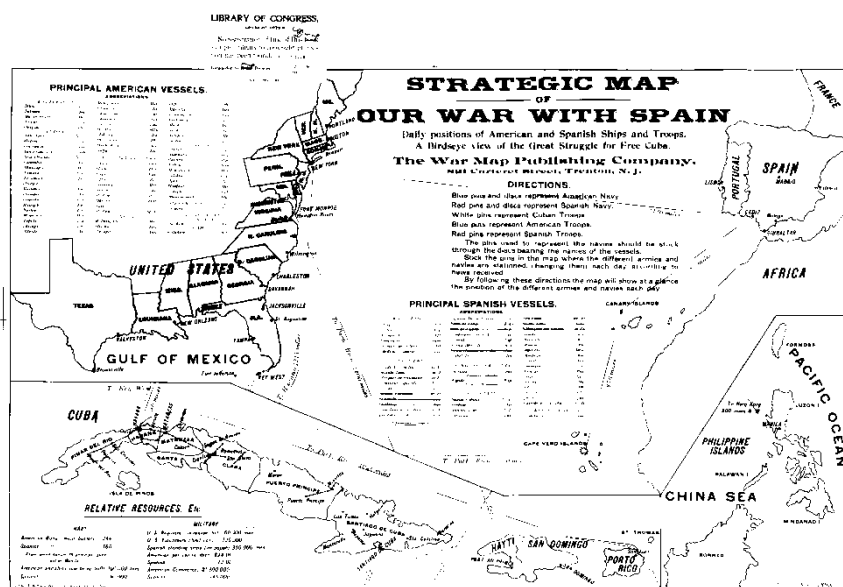


Figure 6. Source: "Strategic Map of Our War with Spain" (War Map Publishing Company, 1898), Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, <http://www.loc.gov/item/98687203>.

If it was inevitable, moreover natural, for *some* of the places depicted on the *Journal's* map of the West Indies to come under supervision of the United States, and the Philippines was aesthetically depicted in the same manner through its colouring and shown in the same proximity on the map, how was this new case any different? The need for visual clarity demanded by the time and page-constraints of the American news media at the turn of the century catalyzed the practice of placing the Philippines close to America through the visual rhetoric of popular cartography. Divorced from its natural geographic place on the world map and incorporated into a "Greater United States," the silhouette of a singular Philippine archipelago was put to work for the interests of empire rather than Filipino nationalist revolt. The curved form of the islands became another piece of the "jigsaw puzzle" of burgeoning American imperialism. In this way, it was a simple image that speaks for itself akin to what Benedict Anderson calls the map-as-logo, in which "all explanatory glosses c[an] be summarily removed: lines of longitude and latitude, place names, signs for rivers, seas, and mountains, *neighbours*."²¹ Reproduced in newspaper after newspaper as American political might on the ground became more and more entrenched, the islands became part of a widely-circulated vision of the shape of the United States as a whole.

MAP/MODEL: THE EBB AND FLOW OF IMPERIAL MAPPING OF THE PHILIPPINES

As the American colonial regime shifted out of military hands, American civilians became key to mapping the Philippine social, economic, and political landscape. The impetus for

²¹ Benedict Anderson, "Census, Map, Museum," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 175.

mapping the Philippine archipelago - its islands, its plant and animal life, its people - ebbed and flowed through the Spanish and American colonial periods. This was reflected in the personnel who carried it out. Until the mid-nineteenth century, Spanish mapping of imperial holdings was confined to the military; personnel from engineering, navy, and army corps sketched out Cuba and to a lesser degree Puerto Rico and the Philippines in order to consolidate the metropole's political power of the islands through knowledge.²² France and Britain had sent scientific reconnaissance missions to map the islands on and off since the seventeenth century, publishing more regularly through the nineteenth.²³ Horatio Capel describes how the opening of the Suez Canal ushered in an era in the 1870s and 1880s in which the scientists who gathered data and mapped these places did so in order to exploit their economic resources to the fullest extent.²⁴ Scientific experts then became the ones ensuring that the government was fully versed in the Philippines' botany, agricultural development, and population in order to protect the new bottom line: economic gain. Any possible threat to this gain needed to be known. In his *Memoria sobre el Ramo de Montes en las Islas Filipinas* (1874), S. Vidal, the head of the Inspección de Montes de Filipinas, drew Philippine populations into the economic equation by connecting social issues to agricultural development. Similarly, in an 1885 report by the director of the Comisión de la Flora Forestal, Ramón Jordana connected non-military expertise, economics, science, and the local population in his natural, geographical, and ethnographic description of the islands, *Bosquejo Geográfico e Histórico-Natural del Archipelago Filipino*.²⁵

By the time of the 1898 Treaty of Paris, American trends and technological advances in cartography, data collection, and the nation's capacity to carry out these tasks were dovetailing with a "new imperialism" revolving around economic goals. In a chapter on the history of thematic cartography in the United States, historian Susan Schulten details data mapping importance in the nineteenth century, in which an economic, social, or another type of variable is presented on top of a topographic layer. New, vast information institutions like the Census were created in the 1800s, bringing about new ways of "translat[ing] statistical patterns into a more concrete and visual language".²⁶ Schulten shows that not only did the visual presentation of data through thematic mapping catalyze new ways of thinking about connections between seemingly disparate information by tying it to space, but that these maps changed American perception of self as well, tying "the population to the territory in new, more direct ways. They made the population both a more concrete phenomenon - by identifying concentrations of wealth and poverty, education and illiteracy - but also more abstract, by treating it as an entity that could be counted and measured in various ways."²⁷

²² Horatio Capel, "The Imperial Dream: Geography and the Spanish Empire in the Nineteenth Century," in *Geography and Empire*, ed. Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith, The Institute of British Geographers Special Publications Series 30 (Oxford UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1994), 61, 63.

²³ Warren du Pré Smith, "Geographical Work in the Philippines," *The Geographical Journal* 34, no. 5 (November 1909): 534.

²⁴ Capel, "The Imperial Dream," 63.

²⁵ Ibid, 64.

²⁶ Susan Schulten, "Thematic Cartography and the Study of American History," in *Envisioning Landscapes, Making Worlds: Geography and the Humanities*, ed. Stephen Daniels et al. (London: Routledge, 2011), 57.

²⁷ Ibid, 60.

As American civilian experts replaced military authorities in administering the Philippines, they applied this new statistical and geographical understanding. In another work, Schulten describes how the Spanish-American War brought the U.S. greater to commitment to world commerce, and geographers followed this in emphasizing resources in their works, rather than just race and climate.²⁸ This was by no means a case of political bigwigs manipulating scientific bureaucracy; scientific experts (including cartographers and geographers), knew that the core of their work was economic exploitation. A 1903 National Academy of Sciences report on the necessity for federal assistance in data collection in the Philippines, written by botanist and committee head William Henry Brewer, shows how economic gain was entwined with scientific practice. While we must bear in mind that the report was submitted to Congress with the intention of gaining federal funding, this passage is important for its framing of economic empire as uplifting both at home and abroad. Brewer wrote, “modern industrial development is an outgrowth of pure science, and almost every discovery of science is ultimately turned to economic account. Hence it would be short-sighted not to extend to the Philippines the broad and generous spirit of the research which animates the governmental scientific work of the United States.”²⁹

In his examination of the territorialization of race and cartographies of self-determination at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, Jeremy Crampton argues that the work of the American delegation constituted the first attempt by the United States to put its foreign policy on a scientific footing legitimized by experts.³⁰ However, we see here in the case of the Philippines, decades previous to Woodrow Wilson’s Waterloo in Paris that year, that this same scientific footing was key to the shift from military to expert imperial rule in the islands. The American view of the Pacific had shifted in the nineteenth century from the “lens of missionary activity” to one where commerce and industry became the yardstick of success. In striving for these new ideals, the newly professionalizing scientific disciplines of geology, geography, and cartography could be put to work.³¹ It is through these shifts in the impetus for mapping and the justification voiced by those like Brewer that one sees how the map is fundamentally tied to political ends. Rather than a means for simply depicting what already exists in a given place, we must return to Winichakul’s observation that a map is a tool, a model for planning the realms in which one aims to exert power. What the American government decided to include on maps of the archipelago illustrates both a function of growing knowledge and an increased sense of different kinds of knowledge of the area, but also directly tied to the changing goals of American imperialism at the turn of the century.

²⁸ Susan Schulten, *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880-1950* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 12.

²⁹ “58th Congress, 3d Session. Senate. Document No. 145: Scientific Explorations of the Philippine Islands,” February 7, 1905, 4, Biodiversity Heritage Library, <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/119711>.

³⁰ Jeremy Crampton, “The Cartographic Calculation of Space: Race Mapping and the Balkans at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919,” *Social and Cultural Geography* 7, no. 5 (2006): 731–752.

³¹ Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*, illustrated (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 83–84.

FRACTURING THE FILIPINO IMAGE: SPECIAL PUBLICATION NO. 3

The first extensive American atlas of the Philippines, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey's *Special Publication No. 3: Atlas of the Philippine Islands*, demonstrates the different ways in which mapping and the creation of "map knowledge" can be an imperial practice. The creation of spatial and geographical knowledge of the Philippines here mimics the inequities of power in imperial relations. The tangible results of that knowledge-making, the maps of the *Special Publication*, contribute to the same imperial inequities they were a product of, breaking apart claims to national unity and providing a forceful argument against the claims of national self-determination made by Filipinos.

In the introduction, Coast and Geodetic Survey superintendent Henry S. Pritchett describes the curious story of how the Atlas came to be: "Shortly after the Philippine commissioners reached Manila it was learned that a series of maps, covering the more important islands of the archipelago, was being prepared at the Jesuit Observatory under the supervision of the director, Rev. José Algue, S.J."³² According to Pritchett, the Commission realized that these were the most extensive existing maps of the islands, covering their topographic, ethnographic, agricultural, geologic and infrastructural landscape. The Jesuits had not yet decided how they would publish the maps or to what ends they would use them, so Coast and Geodetic Survey officials jumped on the opportunity and drew up an agreement in which the series of the Jesuit-made maps would be adopted as the "property of the commission by August 15, 1899", published and put to use under the aegis of the USCGS.³³ The story may be more complicated – a later article by a Bureau of Science agent describes the thirty works as a pastiche of maps by the Spanish cartographer Enrique d'Almonte, mining engineer Enrique Abella, the Jesuits, the hydrographic commission, and other sources including the British Admiralty, rather than the Jesuits alone.³⁴ Regardless of the exact assortment of initial sources, the cartographers at the Survey adjusted the maps they were given to their own technical specifications, key translations were added in English and Pritchett penned an introduction, all of which were then appended to the Spanish language atlas of the islands overseen by Christian Jesuits. The Jesuits, a local elite held over from Spanish imperialism in the archipelago that, as Paul Kramer explains in his important work, would later become key to the reterritorialization of American rule in the area according to new categories of spatial designation.³⁵ The atlas, prepared at the Observatorio de Manila, was delivered to American officials stateside along with the lengthy first report of

³² U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, *Special Publication No. 3: Atlas of the Philippine Islands* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), Biodiversity Heritage Library, <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/106585>.

³³ U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, *Special Publication No. 3*.

³⁴ du Pré Smith, "Geographical Work in the Philippines," 533.

³⁵ John Cloud, "Chapter 8 - Henry S. Pritchett and the Great Reorganization of the Coast and Geodetic Survey (1897-1900)," in *Science on the Edge: The Story of the Coast and Geodetic Survey from 1867-1970* (NOAA Central Library, 2007), <http://www.lib.noaa.gov/noaainfo/heritage/coastandgeodeticsurvey/#scienceedge>; Kramer, *Blood of Government*.

the Philippine Commission published in 1900.³⁶ This report also built on the local knowledge of members of Filipino members of the Society of Jesus. It assembled the work of fathers Baltazar Ferrer and Beranaria, along with details drawn from the Official Guide to the Philippines, the Spanish-American Encyclopedic Dictionary, and “several memoirs and articles relating to the Philippines, written by persons acquainted with the country.”³⁷ In this way, the language and story of the *Atlas*, as well as the Commission’s report, provide a conspicuous example of the collaborative appropriation of elite local spatial knowledge that characterizes mapmaking. Describing French maps of Marseilles and Cairo in order to prove the inherent political nature of map-making, Matthew Edney writes that “both [these] maps are hybrids of knowledge and are representative as much of the contemporary configuration of power relations between central government and local communities as they are of the lie of the land itself.”³⁸ In her examinations of colonial space, Mary Louise Pratt applied Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia: “despite [...] erasures, European geographies and mappings of the contact zone were what she calls ‘transcultured images,’ derived from and saturated with local knowledges and imagery, and reflecting the heteroglossic not monolithic structure of colonial space.”³⁹ What is important to note here, then, is the contrast between this collaboration and the prevailing notion at the time of what a map was—a singular mirror held up to the environment it depicted rather than the cacophony of voices. We must look at the maps that would be used to plot the next bureaucratic, military, and scientific moves in the Philippines as a product of particular political and social configurations in and of themselves, mutually constitutive of imperial power in these realms rather than simply catalysts for it.

The third map of the *Atlas*, its “Mapa Ethnografico,” was used by American officials first to learn about the people of islands, then as a guide to governing them, and a closer examination of it can reveal how the map functioned both as product of and as a tool for American imperialism at the turn of the century. Here we see that America’s particular mode of spatial governance was based on religious, social, cultural, and “racial”/tribal traits while undermining Filipino political claims for shared identity in the form of the nation. It is worth returning to Joseph Priestley’s exaltation of data visualization and its power to convey an argument “at one glance” – a glance at the ethnographic map reveals a jumble of orange (territory of Christian Hispanic Filipinos) in the smaller islands and along the coasts of Luzon, Mindoro, and Mindanao, large yellow swaths in the highlands of new Christians and infidels, and to the south, daubs of green for the Muslim Moro population. Above this, sixty-nine numbered black, gold, and red circles scattered across the page indicate tribes of three different races. Cartography presented itself as a scientific arena amenable to stabilizing the

³⁶ University of Michigan, “Description - Report of the Philippine Commission to the President. : January 31, 1900[-December 20, 1900] (1900),” *Internet Archive*, n.d., <https://archive.org/details/aex9637.0001.003.umich.edu>.

³⁷ United States Philippine Commission, *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President: January 31, 1900 - December 20, 1900* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 20, 1900), 5.

³⁸ Matthew Edney, “The Irony of Imperial Mapping,” in *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire*, ed. James R. Akerman (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 16.

³⁹ John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World*, *Frontiers of Human Geography* (Taylor & Francis, 2004), 119.

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ethnographic descriptions of the concurrent Commission report, fixing people grouped by the imperial power in time and space in order to naturalize assigned phenotypes, traits, and characteristics.

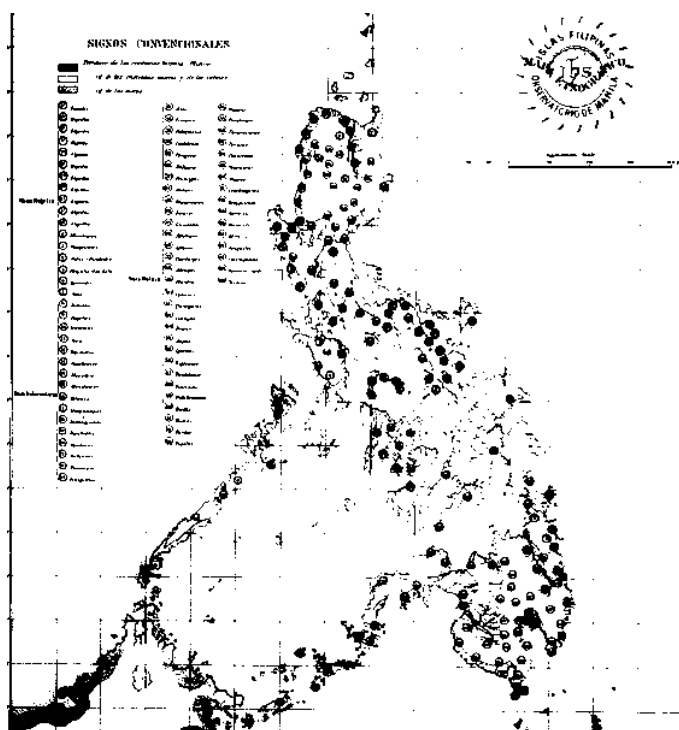


Figure 7. Source: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, *Special Publication No. 3: Atlas of the Philippine Islands* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), Biodiversity Heritage Library, <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/106585#page/77/mode/1up>.

Mapping was the visual, silent partner of ethnographic description in creating the “othered” naturalized subject, reaffirming the existence of tribes such as the “Negrito” race, who were said to always have had an “irresistible tendency toward a nomadic life,” while giving them a fixed territory.⁴⁰ John Pickles, describing the mapping and territorialization of nomadic peoples more broadly, asserts that this practice bounds wandering peoples, “defin[ing] and delimit[ing] the possibilities of identity in ways that are anathema to them.”⁴¹ The silence of the visual in this example masks the inconsistency of images of Philippine nomadic people presented in American knowledge at the turn of the century. The “silence” of the map creates power from contradiction.

The visual effect of mapping all these “tribes,” all these “races,” is jarring— colour upon colour, line upon line, the sharp circular geometrical edge of another tribes delineated space over the craggy shoreline of an island all come together in one image. The map seems to say that this is the anarchy of coexistence amongst many in the Philippines. And so it is

⁴⁰ United States Philippine Commission, *Report of the Philippine Commission*, 389.

⁴¹ Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World*, 117.

odd that Kramer makes this point in *The Blood of Government* without incorporating the very kinds of historical documents that most strongly speak his case. He uses spatial and visual language without mentioning the map, the very kind of document that is itself both spatial and visual:

To successfully recognize tribes – marked by language, religion, political allegiance, or other features – was to disprove a nation's existence. Enumerate a society's fragments, and what might otherwise have looked like a nation became merely the tyranny of one tribe over others; what might have appeared to be a state became instead a problem of "imperial assimilation".⁴²

The ethnographic map of the *Atlas* reified the ethno-racial categories popularized by Ferdinand Blumentritt's wave theory that were so influential on American scientists in the Philippines like the globetrotter Dean C. Worcester. It placed categories "on the map," giving them definite spatial borders, in doing so marking another feature of each of the sixty-nine "tribes"–and providing another means of breaking Filipinos into any category other than citizen of a proto-national independent state.

CONCLUSION: IMPERIAL PUZZLES, IMPERIAL MAPS

...the task of geography's historians, at least in part, is to ascertain how and why particular practices and procedures come to be accounted geographically legitimate and hence normative at different moments in time and in different spatial settings.⁴³

Through these forays into the ways Americans mapped the Philippines I have attempted to show that the history of cartography (colonial or otherwise) is not a matter of "locating" the context of this or that image, this or that map of any given topographical, ethnographical, or economic climate. Unpacking the ways in which maps reflect power relations, imagine spatial futures, and the ways in which they are constitutive of and used as a tool for imperialism is important in order to look towards the power of the map as both an image of the "spatial ordering" of imperialism and an appliance for it.⁴⁴ Interrogating the American imperial from the vantage point of the map, it is clear that the spatiality of American political domination in the Philippines was not confined to territorializing Christian/non-Christian divided rule through establishing Moro and Mountain provinces. American depictions of the islands in popular news media at the turn of the century used the image of an intact archipelago, plucked from its place on the globe and placed in the "Greater United States" to understand and to create a novel formation of American political power.

⁴² Kramer, *Blood of Government*, 122 Emphasis my own.

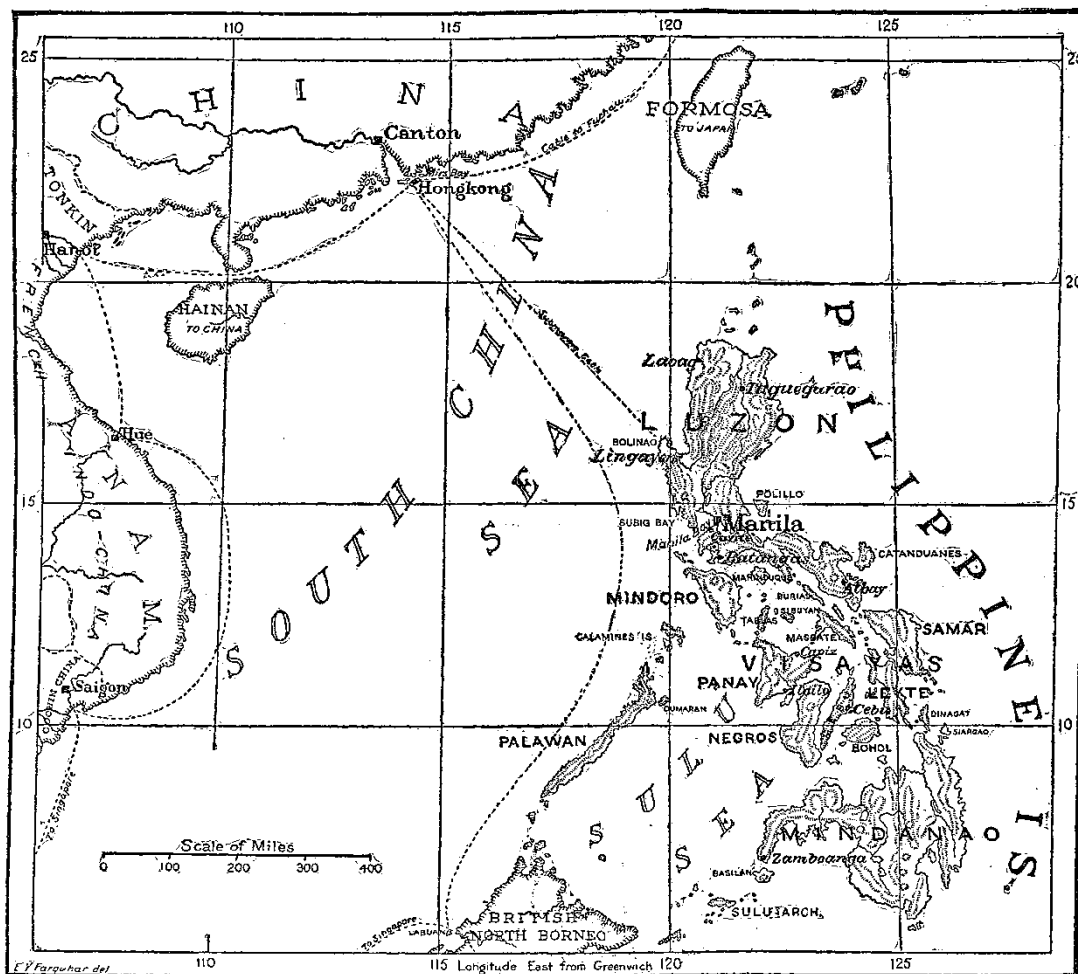
⁴³ David Livingstone, "Climate's Moral Economy: Science, Race and Place in Post-Darwinian British and American Geography," in *Geography and Empire*, ed. Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith, The Institute of British Geographers Special Publications Series 30 (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1994), 133.

⁴⁴ Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): 1348–1391.

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When cartographically positioned in its natural place, as in the maps of the Coast and Geodetic Survey's *Atlas of the Philippines*, the islands' internal space – social, economic, political, topographical – was depicted as Balkanized, disordered, and unqualified for self-determination based on an organic conception of a national people. In the American context, imperial power over the Philippines worked through maps both in terms of the space of the Philippines and the Philippines in space, pulling it apart, breaking it into pieces, all the while constituting it as its own singular piece of a new imperial United States.

MAP OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS TO WHICH DEWEY'S FLEET IS PROCEEDING.



Source: "Map of the Philippine Islands To Which Dewey's Fleet Is Proceeding," *The New York Times*, May 1, 1898, New York Times Article Archive, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F00D11FF3A5D11738DDDA80894DD405B8885F0D3>.

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IN BETWEEN WORLDS

A CONSTITUTIONAL SCHOLAR'S BATTLE FOR THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

The Equal Rights Amendment, a proposal to ensure “equality of rights under the law” for people regardless of sex, was supported by a nationwide movement—and ultimately defeated by an equally fervent grassroots opposition. However, in this essay, Joy Chen ’15 gives the lesser-known story of the constitutional politics behind the amendment debate and describes how politicians and scholars interacted with the mass movements for and against passage. Using the archival papers of Yale professor Thomas Irwin Emerson, Chen posits that Emerson operated at both the elite and popular levels in his support of the ERA. In an era when grassroots activism threatened to supplant traditional lawmaking as a means of effecting change, Emerson’s work blurred the seemingly clear line between high and low politics.

By Joy Chen, MC ’15
Written for “Liberalism and Conservatism in U.S. Politics”

Professor Beverly Gage
Faculty Advisor: Joanne Meyerowitz
Edited by Tiraana Bains and Andrew Tran

On June 7, 1977, the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate* published an article in its Sports/Amusements section entitled, “*ERA Document Co-Author Optimistic on Ratification.*” In the article, Yale Law professor and constitutional scholar Thomas Irwin Emerson issued the following pithy statement regarding the Equal Rights Amendment’s chances of being ratified: “I can’t believe the people won’t pass such a simple statement of rights”.¹ Emerson’s optimistic forecast was not unjustified. The amendment, which held that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex,” and that “Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article,” was passed in 1972 by an overwhelming majority in both houses of Congress—in the House of Representatives by a vote of 354 to 23, and in the Senate by a vote of 84 to 8.² The nation’s previous six presidents and the current President, Jimmy Carter, endorsed the amendment.³ Numerous national associations and interest groups, such as the American Association of University Women, the National Organization for Women, and the American Civil Liberties Union supported the amendment.⁴ In addition, public opinion surveys indicated a growing awareness of the pervasiveness of sex discrimination in American society. A 1962 Gallup survey indicated that only about one third of American women considered themselves victims of discrimination. Eight years later, the proportion had risen to one half, and by 1974 to two thirds.⁵

When the Equal Rights Amendment failed to meet its requisite state ratification quota in 1982, a spate of literature was released in the subsequent years to explain the ERA’s downfall. Though the arguments and explanations varied, most of the writing on the ERA explains the apparent strength and unexpected failure of the amendment as a function of populist action. Much of the literature covering the women’s movement of the 1970’s attributes the growing awareness and public support of the amendment to the efficacious work of grassroots women’s organizations. Similarly, many scholars have ascribed the failure of the amendment to the achievements of grassroots organizations of the New Right, composed primarily of conservative women who resisted the liberal campaigns of the Left. In what historian Ruth Rosen calls “a kind of mirror-image politicking,” conservative women successfully engaged in the same kinds of local and national activities that their opponents utilized to combat the ratification of the ERA.⁶

The story of the Equal Rights Amendment, from its initial years of success to its final quiet burial, has largely been told through the lens of grassroots action. Sit-ins, lobbying, and protests have remained the hallmarks of this movement, and of the era at large. And yet, because the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment was fundamentally a fight over the

¹ Smiley Anders, “ERA Document Co-Author Optimistic on Ratification,” *Morning Advocate*, 7 Jun. 1977, folder 336, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

² Janet K. Boles, *The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment: Conflict and Decision Process* (New York: Longman Inc., 1979), 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁵ James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 544.

⁶ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000), 332.

United States Constitution, this meant that the conversation inevitably started in the legal and political arenas, and expanded beyond the grassroots activism. Figures like Thomas Irwin Emerson, a constitutional scholar at Yale Law School, engaged in the public debate over the ERA at both the level of legislative high politics and populist grassroots action, serving as an intellectual conduit between the two realms. Emerson's *Morning Advocate* article serves as a small insight into this duality—though he appeared in Baton Rouge to speak before the House Civil Laws and Procedures Committee in support of the ERA and to meet with ERA backers from the Baton Rouge country club, Emerson also advocated for the amendment through the mainstream outlet of Baton Rouge's local newspaper. During the course of the ten-year battle over the ERA, Emerson's work was also used by both the women's movement and the anti-feminist movement at the elite and populist levels, thus highlighting the links between legal scholarship and more popular activist arguments. As an elite figure caught at the intersection of many realms, Thomas Irwin Emerson reflects the complexity of his moment—a time in which various strata of society engaged in a national debate about the rights of women.

The women's movement, set against the backdrop of a tumultuous decade, found its origins in the grassroots activism of other 1960's and 1970's New Left movements. Women who engaged in the civil rights, anti-war, and student movements of the era often found themselves encountering discrimination in these ostensibly progressive campaigns. When Stokely Carmichael, leader of the SNCC and later of the Black Panther Party, was asked what the role of women was in his organization, he infamously replied, "The only position for women in the SNCC is prone." This sentiment echoed in the chambers of various other New Left groups, such as the SDS and the Black Panthers.⁷ When, in the late 1960's, women began leaving what they called "the male Left" for alternative organizations that better served their interests as women, they adopted the political styles of their forebear groups.⁸ Through public education, marching, picketing, and protesting, a variety of new organizations, including the National Organization for Women, the Women's Equity Action League, and the Redstockings, publicized a wide array of feminist issues.⁹ Women gathered "consciousness-raising groups" and mass "speak-outs" in their local communities, where they would discuss topics like family life, education, sex, and work from a personal perspective.¹⁰ The objective of these gatherings was for women to envision themselves as part of a larger population of women, with problems that could be traced back to a larger social structure. These actions made women across the nation aware of their apparent subservient role in American society, and it was this growing movement that would champion the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970's.

The women's movement was not, however, defined *solely* by the New Left tradition of grassroots organization. A major division in the women's movement of the 1970's existed between the younger generation of feminists, many of whom had affiliations with other New Left organizations, and the older generation of feminists who frequently occupied a more

⁷ Rosen, 118.

⁸ Ibid, 135.

⁹ Ibid, 83.

¹⁰ Ibid, 196.

elite position in women's organizations. While NOW's membership was eventually heavily comprised of young feminists and women's liberationists who advocated for a radical paradigm shift in society, the executive board of NOW consisted of university professors, national labor union officers, local and federal government officials, business executives, physicians, and religious leaders, most of whom were more interested in gaining specific legislative victories and less interested in restructuring society as a whole. This group was also more concerned with maintaining the organization's public image and reputation.¹¹ It was in this sphere that Thomas Emerson operated, and with this more "elite" camp of feminists that he found his kin.

Like the women's movement, the anti-feminist movement was also largely driven by grassroots activism. After the ERA had been lost, feminist and economist Sylvia Ann Hewlett observed, "It is sobering to realize that the ERA was defeated not by Barry Goldwater, Jerry Falwell, or any combination of male chauvinist pigs, but by women who were alienated from a feminist movement the values of which seemed elitist and disconnected from the lives of ordinary people."¹² This populist mobilization of "ordinary women" was a reaction amongst conservatives who felt that liberal movements of the 1960's, such as the legalization of abortion and the ban on prayer in school, had come to threaten the traditional elements of American society. When the ERA passed through Congress in 1972, these conservatives found a new issue to rally around. Though the ERA gained the approval of twenty-two state legislatures in the first year after its passage through Congress, it would only garner thirteen additional state endorsements from 1972 to 1978 and would ultimately fall three states short of ratification.¹³ Many have attributed this derailment to the quick mobilization of anti-ERA groups, which lobbied not only in the states not ratified, but also fought for recessions in the ratified ones.¹⁴

The most prominent anti-ERA grassroots organization, widely credited with bringing about the downfall of the amendment, was Phyllis Schlafly's STOP ERA movement. ERA scholar Jane J. Mansbridge holds that "many people who followed the struggle over the ERA believed—rightly in my view—that the Amendment would have been ratified by 1975 or 1976 had it not been for Phyllis Schlafly's early and effective effort to organize potential opponents."¹⁵ STOP ERA's main focus was courting the homemaker, but its message also spoke to both broader conservative and mainstream audiences. Following the Senate's passage of the ERA, Schlafly devoted her November 1972 *Phyllis Schlafly Report* to an attack on the ERA, highlighting the fearful consequences that it might engender for women and American society at large. Her central argument was that the ERA would strip women of legally sanctioned privileges, such as immunity from the military draft, Social Security retirement benefits, and protective labor legislation.¹⁶ Schlafly also posited that the

¹¹ Rosen, 85.

¹² Donald T Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 214.

¹³ Mary Frances Berry, *Why ERA Failed: Politics, Women's Rights, and the Amending Process of the Constitution* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988), 65.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 110.

¹⁶ Ibid.

ERA would abolish a husband's duty to support his wife, eliminate single-sex educational institutions and sports teams, mandate tax-funded abortions, and even prohibit separate-sex public toilets.¹⁷

Though STOP ERA was the largest anti-ERA grassroots movement with perhaps the most sweeping impact, it was by no means the only movement of its kind. During the course of the ten-year battle over the ERA, various other conservative grassroots organizations would arise and disseminate the same warnings to counter the passage of the amendment. These groups included Happiness of Motherhood Eternal (HOME), Women Who Want to Be Women (WWWW), American Women against the Ratification of the ERA (AWARE), Females Opposed to Equality (FOE), and countless others.¹⁸ These organizations engaged in both local and national consciousness-raising activities, which included both protest and lobbying in Washington, as well as more militant rallies and demonstrations.¹⁹ The most common strategy employed across all of these organizations was the dissemination of public education material as a strategy for expanding membership. Following the ERA's ratification by Maine and Montana in 1974, the conservative John Birch Society released a statement that "This was not due . . . to apathy on the part of our members in those states, but to the circumstances that there are so few of them."²⁰ Across the nation, conservative groups engaged in direct-mail campaigns that targeted individual citizens, explaining the ERA's feared implications and imploring women to write to their legislators. In Illinois, an opponent commented that they sought to incite "the natural revulsion from the grassroots which is inherent in all women."²¹ By its very nature, the anti-ERA campaign relied on a populist mobilization against what it considered to be an attack on the traditional way of life.

Thomas Irwin Emerson was a professor of law at Yale University from 1946 to 1976, where he taught Constitutional Law, Political and Civil Rights, and Administrative Process. Prior to his tenure at Yale, Emerson worked for two years at a New York law firm, served on the defense team for the "Scottsboro boys" in the 1931 case of *Powell v. Alabama*, and spent thirteen years working in seven government agencies under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. A member of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, Emerson was a staunch civil libertarian and won several landmark civil liberties cases before the Supreme Court. Despite Emerson's lifelong denial of Communist Party membership, his activism and organizational affiliation made him the target of government surveillance from 1941 to 1977, culminating in the FBI's ultimately fruitless efforts to connect him to a Communist cell in Seattle, Washington.

One of the many ways in which Emerson's commitment to civil liberties manifested itself was in his advocacy of women's rights. In 1965, Emerson won the Supreme Court case of *Griswold v. Connecticut*, which not only served to invalidate a Connecticut law banning

¹⁷ Phyllis Schlafly, "The Fraud of the Equal Rights Amendment," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, Volume 5 (Feb 1972).

¹⁸ Rosen, 332.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Boles, 104.

²¹ Ibid, 105.

contraceptives, but also marked the first time that the Supreme Court recognized the right to privacy under the Constitution. This decision has been understood by many constitutional scholars to be the precursor to legalization of abortion. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, Emerson advocated for women's rights as a member of the state of Connecticut's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Women's Educational and Legal Fund. Most notable in Emerson's canon of feminist activism, however, was his work on the Equal Rights Amendment during the 1970's. As a constitutional scholar, Emerson was an authority on the legality and necessity of the Equal Rights Amendment, and worked to advance its passage well into the 1980's.

Emerson's first major piece of work on the Equal Rights Amendment appeared in 1971 when he advanced the notion, widely held by supporters of the ERA, that sexism in American society could only be effectively countered through constitutional means. Along with Barbara Brown, Gail Falk, and Ann Freedman—three Yale Law School students, Emerson in 1971 authored an article for the Yale Law Journal entitled “*The Equal Rights Amendment: A Constitutional Basis for Equal Rights for Women.*” The article argued that the legal structure of the times was one that subordinated women both socially and economically— by creating for them a separate legal status, by directly excluding women from certain opportunities or responsibilities, and by conferring upon them special benefits and protections.²² This legal discrimination spoke to a deeply entrenched ideology of sex role determinism; a dual system of rights and responsibilities had been created for women because of their sex, and so long as a woman's place was understood as separate, it would also be defined by a male-dominated society as inferior.²³ For women to be held in the same regard as men, an amendment abolishing the creation of laws on the basis of sex would have to take form. The passage of the ERA would demonstrate a national commitment to gender equality in the American consciousness, and would provide the framework from which to build a new body of law and practice for the achievement of equal rights.²⁴

In their comprehensive article, Thomas Emerson, Barbara Brown, Gail Falk, and Ann Freedman countered the two primary types of ERA critics—those who opposed the amendment on principle, and those who opposed it on procedural grounds. Those who opposed on principal often did so because they felt that the ERA's threat to traditional gender roles would culminate in the collapse of American society. They posited a variety of feared consequences that the ERA would engender, ranging from the very likely to the far-fetched. These included the elimination of sex-specific protective labor legislation, state funding of abortions, the introduction of women to the draft, and the elimination of sex division in facilities like public restrooms. Those who opposed on procedural grounds held that sex discrimination could be addressed through the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution or through piecemeal revision of existing laws on a state-by-state basis. They felt that the ERA was not only a redundant piece of legislation, but would also “cause endless confusion in the courts” as a result of its broad language, giving excessive power to activist

²² Barbara A. Brown, Thomas I. Emerson, Gail Falk & Ann E. Freedman, “The Equal Rights Amendment: A Constitutional Basis for Equal Rights for Women, *Yale Law Journal* 871 (1971): 873.

²³ *Ibid.*, 874.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 979.

courts.²⁵ In his article, Emerson and his co-authors responded to the most prominent concerns of principle offered by critics, either by defending certain plausible outcomes as a necessary step towards gender equality (the introduction of women to the draft, for example) or by invalidating far-fetched speculations (the abolition of opposite-sex bathrooms). Their counter to procedural critics was that the amendment was necessarily vague because it spoke to broad principles, much like the Constitution's consecration of religious freedom and free speech.²⁶ On the point of redundancy, Emerson and his co-authors held that the existing Equal Protection Clause was problematic because it did not abolish the existing separate sphere created for women. Instead, it pledged to uphold the laws that often protected this separate, and by definition subservient, domain. In the view of Emerson and his co-authors, piecemeal revision of existing laws was also insufficient in combating discrimination for reasons of efficiency. Piecemeal revision would require the mobilization of fifty state legislatures, the federal congress, and the courts, executive agencies, and government authorities in these jurisdictions—an organizational process which could not be completed within the lifetime of any woman living in the 1970's.²⁷

Emerson's and his co-authors' scholarly article did not exist in a vacuum, but rather enjoyed extensive circulation among the public as it debated the ERA. It first garnered attention at the national level when it was distributed by Congresswoman Martha Griffiths to the House of Representatives, and was also inserted in the Congressional Record by Senator Birch Bayh, Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments.²⁸ Emerson's article also found its way into the minority views produced by Senator Sam Ervin, a leading Senate opponent of the ERA, in the Ninety-second Congress's *Senate Report on the Equal Rights Amendment*. Ervin's wild distortion and misrepresentation of the article was detailed in a document produced by the Citizen Advisory Council on the Status of Women, which cited thirty-one instances of distortion or misquotation.²⁹ In one example, Ervin misrepresented Emerson and his co-authors' view of the fate of protective labor legislation under the ERA. Emerson's statement in the 1971 article reads as follows:

In general, labor legislation which confers clear benefits upon women would be extended to men. Laws which are plainly exclusionary would be invalidated. Laws which restrict or regulate working conditions would probably be invalidated, leaving the process of general or functional regulation to the legislatures.

When this point made it into the senator's report, however, it had been stripped down to only include the following: "Laws which restrict or regulate working conditions would probably be invalidated."³⁰ Ervin utilized selective quotation to give the false impression that the ERA would negatively impact women in regards to the draft, rape, alimony, Social

²⁵ Critchlow, 215.

²⁶ Barbara A. Brown *et al*, 883.

²⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁸ Berry, 64.

²⁹ Citizen Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Virginia J. Cyrus Ervin Report, 1972, folder 335, box 22, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

³⁰ *Ibid*.

Security, adultery laws, working conditions, and other major issues.³¹ These misrepresentations went on to be used by a multitude of anti-ERA groups to disseminate falsities about the ERA. Even by April 1977, the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* still continued to circulate the senator's claims as an authoritative case against the Equal Rights Amendment.³²

Ervin's attempts to derail the passage of the ERA were in vain, however, and he himself recognized the impact that Emerson's *Yale Law Journal* article had on the realm of high politics. In a letter to his co-authors Ann Freedman, Barbara Brown, and Gail Falk, dated April 13, 1973, Emerson wrote of an encounter he had with Senator Ervin at a conference on civil liberties: "In the course of [our] conversation, he said, and I quote him exactly, 'If it weren't for that article by you and those three young ladies, the Equal Rights Amendment would never have passed the Senate.'" ³³ The article, along with testimony given by Emerson before the Senate and House Judiciary Hearings, was influential enough, it seems, to usher the amendment through Congress.

Despite Thomas Emerson's scholarly background and his activism in the sphere of high politics, his words also found their way into the populist sphere of ERA activism in the pro-ERA movement. During his time of advocacy for the ERA, Emerson was in constant conversation with pro-ERA organizations. In a letter dated January 5, 1977, the League of Women Voters of the United States thanked Thomas Emerson in the following terms: "We are indebted to you and others who have contributed to the public's understanding of the history of, and need for, equal rights for all American citizens".³⁴ Enclosed with the letter, the League of Women Voters of the United States sent Emerson a copy of their educational publication entitled, *In Pursuit of Equal Rights: Women in the Seventies*. In response to the oft-posed question of how to interpret the ERA in the courts, the pamphlet utilized Emerson's 1971 article to articulate the impact that the ERA would have on the courts. It stated that in the absence of legal precedent, the courts would turn to the "legislative history" of Emerson's 1971 article to determine Congress' intent.³⁵ In this way, Emerson bridged the gap between the execution of the ERA in high politics and the mainstream public's understanding of the ERA. Additionally, Emerson worked directly with smaller, local grassroots organizations like the Junior League of Greater New Haven to educate the public on the ERA's potential impact. In 1979, he spoke on a diverse panel alongside a NOW board member, a New Haven homemaker, and the vice president of a New Haven bank to offer his perspective on the legal implications and social impact of the ERA.³⁶ Throughout his career of advocacy for the ERA, Emerson made countless appearances of this nature to bring the scholarly component of the ERA to the general public.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Thomas Irwin Emerson to Ann Freedman, Barbara Brown, & Gail Falk, 13 April 1973, folder 334, box 22, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

³⁴ Mary E. Brooks to Thomas Irwin Emerson, 5 Jan. 1977, folder 336, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

³⁵ The League of Women Voters of the United States, "In Pursuit of Equal Rights: Women in the Seventies," circa 1976, folder 335, box 22, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

³⁶ Junior League of New Haven to Thomas Irwin Emerson, 3 Jan. 1979, folder 337, box 22, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

Emerson penetrated the populist activism sphere through the anti-ERA movement, too, as opponents to the amendment co-opted Emerson's work for their own benefit. Though Senator Ervin's distortion of Emerson's *Yale Law Journal* article in the Senate hearings failed to stall the passage of the ERA through Congress, it came to aid the right wing grassroots cause. A Florida branch of the STOP ERA campaign widely distributed a newsletter in 1979 misquoting Emerson as having said the following: "A differentiation on account of sex is totally precluded regardless of whether a legislature or administrative agency may consider such classification to be reasonable, to be beneficial rather than invidious, or to be justified by compelling reasons."³⁷ In fact, Emerson had always specified—in his written work, testimonies, and appearances, that a legal differentiation on the basis of a unique physical characteristic was permissible under the ERA. Though this implied a dual system of rights, Emerson maintained that this area of duality was very limited.³⁸ This entirely fabricated quote, nowhere to be found in the 1971 article, was placed in the pamphlet along with alleged quotes from other experts that either condemned the ERA or emphasized its most feared consequences. The Georgia branch of Women Who Want to be Woman similarly falsified quotes in a 1978 mail-in pamphlet, attributing the statements to Emerson's *Yale Law Journal* article. These distortions included the claims that "Under the ERA, if a wife fails to support her husband, he may use it as grounds for divorce," and that "the ERA will abolish 'seduction laws, statutory rape laws, laws prohibiting obscene language in the presence of women, prostitution and manifest danger laws' and all laws against forcing women into prostitution."³⁹ The latter quote was particularly cunning in its selective use of quotation marks—though the quoted portion was indeed lifted from Emerson's article, it was never used in conjunction with the word "abolish."

Through personal correspondence, too, Emerson became aware of the pervasive misrepresentation of the ERA through distortion of his words. In 1980, Emerson received a letter from the pastor of a Lutheran church, stating that he received a letter concerning the ERA, which heavily quoted the *Yale Law Journal* article.⁴⁰ The pastor sought clarification on three quotes, all of which Emerson invalidated as fabrications in his response letter. Emerson wrote, "The statements in your letter are typical of misrepresentations and distortions that have been circulated over the country about the ERA."⁴¹ Anti-ERA organizations so frequently misquoted Emerson, in fact, that he often received letters from ERA opponents who believed he too opposed the Amendment. In a letter to one such individual, Emerson wrote in response:

³⁷ Florida Federation Women For Responsible Legislation, STOP ERA Pamphlet, circa Sep. 1979, folder 337, box 22, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

³⁸ Barbara A. Brown *et al*, 894.

³⁹ Women Who Want to be Women: Georgia, Anti-ERA Pamphlet, circa Jun. 1978, folder 336, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

⁴⁰ Pastor Wiechmann to Thomas Irwin Emerson, 11 Jan. 1980, folder 337, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

⁴¹ Thomas Irwin Emerson to Pastor Wiechmann, circa Jan. 1980, folder 337, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

It is interesting that you are writing to me under the impression that I am opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment. Your letter is not the first I have received which proceeds on that assumption. The fact is that the opponents of ERA have so distorted my position that they have led many, many people to believe that my views are directly opposite of what they really are. I do not think that this is the proper way to carry on a public debate.⁴²

Emerson's unwitting co-optation by the grassroots right demonstrated the ironic way in which his work blurred the line between high and low politics, so much so that it came to aid the opponent's cause.

Well aware that his distorted opinions had been widely distributed by grassroots anti-ERA organizations, Emerson sought out public channels through which to broadcast the truth. In addition to dispelling lies through direct correspondence with the misinformed, Emerson also contributed regularly to the Letters to the Editor section of various local newspapers. In contrast to his *Yale Law Journal* article, which occupied a more elite and scholarly sphere of discourse, Emerson's letters to the editor reached a broader mainstream audience. In a letter to the editor of the *New Haven Register*, Emerson wrote:

In the many years that I have been an observer and student of public affairs, I have seldom seen an issue that has been subject to more factual distortion and gross misrepresentation than the Equal Rights Amendment. I cite as typical examples of this lack of responsibility in public debate three letters on the ERA which appeared in your issue of February 27.⁴³

From there, Emerson proceeded to identify misrepresentations of the ERA's implications published in the newspaper. In a 1976 letter to the Editor of the *Hartford Courant*, Emerson critiqued a column written by concerned citizen Suzanne Javors, who argued that the ERA "would give every woman a constitutional right to have an abortion at will."⁴⁴ Emerson's efforts to dispel ERA lies in the press even extended to the arena of college newspapers. In 1978, Emerson wrote a corrective letter to the editor of the University of Tennessee's newspaper, *The Daily Beacon*, in response to an article written by alumnus Sharon Casey Barnett. In her article, Barnett stated that Emerson "claim[s] that the Equal Rights Amendment would legitimize homosexual marriages and other gay rights," when in fact Emerson had always taken the opposite position.⁴⁵ In his contributions to local newspapers, Emerson sought to counteract the actions of the anti-ERA movements by holding

⁴² Thomas Irwin Emerson to ERA opponent letter, 13 Dec. 1976, folder 336, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

⁴³ Thomas Irwin Emerson to Editor of The New Haven Register, 1 Mar. 1977, folder 336, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

⁴⁴ Thomas Irwin Emerson to Editor of The Hartford Courant, 3 Nov. 1976, folder 334, box 22, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

⁴⁵ Thomas Irwin Emerson to Editor of The Daily Beacon, 11 July 1978, folder 337, box 23, Thomas Irwin Emerson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

newspapers accountable for the material they published, while simultaneously broadcasting his pro-ERA message to a broader mainstream audience.

The conflict over the Equal Rights Amendment, a major event in the modern women's movement, has been widely studied from the perspective of populist action. However, while the 1960's and 1970's trend of grassroots activism factored into the dialogue about the ERA, it was by no means the only voice in the conversation. Another group of figures played a central role in the battle over the ERA—the elite, scholarly feminists who often engaged with both the high politics realm of legislation and the low politics realm of populist activism. Thomas Irwin Emerson, a constitutional scholar and champion of the Equal Rights Amendment, traversed the line between legislation and activism. Emerson's work appealed to the legislative world and pushed the ERA through Congress, but also served the grassroots movements on both the left and the right. He engaged both directly and indirectly in campaigns to educate the mainstream on the ERA, but also found himself unwittingly thrown into the world of anti-ERA grassroots politics when his work was appropriated and distorted by his opponents. Emerson further entrenched himself in the grassroots sphere by engaging with these opponents, either through correspondence or through local media outlets. Ultimately, Emerson's role in the battle for the Equal Rights Amendment demonstrates not only the tenuous nature of the line between high and low politics in the 1970's, but also the indeterminate position that a scholar occupied in politics at this time.

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TITLE IMAGE

White House Staff Photographer. *Photograph of Jimmy Carter Signing Extension of Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Ratification, 10/20/1978*. 20 Oct. 1978. Photograph. *National Archives: Archival Research Catalog*. 13 Mar. 2014. <<http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/action/ExternalIdSearch?id=181981>>.



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