



AMERICAN
2013-14
PAPERS

AMERICAN PAPERS



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Professor Snyder wishes to thank the editorial board of *The American Papers* for their efforts and willingness to give freely of their time—even over summer break! The authors also deserve commendation as well for their good-natured responses to the editorial process.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the 2013-14 issue of *The American Papers*!

Upon first glance, this issue appears to be markedly different from its recent predecessors. The journal's new logo, color scheme, and streamlined design are visually appealing and imbue the publication with a contemporary look and feel. While the "look" has changed, you can rest assured knowing that the journal's mission, its long-standing tradition of delivering readers some of the highest quality papers written by undergraduates and graduates enrolled in American Studies courses, remains unchanged. Our ultimate goal for this issue was to re-establish and re-brand the journal in a way that would appeal not only to American Studies majors, but also to the Cal State Fullerton community at large.

We invite you to explore the many ways in which American Studies attempts to understand American culture, both nationally and transnationally. This issue begins with "American Places," a group of essays that uncover the power of culture in shaping a sense of space and place, community, and memory.

From there, we delve into popular culture, the visual arts, and expressive forms. The essays in "American Forms" each serve to analyze a cultural document to reveal what it communicates about certain facets of American culture.

Additionally, this issue features the winner of the American Studies' Earl James Weaver prize for the best essay written by a graduate student. George Gregory Rozsa's "The Little Economic Engine that Could: Las Vegas's Search for Water Security Under the Shadow of Owens Valley" explores the public memory and narrative of Owens Valley by dissecting the current water politics involved with Las Vegas's growth.

We hope that while you are reading through this fine group of essays you learn something new, come across something that sparks your interest, or discover a topic you would like to explore further. Perhaps something will change your point of view and encourage you to think critically about a certain topic involved with or related to American culture. If any one of these instances occurs, the journal has served its purpose. Enjoy!

AMERICAN PAPERS CONTRIBUTORS

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Jennifer Rudloff plans to attend the University of Washington Graduate Program in Museum Studies to prepare for a career in a children's museum.

CONTENTS

AMERICAN PLACES

- Hillbilly Heaven**
2 Constructing a Racialized Musical Identity in Nashville
by Dusty Altena
- From Political Refugees to American Citizens**
9 Bridging Little Saigon through Oral Histories
by Tramanh Hoang
- Writing in Paris**
17 The American Literary Community of the 1920s
by Danielle Lopez
- The City of Oil, Oranges and Racism**
24 Oil fields, the Sundown Ordinance, the Ku Klux Klan, and Racially Restrictive Covenants in “Good Old Brea,” California
by C.J. Adams
- The Rise of Working Women**
34 *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*, by Kathy Peiss
by Carmen Loya
- Haunting the Halls**
36 Specters of Memory at the Former Camarillo State Hospital
by Diann Rozsa
- Panoptic Playground**
40 How Disneyland Functions as the Ultimate Disciplinary Environment
by Judson Grant Barber

THE EARL JAMES WEAVER PRIZE

- The Little Economic Engine That Could**
46 Las Vegas’s Search for Water Security Under the Shadow of Owens Valley
by George Gregory Rozsa

AMERICAN FORMS

- War on Terror**
58 Film as Colonization
by Najwa Lebeda
- Women in Power?**
66 Representation of Female Characters in Crime Dramas
by Justyna Kuźniar
- Fast Fashion**
74 A Case Study for Exploring American Cultural Theories & Methods
by Brandon Kyle Goco
- Puttin’ ‘Em Back in the Kitchen**
77 The Creation, Containment, Escape, and Recapture of the Nuclear Mom
by John Ciulik
- J.C. Leyendecker**
81 Queering the American Image
by Jennifer Rudloff
- Oh Captain, Our Captain**
85 America as the Hitler-Punching, Commie-Smashing, American God
by Nicole Rehnberg

AMERICAN PLACES

“ I had to learn that in such a large and diverse country, with such a complex social structure, a writer [is] called upon to conceive some sort of model which would represent that great diversity, to account for all these people and for the various types of social manners found within various levels of the social hierarchy...to work out some imaginative integration of the total American experience.”

Ralph Ellison
Going to the Territory, 1986

AMERICAN PLACES

502: THEORIZING RACE IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Hillbilly Heaven

Constructing a Racialized Musical Identity in Nashville

DUSTY ALTENA

This essay was written for Dr. Erica Ball's Theorizing Race in American Studies course in the spring of 2013. I wanted to explore the problematic issues of racial bifurcation on musical identity, particularly when fused to a geographical space. As a case study, this essay takes a specific look at the white, country musical identity of Nashville, Tennessee, and explores the origins of that identity as well as the complicated racial and class issues it creates.

“ We'll be so happy beneath the mountain moon
At the hillbilly wedding in June”

Gene Autry – “A Hillbilly Wedding in June”

In 1961, the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tennessee officially announced its first three inductees—Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, and Fred Rose. Nineteen years later and just 200 miles west in the nearby city of Memphis, the Blues Hall of Fame honored 20 members of its own, including Blind Lemon Jefferson, Bessie Smith, and Son House. In doing so, Nashville and Memphis effectively cemented their reputations as the de facto homes of country and blues music, respectively.

In the decades before and especially since, country and blues as musical categorizations have undergone a racialized transformation that has ultimately resulted in a clearly

marked racial divide; country has become a symbol of whiteness, while blues represents blackness. As the representative cities of these genres, Nashville and Memphis have both informed and been informed by these racialized musical identities. Indeed, despite locations just 200 miles apart, Nashville and Memphis have created a racialized bifurcation that inherently celebrates the constructed racial and class identities from which these genres originated.

New technological developments introduced an enormous new audience to recorded music in 1920s America, even in the still-agrarian south. Electric record players such as the Victrola, as well as the introduction of more affordable records to compete with the massive popularity of AM radio, resulted in a major increase in the commercialization of music. Accordingly, record companies and radio broadcasters rapidly attempted to capitalize on this new listenership by recording and broadcasting a multitude of niche styles in addition to popular music, including authentic folk, hillbilly, and race records.

This essay argues that the rise of the radio and recording industries created distinct racialized musical identities in Nashville and Memphis. These identities imply an innate authenticity that relies on a constructed, romanticized ideology of working-class whites and blacks as well as an idealization of the Appalachian hill country and slave plantations from which country and blues music evolved. By attaching a racialized musical identity to a geographical space, Nashville and Memphis are able to appropriate the authenticity of these genres while simultaneously ignoring the racial fluidity that pervades not only the cities themselves, but the early development of country and blues music as well. Using this contextualization, this essay will focus specifically on Nashville and its racialized country music identity; it will explore the effects that emanate from Nashville's implied location as the authentic home of country

music, as well as the problematic racial and class issues that arise when fusing a musical identity to a geographic space.

The musical identity of Nashville has been racialized with a whiteness that has stemmed from the Appalachian hillbilly origins of country music. Not only does this identity whitenash Nashville and divorce it from its black inhabitants,¹ it also removes the various ethnic and African American influences from the evolution of country music, creating an inaccurate depiction of both Nashville and the music that defines it. Moreover, this phenomenon allows Nashville as a symbolic place to simultaneously and paradoxically retain the fabricated authenticity of country music's origins.

Birth of a (Country) Nation

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term “hillbilly” first appeared in print in the *New York Journal* in 1900. The *Journal* described the “Hill-Billie” as “a free and untrammelled white citizen of Alabama, who lives in the hills, has no means to speak of, dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he gets it, and fires off his revolver as the fancy takes him.”² These derisive, backwoods connotations continued to define the label throughout the early 1900s, formally entering the world of music in 1925, when producer and talent scout Ralph Peer named an act he was recording the Hill Billies.³ By 1926, Hillbilly as a musical term entered the *lingua franca*, appearing in *Variety* and other publications to denote specifically “southern” folk music.⁴ In December 1926, *Variety* described the hillbilly musician as “a North Carolina or Tennessee and adjacent mountaineer type of illiterate.... The mountaineer is of ‘poor white trash’ genera...Theirs is a community all unto themselves. Illiterate and ignorant, with the intelligence of morons.”⁵

Musical categorization is of course helpful and even necessary; however, attaching labels to forms of music that are based on racial and class ideologies poses particular problems, especially when these identities are then attached to specific geographical spaces. In a recent interview with *Pitchfork's* Larry Fitzmaurice, prolific indie musician Bradford Cox pronounced:

[Hank Williams, Bo Diddley, and John Lee Hooker] are absolute artists. I can't hold a match to that stuff and I never will. I'll never be black, I'll never have that experience. That's what's missing from indie culture, though: Bo Diddley and blackness. There's a struggle that exists in black music and hillbilly music from a certain era. Old music resonates with me, new music doesn't.⁶

Cox's band Deerhunter plays neither country nor blues, yet this quote unwittingly exposes the romanticized authenticity that has come to define early country and blues music, a sentiment that has been co-opted through the construction of racialized musical identities in cities like Nashville and Memphis. Aside from the fact that this attitude romanticizes the experience of early performers, these cities are able to claim

the music's authenticity for themselves while removing the problematic issues of racial and class struggle. Ultimately this allows these identities to exist removed from any semblance of racial fluidity and intercultural interaction. Indeed, each identity becomes racialized as simply black or simply white. The experience and struggle that Cox is speaking of are actually part of a complex narrative that involves a multitude of race- and class-based issues. There is no single struggle that can be applied to black music; nor can such a concept be applied to hillbilly music. The origins of both country and blues music are brimming with racial intermixture, cross-cultural influences, and musical appropriation. The bifurcation implied by referring to “a struggle that exists in black music and hillbilly music” assumes a neatly divided racial history in music that quite simply did not exist. These performers combined personal experience with geographical influences, often with commercial aspirations, and many did so in a way that crossed both racial and class boundaries. Romanticizing notions of authenticity and purity in early music constructs a false narrative that hinges on an idealized, spontaneous beauty, untouched by the grabbing hands of capitalism and the problematic issues of race relations and class struggle. The reality is much more complicated.

Nashville as a physical place had little more to do with the origins of country music than most other Southern cities. The first successful country recording artist appeared in Atlanta, not Nashville. In fact it is Atlanta that has been described as the cradle of country music—the “pre-Nashville Nashville.”⁷ Atlanta became the home to the first radio station in the south when WSB went on the air in early 1922, and its broadcasts were quickly heard throughout the region. Renowned local performer Fiddlin' John Carson saw the expansive opportunity that radio offered, proclaiming that he “would like to have a try at the new-fangled contraption that had people sitting around everywhere, with earphones clamped to their heads.” His WSB performances were remarkably successful, and within minutes the telephones were “jumping up and down with requests from listeners who liked this return to old-time mountain music.”⁸

In 1923, record distributor Polk Brockman convinced Okeh Records to release two sides of Carson. Despite Carson's successful radio appearances, Okeh producer Ralph Peer had to be persuaded to record him, and only reluctantly agreed to produce the initial run of 500 copies. The record, “The Little Old Log Cabin In The Lane” with B-side “The Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster's Going to Crow,” was a resounding instant success and Carson was given an immediate recording contract, paving the way for other country, folk, and hillbilly performers and recordings.

The radio and recording industries were major benefactors of this early country music. Carson achieved nationwide fame through his radio performances, reaching listeners as far away as New York and Canada. During one appearance, the station received over 100 telephone calls and telegrams

from listeners requesting their favorite songs; by 1927 it was reported that Carson had received “letters of praise from listeners in practically every state in the Union.” In a *Radio Digest* article, Carson admitted that “radio made me. Until I began to play over wsb...just a few people in and around Atlanta knew me.” His records, meanwhile, were selling out everywhere; Peer claimed Carson’s first record had sold over 500,000 copies. Soon Okeh distributors announced that Carson’s “homely ditties are as much in demand in the Rocky Mountains as in Georgia.”⁹

Following the record’s success, Peer realized he had discovered an untapped market. Correctly anticipating that an enormous amount of money was waiting to be made from recording original folk material that he could retain the rights to, Peer began searching for hillbilly singers who performed their own songs, a strategy that emphasized an ongoing relationship between producer and performer and ultimately created an industry dependent on the creation and marketing of new musical material that still resembled and sounded like authentic traditional standards. By 1924, country music had its first million-selling record, coming from Vernon Dalhart (Marion T. Slaughter) of West Texas. In 1925, industry publication *Talking Machine World* noted the genre’s remarkable success, stating that “the [rural] demand is largely for Blues, Coon Songs, and Hilly-Billy numbers.”¹⁰

In addition to his Okeh recordings, Fiddlin’ John Carson’s successful appearances on wsb Atlanta influenced dozens of radio stations throughout the south and the Midwest to broadcast “barn dances” featuring authentic folk or hillbilly music. Nashville’s foray into this market began in earnest in 1925, when local radio station wsm began broadcasting its own *wsm Barn Dance*. Following the lead of Atlanta’s wsb, wbap in Fort Worth, wls in Chicago, and many others, the *wsm Barn Dance* broadcast folk and hillbilly music to thousands of listeners across the region.¹¹ The program’s creator and announcer, “Judge” George Hay, who already had radio experience in Memphis and Chicago, coined its new name, the *Grand Ole Opry*,¹² in 1927, and the show eventually achieved enormous commercial success by focusing on rural, authentic, down-to-earth performers that portrayed a homely, unrefined persona. This persona was specifically fabricated to exhibit the ideal, pastoral image of the Appalachian hill country.

Fabricating authenticity in this way produced a racialized musical identity that removed itself from the many ethnic and black musical influences that pervaded early country music. Unlike the romanticized bucolic narratives continuously put forth, the roots of country music could not in reality be reduced to a group of fiddling Anglo immigrants dancing in the hollers with bellies full of moonshine. Rather, country music was informed by a diverse mixture of ethnic and black musical influences as well as day-to-day interracial interactions and experiences. In one interview, Zeke Morris of the Morris Brothers described his experience in rural North Carolina thus:

Back in those days, we didn’t know what integration was, because we was raised up around black people. We worked together, played together, and often ate at each other’s houses. That’s the way it was back in those days. I’ve seen many a time when black people would come to the white church. So I went to the black church to learn their spiritual singing.¹³

Jimmie Rodgers, generally considered the father of country music, grew up in frequent contact with African Americans in Mississippi and while working on the railroad across the south. He learned to play the guitar and banjo from a black musician as a child, and was heavily influenced by blues forms, often incorporating them into his own music. Additionally, some scholars maintain that Rodgers’s famous blue yodel was informed by Mexican border singers.¹⁴ Mexican harmonies and the romantic balladry of the Mexican *corrido* form also influenced many early country performers, particularly in Texas.

Hank Williams learned the guitar from black musicians, some of whom were probably in turn influenced by Rodgers.¹⁵ Conversely, blues legend B.B. King remembered working on a Mississippi slave plantation while listening to Williams on the radio: “Hank Williams, man...tunes like that, that carried me right back to my same old blues...’Cause this is a guy hurting. He’s hurting from inside.”¹⁶ As late as the 1930s, the *Grand Ole Opry* employed at least one black musician—the tremendously popular harmonica performer DeFord Bailey, who played the *Opry* for over 15 years in the 1920s and 30s. Other performers such as Dr. Humphrey Bate, Uncle Dave Macon, and Sid Harkreader have each recognized the importance of black musical tradition in their upbringing. Bailey, whose father was a fiddler and uncle a banjoist, described his influences as “black hillbilly music.”¹⁷ Finally, Nashville’s proximity to the blues traditions of nearby Memphis allowed for even further musical and racial interaction between the two cities.

The banjo, one of the pre-eminent instruments now associated with country and particularly hillbilly music, claims its origins from primitive stringed instruments brought over from Africa via the slave trade. The original crude instruments, which were fashioned from gourds and other vernacular materials, were already popular on slave plantations by the 17th century. Ultimately evolving into its modern day form in the 19th century, the banjo gained massive popularity through its use in blackface minstrelsy, a popular type of American entertainment that combined variety acts, musical numbers, and comedic skits by performers in blackface. Ironically, the Irish-born fiddle and the African-born banjo proved to be natural bedfellows, and many minstrelsy troupes and medicine shows frequently included both.

Early country music was heavily influenced by minstrelsy and the medicine show. Jimmie Rodgers himself played banjo in blackface as a part of a traveling medicine show after the First World War,¹⁸ and many other early performers carried influences directly from blackface shows to radio barn dance programs; blackface stars Jamun and Honey frequently appeared on the

Opry well into the 1930s. The racial influences of minstrelsy on country music are both significant and hard to define. As Eric Lott and others have convincingly argued, blackface minstrelsy was much more complex than a simple jeering send-up of black music and culture. Minstrel shows included many layers of appropriation, mixing both genuine white and black music with various levels of ridicule, mockery, and satire, which created a distinct form of popular music that was informed by both black and white influences and crossed over multiple racial borders. Musically, the line between genuine and satirical elements could often be rather hard to distinguish.

Lott notes that “we might say that minstrel men visited not plantations but racially integrated theaters, taverns, neighborhoods, and waterfronts—and then attempted to recreate plantation scenes.”¹⁹ Indeed, many of the best banjo performers in 19th-century minstrelsy troupes learned to play the instrument by traveling to plantations and listening to black musicians. In 1897, the minstrel Ben Cotton recalled that as a youth along the Mississippi River he visited slaves “in front of their cabins” so as to hear them “start the banjo twanging.” Banjoist Joel Sweeney “would hang around the negroes at all times learning some of their rude songs and playing an accompaniment on a gourd banjo.”²⁰ Many minstrel songs did in fact remain faithful to the original incarnations despite the mocking satirical pretext, while other styles and forms were used piecemeal throughout the shows, ultimately creating a *mélange* of racially mixed music that was hard to distinguish through a strictly defined black and white racial dichotomy. By the 1920s, then, many early hillbilly performers were already adrift in a sea of racial musical styles and forms.

Nashville Skyline

Despite its irrefutable importance in the history of country music, the Nashville elite at the time originally wanted nothing to do with the *Grand Ole Opry*. The program’s heavily lower-middle class, rural audience was at odds with the new urban image the city was trying to cultivate in the decades following the First World War.²¹ The sound and stigma of southern hillbilly music was considered embarrassing, and the city did not want to be associated with it. Steel guitarist and industry executive Joe Talbot explained that

Nashville simply did not want this trash in this town. The city of Nashville, as an entity, was very embarrassed and ashamed of this bunch of hillbillies that were wandering around here...this city was principally an educational, religious institutional, and financial town and a country music show simply wasn’t relevant to [any] of these things.²²

Jack Harris further explained, “when the *Grand Ole Opry* started there was an immediate protest from the Nashville citizenry. Old Judge Hay was accused of making the city the laughing stock of the nation—the hillbilly capital.”²³ In October, 1943, Tennessee governor Prentice Cooper was invited to the Ry-

man Auditorium to celebrate the *Grand Ole Opry*’s coast to coast hookup, but he declined, stating “he wanted no party to a ‘circus,’” further grumbling that Opry star Roy Acuff was “bringing disgrace to Tennessee, by making Nashville the hillbilly capital of the United States.”²⁴

The Nashville bourgeoisie wanted to distance themselves from the “unsophisticated roots” of those who were associated with country music.²⁵ The city’s image as the “Athens of the South” was hardly compatible with the rural flavor of the Opry’s audience and performers. Nashville’s elite preferred to focus on finance and educational institutions in the 1920s and 30s; after the war, schools such as Vanderbilt were receiving millions of dollars from various endowments and philanthropists. Meantime, other elites referred to the city as the “Wall Street of the South,” due to its immensely successful insurance²⁶ and banking industries; Nashville’s bank clearings topped one billion dollars in 1929.²⁷

Despite the reluctance of city officials, however, the *Grand Ole Opry* could not be suppressed. Its popularity was tremendous and the Opry was arguably the single most important factor in the creation of Nashville’s musical identity. Eventually increased to 50,000 watts, WSM was capable of reaching a massive section of the country, and dozens of musicians would later recall the importance of listening to the *Grand Ole Opry* in their formative years. Roy Acuff explained, “there’s no question, it helped to popularize country music. It carried ‘hillbilly’ music far beyond the hills and into the living rooms of people everywhere, and turned it into ‘country’ music.”²⁸ Writer Paul Hemphill recalled,

Once the chores were done and night began to close in, the entire family would huddle around the big Zenith radio in the living room, and the old man would start hunting for 650 on the dial...for the *Grand Ole Opry*. Then, until midnight, weary legs and cracked hands and broken spirits would be resurrected by the familiar sounds crackling over the radio.²⁹

Indeed, the incredible popularity of the program was the impetus behind the decision of hundreds of up-and-coming country performers to relocate to Nashville in the coming decades.

Joli Jensen points out that country music “celebrates a world that is, by its own definition, different from the rest of society. The world it celebrates is easily denigrated by outsiders as backwards and uncultured. The issue of social class haunts country music.³⁰ Assuredly, the very definition of “hillbilly” was based on these characteristics. This “world,” however, was already undergoing a process of fabricated authenticity as early as the 1920s. As Louis Kyriakouides notes, the

“authenticity” on which country music performers prided themselves and which their audiences demanded was based upon a fabricated vision of rural life—a “misremembered” past that [Judge] Hay manipulated to create an image of rural white rusticity on the radio.³¹

Hay specifically emphasized the hillbilly ideal in his broadcasts. The group Dr. Bate and His Augmented Orchestra, for example, became the Possum Hunters, complete with hillbilly garb such as overalls, straw hats, and hay bales.³² Other “cornpone names,” such as Fruit Jar Drinkers and Clodhoppers, were devised as well—each attempting to portray an “authentic” depiction of rural, hillbilly life.³³

This authentic depiction of hillbilly life, however, romanticized the extreme difficulties faced by the people who actually lived it, fetishizing the rural lifestyle as something to be yearned for, rather than accurately portraying it for the arduous existence it actually was. Ralph Stanley of the Stanley Brothers described southern Appalachia with nothing but gloom: “There’s always been a lot of murder, a lot of death, and heartache in these mountains. Life was very, very hard here. It was all you could do to get through it.” Accordingly, he freely admitted to attempting to commercialize his music, noting that “we come to think we could make a career out of playing. We knew we didn’t want farm work and we darn sure didn’t want the mines.”³⁴ Stanley’s comments dispel the myth of spontaneous purity in early country music as it is so often portrayed. By appropriating country music’s beginnings but removing the class-based stigma of its performers, Nashville is able to divorce itself from these elements of racial and class struggle and yet, paradoxically, retain an idealized, fabricated authenticity. Romanticizing this now-displaced struggle allows the idea, rather than the reality, of Appalachian hillbilly music to be fetishized as something beautiful *a priori*. This portrayal ignores the actuality of so many lives filled with death, loss, and heartache and reduces it instead into a simplified, constructed narrative of bucolic idyll—even in its sadness. Through the success of the *Grand Ole Opry* and the recording industry, Nashville claimed this romanticized construction as its own musical identity.

Jensen notes that “Those who create, perform, and market country music work hard to maintain a rural, pastoral image, an image that appears detached from, and utterly uninterested in, the technology and economics of commercial music.” Put more simply, country music “is commercially constructed to evoke and to honor uncommercial natural origins.”³⁵ This construction is necessary to resolve the conflict that has always existed vis-à-vis the commercialization of country and its homespun, spontaneous appearance. In reality, country music did not evolve solely in the pastoral rural hills of Appalachia. Nor did it develop specifically in the Nashville area, or even in the southeast in general. Rather, it was a commodified form of music that matured in different ways in multiple geographic locales. Performers like the Stanley Brothers didn’t live lives of serene purity in the rustic mountains of Appalachia; they tried to make a living with their music to escape the incredible toil of an extremely difficult life, as did many other country performers throughout the United States, many of whom were thousands of miles away from both Appalachia and Nashville.

In fact, both Texas and California figure prominently in the

history of country music. Furthermore, many styles of country, such as western swing in Texas, were informed by a diverse assortment of ethnic groups. Texas performers incorporated influences from a rich mixture of cultures and styles, including Appalachian fiddling, Dixieland jazz, German and Bohemian polkas and waltzes, Mexican *norteños* and *corridos*, and Hawaiian, Cajun and African-American music. In 1940, *Variety* advised bandleaders coming to Texas to be prepared to play “1) Viennese waltzes 2) the *schottische* 3) the polka 4) the *varsoviennne*. To be perfectly safe, [they] should have ‘Get Along Sally,’ ‘Turkey in the Straw,’ ‘Little Brown Jug,’ and other Ozark items in [their] repertoire.”³⁶ As many of these musicians relocated to further their careers, these influences would, in turn, inform the music coming out of Nashville. The process of creating Nashville’s musical identity was not—as its status as the symbolic home of country music would suggest—reduced to gathering nearby talent and broadcasting it westward for the rest of America, but in fact a complex relationship that was ultimately informed by a multitude of regional and ethnic styles which combined to reify a musical identity that was then re-broadcast outward.

The cowboy image, for example, was popularized in the southwest by Pee Wee King, brought east to the *Opry*, and soon displaced the hillbilly image as the costume of choice for many country musicians. Accordingly, performers on both the east and west coasts soon began to adopt names that depicted an authentic Western, rather than hillbilly, persona—epitomized by Hank Williams’s *Drifting Cowboys*.³⁷ The mythic cowboy represented the same type of romanticized authenticity the hillbilly image had previously fulfilled. Fascination with Buffalo Bill Cody and the frontier produced an idealized vision of the cowboy that was in fact far removed from reality and ignored the difficult struggles of day-to-day frontier life. The symbolic cowboy, as the definitive image of white masculinity, further racialized the already-whitened category of country music. Put another way, by ascribing a new symbolic representation—one based on the specifically racialized ideal of the white cowboy—country music further removed itself from the racial fluidity of its roots.

Like that of the hillbilly, the fetishization of the cowboy is based on an isolated culture that lives in a lawless, unschooled freedom typified by an appetite for unchecked violence and liquor. Each of these cultures live in dangerous but beautiful country, refusing to change for the modernizing world around them. Unlike the backwoods, lazy image of the hillbilly, however, the cowboy is based on colonial, imperialist notions that are even further removed from any semblance of racial fluidity. Moreover, the cowboy was revered, avoiding the negative stigma that generally came with the hillbilly. This projected masculinity, steeped in racial subjugation, offers an extreme, idealized extension of the rural life that so many country music listeners were familiar with. As such, this construction attached itself to Nashville, forming an image of vaguely rural manliness and ruggedness that was based on colonial images of whiteness. The admiration for the cowboy allowed Nashville to disconnect its

identity from the ignorant hillbilly while maintaining many of the same positive connotations.

The cowboy image was naturally quite popular in western cities like Bakersfield and Los Angeles, each of which unquestionably affected country music. Los Angeles in particular, as the home of Capitol Records and dozens of television and film studios, was a major country music hub in the early postwar years, even rivaling Nashville in prominence. Performers like Cliffie Stone and Gene Autry were significant figures in California's country music scene, appearing on and creating several country radio and television programs. Broadcasts like the *Dinner Bell Round-Up*, the *Hollywood Barn Dance*, and Stone's television fixture, *Hometown Jamboree*, were major successes, entertaining a huge segment of west coast residents and recent migrants.³⁸ Other television programs such as *Town Hall Party*, broadcast from Compton, California,³⁹ continuously featured a host of major performers, including Tex Ritter, Merle Travis, and Lefty Frizzell. As the nexus of television and film production, Los Angeles simply dominated Nashville in this respect. As Cliffie Stone exclaimed, "The West Coast resented the hell out of Nashville [for] saying they were the home of country music, because they really weren't, you know, but they were smart."⁴⁰

Nashville's musical identity was thus not based off of true representations of the city and its people, but from a plethora of outside influences, fabrications, and appropriations—each of which become obscured by Nashville's symbolic geographic representation as the "home of country." As Jensen notes, the "country" in country music, "is both a real and imaginary landscape, one the people actually know and live in but also one that is invented to symbolize other things."⁴¹

Claiming Country

Following a huge increase in the popularity of country music during World War II as well as several commercial developments, the 1950s witnessed the city of Nashville finally claiming country music as its own. It is no coincidence that this occurred at a time when the sound of country music was going through a dramatic change, informed by developments in California and Texas, that removed many of its more rural and unrefined hillbilly influences in favor of a more homogenized and commercial country pop approach, referred to as "the Nashville sound." This musical shift finally allowed Nashville to complete the process of removing class and racial struggle from country music while retaining the implied authenticity of its origins in the Appalachian foothills, or, in the case of later cowboy-flavored country music, the western frontier.

In 1942, Roy Acuff teamed up with songwriter Fred Rose to form Acuff-Rose publishing in Nashville—America's first publishing house dedicated specifically to country music.⁴² Meanwhile, throughout the 40s and 50s, the *Grand Ole Opry* continued to rise in popularity;⁴³ indeed, half of the country records sold in 1954 came from performers on the *Opry* tour.⁴⁴ By the mid-50s, major producers such as Chet Atkins (RCA),

Owen Bradley (Decca), and Don Law (Columbia) relocated to Nashville, bringing with them a penchant for a more urban, commercialized sound. The Nashville sound's commercial viability resulted in a huge influx of industry moguls taking up residence in the city, with many studios and businesses starting up in what is now known as Music Row. Charlie Louvin of the Louvin Brothers explained, "we felt that Nashville was where it was at. If you weren't in Nashville, you were just almost next to being out of the business."⁴⁵ According to Ernest Tubb, "you had to be back in Nashville every Saturday night, come hell or high water, for the *Opry*."⁴⁶

Time magazine dubbed Nashville "Tin Pan Valley" in 1951, and *Opry* announcer David Cobb coined the term "Music City, U.S.A." around the same time.⁴⁷ By 1961, when the Country Music Hall of Fame was created, Nashville was fully ingrained as the official home of country music. Indeed, by 1963, Nashville was the home to nearly a dozen recording studios and talent agencies, four record pressing plants, over two dozen recording labels, and thousands of musicians and performers.⁴⁸ This representation, however, relied on a fabricated, racialized authenticity that was in actuality far removed from reality. As the symbolic home of country music, Nashville was able to appropriate a wide range of influences and strip them of their class- and race-based experience. In fact, even the first three musicians elected to the Country Hall of Fame came from disparate backgrounds. Jimmie Rodgers grew up in Mississippi; Hank Williams grew up in Alabama; and Fred Rose came from Indiana.

Conclusion

Beginning in the 1920s, the radio and recording industries introduced an enormous new audience to country music. Record distributors and radio broadcasts had the capabilities to reach a nationwide listenership and were able to provide exposure for hundreds of performers who would have otherwise languished in obscurity. As the home of the most popular and far-reaching country radio program, as well as many important members of the industry, Nashville became somewhat of a pilgrimage site for performers looking to make it. Ultimately, these factors enabled the city to construct an identity as the symbolic home of country music. This identity, however, was based on an implied authenticity that was fabricated and constructed over several decades of erasing and appropriating various aspects of ethnic and black musical forms, leading to a romanticized, racialized idealization of both Nashville and country music's origins. As Nashville's legacy as the home of country music grew, thousands of performers relocated there from various regions of the country, bringing a diverse blend of local influences with them, all of which would in turn inform Nashville and play a part in producing a singular, racialized musical identity.

The construction of Nashville's identity left out the myriad ethnic and black influences from which country music originated. In addition to Irish and Scottish fiddling and folk songs, country music was influenced by blues, blackface minstrelsy,

Mexican *norteños* and *corridos*, Hawaiian music, and countless other styles and forms. The contributions of blacks and other ethnic groups that resulted in the inclusion and co-optation of elements such as the banjo, the yodel, and various blues forms were increasingly removed from country's origins as Nashville's musical identity grew whiter and whiter. By appropriating these influences as its own through its symbolic status as the home of country music, Nashville was able to retain a constructed authenticity without the burdensome issues of racial and class struggle, ultimately producing a whitewashed narrative of bucolic hillbillies dancing in the moonlight and roughneck cowboys singing on the range. Not only are the racial influences of country music ignored under this construction, but, so too, are the tens of thousands of Nashville's black inhabitants. In claiming country music's origins, Nashville creates a representation of itself as an idyllic, naturally evolved white musical heaven—existing simultaneously in the hollers and the wild west. ♦

1. Nashville's black population was nearly 43,000 (28%) in the 1930s, and was as high as 43% in the 1960s.
2. Julian Hawthorne, "Julian Hawthorne Tells How Unpurchasable Alabama 'Hill Billies' Upset the Railroad Magnate's Effort to Defeat Morgan to Satisfy His Grudge Against the Veteran Senator," *New York Journal*, April 23, 1900, 2.
3. When Peer asked bandleader Al Hopkins what his group should be called, Hopkins responded, "Call the band anything you want—we're nothing but a bunch of hillbillies from North Carolina and Virginia, anyway."
4. Jeffrey J. Lange, *Smile When You Call Me A Hillbilly: Country Music's Struggle For Respectability, 1939-1954* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 23.
5. "Hill-Billy Music," *Variety*, December 29, 1926, 1.
6. Larry Fitzmaurice, "Deerhunter: Bradford Cox is one of indie rock's most unpredictable frontmen, but as Deerhunter release their sixth album, are his antics overshadowing his art?" <http://pitchfork.com/features/articles/9122-deerhunter/>.
7. Wayne W. Daniel, "Fiddlin' John Carson: The World's First Commercial Country Music Artist," *Bluegrass Unlimited* (1985): 40.
8. *Ibid.*, 40-42.
9. *Ibid.*
10. "Edison Cylinder Sales Gain in Rural Districts," *Talking Machine World* 21, no. 11 (1925): 186.
11. Lange, *Smile*, 27.
12. Quite interestingly, this famous name was coined following a performance of black musician DeFord Bailey's "Pan American Blues."
13. Wayne Erbsen, "Wiley and Zeke: The Morris Brothers," *Bluegrass Unlimited* 15, no. 2 (1980): 46.
14. George H. Lewis, "Mexican Musical Influences on Country Songs and Styles," in *All That Glitters: Country Music in America*, ed. George H. Lewis (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1993), 97.
15. Jay Caress, *Hank Williams: Country Music's Tragic King* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 16.
16. Richard Leppert and George Lipsitz, "'Everybody's Lonesome for Somebody': Age, the Body, and Experience in the Music of Hank Williams," *Popular Music* 9, no. 3 (1990): 270.
17. Louis M. Kyriakouides, "The Grand Ole Opry and the Urban South," *Southern Cultures*, Spring (2004): 80.
18. Bland Simpson, "Blue Yodeler: Jimmie Rodgers," *Southern Cultures*, Winter (2006): 93.
19. Eric Lott, *Love & Theft: Blackface, Minstrelsy, and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 41.
20. Philip F. Gura and James F. Bollman, *America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 24-25.
21. Lange, *Smile*, 29.
22. Joe Talbot, "Interview by Douglas B. Green, May 3, 1974," *Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection*.
23. Jack Harris, "True Story of the Famous wsm Grand Ole Opry," *Rural Radio* 1, no. 10 (1938): 30.
24. Maurice Zolotow, "Hillbilly Boom," *The Saturday Evening Post*, February 12, 1944.
25. Lange, *Smile*, 62.
26. Ironically, it was the National Life and Accident Insurance Company who first broadcast the *wsm Barn Dance*, hoping to increase sales.
27. Don H. Doyle, *Nashville: In the New South 1880-1930* (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 212-18.
28. Roy Acuff, *Roy Acuff's Nashville: The Life and Good Times of Country Music* (Perigee Books, 1983), 43.
29. Paul Hemphill, *The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music* (New York: Ballantine, 1970), 187-88.
30. Joli Jensen, *Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization, and Country Music* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 14.
31. Kyriakouides, "The Grand Ole Opry and the Urban South," 71.
32. Lange, *Smile*, 29.
33. Kyriakouides, "The Grand Ole Opry and the Urban South," 71.
34. Ken Ringle, "The Natural King of Bluegrass; Virginia's Ralph Stanley, the Old-Timey Singer Whose Time Has Come," *The Washington Post*, March 20, 1993, D1.
35. Jensen, *Nashville Sound*, 9.
36. "Texas Hoofing Can't Make Up Its Mind—Hillbilly or Waltzes," *Variety*, January 3, 1940, 217.
37. Lange, *Smile*, 91.
38. *Ibid.*, 222.
39. This further illustrates the problematic issues of fusing a musical identity with a geographic space. Compton is now infamously known as a hopeless gang-infested ghetto, epitomized musically by nwa's landmark album, "*Straight Outta Compton*," in 1988.
40. Cliffie Stone, "Interview by John W. Rumble, Nashville, March 27, 1992," *Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection*.
41. Jensen, *Nashville Sound*, 9.
42. Lange, *Smile*, 188.
43. Ninety-five percent of American households had a radio by 1950.
44. Lange, *Smile*, 190.
45. Charlie Louvin, "Interview by Douglas B. Green, Nashville, November 30, 1977," *Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection*.
46. Marshall Fallwell, "E.T. Remembers," *Country Music* 2, no. 8 (1974): 72.
47. "Tin Pan Valley," *Time*, August 13, 1951.
48. Jensen, *Nashville Sound*, 77.

AMERICAN PLACES

423: SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY

From Political Refugees to American Citizens

Bridging Little Saigon through Oral Histories

TRAMANH HOANG

This essay was written for Dr. Carrie Lane's Search for Community course in the spring of 2013. Graduate students were required to research an American community of their choice. I examined recent research on Vietnamese Americans and explored the different meanings of anticommunism through a cultural analysis of two oral histories from UC Irvine's Vietnamese American Oral History Project and an oral history of my father, conducted by myself.

Westminster's Little Saigon represents the largest Vietnamese population outside of Vietnam with an estimated number of more than 180,000 in Orange County, California.¹ The genesis of Little Saigon is debatable among scholars and Vietnamese Americans, but the city council of Westminster officially designated the name to the commercial strip along Bolsa Avenue on February 9, 1988.² The imagined borders of Little Saigon now extend beyond Bolsa Avenue into neighboring cities, such as Garden Grove and Fountain Valley, as new Vietnamese American businesses open.

In February 2003, Westminster was the leader in the passage of the first of many resolutions throughout the country that sought to recognize the yellow-and-red-striped flag of

the former Republic of South Vietnam as the "Freedom and Heritage Flag."³ While there are other Little Saigon communities located across the country, Westminster's Little Saigon remains the unofficial "cultural capital of the overseas Vietnamese."⁴ Because of this significant status, Little Saigon in Westminster has gained the attention of numerous scholars in the last decade as an "imagined political community," moving it well beyond its characterization as a mere ethnic enclave and marketplace situated along Bolsa Avenue.⁵

Anticommunism plays an important role in understanding how Little Saigon is an "imagined political community."⁶ "The Freedom and Heritage Flag" is the most visible marker of anticommunism in Little Saigon. Anticommunism is also expressed through the commemoration of the historically significant Fall of Saigon in 1975 in an event known as Black April. The event includes both former political refugees and their American-born children. A generational gap is expressed when second-generation Vietnamese Americans lack an understanding of their parents' experiences in Vietnam. While Black April bridges the generational gap through its remembrance of those who perished during the Vietnam War, it lacks a diverse Vietnamese American narrative because it is told solely through the lens of anticommunism. As a result, many diverse narratives without a non-political public platform remain untold.

In this paper, I explore how anticommunism is part of the cultural politics in Little Saigon and what that means for individual Vietnamese Americans through a cultural analysis of their oral histories. Based on my analysis of oral histories from UC Irvine's Vietnamese American Oral History Project

(VAOHP) and an oral history of my father, I argue that bridging the generational gap and easing inter-generational tensions in Little Saigon starts at home with family histories. Building community in Little Saigon might be a process that begins within families, but it needs a non-political, shared public space like VAOHP's online archive to put together an objective Vietnamese American history with diverse narratives. A public space that is non-political might ease inter-generational tensions that exist in Little Saigon surrounding anti-communism.

Vietnamese American Anticommunism as Cultural Politics

According to Vietnamese American scholar, Thuy Vo Dang, Black April “remains significant for many overseas Vietnamese [because it serves] as a marker of the loss of and departure from South Vietnam.”⁷ Little Saigon commemorated the Fall of Saigon during its 38th anniversary event on April 29, 2013 at the Vietnam War Memorial and Vietnamese Boat People Monument in Westminster. During this event, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that “former members of the South Vietnamese military [marched]” in a ceremony holding the yellow-and-red-striped flag of the former Republic of South Vietnam and the American red, white, and blue flag side-by-side. A photograph of the march accompanied the article titled, “Young Vietnamese Americans Learning the Lessons of Black April.” Through such displays, it is apparent that Black April not only serves as a political event that concerns the Vietnam War, but it also functions as a cultural activity for Vietnamese Americans.⁸

The lessons taught to young Vietnamese Americans during Black April are structured through anticommunism, but the lessons are not always about communist ideologies. At the 2013 Black April event in Little Saigon, Giao Tran, a 20-year-old college student expressed, “I must figure out what led us here. When I ask my dad about his escape, he says, ‘That’s in the past. We don’t talk about it anymore.’”⁹ Giao Tran’s unanswered question to her father reflects a generational gap and the curiosity of a younger generation trying to understand its individual family histories.

Professor Thuy Vo Dang, director of UC Irvine’s VAOHP, identifies a “culture of silence within such families” as Giao Tran’s, whose father refuses to explain what happened in Vietnam.¹⁰ UC Irvine’s VAOHP is an attempt to break the silence. In addition to interviewing Vietnamese Americans for the VAOHP, Dang trains UCI students to conduct oral histories in her “Vietnamese American Experience” course.¹¹ Sometimes the students interview their own parents to contribute to the VAOHP.¹² I explore how these diverse oral histories contribute to an understanding of Little Saigon as a community beyond Black April events.

According to Dang, Black April “is much more about working through internal politics of the community.” There is

only one narrative about the history of South Vietnam that is promoted during Black April and it is “a version which defines the Vietnamese American community always in opposition to Vietnamese communists.” This one-dimensional narrative is a source of inter-generational tension in Little Saigon. Since Black April is “a space of mourning for the Vietnamese dead,” it is also inherently a display of protest against the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) for causing the deaths of many Vietnamese during and after the war. Dang critiques the narrative promoted by Black April events:¹³

This narrative points a finger at Ho Chi Minh and Vietnamese communism as the perpetrators of their losses, as many first generation Vietnamese Americans adopt an uncritical assessment of the United States’ role in the Vietnam War as well as buy into the linear framework of Vietnamese refugees as new (and deserving) model minority. Therefore, while anticommunism may enable an imagined diasporic community through creative means, it has also drawn very distinct lines around that “moral community” in order to align with the U.S. nation-state.¹⁴

In addition to clarifying how Black April acts as both a political and cultural activity, Dang reveals the effects of this event on the imagined boundaries of the Vietnamese diaspora. Since America was supposedly fighting a war against communism in Vietnam, narrating such experiences and losses through anti-communism in Black April events appear to uncritically take the side of the U.S. government in the Vietnam War. Limiting anticommunism to a definition about communist ideologies that America fought against in the Vietnam War distracts from the historical struggle of Vietnamese Americans with the narratives assigned to them as either political refugees by the U.S. government or as “traitors” of their own country by the CPV. UC Irvine’s VAOHP moves the narratives beyond such frameworks. The oral histories of Vietnamese Americans I analyze criticize both the U.S. government and the CPV during and after the Vietnam War.

Although criticism about U.S. involvement in Vietnam appear absent during Black April events, the oral histories I examine reveal that some criticism of U.S. policy in Vietnam during and after the war exists in the narratives of first-generation Vietnamese Americans. This complicates the popular notion of Vietnamese Americans adopting an uncritical view of the U.S. government during the Vietnam War. Criticisms about the Little Saigon community are also present in these narratives, illustrating that not all first-generation Vietnamese Americans fully self-identify with the broader Little Saigon community.

The constricted Vietnamese American history narrated by Black April events is diversified by UC Irvine’s VAOHP, which allows Vietnamese Americans to narrate their oral histories in a public space beyond the cultural politics of anticommunism in Little Saigon. Dang critiques community formation among Vietnamese Americans by asking, “Are there other ways of

narrating this history so that we may emerge with a different definition of community, one that does not depend upon a binary categorization of us versus them?”¹⁵ In other words, can anticommunism in Little Saigon move beyond a singular narrative about Vietnamese Americans against communist Vietnam? VAOHP’s diverse Vietnamese American narratives of loss and gain attempt to answer this difficult question.

Inter-generational tensions arise when members within the Little Saigon community lack a shared meaning of anticommunism. For example, “a disagreement between the youth and the elders erupted over which terminology to use for the banner” during the planning of the 2004 Black April event in San Diego. “Day of National Resentment” was favored by the elders, while a less political statement of “Day of Commemoration” was preferred by the youth. Despite the disagreement, both the elders and youth were participating in the cultural politics of anticommunism. While the first-generation wanted to make a strong political statement against communist Vietnam in regards to Vietnam War casualties, the second-generation focused more on protesting current human rights issues in Vietnam. The second-generation did not see a problem with keeping the Vietnam War in the past through the event’s terminology. “Day of National Resentment” also implied a South Vietnamese nationalism that second-generation Vietnamese Americans might have felt uncomfortable with adopting, since it did not align with their identities as American-born Vietnamese citizens. Dang argues, “anticommunism has taken on other important meanings for those who engage in its discourses and practices so that it becomes necessary to understand Vietnamese American anticommunism as a cultural politics.” The different ways of expressing anticommunism between the elders and youth in San Diego reflects a generational gap within the broader Vietnamese American community.¹⁶

VAOHP demonstrates that there are other ways to understand Little Saigon by applying Dang’s framework for “thinking of anticommunism as a cultural discourse.” If anticommunism is viewed as a cultural politics in the Vietnamese American community, it moves beyond a strict “opposition to [neither] communist ideology nor does it strictly mean a specific opposition to communist Vietnam.” I adopt this definition of anticommunism in my cultural analysis of my father’s oral history and the oral histories from VAOHP. Further, I explore how anticommunism takes on other meanings in these oral histories.¹⁷

An Imagined Political Community

Anticommunism in Westminster’s Little Saigon can be extreme because of its leading role in the Vietnamese diaspora in preserving a Vietnamese heritage overseas. The branding of the name “Little Saigon” is a reflection of South Vietnamese nationalism. Based on this fact, scholars Christian Collet and Hiroko Furuya argue that Little Saigon “is better

conceived of as an ‘imagined political community’: a label for a nation that is inventing new traditions and building a public culture to achieve recognition from the state.”¹⁸ When referring to Little Saigon, I use the definition that it is also an “imagined political community” beyond Westminster. Anti-communist events like Black April and other community protests in Little Saigon can be viewed as a new tradition in the Vietnamese diaspora that seeks recognition from the U.S. nation-state. Collet and Furuya borrow this concept from Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Political Communities*, which argues that “the concept of nation is more cognitive and, as such, transcendent of location.”¹⁹ Thus, Vietnamese Americans do not necessarily have to live in Little Saigon to consider it their community nor is Little Saigon limited to Bolsa Avenue.

Collet and Furuya argue, “Little Saigon is moving beyond its traditional place in the literature as an ‘enclave’ or ‘place’ of cultural comfort.” This shift is demonstrated by the tension between Vietnamese Americans who disagree over the cultural and political meaning of anticommunism in Little Saigon. For example, in 2009, Vietnamese Americans in San Jose, California, demanded the recall of the city’s first Vietnamese American councilmember, Madison Phuong Nguyen, “for not supporting Little Saigon as the name of a proposed district.” Councilwoman Nguyen was protested against because Vietnamese Americans claimed that her lack of support for naming the ethnic enclave indicated that she had “an issue with the Vietnamese political identity.” The Little Saigon name is important to many Vietnamese Americans because it makes a strong political statement. This is similar to how the elders of the Vietnamese American community in San Diego wanted the words, “Day of National Resentment,” displayed on the 2004 Black April banners. The elders compromised and displayed both “Day of National Resentment” and “Day of Commemoration” banners to support youth involvement.³¹ Despite this compromise, the generational gap is not entirely bridged.²⁰

Two other protests about the Vietnamese political identity in 2008 and 2009 within Little Saigon surrounded *Nguoi Viet Daily*, a Vietnamese language newspaper, and the Vietnamese Arts and Letter Association (VAALA), a non-profit community organization. In *Transnationalizing Viet Nam*, scholar Kieu-Linh Caroline Valverde details VAALA’s January 2009 art exhibit, *FOB II: Art Speaks*, and how anticommunist protesters shut it down.²¹ Valverde explains the community politics behind the protests in 2008 and 2009:

The exhibit was a direct reaction to a more than year-long protest by anticommunist groups against a Vietnamese American newspaper for printing an “offensive” image of an art piece by Chau Huynh and to a recall campaign against the first female Vietnamese elected to office in the United States, Madison Nguyen, arising from a business-district-naming issue.²²

The protested image published by *Nguoi Viet Daily* of Chau Huynh's artwork, *Pedicure Basin*, offended members of the community because the former South Vietnamese flag was painted onto a footbath. This was perceived as disrespectful to the former RVN flag and considered the work of Vietnamese communists. *FOB II: Art Speaks* can be considered as a counter protest to earlier anticommunism protests in Little Saigon for its blatant use of symbols and images that were representative of communist Vietnam.

Despite the fact that the communist Vietnamese flag was not technically displayed in the art exhibit in its original form, a flag composed of a "quilt consisting of different-size South Vietnamese and North Vietnamese flags woven together" called the *Unity Flag* by Chau Huynh offended anticommunist protesters. According to Valverde, protesters were so infuriated that they were driven to use physical violence on James Du, the man responsible for showcasing the *Unity Flag*.²³ Du said, "I counter protested to begin an open dialogue, but before anything could be exchanged, I was beaten."²⁴ The *Orange County Register* reported that the father of one artist, Brian Doan, joined others in protesting the art exhibit, stating that "he was angry about his son's photograph and that he had spent 10 years in a communist prison."²⁵ The subjects in Doan's photograph included a bust of Ho Chi Minh and symbols of the communist Vietnamese flag on the tank top of a girl sitting down.²⁶ *FOB II: Art Speaks* was a protest against anticommunism in Little Saigon that resulted in further dividing the community and families dealing with anticommunism.

In an interview I conducted with the Internal Vice President of VAALA, she described how the immediate aftermath of *FOB II: Art Speaks* affected VAALA board members:

A lot of board members at that time had to resign because they didn't want to be in the public eye because they didn't want to be associated with this kind of bad and negative publicity. I think that it caused a lot of heartache for a lot of people. We had a lot of really deep conversations and as a board we had a retreat afterwards. People were dealing with personal and professional issues. Certain people felt that it could have been handled better and other people were very adamant about not giving in to the protesters in any way. It's a two-way street where we can put certain things out as an organization and have the best intentions, but we can only plan for so much.²⁷

VAALA experienced internal divisions and tensions in the midst of the protests. However, despite the conflicts, the Internal Vice President of VAALA said, "*FOB II* put the organization on the map in terms of a nonprofit organization that was trying to do something that was very ground breaking."²⁸ This notoriety, according to VAALA's internal Vice President, presents the possibility for a future *FOB III* art exhibit, one that may provide another opportunity to bridge the community through artwork concerning anticommunism.

Little Saigon as a Third Space

In *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg argues that there is a problem with place in America and identifies the solution to this problem:

The examples set by societies that have solved the problem of place and those set by small towns and vital neighborhoods, must find its balance in three realms of experience. One is domestic, a second is gainful or productive, and the third is inclusively sociable, offering both the basis of community and the celebration of it.²⁹

Based on Oldenburg's definition, Little Saigon serves as a "third place" for many Vietnamese Americans. As an "imagined political community," Little Saigon still serves as a shared public space for Vietnamese Americans in Southern California that functions through its ethnic businesses. In 2006, during a monumental moment in Little Saigon, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger gave remarks before signing an executive order honoring Vietnamese Heritage in Westminster.³⁰ He also added that, "Just alone here in Little Saigon there are 4,000 businesses."³¹ Those businesses serve as a community in Little Saigon.

According to a 1994 *Los Angeles Times* report, "Little Saigon is considered a major business, cultural and social center to seven out of ten Vietnamese."³² Despite the high ratio, according to the Bureau of the Census in 1992, "less than 5 percent of California's estimated 300,000 Vietnamese residents live in Westminster, the city in which the commercial area is located."³³ Recent community politics and protests in Little Saigon changed the way it is understood beyond a place by both scholars and Vietnamese Americans, but Little Saigon remains a historically important place. According to scholars Colette Marie McLaughlin and Paul Jesilow in, "Conveying a Sense of Community along Bolsa Avenue," Little Saigon serves as a model for a new emerging form of urban village that "primarily serves persons living miles outside its boundaries... [through] ethnic businesses that furnish a sense of place."³⁴ This explains why many Vietnamese Americans consider Little Saigon an important place in the Vietnamese diaspora, regardless of whether they reside there or not.

Telling and Understanding Vietnamese American Stories

The oral histories from UC Irvine's VAOHP that I examine are interviews by students with family rapport and some prior knowledge of their family histories. Despite having an insider's approach, the student interviewers faced challenges when conducting their interviews because of the public nature of the VAOHP. Although my father agreed to the interview, it was challenging for him to be completely relaxed due to the academic nature of my project. Despite these challenges, insightful narratives about Vietnamese Americans are successfully shared through these oral histories because of the

questions asked by interviewers. I analyze how anticommunism is expressed in two oral histories from VAOHP and an oral history of my father, Dr. Hoang, which I conducted. Cuong Nguyen and Loan Thi Kim Nguyen narrate the two oral histories from VAOHP.

The oldest narrator is my father, Dr. Hoang, born in 1947, and the youngest narrator is Loan Thi Kim Nguyen, born in 1960. Cuong Nguyen was born in 1956. All three narrators escaped from Vietnam by boat between 1978 and 1987 and settled in Southern California to raise their families. Cuong lives in Irvine, Loan lives in Duarte, and Dr. Hoang lives in Santa Ana. Despite not living in Westminster, these narrators visit Little Saigon for various reasons. Dr. Hoang has a medical office in Little Saigon and Cuong visits Little Saigon for the food. When asked about visiting Little Saigon Loan said, “when I go to Little Saigon or Phuoc Loc Tho (the Asian Garden Mall) I see it’s so busy and I don’t think I can handle that so once in a while I go back there to Little Saigon, but I don’t go there a lot.”³⁵ Out of the three narrators, only two express going to Little Saigon frequently. Not all first-generation Vietnamese Americans identify Little Saigon as an important place to them for a sense of community. Despite recognizing Little Saigon as a place like Saigon in Vietnam, Loan does not want to live there because she believes that Little Saigon is too noisy and prefers her home in the city of Duarte, in Los Angeles County, because it is quiet.

One obvious reason for identifying with the Little Saigon community is the dominant Vietnamese language there, but this is not enough to attract all Vietnamese Americans. Despite being less fluent in English, Loan does not visit Little Saigon often or live there. Loan has difficulty communicating in English when speaking to her daughter, Kathy Le, during their interview. In her field notes, Kathy notes that she would like to do a follow-up interview with her mother in Vietnamese for a more open interview. Cuong communicated in English fluently to his daughter, Adrienne Nguyen. Language was not a barrier between Cuong and Adrienne. Even though my father speaks Vietnamese more fluently than English, he communicated in English to me during our interview. Although I am bilingual, I requested that my father speak in English during our interview for the purpose of capturing his candid words. At times I did have to rephrase a question in Vietnamese for my father to understand, but he consciously responded in English to my questions because of my request. All three oral histories share a level of uneasiness due to the academic nature of the interviews, which transformed the familial relationships into a more formal one between interviewers and interviewees.

Even though Cuong Nguyen visits Little Saigon for Vietnamese food he said, “I don’t get involved with the Vietnamese community because I know they have a lot of b.s. politics, a lot of crappy things out there, and I’m not a politician. You might say I’m selfish, but that’s okay because I’m just being

myself.”³⁶ Little Saigon is not a community that all first-generation Vietnamese Americans designate as a replacement of their home country. Cuong said, “I have my own community of friends, a circle of friends from high school for almost fifty years now.”³⁷ He considers his friends his own personal Vietnamese community, but chooses not to associate himself with the broader Little Saigon community. The community politics in Little Saigon are identified as a negative trait with which Cuong does not want to associate.

Perhaps Loan Thi Kim Nguyen is also criticizing the bigger Vietnamese community in Little Saigon when she says that it is too noisy for her and prefers her neighborhood in Duarte, despite its lack of a big Vietnamese community. When speaking about her neighbors she said, “I don’t see anything racist in my town yet, maybe somewhere else, but not in my town, the place where I live.”³⁸ The sentiments about Little Saigon that both Loan Thi Kim Nguyen and Cuong Nguyen express are an exception to the belief that first-generation Vietnamese Americans need Little Saigon to convey a sense of community in their lives. The recent anticommunism protests in Little Saigon might be part of the politics and noise that both Cuong and Loan both avoid.

Dr. Hoang feels that he is a proud member of Little Saigon and its Vietnamese American community. He explains why he decided to open a medical practice in Little Saigon:

In 1992, I decided to open my practice in Little Saigon because I wanted to live with the community, help the community, and speak Vietnamese. I have no problem with American patients. I did my residency training in New York so I have no problems with treating the American people, but here in the Vietnamese community I love to treat them because we share the same culture and language.³⁹

Dr. Hoang emphasizes his desire to help the Little Saigon community with his skills as a Vietnamese medical doctor. He does not view his workplace as distinctly “gainful or productive” because it is also an “inclusively sociable [place], offering both the basis of community and the celebration of it” in Westminster.⁴⁰ Dr. Hoang’s oral history revealed that Little Saigon was both his second and third place because he works in the same place that he considers his community.

When talking about his patients as his community Dr. Hoang said, “I have an older Vietnamese patient who told me that since his parents died already, I am like a parent who takes care of him now in his old age. My patients ask me when I plan to retire. I tell them don’t worry, never.”⁴¹ Dr. Hoang has practiced medicine in Little Saigon for about two decades. Aside from his medical office, he speaks on Vietnamese language radio stations to help educate the Vietnamese-speaking community in Little Saigon about health issues.⁴² His second and third places are not “physically separate and distinct places” how Oldenburg defines a balanced life.⁴³ If Dr. Hoang did not work in Little Saigon and see

his patients every week, he would not feel as connected to the community. He sees his patients and other community members informally in Little Saigon outside of his office in many of the restaurants, shops, and celebrations; therefore, Little Saigon “[offers] both the basis of community and the celebration of it.”⁴⁴

Anticommunism in Little Saigon does not deter Vietnamese Americans who are not community “politicians” from visiting. Even though Cuong Nguyen is critical of community politics he still goes to Little Saigon to eat Vietnamese food. Dr. Hoang also does not see himself as a politician and said, “Everybody has their own skills to use to help the community and mine is in the medical field.”⁴⁵ Since both Cuong and Dr. Hoang distinguish themselves from being “politicians” when in Little Saigon, it reveals that the community politics there are highly visible to the public. Dr. Hoang summarizes what he thinks about politics in Little Saigon:

The Little Saigon community is a very strong community. With time it will have more affluence and a stronger voice in the political life. The U.S. government will pay more attention to Little Saigon now because they know that we are a strong community with many people. Politicians pay more attention because of that.⁴⁶

Dr. Hoang’s insights on Little Saigon reveal how it is an “imagined political community” that is “the product of transformation and struggle, for incorporation in Western society and establishing an identity lost in the face of dual erasures by the United States and Vietnam.”⁴⁷ If the U.S. nation-state is only paying attention to Vietnamese Americans now because of a strong Little Saigon “imagined political community,” then when did it fail to pay attention?

First-generation Vietnamese Americans, like my father, who were once refugees of the Vietnam War, face a contradicting identity in America. Collet and Furuya argue that “to understand the idea of Little Saigon, one must not only consider Vietnamese Americans as ‘subjects of U.S. war and imperialism,’ but the impact that the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) has had on community development.”⁴⁸ Thus, Vietnamese Americans marching with both the South Vietnam and American flag during the 2013 Black April event might look contradictory to outsiders trying to understand why Vietnamese Americans support the American War in Vietnam, especially since South Vietnam was lost to the CPV in 1975 as U.S. troops withdrew. Collet and Furuya observe that “infused in the anti-communist narrative is a critique of white-dominant politics as well as American disengagement from the RVN, the theme of ‘betrayal’ [is] evident in recent calls for Vietnamese Americans to be heard on the subject of the war.”⁴⁹ The theme of “betrayal” is also evident in both Cuong Nguyen and Dr. Hoang’s oral histories.

Cuong Nguyen explains his thoughts on U.S. Policy in Vietnam during and after the war:

About ten thousand people were left behind by the U.S. government. So we were mad. I was mad. Really pissed off, we were mad. But when you grow older and see the war you understand more about the situation. They could not take everybody. Well, they just tried the best that they can. Speaking of the war, that was a big mess back then, but reading through the history I understand more about the situation then.⁵⁰

Cuong was angered by the U.S. government’s “betrayal” in 1975 while he was still in South Vietnam, but when he became an American citizen he was willing to be understanding of the U.S. government’s inability to help him and others escape South Vietnam after the war ended and the CPV invaded. On the process of American citizenship, Cuong said, “When you become a U.S. citizen, you deny your previous citizenship so you’re no longer Vietnamese citizen. For myself, I don’t want to keep that. It’s a part of history now.”⁵¹ He now fully embraces his American citizenship, while willingly giving up his Vietnamese one. Cuong did not feel an erasure of his identity when he gained American citizenship. It was very clear to him that he was no longer a Vietnamese citizen and negotiated the past to fit his American identity.

Dr. Hoang also looks back on the Vietnam War with a critical eye. He describes how the U.S. government betrayed Vietnamese people in South Vietnam during the war:

The U.S. policy back then abruptly changed. They did not know how to prepare us slowly; they just ran away abruptly. It was very rude to the Vietnamese people then. That policy was okay in the long term, but in the short term it was a bad thing for Vietnamese people. I understand now, but back then I was angry. Many people died.⁵²

Dr. Hoang also looks back at the past as a Vietnamese citizen, but embraces his current citizenship in America by now choosing to understand the U.S. government’s actions during the Vietnam War. Cuong Nguyen and Dr. Hoang both remain critical of the U.S. government during the end of the Vietnam War, but as American citizens they have the opportunity to move on, although they are unwilling to forget the past in their narratives.

Conclusion

In *Everything In Its Path*, scholar Kai Erikson’s analysis of the loss of community on Buffalo Creek can be applied to the loss of home and community that former Vietnamese American refugees experienced after the Fall of Saigon. Erikson suggests that people who have lost their home and community may be more paralyzed by having to deal with reality “without the help of a communally shared filter,” than by imaginary fears.⁵³ Anticommunism is the shared filter that Vietnamese Americans in Little Saigon subscribe to in order to deal with their reality after the Fall of Saigon and their existence in America today. Loan Thi Kim

Nguyen, Cuong Nguyen, and Dr. Hoang all express a form of anticommunism in their oral histories when speaking about Vietnam and what they want their children to know about Vietnam. Loan wants to take her children with her to visit Vietnam one day so that they may see first-hand how people in Vietnam live under communist rule. She said, “I want them to know so they respect it here more.”⁵⁴ Anticommunism in this sense is expressed to share what life is like in Vietnam today under communism to appreciate American citizenship.

Vietnamese Americans express their opinions about what happened during the Vietnam War and their concerns over the future of Vietnam through anticommunism. Cuong Nguyen said, “There are two different versions, one that is anti-war and is willing to listen to the communist side, but it’s not a hundred percent the truth. Those who fought side-by-side with the Republic Party of Vietnam are the ones who saw the real war.”⁵⁵ He authorizes Vietnamese Americans who fought for the RVN with the real version of the war and disregards those who favor the CPV. Vietnamese refugees may have escaped communist Vietnam with their lives, but they still hold onto memories of the Vietnam they lost to war. Dr. Hoang reflects on the future of Vietnam when he said, “I believe the people in Vietnam will have a better life soon because Vietnam will change because of the Internet and economics. The U.S. going back to help Vietnam now is good too.”⁵⁶ Dr. Hoang expresses hope for Vietnamese people in Vietnam today to have a better life and also move on from the war. His belief that Vietnam needs help from the United States reflects his criticism of the communist Vietnamese government and human rights issues prevalent as of late. This version of anticommunism is not the traditional one of “us vs. them.” Anticommunism allows Vietnamese Americans to tell their stories about their experiences as political refugees as they move on with their lives. Bridges will form when diverse Vietnamese American refugee stories are heard and understood by future Vietnamese American generations and the American public.

Just as first-generation Vietnamese Americans remain critical of the CPV through anticommunism, they also remain critical of the U.S. government and its role in the Vietnam War. Moving on from the Fall of Saigon is possible through anticommunism as a cultural discourse for Vietnamese Americans, as it allows Little Saigon to grow as a community. Anticommunism takes on different meanings within a diverse Vietnamese American culture and is not limited to imaginary fears and hatred toward communist ideologies. As an online public archive and space for an objective view of a Vietnamese American history, UC Irvine’s VAOHP is a successful model for bridging the generational gap and easing inter-generational tensions in the Vietnamese American community through a myriad of family narratives. ♦

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AMERICAN PLACES

423: SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY

Writing in Paris

The American Literary Community of the 1920s

DANIELLE LOPEZ

This essay was written for Dr. Carrie Lane's Search for Community course in the spring of 2013. On a quest to find their sense of place in the world, while also seeking to understand their true identities, several American writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, and F. Scott Fitzgerald ventured off to Paris, creating a contagious literary community in the 1920s postwar modern world. This essay uses scholars Kai Erikson, Yi-Fu Tuan, Ray Oldenburg, and Noël Riley Fitch to examine the advantages of community and culture among expatriates.

With ripe mandarins and roasted chestnuts in his pocket, a very young Ernest Hemingway strolls along a street in the Left Bank, taking in the chilly, blunt winter scene that has just fallen upon Paris. Admiring the bare trees against the ashen sky, he notices the freshly washed gravel path as he continues his walk through the gardens of the Jardin du Luxembourg, an area so rich in landscape and beauty, it inspires those living from all around the world, even in the harsh cold season. After leaving the gardens, he ambles along to the Musée du Luxembourg, which housed some of the great Cézannes, Monets and other Impressionists that he admired so much. This was not the first time he had visited the museum. In fact, he frequented Lux-

embourg often to view the paintings of Cézanne, a man from which he learned to write simple true sentences by studying the curvature of his brush strokes. After his afternoon study course, he continues his stroll through the Parisian quarter until he approaches 27 rue de Fleurus. He knocks. Moments later, a heavily built peasant-looking woman with beautiful eyes opens the door. It is Gertrude Stein. She welcomes him in from the cold and he enters without hesitation. Inside, he sits among dozens of modern paintings that hang on the wall, some from Pablo Picasso, and others from Henri Matisse. Stein casually sits behind a thick desk. She asks, "What do you have for me today, Hem?" He instantly pulls out a manuscript from his bag and pushes it toward Miss Stein. She opens it up and begins to read.¹

In the 1920s, a generation of American writers had a love affair with Paris. It was not just the sweet smell of croissants baking, the bold aroma of French drip coffee, or the historic architecture that was appealing but rather, the feeling of acceptance and attachment to a community comprised of other writers that made the City of Lights a point of attraction. This community of expatriates was dubbed The Lost Generation, a group of individuals who uprooted from their country post-World War I in search of their place in the literary world. This paper explores the significance of The Lost Generation community that formed in Paris between 1920 and 1929, along with the cultural movement of expatriation that derived from moving abroad. By using primary source documents such as memoirs and journal articles written by the American expatriates, and secondary source documents written by their biographers and historians, this paper argues that a community, predominantly composed of Americans, was formed in Paris rather than in the United States because they had to flee a life of already-fixed values and traditions in order to create

and claim their own space in the postwar world. While on a quest to find their true identities, expatriates found community, one that enriched their lives and ultimately kept them moving forward as writers.

I: Becoming Expatriates

*"You are all a génération perdue...a lost generation."*²

—Gertrude Stein

While The Lost Generation was not the first group of Americans to live in and write about Paris, France, it was they who developed the trend of expatriation and the building of community on Parisian grounds. From Ralph Waldo Emerson to William Burroughs, Paris became an escape for many American writers, but arguably more so for The Lost Generation of the postwar 1920s—the era of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. However, prior to delving into The Lost Generation, initial recognition should be given to the first American writers that set out for Paris in search of inspiration: the Renaissance dissenters of the nineteenth-century.

Composed of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry David Thoreau, this group of prominent American writers spent time abroad, touring several countries in Europe, with lucrative time spent in Paris. In his 1856 travel novel *English Traits*, Ralph Waldo Emerson exclaimed that, "Paris was a loud modern New York of a place," and that his visit at the Jardin des Plantes, an elaborate botanical garden located on the Left Bank of the Seine River, "forever changed his direction as a writer."³ Emerson's moment of insight into the interconnectedness of things in the Jardin des Plantes was a "moment of almost visionary intensity that pointed him away from theology and toward science."⁴ Paris had shed a new light on Emerson enough to dramatically change him as a writer and inspired other transcendentalists, such as Henry David Thoreau, to recognize that nature, and its relationship with the soul, was inextricably linked to divinity and comfort.

Much like Emerson, after visiting Paris, Thoreau adapted to nature and bohemian living, and believed "wilderness was the best environment to settle and embrace reality."⁵ Meanwhile, for Edgar Allan Poe, spending time in Paris essentially led to his first detective novel, set prominently in Montmartre. Several novels would soon follow and admiration would grow for Poe's work within the Parisian streets, "making him one of the first American authors of the nineteenth-century to become more popular in Europe than in the United States."⁶ In addition, it is said that Herman Melville enjoyed his trip to Paris, and roughly ten years later, Nathaniel Hawthorne would spend time living there as well, researching and preparing to write his novel, *The Marble Faun*, which was inspired solely by his experiences in Europe.⁷

What the world saw in the mid nineteenth-century was a mere preview of the Paris and European-inspired writing by

American men who left the United States to gain fresh perspective. What the Renaissance dissenters provided to The Lost Generation of the 1920s was an ideology comprised of exile and escapism from their place of origin that would better help their understanding of their place in the world while helping them grow as writers.

The Lost Generation was termed by Gertrude Stein, an American writer and expatriate who called Paris her home after moving there in 1903. After World War I, several American male war veterans-turned-writers traveled to Paris to shed the early twentieth-century traditional American lifestyle that centered on work, family, and religion. Through word of mouth, these new social thinkers met Stein, where, on the Saturday evenings spent in her apartment, they would dine, drink, and discuss their latest work. After a while, she began to notice a pattern amongst the men: they were drinkers, arguers, spitfires, and wanderlusts, all searching to write the perfect novel. The majority of them were young, middle-class, white men, born roughly around the year 1900, who served in the war and were now looking for validation and their place in the world. It was around that time that Stein described the men as a "*génération perdue*—a lost generation."⁸

Another way of understanding The Lost Generation is to ignore it as an actual name, and instead recognize it as an object—a *discursive object*—as Michel Foucault calls it. He explains that, "a discursive object is simultaneously a discovery and a product of inquiry. It is found because the inquirer's thought led him to it."⁹ With that, The Lost Generation is both an object and a method of discourse because it represented a type of object that could be recognized as a whole: the youth generation of the 1920s, who were anti-traditionalists, representing and creating a discourse on the symbol of new age thinkers. Spoken from one of the most prolific members of The Lost Generation, F. Scott Fitzgerald explained that, "Each generation essentially needed to acknowledge its precursors—madmen and outlaws—who give an intellectual structure to the generation's own rebellion—and must also witness or participate in historic events which furnish its members with a common fund of experience."¹⁰ In turn, this rebellious, literary discursive object known as The Lost Generation was thus created, and could be recognized as both a style of the modern age and as a community composed of non-traditional ideologies.

The American male writers of The Lost Generation consisted of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Carlos Williams, E.E. Cummings, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, and Malcolm Cowley. The American women writers were Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Beach, Janet Flanner, Djuna Barnes, and Margaret Anderson. They hailed from all over the United States—San Francisco, the mid-west, and the east coast—and were in search of a sense of place and community that was unavailable to them in America because they did not subscribe to the traditional mold. These American expatriates did not invent deracination—the act of uprooting from their

place of origin and relocating (in this case, abroad)—but rather created their Paris voyages into a vogue, becoming leaders of a progressive act that many would follow, such as The Beat Generation of the 1950s and 60s.

There were many reasons to migrate to Paris in the 1920s. America was entering the Golden Age, or the Roarin' 20s as some suggest. With World War I just ending, the decade soon found itself full of joy and happiness, with modern accomplishments such as the first airing of a radio broadcast and the first electric razor, plus economic prosperity. Money allowed Americans to purchase more and travel abroad inexpensively especially as a third-class steamship was introduced that could bring thousands of writers, artists, and students abroad. Furthermore, it helped that the European currency exchange rate favored the American dollar. On the other hand, while the Golden Age prospered, the Temperance Movement, with its strict prohibition laws, dampened those living in the United States, primarily the youth culture and men returning from war, who both wanted to escape regulations. Moreover, even at a time of such prosperity, soldiers returning from war were finding the transition back into civilian life rather difficult. Returning soldiers lacked steady work and careers. Even those who were lucky enough to find consistent work could not shake the dislike of their new, formal white-collar jobs. Additionally, several grew to reject the political and religious beliefs that were instilled in them from their childhood. According to Malcolm Cowley in his memoir of Paris, "these individuals essentially found themselves exiles in their own land, spectators of a culture they had no hand in creating, and disenfranchised socially, economically, and politically."¹¹

Arguably, the *main* reason why American writers migrated to Paris was because they found themselves without a concrete community. The writers lived all over the United States, and were therefore without a great sense of place that would enable them to feel connected to the larger literary world. Scholar Yi-Fu Tuan explains that, "place is security, a center of felt value where biological needs are satisfied."¹² Without a sense of place, one feels detached. Without a community comprised of a shared cultural way of living within a common place, one also feels lost. Sociologist Kai Erikson explains that,

When one is talking about the *way of life* one is essentially talking about culture. It is those modes of thinking and knowing and doing that a people learn to regard as natural, those beliefs and attitudes that help shape a people's way of looking at themselves and the rest of the universe, those ideas and symbols that a people employ to make sense of their everyday experience as members of a society.¹³

The way of life for these modern writers was considered a huge departure from traditional American standards. They not only chose to question the war that their elders support-

ed, but also critiqued the overall morality and value system of the civilization after the war. Lacking a sense of place with a shared cultural belief system, these modern writers had no choice but to look elsewhere to plant their roots. They looked to Paris because the city always seemed to accept western writers and vigilantes, and rebellious newcomers seemed to gain more grace as non-traditionalists. There was also a romanticized vision of Paris that Americans had because of the city's history and charm. Many Americans also became familiar with France, as both countries were allies during the war. Lastly, because the distance between the two countries was so great, freedom in every sense of the word became readily available. Taken together, there was no better time to leave for Paris.

One by one, with the knowledge of where to go by word of mouth, Americans arrived in Paris in the late 1910s but primarily during the 1920s. While American expatriates joined the others at local street cafés, bars, and bookstores, Paris was beginning to agree with them. It was not too long until a community of shared cultures was born, created solely by the American expatriates who called the Left Bank of Paris their home.

II. The Culture of the Community

*"The only real voyage is not an approach to landscape but a viewing of the universe with the eyes of a hundred other people."*¹⁴

—Marcel Proust

Paris warmly welcomed the exiled. According to Noël Riley Fitch, a historian of the 1920s American expatriates,

That Paris has been the second home for artists for centuries is no accident. The City of Lights has represented the best in Western culture...One sees this in the beauty of the architecture of the grand boulevards and monuments as well as in the names of its streets, for Paris honours its artists and philosophers. Paris has always accepted and nourished genius. Thus, it promises a haven to the fleeing or seeking artist. It is the ancient city of the exiled and the centre of Western art.¹⁵

While in Paris, the youthful and romantic writers of the 1920s discovered that their inner exile was unconfined within the community, for they were able to seek acceptance while being in good company with others who shared similar interests and outlooks on life. Cowley explained that "in postwar Paris, they escaped the hypocrisy and repression of America and found cheap living, laissez-faire standards of conduct, a sense of community, and a feeling that they were living, creatively unfettered, at the cutting edge of art in the cultural center of the world."¹⁶ Paris was their haven. For Hemingway, "Paris had been his university."¹⁷ Everything he learned was due in some part because of his living abroad amongst other American writers, or studying artists such as Cézanne. For Fitzgerald, "Paris was his stimulation," explaining to a *New York World* reporter that, "France has the only two things toward which we drift as we grow old-

er—intelligence and good manners.”¹⁸ The city’s sincere, warm welcome in addition to a thriving community fueled by shared interests were principle reasons why many Americans joined other expatriates, and why many ultimately chose to stay.

As previously mentioned, the expatriates experienced freedom that they had not felt back home or during the war. After joining the community, they were unrestricted and more liberated to be themselves. The political and religious obligations circumscribed in America became non-existent once abroad. They were free to write, drink, flirt with sexuality, reject traditional gender roles, rebel, and reflect on their place in the world. Paris in the 1920s was a giant playground for grown adults. They were accountable for very little, and roamed the streets at all hours of the day and night. They gained inspiration and ideas from nature, museums, and socialization among the community. By understanding this non-traditionalist philosophy of living, one can understand that personal freedom lay at the heart of the community.

However, Erikson argues that, “through every center of a cultural space is an *axis of variation*, which includes identifying motifs of a culture that are just not the core values to which people pay homage but also the *lines of point and counterpoint* along which they diverge.”¹⁹ There were two visible consistent divergent points within the literary community. The first was the struggle between independence and dependence. On the one hand, the American writers thrived on independence but simultaneously were very dependent on others within the community. This juxtapositional binary is identified as one axis of variation. For example, Ernest and Hadley Hemingway had their own apartment in Paris but often borrowed money from Sylvia Beach, the owner of Shakespeare and Company, when they were short on cash. One account of this was when Beach loaned Hemingway money so that he and Hadley could return to Toronto for the birth of their son. Other times, Beach would lend Hemingway and other expatriates library books along with sending out their mail. In an October 21, 1929 newspaper article, Wambly Bald, journalist for *La Vie de Bohème (As Lived on the Left Bank)*, the European newspaper edition of the *Chicago Tribune*, wrote of the Left Bank: “Its chief asset is the charming personality of Sylvia Beach whose bookshop on rue de l’Odéon is the favored social club of the literati. Men of letters have become so attached to the place that they call there for their mail, cash checks and borrow money.”²⁰ Another example of dependability on the community was when Hemingway relied on Gertrude Stein to edit his manuscripts, which she obliged without fuss. Despite his self-proclamation as an independent writer, Hemingway needed Stein just as much as he needed his wife. It is clear that this binary of independence versus dependence played a huge role in the community.

The second divergent point was the struggle between being self-centered and group-centered. Many of the writers in the community were self-centered by nature. To write and to be published meant that days and nights revolved around them.

The writers’ spouses had no choice but to live in the shadows of their lovers. At the same time, the expatriates were extremely group-centered in that they relied heavily on friendships, drinking buddies, peer readership, and travel comrades. One example is when Fitzgerald asked Hemingway to take the train with him to pick up a car for his wife, Zelda, in the city of Lyon, France. Fitzgerald could have gone by himself but he insisted that he needed company as he did not want to travel alone. While on the trip, Fitzgerald ended up getting sick and depended on Hemingway for several additional things other than companionship, such as medical attention. This instance reveals that not only was Fitzgerald heavily dependent on Hemingway, but also that he craved companionship, even for what seemed like the most mundane of tasks.

Erikson argues that in a community there are always two extremes pulling from both sides but essentially where culture is shaped and lived is found in the middle. In order to maintain a healthy balance between two binaries, such as independence and dependence and self-centered and group-centered, one must find and keep the equilibrium. There is core ambivalence in every culture that needs maintenance but Erikson suggests that there be a balance between these dynamic tensions in order to maintain peaceful communities. The community of The Lost Generation displays the axis of variations prominently, and I argue that without community, these individuals would not have been as successful.

III: Third Places on the Left Bank

“We loved the big studio with the great paintings.”²¹

—Ernest Hemingway

“Who is Sylvia, what is she? That all our scribes commend her?”²²

—James Joyce

The literary community of the American expatriates lived on the Left Bank of the Seine River. This was true for the Renaissance dissenters in the nineteenth-century and would remain the same for The Beat Generation that followed. The Seine River essentially divided the city of Paris: the expatriates inhabited the intellectual left, while the tourists occupied the vacationing right. According to American expatriate and journalist Janet Flanner, “the inexpensive Left Bank hotels would be fully booked during the summer as boats full of Americans came and occupied for weeks on end in the alluring city.”²³ Within the Left Bank, there were several places where the American literary community gathered. For the purpose of this paper, this essay will focus on two locations where community thrived and blossomed during the 1920s: Gertrude Stein’s apartment at 27 rue de Fleurus and Sylvia Beach’s bookstore, Shakespeare and Company, on the rue de l’Odéon.

Gertrude Stein’s apartment, located near the gardens of Luxembourg, was a small studio that attracted countless American, Spaniard, and English expatriates. It was Stein whom they visited because she was a brash older woman who was not afraid

to speak her mind. Many of them looked up to and relied on her to mentor them because she was a strong and intelligent woman with a solid reputation among those in the Left Bank. While in Paris, Stein and the young writers developed something similar to a mother-son relationship because of their dependence on her. It is said that her apartment was like a shrine displaying hundreds of their work on her walls and manuscripts on her desks. Described in an article published on April 7, 1931 in *La Vie de Bohème*, Bald explained that, “Stein’s apartment was hung with many Cubistic and Impressionistic paintings, some of them from the brush of Picasso.”²⁴ Stein’s door was always open, allowing everyone in the community a place to eat, talk, and get their work critiqued.

In November 1919, Sylvia Beach created a “literary center that magnetically attracted artists from all over the world during the greatest period of literary and artistic innovation since the Renaissance.”²⁵ This place was called Shakespeare and Company. Shakespeare and Company was both a bookshop and lending library whose first attendees were French students who liked having a local shop with English books. Beach enjoyed their visits and often gave recommendations of Henry James, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Thomas Hardy. It was not until the arrival of the Stein and Hemingway clan that Shakespeare and Company would emerge into a gathering place for American writers among the community.

Shakespeare and Company may have been a little bookshop, but its force within the community was great. Much like Stein’s apartment, Shakespeare and Company was another place where the expatriates could frequent for hours to borrow books and meet with other writers for peer readership or companionship. Both of these spaces are what scholar Ray Oldenburg calls a *third place*. In *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg explains that Americans have three places: home, work, and an *informal* hangout. This informal hangout, also known as the third place, is a “generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work.”²⁶ Stein’s apartment and Beach’s bookshop were third places for American literary expatriates because both women hosted and welcomed the community at all hours of the day. The women, who were like motherly figures to the writers, gave encouragement and support while simultaneously enjoying their informal visits. The writers and artists knew they could casually stop by, which is arguably why both locations represent the third place. Additionally, Oldenburg claims that the “prominence of third places varies with cultural setting and historical era.”²⁷ Because this was the Left Bank of Paris in the 1920s, the majority of the American expatriates could walk to and from Stein’s apartment, the bookshop, and their apartments. This prominence became the norm for their culture, and going to these third places was a daily activity that was not forced. This unconscious feeling that drives one to a place is what Oldenburg claims makes the third place.

IV: Knowing Them as Achieved Writers

“He’s the first contemporary I’ve ever met whom I’ll admit is my superior in mental capacity.”²⁸

—Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise* (1920)

The American expatriate literary community was rebellious. They questioned the value system that the previous civilization created while they were at war. They rejected countless traditional American beliefs and were looking for a sense of place and community. They were independent in the sense that they were living on their own, but they were dependent because they needed their community. The world knows them as The Lost Generation: the writers, artists, and poets of the 1920s. Erikson claims that by “distinguishing this generation by their career choice indicates that the population knows them by their *achieved status*: the identities one acquires by what one has done.”²⁹ In his unpublished essay, “Villages,” Erikson explains how community has shifted from one time period, the Age of Agriculture, to another, those of more modern times. He borrows two distinct definitions—*gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*—from an 1887 German sociologist, Ferdinand Toennies. Erikson agrees with Toennies when he argues that a *gemeinschaft* way of life is when a community of people have known and lived in the same place of origin, and are recognized solely by this. For example, this would be recognizing someone as “my neighbor from Main Street.” On the opposite side of the spectrum, the “*gesellschaft* way of life consists of people who are known and valued by what they become, what they turn out to be, what they make of themselves.”³⁰ That same neighbor from Main Street would now be recognized as the “president of his company” because he is known on a formal level and distinguished by his career. The literary community essentially transformed from the *gemeinschaft* end of the continuum to the *gesellschaft* once they moved to Paris. When they became expatriates, they left the political, religious, and sexual ideologies they were ascribed to back home, and became known by their achieved statuses. Erikson adds that, “at the *gesellschaft* end of the continuum is a world where everyday social relations are more likely to be keyed to certain of the roles a person plays in life.”³¹ The population does not know them personally or on a first-name basis, like Gertrude, Ernest, Scott, or neighbor. Instead, we know them based off of their literary achievements—as the Nobel Peace Prize winner or as the writer of *The Great Gatsby*, *Tender Buttons*, or *The Old Man and the Sea*. Knowing The Lost Generation by the *gesellschaft* point of view is because of all the achievements and richness that came from forming a community in Paris.

Misleading as the term may be, the generation was not *lost* but instead *found*. Noël Riley Fitch explains that, “they were not wanderers but seekers. Like true pilgrims, they were in quest of salvation.”³² By coming together and building a community, these individuals were able to find their sense of place that was full of support, security, and platonic affection toward one another. Yi-Fu Tuan states that, “place is pause, and while

it takes time to form an attachment to place, the quality and intensity of experience matters more than simple duration.”³³ By living in Paris for months and years at a time, this gave the expatriates time to plant their roots, allowing them to identify with Paris as their home. It also allowed them to start over and gain a fresh perspective toward life and love. It was Stein’s investment in her Paris home and the life she created there that allowed a “complete break with the past that made her and offered her a second birth. She was able to reinvent herself in the twentieth-century.”³⁴ Not only did Stein experience rebirth, but the other community members did as well. By moving to Paris, they all were able to escape the oppressive restrictions they struggled with back home. They embodied everything that this new environment came to represent: modernity, freedom, community, and rootedness.

Conclusion: Magic in the Name Paris

“There is never any ending to Paris...”³⁵
—Ernest Hemingway

By taking notes from the great Renaissance dissenters, The Lost Generation was able to represent and model deracination as vogue to generations that followed. Despite the fact that previous writers wrote in Paris, this community was the one that led the popular first wave of expatriation. By creating an American phenomenon of anti-traditionalism on foreign land, The Lost Generation became a role model to others who wanted to follow in its footsteps and be recognized as a symbol of the new modern age: “a time where one finds himself in an environment that promises adventure, power, growth, and transformation, while at the same time, threatens to destroy everything he has, knows, and represents.”³⁶ This binary is what made the act of modern expatriation so exciting, and, once in Paris, the construction and nature of the community is what essentially kept the expatriates there.

This paper has argued that by American writers moving abroad, a community formed that allowed each of its members to find their identities and become successful writers. Dozens of classic literary works exist today because of the move to Paris. The expatriate community has made such a historical impact that, almost a century later, we still continue to read, study, talk about, adore, critique, and praise the novels that it produced.

Additionally, this paper has shown the power of community when there is a third place represented and experienced. When groups of people gather because they feel comfortable and secure with one another, and there is a mutual level of respect amongst them, one of the greatest outcomes is community. Stein’s studio apartment and Beach’s Shakespeare and Company bookshop both served as shared third places that allowed the community to thrive and build off of one another. Without community, with its comfort, relief, and support, The Lost Generation would not have existed. Therefore, it would not have served as role models for future generations, such as The Beat Generation of the 1950s

and 60s, who, like The Lost Generation, created its own community on the Left Bank in Paris. Resembling its founding fathers, The Beat Generation rejected conventions and ideologies regarding religion, sexuality, and politics, and had a passion for writing. Because The Lost Generation positively modeled a life cut from the non-traditional world, The Beat Generation sought out Paris, creating yet again, a generation full of successful literature praised and studied to this day.

The Lost Generation can be seen as a cultural movement, a pattern of history, or a symbolic revision of literal elements of the era.³⁷ What all these variants had in common, and what gave rise to the emergence of what Michel Foucault called a *discursive object*, this joint recognition of a distinct rebellious generation set out to create change in their modern lives. Hemingway’s account of Paris was that the city was, “the best organized for a writer to write.”³⁸ He adds by explaining that Paris was always old and always seeking the new. Each generation makes Paris its own—each builds its memories and houses on top of his own Paris. There is never any ending to Paris, and the memory of each person who has lived there differs from that of any other.³⁹ Stein claims, “Paris was where the twentieth century was.”⁴⁰ Cowley announced that while in Paris, “he was in the company of the high priests of art.”⁴¹ Fitzgerald described the period as, “the greatest, gaudiest spree in history.”⁴² These verbal accounts give us insight as to what it must have been like to live in Paris during the 1920s. Not only do these accounts give us a glimpse of culture—the expatriates’ *way of life*—they show a tie to community, which further validates that their trip from America to Paris was indeed worth it.

Like with all good things, they must come to an end. The community of The Lost Generation stayed strong during the mid 1920s. In fact, the summer of 1925 has often been known as “the year of the 1,000 parties.”⁴³ But, as life happens, things change. Many of the American expatriates left Paris and continued their exploration in other parts of the world, such as Spain, Cuba, and the French Riviera. Others returned to America, just as The Great Depression hit, taking with them everything they learned abroad. Many stayed in Paris and made it their home. However, the journey to Paris showed these expatriates how to shape and live against outmoded values and tradition, with people who shared the same outlook. Overall, what they learned from their exile could be applied no matter where they resided.

In a way, the community died after the 1920s, but the story of the young, rebellious expatriates, set out for adventure and community, and to reflect on their purpose in life as writers, is still studied and romanticized today. To this day, the cobblestone streets on the Left Bank are filled with writers, artists, poets, and philosophers from all over the world, each seeking and walking the same paths as the expatriates that lived there before. With each stone represents history: history of the old and history of the new. By creating our own story in the presence of those past generations, we are molding our own Paris, while the City of Lights vibrantly glows at dusk. ♦

1. Introduction inspired by Hemingway's meetings with Stein in "Miss Stein Instructs," Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*. (New York: Scribner, 1964), 21-24.
2. In a conversation between Hemingway and Stein. Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 61.
3. Robert D. Richardson, Jr. *The Mind on Fire*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 143.
4. *Ibid.*, 143.
5. Roderick Nash. "Philosopher," *Wilderness and the American Mind*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 84.
6. Jeffrey Meyers. *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy*. (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1992).
7. Nathaniel Hawthorne became the consul in Liverpool in 1853. In 1857, his position ended and Hawthorne and his family toured Europe. Upon his arrival back to the United States in 1860, the publication of *The Marble Faun* was released. James R. Mellow. *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980).
8. Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 61.
9. David Macey. *The Lives of Michel Foucault*. (New York: Pantheon, 1993).
10. A conversation between F. Scott Fitzgerald and Malcolm Cowley. Malcolm Cowley. *Exile's Return*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1934), x.
11. *Ibid.*, xi.
12. Yi-Fu Tuan. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 138.
13. Kai T. Erikson. *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1976), 79.
14. Noël Riley Fitch. *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation: A History of Literary Paris in the Twenties and Thirties*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983), 10.
15. Noël Riley Fitch. *Walks in Hemingway's Paris: A Guide to Paris for the Literary Traveler*. (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1989), 11.
16. Cowley, *Exile's Return*, xiii.
17. Roger Asselineau. "Hemingway in Paris," *Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual 1973*.
18. *New York World*, April 3, 1927.
19. Erikson, *Everything in Its Path*, 82.
20. Wambly Bald. *On The Left Bank: 1929-1933*. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987).
21. Fitch, *Walks in Hemingway's Paris*, 71.
22. Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 14.
23. Janet Flanner. *Paris Was Yesterday: 1925-1939*. (New York: The Viking Press, 1972).
24. Bald, *On The Left Bank*, 57.
25. Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 12.
26. Ray Oldenburg. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, coffee shops, community centers, beauty parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts and how they get you through the day*. (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1989).
27. *Ibid.*, 17.
28. Amory Blaine is the young protagonist in F. Scott Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920). It is often said that this novel is semi-autobiographical, and that Fitzgerald portrayed himself as Blaine, a character in search for his place in the world. F. Scott Fitzgerald. *This Side of Paradise*. (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005), Introduction.
29. Kai T. Erikson. "Villages." Unpublished essay, 1998.
30. *Ibid.*, 39.
31. *Ibid.*, 39-40.
32. Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 12.
33. Tuan, *Space and Place*, 198.
34. Shari Benstock. *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).
35. Fitch, *Walks in Hemingway's Paris*, 15.
36. Marc Dolan. *Modern Lives: A Cultural Re-reading of "The Lost Generation"*. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1996).
37. *Ibid.*, 10-11.
38. Donald Pizer. *American Expatriate Writing and the Paris Movement: Modernism and Place*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).
39. Fitch, *Walks in Hemingway's Paris*, 15.
40. Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 14.
41. Cowley, *Exile's Return*, xiv.
42. *Ibid.*, 5.
43. Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 183.

AMERICAN PLACES

401: AMERICAN SUBURBAN CULTURES

The City of Oil, Oranges, and Racism

Oil Fields, the Sundown Ordinance, the Ku Klux Klan, and Racially Restrictive Covenants in “Good Old Brea,” California

C.J. ADAMS

This essay was written for Dr. Elaine Lewinnek’s Suburban Cultures course in the spring of 2013. I wanted to explore the question: How did the city of Brea become so white? In the city’s almost one-hundred year history it has struggled to become a diverse community, especially when it comes to African Americans. The city remains a white spot even among Orange County. In my research I found that Brea had an incredibly racist and restrictive past which included the Ku Klux Klan, a sundown ordinance which kept African Americans from staying in Brea over night, and racially restrictive covenants within home buying. I discovered that Brea had created invisible borders which continue to hinder its growth in both its racial and cultural diversity.

On Wednesday, May 2, 1923, Brea residents flocked to the Red Lantern Theatre to see a vaudeville show. Upon exiting the theatre, they entered into a scene of horror as a cross burst into flames right before their eyes. In the distance another cross atop the city water tower could be seen burning for miles. The next day, the *Orange County News-Her-*

ald reported under the headline “Burning Crosses, Emblems of the Ku Klux Klan, Witnessed in Brea,” the event had been carried out by the Klan. The report read, “Many believe that the Klan is taking this method to make the fact known that it is in evidence in Northern Orange County.” It went on to say that this was the second time in just a few days that the Klan had erected a cross and set a blaze to it, the first taking place on a hill between the city of Brea and Fullerton.¹

This event is just the beginning. Brea’s history includes many shocking instances of racist and restrictive behavior within its suburbs. The city of Brea’s slogan has been “Oil, Oranges, and Opportunity” but for whom is the “opportunity” being promised to? Through the power of the Klan, racially restrictive covenants, and a sundown ordinance, Brea was able to create and maintain borders of segregation around its city limits, borders which have hindered its tolerance and diversity since the city’s incorporation in 1917.

The Oil Fields

Brea began as an oil boom-town in the late part of the 19th century and was incorporated into a city in 1917. It was a small town. According to one resident, “Brea was just a town, that’s all it was; just a town to work in. There was no entertainment. Nothing...Brea was just a closed circle....There weren’t many there, you knew everybody.”² Another resident said, “This was an oil town, and it was a tough town when it first started.”³

According to well-known Orange County author and historian, Esther Ridgway Cramer:

It was the single men and transient oil workers, arriving on the scene to take advantage of the good wages the oil field

work paid, that often gave oil towns like Brea a reputation for being part of the “wild and woolly west.” “Roughneck” and “roustabout” were names given to two types of oil workers...Some of these workers lived up to the descriptive oil field jargon...There were many reports in the local newspapers about the rowdy workers as they returned from their nights out, which they spent in the saloons...As Brea grew there were also reports that certain places in town made liquor available with the proper password...Crap games and impromptu boxing matches were also sources of problems for the lawmen.⁴

This excerpt shows that Brea started off as a city composed mostly of single men with big attitudes and no form of entertainment. This could only lead to trouble, and often in the 1920s and 30s, the men were arrested for disorderly conduct and being drunk in public. Their high wages facilitated this disorderly pastime. With little downtime from their arduous work, many of the men created a public nuisance in their off hours. Their drunken habits created scenes straight out of western films that often ended in belligerent and violent fashion. However, what is missing from Cramer’s excerpt is the issue of race. After all, these were not just any rowdy men; they were rowdy, white men. These white roughnecks and roustabouts held onto racist hegemonic notions, which carried over into the oil industry and Brea. As the saying goes, “boys will be boys.”

Historian William Rintoul tells us:

While the oil fields were a friendly place for most white people, racial discrimination prevailed there as it did throughout much of the country. Most people believed that the color of a person’s skin made a difference, and whites believed that black, brown, and yellow peoples were inferior...racial feelings were exaggerated to the point that these places became widely known as “white man’s towns” in which blacks were not permitted to remain overnight. Nor were there many Orientals.⁵

Rintoul’s assessment reflects the inherent beliefs of oil workers. These racist ideologies helped form Brea’s oil industry, and since oil founded the city, racism was included by default. With the establishment of the city in 1917, and the invention of the automobile in the 1920s, racist sentiments of Brea oil workers became mobile, making it easier to trickle down into the suburbs. Since these white oil workers built a superiority complex when dealing with other races, their “white man towns” would serve as a model for Brea’s establishment.

Although Cramer argues that Rintoul gives no background for racism within the oil industry, according to the 1920 census, many of Brea’s oil workers and residents had moved to the city from the south. It is no secret that the south had, for years, held onto many racist principles and ideologies, much of which had been established after the Civil War in the Reconstruction Era. This influx of racist white Southerners was

termed “the southernization of Southern California” by Darren Douchuk, in his book *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*.⁶ Consequently, this southernization included ideas of segregation brought by southern white migrants. It is important to note that these characteristics do not hold true for every single Brea resident. However, the town was established on oil, and many who established the city also held onto racist beliefs. Southern, transient racists created a cultural genesis of what became a racially restrictive city. As a result, to some degree, Brea was founded on racism.

Neff Cox and the Sundown Ordinance

No one understood these racial restrictions better than Neff Graham Cox, an African American man who worked as a boot-black (shoe shiner) in Brea from 1925 to 1941. Due to a city ordinance, he could only stay in the city until 6:00 p.m. daily. This restriction is referred to as a “sundown ordinance.” According to James Loewen, author of *Sundown Towns*, “A sundown town is any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus ‘all-white’ on purpose.”⁷ According to residents, Brea was one of these organized jurisdictions. Loewen tells us that during the 1920s and 30s, “Brea may have had a sign reading ‘Nigger: Don’t let the sun go down on your back in this town.’”⁸ If this sign was posted in town, it would have surely alarmed African Americans coming into town as to the type of prejudice and racial discrimination they were entering, and would have alerted them that they were not welcomed.

As a resident of Brea since 1913, and daughter of the first police chief in the city, Alice J. Thompson recalls:

There were no Negroes in Brea; they were not allowed. We had a shoeshine man who we called Neff and he always spoke to all the kids and everything. He had a little cigar store in front of the barbershop; another man ran a little cigar counter and he had the shoeshine place. But at six o’clock, some people say ten [o’clock] but I believe it was six, the bus came through and he left for Fullerton. Fullerton has always had more colored people. He was an awful nice old man, but Brea just would not allow them to be here and I don’t know how they stopped them.⁹

This interview was taken in 1982, and it reflects instances of racist vernacular in her use of the words “Negroes” and “colored people.” It also reveals that racism has been engrained in her throughout her life. It comes as no surprise then, that her dad, the first police chief of Brea, was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. In this quote Thompson also confirms the existence of the sundown ordinance in Brea, and tells us that even though Cox was an “awful nice man,” the color of skin denied him access to stay in town after 6:00 p.m. Perhaps the most shocking part of this quote, however, is the fact that she says, “There were no Negroes in Brea.” The 1920, 1930, and the 1940 Brea censuses confirm this statement. It was not un-

til the 1950s when Brea finally gained two African American residents.

Thelma Henderson, who was the eldest daughter of Brea pioneer, mayor, fire chief, school board member, and clerk, Charles C. Kinsler, stated, “You couldn’t live in Brea if you were black. We had a shoe shiner that was black, but he had to take the bus every night for Fullerton. He lived in Fullerton...I guess it was a law...there were never any overnight colored in Brea.”¹⁰ In this oral history interview, Henderson also shares some of the same racist vernacular that Thompson used. If both of these two women are fluent in racist jargon, and are willing to go on record saying these words, then it further substantiates the claim that Brea residents held on to preconceived notions of racial prejudice. Henderson also joins Thompson as a daughter of a former Klansman, Charles Kinsler, who was a prominent figure in the history of Brea, and shockingly, a member of the Klan. This would undoubtedly have had an effect on Henderson’s language. Furthermore, Henderson also confirms the existence of the sundown ordinance. While Thompson was not sure how Brea had stopped African Americans from living in the city, Henderson believes this ordinance to have been law.

Catherine Seiler, another longtime resident of Brea, states:

At the time we also had this restriction about Negroes. We had only the one Negro man in town who was Neff and he lived in Fullerton and had a shoeshine place up here. But he had to go [out of Brea because] they weren’t allowed to stay in town overnight. Isn’t that something? There was some kind of rule in town that had been made up that they couldn’t stay overnight in town...no one thought anything about it then, I guess. It was kind of a commonplace thing...we didn’t realize that [it was racism], you know. There weren’t enough Negroes in this area to make any difference. As I say, he was about the only one we ever saw. He was a very nice man. We all knew him. Everybody talked with him and enjoyed him. It was not racism in that respect, it was just that it was an unwritten rule, I guess.¹¹

Racially insensitive language can be seen throughout the oral histories taken at California State Fullerton in the 1980s from long term Brea residents. Seiler remembers the sundown ordinance and speaks to the character of Cox, who so many Brea residents loved. In this quote, Seiler questions whether or not this ordinance was explicitly racist. It is true that she was much younger when these events occurred, and at the time, most likely could not understand what racism was, or question why this ordinance was in place during her childhood. It was simply commonplace for her. This speaks to characteristics of early Brea during the 1920s and 30s. This ordinance may not have been viewed by Brea’s inhabitants as being racist. However, the fact that this type of racial segregation was second nature to Brea residents speaks volumes to how inherently racist, restrictive, and segregated Brea truly was. The exclusivity of Brea, which Seiler points out, shows that Brea was even will-

ing to prohibit a man whom the city thoroughly enjoyed. Cox was not judged by his great character, but simply by the color of his skin. Thus he was forced to ride the bus every day to his home in Fullerton, where he was allowed to live.

Former school principal and Brea School District Superintendent, Vincent Jaster also speaks to the existence of the sundown ordinance by saying:

Brea used to have a law that no black person could live in town here after six o’ clock. See, Fullerton had its colored section; Placentia at that time was predominantly a Mexican town. But for years there were no black people in Brea at all. The shoeshine man was black, but he had to leave town by six o’ clock. It was an illegal law, of course, if you’d gone to the Supreme Court.¹²

Loewen notes, “No one took Brea to the Supreme Court, so its unconstitutional law was legal, so far as its effect in Brea was concerned.”¹³ Simply stated, during this time in Brea, nobody questioned whether or not this ordinance should be in place – it simply was. Jaster not only confirms the existence of the sundown ordinance in Brea, but also speaks to the racial segregation that took place throughout neighboring cities in Orange County. As evidenced in this quote, Cox lived in Fullerton on Truslow Avenue, which was located just south of the Fullerton train station.¹⁴ It was on this street where Cox lived and was able to move his mom and siblings to, from Alabama.¹⁵ According to Robert A. Johnson and Charlene M. Riggins, “For many black men in the early-to-mid-twentieth century, [being a boot-black or shoe shiner] provided a steady job and a middle-class existence in a time when racism made it difficult to find work of any kind.”¹⁶ This job allowed Cox to achieve the suburban dream through his achievement of middle class status. However, because of the sundown ordinance and because Cox and his family were segregated to a particular section of Fullerton, this made it more of a second-class, middle-class status which differed from the middle-class status of white citizens.

In Fullerton, blacks were only living in two blocks and everyone within those blocks got along well and knew each other.¹⁷ It was here “the communities where [blacks] settled were often poor, but they were fully part of the national trend toward urban decentralization known as suburbanization. At the same time, they reflected a vision of residential, family, and community life that was at once suburban, working-class, and African American.”¹⁸

When asked if Cox felt uncomfortable working in Brea, Jaster responded by saying:

[He] was not uncomfortable that I know of, because I had my shoes shined all the time. He was a great kidder. He had coffee with us. We used to have a coffee club that met every morning at ten o’ clock for coffee...He used to sit in with the group for coffee and they didn’t mind. There wasn’t any

feeling against blacks here that I know of at all, there really wasn't, except for the city ordinance that they'd have to be out of town by six o' clock. I guess he lived in Fullerton anyhow. I don't think he cared for living here. We have hardly any black people here now.¹⁹

This response exposes a puzzling dynamic of inclusion and exclusion. While Cox was allowed to work in town and allowed to participate in daily functions and leisurely activities, which included a coffee club with white Brea citizens, he still had to be out of town at a certain time every day. Perhaps this speaks to the character of Cox. Maybe he was able to bridge a gap, to some degree, because of his delightful personality which Brea citizens enjoyed over the years. Or perhaps, on some level, the people of Brea, that Jaster describes, did not have anything against African Americans personally, and instead was city leaders who carried out the enforcement of this ordinance. Maybe Brea residents held notions of racism that Cox was able to overcome, thus seen as a racial pioneer in Brea. I would argue the latter. However, the logic behind this dynamic remains a bit perplexed.

Through these oral histories, many possible conclusions can be reached about the sundown ordinance in Brea and Cox. They also raise other questions which further research can address. First, it seems a bit unclear throughout these oral histories as to whether or not the sundown ordinance was written into law or just understood by the citizens of Brea and those who visited. In an interview with Brea historian Brian Saul, he stated, "Whether or not there were actual 'sundown laws' on the books, personally I doubt it. I've gone through most of the early city council records starting in 1917 and never seen such a thing. If the laws were there, they were probably then not written down on paper but just understood."²⁰ This could very likely be true, but it is also interesting that on the city website, there seems to be a number of ordinances missing.²¹ Like Saul stated, perhaps this ordinance was simply understood or was erased in an attempt to subvert history. In reviewing Loewen, historian Greta De Jong writes, "Direct, written evidence of sundown policies...is scarce, possibly because such regulations were unconstitutional and subject to legal challenges. Local histories rarely mention how towns became and remained all white, and historical societies generally did not preserve material evidence...relating to the treatment of African Americans."²² I would speculate that if a written sundown ordinance was never specifically produced, then it is possible that Brea police officers could have held those who broke this law under Ordinance no. 16: "An Ordinance for the Prevention and Punishment of Certain Offenses against the Peace, Good Order and Public Health of the City of Brea." During the 1920s and 30s most bookings were under this ordinance that included crimes such as public intoxication, vagrancy, and carrying weapons.²³ The document even refers to the city of Brea as the "Restricted District." However, it seems this title has little or nothing to do with

the fact that Brea had racial restrictions, and instead refers to the borders of the city under this title, however odd that might be.²⁴ To any extent, this question needs to be further researched in order to be answered.

Cox forever holds the title of the first African American man in Brea. Not much is known of this man and what is known of him comes from the oral histories at California State Fullerton. He was well liked in the city of Brea but had to leave town by 6:00 p.m. He lived in the small section of Fullerton on East Truslow Avenue and worked as a shoe shiner, which afforded him a second-class middle class status. He was born in 1899 and died fairly young in 1941 of pneumonia.²⁵ Today he remains buried at Loma Vista Memorial Park in Fullerton, and can be viewed as a race pioneer for African Americans.

On Thursday, August 28, 1941, under the headline "Fullerton and Brea Honor Neff Cox," *The California Eagle*, a black publication, reported:

Cox died Thursday, Aug. 14, at the Orange hospital after a very brief illness. He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Georgetta Cox; his wife, Callie; two daughters, one son, two brothers, six sisters and many others. Although he had lived in Fullerton for the past 16 years, he had worked for that same length of time in Brea. He was the only Negro in Brea where he operated his own business and the whole town paid tribute to him by turning out in masses to his funeral services.

The Brea Progress had this to say at the passing of its only African American citizen:

During his long stay here, Neff made hundreds of friends... never an enemy. When the funeral was held in Fullerton on Monday, approximately 50 Breans—all white—were present to pay their last respects to a man they liked and admired. And for many a year around Brea, Neff Cox will be missed...and his sunny disposition, his humor, his kindness, his fairness will be the subject of talk by the friends he left behind him.²⁶

Cox's obituary shows he touched the lives of many Breans. The paper reported that he was the only "Negro citizen" of Brea. While it is true the writers of this paper wished to give their own personal condolences to the family and to the legacy of Cox, he was never truly a citizen of Brea. The sundown ordinance restricted him from living in the city or even staying there after 6:00 p.m. because of the color of his skin. White citizens of Brea simply accepted racism, even in regards to a man which most residents said they admired. Also, the whites that were interviewed never mentioned Cox's large family, while the paper does. Residents' compliance with this ordinance displays an innate form of racism among the city's whites who didn't see the ordinance as racist at all.

It was not until the 1950s that the sundown ordinance was lifted and African Americans were no longer under threat

of arrest in the city after 6:00 p.m. It was also not until the 1950 census that Brea became home to two African Americans.²⁷ Brea went approximately thirty-plus years without a single African American living there. As Loewen explains, racial segregation, rather than market forces, excluded African Americans. This systematic form of racial exclusion affected both whites and African Americans. For African Americans, they were left with less opportunity and less access to suburban housing. Sundown ordinances left African Americans unable to inherit wealth which whites had easier access to. Since whites had access to these homes, when the values of those homes increased, they were able to benefit from the increase in property values which African Americans were unable to because they did not have access to them, even when the property values were low. Consequently, property values hampered African Americans' ability to attain wealth that allowed whites to attain while blacks could not. Both African Americans and white were left affected and limited in terms of diversity because of developed fears of one another due to years of exclusion. Brea's sundown ordinance, which lasted a span of over 30 years, is a major reason for the city's lack of racial diversity and its minuscule percentage of African Americans living in the city today.

The Brea Klan

The Ku Klux Klan began appearing in Brea and Orange County during the 1920s.²⁸ They sustained power and influence within suburban life, and were involved with the church, fire department, police department, schools, mayor's office, city council, newspaper, and every other avenue of civic life. During the 1920s, the size of the Klan's influence was great and felt by most citizens of Brea. The Klan was closer than ever before and could have likely been your own neighbor. As described in the introduction, the presence of the Klan was greatly felt in Brea during the 1920s and 30s as they displayed intimidation throughout the community. An interesting contrast between what is normally thought of as suburban Orange County, and the realities which lie beneath the surface of that glorified image can be seen in the presence of the Klan. Minority rights activist and journalist Carey McWilliams referred to this as the "fruit crate label version of Southern California."²⁹ At this time, Orange County may have been advertised as sunlight and oranges, but a very dark shadow hung amidst those placid rays of sunshine. That dark shadow was the Klan.

In order to understand the 1920's Klan, it is important to note the similarities and differences from previous Klans. Christopher Nickolas Cocoltchos defines the 1920's Klan in his dissertation titled, "The Invisible Government and the Viable Community: The Ku Klux Klan in Orange County, California During the 1920s," stating:

The 1920's Klan was not entirely based in the South as was

the Reconstruction Klan, nor was it a collection of small, ineffective groups...The 1920's Klan claimed a nationwide membership of at least two million, native-born, white Protestants over the age of eighteen...The 1920's Klan also had an effective central, promotional organization, and many elements of its ideology were shared by most native born white Protestants. The 1920's Klan sought to win elections on the local, state, and Congressional levels achieving substantial power in states as politically and economically varied...the 1920's Klan was not primarily a violent vigilante group as were the other Klans.³⁰

This excerpt reveals that the 1920's Klan was more focused in the realm of politics and the role of power. In order to push their agenda, they knew they had to penetrate the associations that could render change. This meant, in order to get their racist and nativist agendas passed, they knew they had to get members into positions of power and influence. The shift for this group had taken on an alarming new trend. Because the group had broken away from its vigilante past, though not entirely, and was more focused on the politics of the day, they were thus more easily able to sway new members to join, gaining more votes and greater influence.

This influence was felt by a number of Brea residents who confirm the Klan's existence in the city and speak to the volume of the Klan's membership and influence. In her interview, Henderson said, "I can remember the Ku Klux Klan. You just couldn't imagine what it was like. It was like this: if you're not a Klansman, you're not my friend...they were against everything and anything that wasn't Protestant. If you weren't white and a Protestant, you were nothing...they were against the Catholics, they were against the Jews, they were against the colored."³¹ According to Henderson, the Klan was able to gain power through peer pressure. Through this peer pressure, the Klan was able to gain a foothold on the political establishment in Brea. W.S. Norman confirms this pressure with his statement: "The Ku Klux Klan started out and everybody started joining, so I went ahead and joined them. The first meeting we had was in old Puente."³² While it seems that Norman was not sure of the Klan's ideology prior to this meeting, he was, however, influenced to join the group, making the Klan's existence stronger with a new member. A.J. Thompson, another resident, said, "Nearly every man I knew joined the Ku Klux Klan...A lot of people did. I know my husband did, and my father did, and all of my friends, or a lot of them did."³³ This further confirms the power of the Klan in Brea and the strength that the organization was able to produce.

During an interview, Jaster shared his view regarding whom he believed to be responsible for the sundown ordinance. He stated, "The [Klan] was strong in this town when I first came here. I wouldn't doubt they had an influence over the issue that no black people could be in town."³⁴ An interesting correlation is present here between the Klan and the exclusion of African Americans in Brea. Perhaps Cox was not

allowed to live in Brea because of the power of the Klan. While this is just conjecture and hard to prove, it is a likely argument and bares an intriguing presumption by a former member of the city of Brea.

This paper is largely a response to Craemer's argument that the Klan was not influential in Brea. In her book she states:

Although there may have been members in the Brea area, there are no records that the Klan was active here. There are reports, however, that there may have been many sympathizers in the oil communities. Of the 203 members recorded in Orange County in 1922, all but 25 resided in Santa Ana. According to newspaper reports of that period, many of those who did join did so without knowing the real principles of the Klan. As indicated earlier, in the post-World War I period there were strong anti-alien sentiments in most of the communities, so it was easy for the Klan to enlist members. Since a real Klan involved at least 1,000 members, Orange County fell far short in this requirement.³⁵

This argument is filled with factual errors. The membership roster of the Orange County chapter of the Klan can be found at the Muzeo in Anaheim, in the Anaheim Heritage Center Disney Resort Reading Room and includes a membership of well over one thousand Orange County residents. In Brea alone, there were over one hundred members recorded (see Appendix I). Although it was reported in a *Los Angeles Times* news report titled "Anaheim Regime: Once It was the Klan," that there were only 203 Orange County Klansmen and all but 25 were in Santa Ana (likely where Craemer acquired her information), this list directly disproved her findings as well as the *Times* article.³⁶ Furthermore, many of the members who are on the list from Brea held highly esteemed and powerful positions. These high positions of influence would also negate Craemer's claims that these members did not know what they were getting themselves into. It is true that many members of the Brea Klan came from the oil fields as Craemer states. However, this was just one area in which Klan members participated, and thus just one part of the story.

The Brea Klan membership list in Appendix I, like the Orange County list described by Gustavo Arellano, editor of the *oc Weekly*, "takes a lifetime to decipher, for its secrets are many."³⁷ In his *oc Weekly* blog, "oc Pioneers Who Were Klan Members," Arellano examines many famous Breans who were members of the Klan. So far he has listed:

Ben Blanchard Jr.—Brea City Councilmember
G.W. Bird—Constable (Deputy)
W.A. Culp—Real Estate and Brea School Board Trustee President
E. Carlson—Brea Fire Chief and Mayor (street named after him)
W.W. Davis—Brea Doctor and Health Officer
W.E. Fanning—Teacher and School Pioneer (Fanning Elementary School named after him)
Forrest Hurst—Brea Councilmember
Charles C. Kinsler—Real Estate, Fire Chief, Clerk, School

Board Member, and Pioneer

J.A. Leuzinger—Brea Mayor and Founder of Brea Electric
O.R. Meissner—Brea Councilmember
Chas. R. McClure—Brea's First Police Chief
E.J. Sechrist—Brea Minister (street named after him)
E. Smith—Brea Justice of the Peace
O.N. Thorton—Brea Postmaster
H. Winchel—Brea's First City Marshal
Geo. W. Cullen Jr.—Brea School Clerk
E.R. Rudy—Traffic Officer and Brea Marshal³⁸

This list seems shocking because it includes such prominent and historical Brea figures. Many of Brea's famous pioneers were members of the Ku Klux Klan. And all of those which Arellano listed were highly influential in the city of Brea. Furthermore, there are two streets named after Klan members as well as one elementary school, still in existence today. Adding to Arellano's list of the Brea Klan members with influential roles, I have pulled thirteen more members that I would like to focus on:

Hugh Badgley—Billard Owner
Fred Dustin—Barber
Earl Doty—Fireman
Roy M. Eubanks—Barber
Geo Gesme—Barber
T.E. McGrew—Clerk V.W.
Russell—Real Estate
J.E. Rmer—Editor of *The Brea Progress*
Schuppert—Baker
Elton Shipley—Barber
A.J. Stevens—Pharmacist
Robt Shanks—Barber
L.A. Stumbo—Butcher

These men also held positions which can be regarded as influential. For instance, five of them were barbers. A barber has the opportunity to see many different clients in a single day. With those clients he can talk and express his viewpoints. After all, the barbershop has always been a place where folks can get together and talk. Since these barbers were all members of the Klan they had the opportunity to express their racist beliefs and prejudice to others. The same could be said for Hugh Badgley, who ran a pool hall, as well as the baker, Schuppert. Even A.J. Stevens, the pharmacist. Additionally, there is another fireman on the list whose job was to save lives, and another real estate official that could have potentially excluded minorities from purchasing homes in Brea. Finally, there is the editor of the local newspaper. This is an impressive role for a member of the Klan because he has the opportunity of telling the news in the way he sees fit. This could include propaganda or the blaming of minorities for social and political ills, which was the case in many city papers, including Brea. Saul says, "If you want to see the way minorities were thought of during the early years of the city, you need to check the old Brea newspapers in which almost all the local criminals were either 'Mexicans' or 'Negroes.' It was very seldom that a white person was

guilty of a crime unless it was murder when the paper had to cover the story, white person or not.”³⁹ Positions of power and centers of sociability made the Klan both influential and persuasive in Brea.

Through a number of social and political tactics, the Klan was able to gain control in Brea, and maintained their power to restrict Catholics, Jews, and African Americans while increasing their membership.

According to Cocoltchos:

The Klan won power in Brea, not by challenging the authorities in an election battle, but by quietly enlisting the people in power... Five of the town's first eight mayors were Klansmen as were six of the ten councilmen who sat on the board of trustees from 1924 to 1936... Klansmen dominated during these years, providing 50% of the city's treasurers, 25% of the city's engineers, 50% of its city clerks, 50% of its city marshals, and 67% of its fire chiefs.⁴⁰

With such high statistics of influence, the Klan reigned in Brea during the 1920s and 30s. They were able to establish law and order, and recruited new members with ease and efficiency. The Klan recorded over one hundred members, thus making up more than 10% of Brea's residents. Since women are not accounted for on this list, if each of these listed men are counted as a household who averages four family members, this percentage could be as high as 40% of Brea's overall population. Thus, the Klan was able to create and maintain a stronghold in the northern part of Orange County, and Brea was able to sustain its racial and cultural isolation.

Racially Restrictive Covenants

It should come as no surprise that Brea also had racially restrictive covenants within home buying. Racially restrictive covenants were restrictions that prevented minorities and people of color from being able to purchase suburban homes in white neighborhoods. Loewen writes:

Suburbs used zoning and eminent domain to keep out black would-be residents and to take their property if they did manage to acquire it. Some towns required all residential areas to be covered by restrictive covenants—clauses in deeds that stated, like this example from Brea, California, “[N]o part of said premises shall ever be sold, conveyed, transferred, leased or rented to any person of African, Chinese or Japanese descent.” After a U.S. Supreme Court 1948 decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer* rendered such covenants hard to enforce, some suburbs relied on neighborhood associations among homeowners, allowing them to decide arbitrarily what constituted an acceptable buyer.⁴¹

This quote reflects further evidence of Brea's racially restrictive nature that worked to keep a homogenous society by specifically targeting several different minority groups. In this case, targeting not just African Americans, but Chinese and

Japanese Americans as well. Through these restrictive covenants, Brea homeowner associations and home buying deeds aimed to keep Brea segregated and institutionalized racism within the suburbs. When the Supreme Court stepped in, Brea was able to dodge contestation to these racial restrictions. Saul confirmed the existence of deeds such as the above displayed by Loewen. He states, “As for restrictive covenants, I have seen one of them for one of the several historic homes we used in Brea in 1992 during the Diamond Jubilee Home Tour. If I remember correctly, it read exactly as the one [mentioned by James Loewen].”⁴²

When asked if he could recollect if Brea tried to enforce a racial or social homogeneity, Ralph Barnes, Brea resident since the mid 1920s and co-founder of the Oilfields National Bank, responded by saying, “Yes, there was a piece of land over east that restricted other than white people.”⁴³ When asked if he saw a lot of houses in Brea having covenants on them, Barnes answered, “There was an organization called Brea Homes, Incorporated. Several persons put up a hundred dollars and had a president and a secretary. Their function was to promote houses which are now over in the east Elm Street area. A lot of those houses were built through their participation and encouragement.”⁴⁴ Barnes was able to view these covenants because he was a banker back in the 1920s. As a resident and local co-founder of a bank, Barnes was able to see what went on during this time. This statement exposes the fact that Brea actively pursued excluding minorities, and instead advertised to white homebuyers.

In her dissertation, “The Attenuation of Community: Voluntary Associations and Cultural Change in Brea, California, 1920s-1970s,” Ann Sibley Towner gives background to Barnes's answers by telling us:

After a club survey, it was determined by the Lions [Club] that there was a need for more and better homes. The club members wrote in their scrapbook in the late 1930s that “there are 700 families living in Brea, and there are 131 vacant lots and no modern homes for rent, meaning that if Brea is to grow we must find some way to finance some home building.” As a result, the Civic Improvement Committee was established... While the club's primary goals were boosterish and aimed at business and civic improvements, as well as cultural and social reforms, the club also came in contact with blatant forms of racial control.⁴⁵

This excerpt shows that Brea's idea of civic and suburban improvement included keeping it a white, homogenous center. While the supposed goals of the Civic Improvement Committee were for social and cultural reform, it seemed that rather than reform, they were instead tightening the strings of racial exclusion. Instead of just targeting African Americans, Brea and its civic clubs were able to stretch the boundaries of segregation and close the city off to certain minorities.

Today

Even today, instances of public discrimination and racial exclusion can be seen within city limits of Brea. In May 2013, protestors gathered on Imperial Highway overlooking the 57 Freeway armed with signs that read: “No Amnesty,” “Stop Illegal Immigration,” “Secure Our Borders,” “Deport Illegals,” “Hire Americans,” “Uphold Our Laws,” and “Support American Workers,” all while waving American flags. The demonstrators were responding to the May Day protests that occur every May 1st in cities such as Santa Ana and Los Angeles, which have a higher concentration of Mexican residents. This demonstration serves as a reminder that Brea’s racially restrictive behavior is not just a distant past time. Racial tensions still exist, and Brea continues to maintain certain borders of segregation. Who Brea overtly restricts may have changed, but certain exclusivity still remains.

Throughout the 1920s and 30s Brea was a place that retained walls of segregation around its “restricted district.” In many respects, these racially restrictive forms of segregation and exclusion prevented Brea from becoming a diverse community. In the 2010 census (see Appendix II), Brea recorded a meager percentage of African Americans living within its city. Only 1.4% of the population maintained that they were African American. Through the racist temperament of the oil fields, the sundown ordinance, power of the Ku Klux Klan, and racially restrictive covenants, Brea was able to create and maintain borders of segregation. These borders still linger today, and hinder African Americans’ desires to move to such a white community. While it is true that Brea does have a large portion of Mexican Americans, the city still stammers to gain a truly diverse population with the inclusion of African Americans and many other races. The city remains a white spot even amongst Orange County. Invisible borders continue to segregate minority groups from entering Brea, begging the question: How can these borders be torn down? ♦

Appendix I List of Brea Klan Members

Taken from the “List of O.C. Members K.K.K.,” Courtesy of Anaheim Heritage Center Disney Resort Reading Room at the Museo Collections, Anaheim, California.

E.W. Dickinson		415 W. Cedar
W.R. Williams		415 W. Cedar
E.E. Anderson	Tool Maker	Box 284
A.R. Burns	Plumbing	
E.A. Brainer		Santa Fe Lease (Olinda)
Hugh Badgley	Billiard	143 S. Pomona
H.A. Baldwin	Baldwin Motor Co.	117 Princeton
W.C. Baldwin		
Ben Blanchard Jr.*	Oil Worker	Union Oil Co.
G.W. Bird*	Contractor	
J.F. Bergman	Oil Worker	
M.H. Brawley	Rig Builder	
R. Bennete	Mechanic	

B. Cox		115 R. Elm
J.F. Bergman	Oil Worker	
M.H. Brawley	Rig Builder	
R. Bennett	Mechanic	
M.A. Cox	Oil Worker	10 S. Walnut
J.H. Carter	Driver	P.O. Box 192
W.A. Culp*	Real Estate	
Wm. M. Conley	Mach.	Union Oil Co.
W.E. Childers	Mach.	Union Oil Co.
E.H. Garage Crowe		
E. Carlson*	Mech.	307 E. Bush
J.P. Classen	Teamster	233 S. Poplar
J.T. Charman	Salesman	
C.H. Chansler	Oil Worker	
I.H. Clark	Oil Worker	Standard Oil
Geo. W. Doyle	Oil Worker	Birch Oil Company
W.W. Davis*	Physician	200 Pomona
Fred Dustin	Barber	312 W. Cidar
Earl Doty	Fireman	
Roy M. Eubanks	Barber	245 S. Flower
I.M. Edwards	Oil Worker	
P.N. Elder		220 S. Redwood
W.E. Fanning*	Teacher	
F.F. Finch	Oil Worker	
James Grewoo	Agt. Oil Wk. Un.	406 S. Pomona
Geo Gesme	Barber	234 S. Pomona
Wm. A. Gebhardt		129 S. Pomona
M.L. Garrison	Laborer	
Maurice Graves	Mngr. Lbr. Co.	
Kenneth C. Horton	Clerk	
J.D. Hooker	Driver	
Forrest Hurst*	City Council	
M.V. Hayes		119 S. Madrona
Elmer Halcomb		
S. Hemus		
V. Houts	Driver	
H.T. Heimiller	Shell Oil Co.	
W.C. Hirth	Oil Worker	214 N. Orange
Jas. A. Johnston		Box 442
C.R. Johnson	Oil Worker	350 N. Orange
V.O. Kiger	Oil Worker	237 S. Poplar
C.C. Kinsler*	Real Estate	129 S. Orange
C.F. Kimmons	Oil Worker	261 S. Laurel
J.A. Leuzinger*	Electrician	
R.H. McKee		406 S. Pomona
Jas. A. McCabe	Oil Worker	116 N. Orange
Earl Murphy		
T.E. McGrew	Clerk	Pool Room
O.R. Meissner*	Driver	
Chas. R. McClure*		
T.E. Moore	Carp.	201 Silvers
A.W. Mann		
F.R. Mason	Foreman	Sheffer Tool
E. Nelson	Shell Oil	343 S. Walnut
W.S. Norman	Driver	
E.H. Paschal	Oil Worker	
R.H. Rogers	Electrician	
H.H. Rogers	Oil Worker	323 S. Pomona
V.W. Russell	Real Estate	
Herman Ramsey	Mech.	Box 364
J.E. Rmer	Editor	Progress
R.D. Russell	Foreman	Union Oil Co.
A.J. Robertson	Oil Worker	
J.E. Reed	Oil Worker	Box 233

M.F. Roberts	Machinist	
J.L. Ray		
E.J. Sechrist*	Minister	Cong. Church
Schuppert	Baker	
Benjamin Sanders	Janitor	Santa Fe Lease (Olinda)
E.R. Stewart		(Olinda)
Cecil Sweet	Driller	237 S. Orange
H. Schryor	Pumper	Santa Fe Lease (Olinda)
J. Slaybaugh	Oil Worker	
Elton Shipley	Barber	
A.J. Severson	Drugs	325 S. Pomona
Robt Shanks	Barber	
J.W. Stanker		127 S. Pomona
C.E. Smith*		
Chas. D. Shaner	Oil Worker	
Wm. G. Saunders	Oil Worker	
C.M. Shride	Prop.	City Transf. Co.
K.E. Sutliff	Oil Worker	
L.A. Stumbo	Butcher	
J. Seaman	Oil Worker	
R.W. Tremaine	Oil Worker	230 Pomona
Jay B. Taylor	Prop	Ignition Wks.
W.D. Tremaine	Garage	120 N. Pomona
E.C. Tremaine	Mech.	
Chas. S. Taylor	Carp.	
O.N. Thorton*	Postmaster	116 S. Madrona
E.L. Underwood	Oil Worker	240 N. Madrona
F.R. Vermillion	Oil Worker	
H.R. Williams		
R.K. Wilson	Carp.	231 S. Orange
W.D. Webb	Clerk	Oil Well Supply Co.
C.A. Williams	Pumper	282 S. Poplar
J.T. Williams	Oil Worker	
H. Winchel*	Rig Builder	235 S. Walnut
W.C. Weiland		

Other Members of Interest to Brea:

Geo. W.Cullen Jr.*	Stkpr	Santa Fe Lease (Fullerton)
E.R. Rudy*	Traffic Officer	328 W. Whitney (Fullerton)

*Posted in Gustavo Arellano's *oc Weekly* Blog, "oc Pioneers Who Were Klan Member."

Appendix II⁴⁶ Brea Population

Year	Black Pop.	Total Pop.	Black %
1920	0	1,027	0%
1930	0	2,435	0%
1940	0	2,567	0%
1950	2	3,208	0.06%
1960	1	8,487	0.01%
1970	41	18,447	0.22%
1980	130	27,913	0.47%
1990	355	32,873	1.08%
2000	447	35,410	1.26%
2010	550	39,282	1.40%

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AMERICAN PLACES

320: WOMEN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

The Rise of Working Women

Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York, by Kathy Peiss

CARMEN LOYA

This essay was written for Dr. Carrie Lane's Women in American Society course in the spring of 2013. Its purpose was to analyze Kathy Peiss's argument from her book Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York. With a focus on women's leisure activities, this essay aims to affirm Peiss's argument, which states that the very same things that gave women of the Progressive Era liberty and autonomy served as weapons for their oppression and discrimination.

In *Cheap Amusements*, Kathy Peiss writes about working women's culture in turn of the century New York. The Progressive Era brought about changes in work and leisure that, she explains, fueled women's embrace of fashion, style, and heterosocial relations. Peiss argues that these new interests and activities were a double-edged sword. On one hand, they resulted in progress toward women's independence and rights and, on the other, they sustained the oppression of and discrimination against working women.

Urbanization, electrification, immigration, and the switch from home-based work to actually going to work at a factory or store helped develop the new working wom-

en's culture. The American Industrial Revolution brought on electrification, which changed the work environment by permitting work to be done at any time of day. The economic landscape was also changing, creating "a demand for workers increasingly filled by female clerks, 'typewriters,' secretaries, and telephone operators" (38). These new employment opportunities helped to define the separation of the workplace and leisure time. Working women increasingly preferred jobs in schools, offices, and department stores rather than going into domestic service (40). Young v-class women dominated the female labor force in the period from 1880 to 1920 (34). As seen in the Great Shirtwaist Strike of 1909 in New York, women dominated the workforce and made up 85 to 90 percent of the strikers involved. This famous strike brought many gains to workers including equally distributed work seasons, paid holidays, and a 52-hour work week. Women's involvement in the workforce made them breadwinners for their families and they gained a sense of pride by being a contributing, supporting individual of the family. As Peiss states, "the workplace reinforced the wage-earner's interest in having a good time" (35).

Leisure began to be widely advertised and commercialized, creating "social spaces in which young women and men enjoyed their outings" (122). Commercialized forms of leisure included trips to theme parks, movie theaters, and dance halls. All of these new commercial forms of leisure appealed to both men and women and increased heterosocial interactions. Leisure was perceived as "a separate sphere of independence, youthful pleasure, and mixed-sex fun" (35). Movies that showed women interacting with and dating men, as well as rides in amusement parks that promoted fun

between the sexes, reinforced this idea of leisure.

Working women's embrace of "style, fashion, romance, and mixed-sex fun" (6) increased their ability to express individuality and created new opportunities for independence. With fashion they were able to identify themselves as individuals. Their style was a very effective way of playing with "notions of respectability, allure, independence, and status and to assert a distinctive identity and presence" (63). Attending dance halls also created an opportunity for female independence by allowing them to engage in activities out of the reach of parental controls. They were able to have fun on their own doing what they liked to do. Dances such as the grizzly bear or tough dancing put a sexual emphasis on dance. Through their embrace of mixed-sex fun, such as dancing, young women were "allowed to use their bodies to express sexual desire and individual pleasure" (102). Because working women were engaging in new forms of heterosocial leisure, they were able to make their own decisions in regards to their romantic and sexual lives. Even youth organizations "tended to be oriented toward amusement and mixed-sex sociability" (60). Working women were able to achieve autonomy by choosing who they wanted to marry. Marriage was still seen as an objective but the standards for marriage now included mutual attraction and friendship in marriage.

Trips to beaches and Coney Island represented modern forms of heterosocial leisure and also increased the working woman's independence. Instead of spending time together with their families at picnics or going on walks through the park, working women were able to enjoy time with co-workers, friends, or men. Excursions to Coney Island's parks "encouraged familiarity between strangers, permitted a free-and-easy sexuality, and structured heterosocial interaction" (136). Although they may have been faced with conflicting views with parents, most working women were able to be independent and enjoy themselves in public heterosocial activities and embrace personal style and fashion.

Yet, as Peiss argues, working women's embrace of the very same things they most enjoyed also served as tools for their oppression and discrimination. Outings to movie theaters gave working women the ability to interact with the opposite sex and possibly express sexual attraction and engage in flirtatious activities. However, working women and their leisure activities were targeted by the middle class "who assailed the condition of the theaters and the content of the shows" (159). Reformers pushed for political legislations that would bring order back to the Progressive Era's working women.

Women's independence could be a source of vulnerability as well as independence. Charity girls were young women who would not accept money but would exchange sexual favors or their company in return for things such as gifts, shoes, or dates. As Peiss states, "the pleasure and freedom

young women craved could be found at dance halls, but it carried a mixed message, permitting female sexuality within a context of dependency and vulnerability" (110). Charity girls were seen as threatening and immoral because they were using their bodies and exploiting their sexuality in exchange for going out and embracing this new form of leisure. They were looked down upon because although they may not have accepted money, they did accept gifts, making them seem reliant on a male in order to go out and have some fun.

Even though working women had a source of income, they rarely kept all of it for themselves or for their own leisure. Many working women yearned for "mixed-sex fun" but could not afford the outfits or tickets and so they resorted to allowing men to "treat" them. The implications of "treating" could include the "trading of sexual favors of varying degrees for male attention, gifts, and a good time" (110). Although this method got working women into amusement parks or the shoes they had fallen in love with, they became dependent on men's gifts for the fulfillment of their leisure. Members of society that opposed working women's leisure activities could have compared charity girls to the "occasional prostitute" when unemployed or in need of extra income (110).

While style and fashion promoted individuality, it also created a competitive arena for working women. They would put on their best clothes for male attention making themselves the objects of dependence. As described by Peiss, "the need to strive for popularity with men came to be a socially defined and ultimately restricting aspect of female expressiveness and desire" (107). Dance halls created contests and awarded prizes to the "prettiest woman" which reinforced women's objectification (107). Dance halls also had differing prices for single women. The lower rates offered to single working women endorsed the participation of women in this form of leisure and it also recognized the "subordinate economic status of women" (97).

Working women in turn-of-the-century New York pushed boundaries and rejected the Victorian ideals. They demonstrated courage by engaging in heterosocial interactions, as well as expressing and embracing fashion and personal style. Working women may have been subjected to oppression and objectification, but they also participated in strikes to change working conditions and the workplace, altered the standards for marriage, and slowly moved their way into political arenas. Working women of turn-of-the-century New York can be seen as pioneers for greater changes, such as women's suffrage, women in politics, and women in various career fields. ♦

AMERICAN PLACES 502: PUBLIC MEMORY

Haunting the Halls

Specters of Memory at the Former Camarillo State Hospital

DIANN ROZSA

This essay was written for Dr. Pamela Steinle's Public Memory course in the spring of 2012. One of the things that we must keep in mind is that memory is fleeting, it is always changing, and furthermore it is always subjective. Memory does not simply live within our minds, as something we recall; memory is tangible, and it lives and breathes within objects of material culture, as well as in the landscape and built environment.

In 2010, I was a student at California State University, Channel Islands (CSUCI). The campus is located on the grounds of the former Camarillo State Hospital. I had always known this. As a teen, I worked for a local florist, and routinely made deliveries there. This is when it was still a functioning mental hospital. I recall the sprawling grounds, the old Spanish style buildings, and the almost two mile drive from the main road onto the grounds. It was very much off the beaten path. I never thought much of it though, and really, I knew nothing of its past. Locals have always known it was there. It was *Hotel California*, and it was famous.¹ However, I did not know about the abuse, the murders, nor the indictments which took place in the 1960s. But when you frequent a place long enough, you begin to hear stories. And as a student there, on the campus of what once was a state mental hospital, I began to hear more than stories; I began to encounter ghosts.

While reading the local newspaper in the library one day, I came across a story entitled, "Patients who died in State Hospital Remembered."² The article went on to say that there had been a memorial the previous day for those who died at Camarillo State Hospital. I turned to my friend and after showing her the article I asked, "Did you hear about this yesterday?" She replied, "No, if I had, I would have went." Upon further inspection I learned that several former patients, along with a number of relatives of those who had died there, attended the event. Though few in number, they needed a platform to speak. They needed to go back and deal with pain and suffering. They needed to share their memories. As I was reading the article, I wondered to myself, "Why was this event not announced to the students?" I have always been interested in local history, and had I been aware, I would have attended it myself. Why not include the students? Why not make an announcement? When you frequent a place long enough, you begin to hear voices. As it turns out, there were ghosts at CSUCI. They haunted the halls, and they wanted to speak, but just who was listening?

For Avery Gordon hauntings are "the gaps left within us by the secrets of others."³ There are ghosts at the old Camarillo State Hospital, but it may not be as simple as getting on YouTube and watching the array of amateur videos that exist of people walking through the empty and decaying buildings, in search of ghostly forms. A haunting is shared by each of us. We must not close our eyes to the subjects that we would rather not confront, but rather "unmask and demystify" the things that remain unseen.⁴ Hauntings leave evidence, but we must be ever vigilant, if we are to see them. This is a ghost story. The site that was once Camarillo State Hospital is haunted. Haunted with things unspoken and things not yet dealt with. The ghosts here not only reside within our collective memories,

but they also lie within the buildings and on the landscape itself. I contend that these buildings, as well as the landscape upon which they rest, are ghostly forms. And if we pay close attention, we can hear the voices calling from far away.

A one and a half mile stretch of winding road separates the campus from the main highway. Deer are often spotted grazing. The road itself skirts the side of a green hill with an open clearing with several palm trees. On the other side of this sliver of a winding road, is a sea of private agricultural farms, which at certain times of the year grow the strawberries that Ventura County is famous for. A hospital brochure from the 1970s states that the hospital is located about forty miles from Los Angeles, and four miles from the city of Camarillo proper.⁵ The distance made it close enough to receive high-profile patients such as Charlie Parker, and yet, far enough away to keep the undesirables from being seen by the cities that surrounded it. Historically, hospitals such as Camarillo State were always built in the countryside.⁶ The large acreage allowed for the land to grow its own food, a slaughterhouse, and a dairy.

The campus is in a state of change; there is a mix of old with new. It is still half school, half mental hospital—a memory in transition. The built environment itself is a memory narrative, providing a window into the past; its remains are ghosts on the landscape. The once beautiful Spanish-style buildings can tell us a story of days now forgotten—by some. In 2002, survivors of the former state mental hospital met on the grounds to inaugurate the first, of what was to become an annual, Day of Remembrance. The very same year, CSUCI also received their first five hundred transfer students.⁷ The school was operating on a very limited capacity with only the famous Bell Tower section open. We can examine the hospital as a text, and the university as a text in the process of being rewritten.

In this paper, I will be analyzing the landscape of the current CSUCI campus to describe what has been written and rewritten on the landscape, and what remains—the scars of the past.⁸ In many cases, “time must pass before an event’s meaning...can be assessed and then embossed on the landscape.”⁹ I maintain that in the case of Camarillo State Hospital, meaning and memory are in the process of being altered by those that would like to forget its past. How is this memory transitioning? What is being forgotten? And most importantly, who is shaping this memory? A transition is taking place before our eyes, as one memory is created, another is erased. This is a snapshot of that transformation.

State mental institutions have a dark past. Once referred to as “snake pits,” they were a place where people fell into and never left. They also have a long history of abuse and violence. Camarillo State Hospital was no exception. Newspaper articles from the 1970s highlight many cases of patient neglect, abuse, and death. In October 1976, the Ventura County District Attorney began investigating “more than 100 deaths at Camarillo State Hospital.”¹⁰ The district attorney was “look-

ing hard’ at 79 of the deaths, [which] includ[ed] cases of drug overdoses, strangulation, and possible gross negligence by hospital staff.”¹¹

[The official Grand Jury report acknowledged the deaths but made superficial recommendations for to remedy the problems. And yet, even after the dust had settled, ghosts remain. It is within this context that I examine this space as a site of trauma and violence.]

Hauntings occur when we (as a society/culture) refuse to deal with traumatic past events. The ghost, in this case, is an essence of the past—a forgotten moment in time, in which something is left over. This residual can be seen in both the landscape and built environment. Further, hauntings are “animated state[s] in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known,” when “the over and done with comes alive.”¹² This *over and done with* is imprinted all throughout the landscape of what is now CSUCI; moreover, it is never a closed matter.

Even as renovations are taking place, bars on the windows are remnants of the buildings’ past—a mental hospital in transition. As the university renovates, the steel bars are removed, thus erasing signs of the past. And even though the bars are slowly disappearing, this does not mean the past itself has been erased. As a student, I remember sitting in my classroom looking out to the big green courtyard from behind rusted steel bars still fastened to the large dirty windows. Those rusted bars are remnants of a haunting, reminding us that actual people were once locked inside; memory too remains locked inside these barred windows. For many, this was a site of trauma and violence. These ghosts keep rattling the bars, asking us to listen.

The online website for former Camarillo State Hospital employees reports only one former patient’s testimony. It not only serves to maintain the “official” narrative of the hospital as a positive experience, but it reveals yet another ghost. Hand-painted murals were once displayed all over the old hospital. Few exist today, and soon, they will only exist in photographs. For me, they are another ghostly matter—another trace of the past. It was said that patients painted these murals.¹³ Most of these, however, remained a mystery for me, but as my research progressed, I soon discovered that the virtual archive maintained by CSUCI had several photographs of the murals, but no information on their artists. No credit is given to the individuals who painted these walls, and in the process, made Camarillo State Hospital a brighter place. What we are left with are merely the ghostly forms of the art—the photographs. In fact, the only mention of the murals on the internet was a 1996 *Los Angeles Times* article about a mural celebration in the town of Santa Paula, about 25 miles north of Camarillo. The article stated that, “Judy Suzuki takes stamps as her subject at the Camarillo State Hospital.”¹⁴ The online archive briefly mentions the “Stamps” mural, only to say that

is was painted over for a movie. The archive maintains the only known photo.¹⁵ There was once an *Eagle* mural too, but “sadly,” the archive laments, “the eagle mural is gone, it was removed with the construction of student housing, [and] like many [of the] other murals [painted here] there are no photos left of this art work.”¹⁶ Why were no photographs taken of them before they were removed? Was memory being deliberately erased? The scars on the landscape still exist, in spite of efforts to recode this space.

The hospital also had several ornate tiled drinking fountains at various locations on the grounds. Each one was unique. As the university refurbishes its buildings over time, the old Spanish-tiled roofs are repaired, broken windows are replaced, and old weeds are pulled out but for some reason, the tiles of these ornate fountains remain—in a skeletal form, even after a building has been renovated. These lonely tiles attest to the past of the hospital. They are a tangible memory embedded within the landscape. Scattered around the campus, these tiles are in themselves evidence that a haunting is taking place. They trace the buildings’ past. Unfortunately, only a couple of photographs of these fountains exist. This is just a further reminder of how fleeting this landscape, and by extension memory, is.

During its heyday Camarillo State Hospital maintained a working dairy. The dairy was discontinued years before the hospital finally closed in 1997. A quick Google search will yield many various results about the dairy. Ask any local teenager or young-adult about the dairy and they will give you a two-word response—“scary dairy.” The “scary dairy” is something of a local urban legend. There are so many local yarns about the old dairy, and most of them have to do with it being haunted. The main dairy and barn are located on a separate road, but its locked gates are designed to keep prying eyes out. This, however, does not stop locals from parking at the gate and taking the mile-long trek up the dirt road. It has become a popular spot for local teens to drink and a prime location for amateur ghost hunters. The dairy is not really a dairy anymore, nor has it been for many years. It was and still is a ghost in a field. A dead hallowed out carcass of the past, a shell of what it used to be. It is currently losing its battle to the weeds and brush that are attempting to take back the land, to reclaim the space where patients of the hospital once worked.

Graffiti has been part of the dairy’s landscape for many years but we must place it in context of the landscape on which it feebly still rests—a former mental hospital. Kenneth Foote notes, “stigmatized sites attract graffiti and vandalism, and because there is no easy way to remove the stigma, [these sites] remain targets of abuse for long periods of time.”¹⁷ It could very well be that the only way for people to obliterate the memory of a hospital that was still in operation was to attempt to raze the abandoned dairy. The appropriation of the “scary dairy” into a party hang out place covered in graffiti both cushions and excises the memory of the Camarillo State

Hospital as a site of trauma. It is true the dairy is *haunted*, but it is haunted by untold memories of the patients who lived, worked, and were traumatized here. It has lost its meaning of what it once was and what it once represented. Now all that remains is the shell of what has now become an urban legend devoid of meaning—the scary dairy.

In 2011, after a ten-year bout to place a memorial plaque at the site of the former state hospital, one was dedicated at the annual Day of Remembrance. The fight for the memorial honoring patients who died on the grounds was long and difficult. Kenneth Foote theorizes how people come to terms with such tragedy and violence, noting how the memorial process is written (on the landscape) or not written at all. Landscape is a fluid and changing entity, likewise, so are the marks (the text) that we place upon it. There were some questions as to how Camarillo State Hospital would be remembered, if at all, by the university administration. The simple fact is, many of the students who attend school there do not even know the history of the buildings they now occupy, bars and all. They do not know, for example, that the current library sits on top of what was once the former morgue or that the morgue itself now houses the school’s official archive. The ways in which we choose to (or not to) inscribe on the landscape “offers insights in to how society deal[s] with violence and adversity...and how [we] view and interpret the past.”¹⁸ What will be remembered?

The inflammatory language of the plaque itself speaks to the indignation that these survivors feel toward the hospital, and by extension, its past. The plaque reads, “*In honor and memory of those who lived and died on the grounds of the former Camarillo State Hospital and of those buried anonymously throughout California. Let no person ever again be wrongly removed from the community by reason of disability.*” I can not help but wonder though, if CSUCI would have allowed the plaque ten years ago, would it have been so inflammatory?

In these instances, the landscape itself becomes a palimpsest, written and rewritten with memory. There are layers upon layers of memory piled on top of one another, or erased and rewritten, or worse, recoded. But whose memories are they? Who constructs memory? Is it power, or those with the loudest voice? To be sure, there was a contestation of memory at the old Camarillo State Hospital, now California State University, Channel Islands.

We must peel back the layers of this palimpsest. There was, and some would argue still is, a desire to forget the past and move on with an uncertain future; but one cannot simply forget the past without implicating ourselves in our desires to alter these past memories. So what can we make of this unexpected designation on the CSUCI campus? Time will tell if and how the former Camarillo State Hospital will be remembered by its new occupants. The plaque is now tangible proof that the hospital remains a ghost on the landscape. ♦

1. Hotel California was a 1977 song by the Eagles, which has been synonymous with Camarillo State Hospital in popular culture. It is said that the song is actually about the hospital, and even though members of the Eagles have refuted this claim, the myth persists to this day. A Google search will yield a plethora of results as to the magnitude of this urban legend.
2. Kathleen Wilson, "Patients Who Died in State Hospitals are Remembered," *Ventura County Star*, September 20, 2010.
3. Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 183.
4. *Ibid.*, 65.
5. Brochure 1971, University Archives, John Spoor Broome Library, California State University, Channel Island, Camarillo, California.
6. Christopher Payne, *Asylum: Inside the Closed World of State Mental Hospitals* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009), 8.
7. <http://www.csuci.edu/about/timeline.htm>.
8. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 110.
9. Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 113.
10. "Deaths Investigated at State Mental Hospital," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1976.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, xvi.
13. I also heard the brother of a patient painted them, and also that both patients and employees painted them—the jury is still out.
14. Josef Woodward, "Exhibit Serves to Record, Celebrate Local Murals: Santa Paula Union Oil Museum Show Surveys Wall-size Art. Another Focuses on Portrayal of Animals," *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1996.
15. Camarillo State Hospital Collection, John Spoor Broome Library, California State University, Channel Islands, Camarillo, California, <http://repository.library.csuci.edu/handle/10139/6077> <(accessed April 18, 2012)>.
16. Cited at "Eagle," Hospital Mural Location Map, Camarillo State Hospital History, <http://209.129.118.23/history/mural-map.html> <accessed 20 October 2013>.
17. Foote, *Shadowed Ground*, 25.
18. *Ibid.*, 7.

AMERICAN PLACES

395: CALIFORNIA CULTURES

Panoptic Playground

How Disneyland Functions as the Ultimate Disciplinary Environment

JUDSON GRANT BARBER

This essay was written for Dr. Shawn Schwaller's California Cultures course in the fall of 2012. Students were asked to apply one of the course readings to analyze an approved topic of their choice. I decided to take Eric Avila's work on Disneyland and suburbanization in greater Los Angeles and, inspired by Michel Foucault and Mike Davis, analyze these subjects for disciplinary technologies. My goal was to explore how many of the structures Foucault's Discipline & Punish found to be at work in prisons have also managed to circulate throughout society and even to places where one would suspect them least.

The practice of disciplining individuals has become a central function of various American environments. The architecture and policing methods that carry out the instillation of discipline have even permeated institutions that appear to be independent from the exercise of political power. As public spaces are privatized and “order” becomes the goal of civilization, city streets, shopping malls, and amusement parks have all taken up the task of the prison to maximize the docility of individuals. This movement, with Disneyland as the torchbearer and exemplar, has created a multitude of

environments, which I would like to refer to as amusement compounds. In the pages ahead, I would like to explore the ways in which these supposedly recreational environments are functionally similar to the prison in a number of ways.

Michel Foucault argues that the architectural design of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon (1791)—a model for prisons which subjects inmates to a state of constant surveillance—produces a mechanism which imbues docility in its prisoners and allows for the automatic functioning of power. This surveillance mechanism, however, is not limited for use solely in prisons. The panoptic model, which relies on the principle of simultaneously visible and unverifiable authority, can be circulated to form a disciplinary society that “assures an infinitesimal distribution of the power relations” with unparalleled economy.¹ The dispersal of panopticism throughout society carries out the functional inversion of discipline, shifting its purpose of maintaining order and control to one that maximizes the utility of individuals through the instillation of docility:

Hence their emergence from a marginal position on the confines of society, and detachment from the forms of exclusion of expiation, confinement or retreat...Hence also their rooting in the most important, most central and most productive sectors of society.²

The disciplines infiltrate the cornerstones of society: factory production, education, the war-machine, the civic environment, and the recreation/entertainment machine. Their mechanisms detach from the closed fortresses of punishment, according to Foucault, and circulate in a “free” state.³ Equally important to the dispersal of disciplinary power is the act of policing. The ceaseless presence of a potential surveyor car-

ries out what Foucault refers to as the “faceless gaze,” which Foucault describes as a system of inescapable, omnipresent surveillance that simultaneously makes itself known to the subject while remaining invisible. When one is aware that they are subjected to this faceless gaze, one assumes responsibility for their actions and polices herself/himself, becoming both the jailor and the jailed.⁴

On the streets of New York City, modern policing habits and methods under Mayor Rudy Giuliani were implemented to carry out both functions of discipline: the maintenance of order and the inculcation of docility in individuals. Practices of “zero tolerance” (ZT) policing and what journalist and author Christian Parenti refers to in his book *Lockdown America* as “free market social hygiene” of the Grand Central Partnership “Outreach Team”—the system of transient citizens policing each other for nominal compensation by the residents of the Business Improvement Districts—have taken root in the city as a way of ensuring the increasingly privatized public space of New York City remains, or at least appears to be “safe.”⁵ Even the most trifling municipal codes are enforced vigorously to uphold this image of safety, under the police department’s philosophy that preventing disorder will prevent violence.⁶ This process of constructing an ambiance has begun to literally and explicitly transform the streets of New York into a theme park, as The Walt Disney Company and other developers have poured money into the conversion of Times Square from “porno-Mecca to urban theme park epicenter.”⁷ What is accomplished by “pacifying the central city” with police visibility and force is not only the familiarization with authority, but the constant awareness of it, thus internalizing the “faceless gaze” for individuals, surveilling and normalizing their movements.⁸ The policing of the sidewalks in New York through the GCP Outreach Team as well as architectural measures taken in Los Angeles (“ingenious design deterrents” such as the barrel-shaped bus bench, outdoor sprinklers, and the elimination of public lavatories) act not only as a way of deterring and containing the cities’ homeless populations, but also as a way of dictating what space is *for*.⁹ This ascription of purpose to space is central to the disciplinary society.

Shifting from a place intended to be explicitly public to those now more privatized, one can see the technology of discipline deployed in the institutions which scholar Mike Davis refers to in his book *City of Quartz* as Panoptic Malls. These fortresses, whose architectural design and management are oriented toward security, “plagiarize brazenly from Jeremy Bentham’s renowned nineteenth-century design for the ‘panoptic prison’ with their economical central surveillance.”¹⁰ In addition to the elements of surveillance, the mall’s—specifically, the Martin Luther King Jr. Shopping Center in Watts, California—perimeter is marked by an eight-foot-high fence, through which passage of patrons is monitored whether they enter by foot or automobile. This

allows for shoppers to be individualized and reorganized as they are subjected to an inspection upon entrance to the facility, simultaneously making them hyper-aware of the security and their body’s place in relation to it. These malls each have their own nerve centers, which act as the eyes and brain of the security system. These operations outposts contain the managerial headquarters for each mall, their own surveillance systems for monitoring video and audio feeds, substations of LAPD, as well as a communications center for contacting local police and fire departments.¹¹ Patrons’ awareness of this complex system thereby encourages the policing of one’s own body to prevent external forces from having to do so.

It is important to understand how a completely privatized but exceedingly popular place such as Disneyland utilizes these disciplinary functions of the Panopticon, and how the theme park itself has influenced the construction of other amusement compounds throughout the era of suburbanization in Los Angeles. One of the most striking similarities between the modern prison and Disneyland is their placement in relation to the urban center. Both destinations adhere to principles in which sequestration from the urban center is key, though this is done with different goals in mind. The modern prison in the United States, and California in particular, is one placed out in rural areas. This is done in order to visibly erase problems from a community and to geographically displace “criminals” from their environments (or rather, to keep the prison and its contents out of the city), whereas Disneyland is removed from the population center of Los Angeles as a way of keeping the city, in the metonymic sense, out of the environment.¹² The placement of both institutions is significant because they both play a role in the suburbanization of the greater Los Angeles area, both directly and indirectly. As UCLA professor Eric Avila notes, the construction and design of Dodger Stadium, though not completely removed from the noir shadow of Downtown Los Angeles, follows the example, which accommodated the suburban ideal, championed by Walt Disney’s theme park.¹³ Among the hallmarks borrowed from Disneyland, in the perpetuation of the suburban model by then-owner of the Brooklyn/Los Angeles Dodgers Walter O’Malley and others were: ample parking, a separation from the “blighted” urban center, a self-contained environment, and a single-entrance-design, all of which were utilized to maximize feelings of comfort and familiarity in visitors. Avila writes that, “The car-oriented culture of Southern California demanded a careful ordering of space around Chavez Ravine. Dodger Stadium, like Disneyland and the freeways, demanded an almost complete surrender to a strict spatial order, designed to facilitate the smooth flow of cars and people,” thus allowing the order maintained by disciplinary power to permeate.¹⁴

From the moment guests arrive on Disney property, their movements are controlled, influenced, and disciplined

by both the architecture and employees of the park. When parking, cars are individualized and reorganized into predetermined spaces by staff. If this authority is questioned and guests try to choose their own parking space, they are asked to exit the parking structure. Upon approaching the front gates, guests' bodies are once again reorganized into single-file lines as they pass through a security checkpoint, at which bags are checked and guests are asked to open any bulky coats, making the masses hyper-aware of the secure, surveilled environment and their role in it, similar to the situation at Davis' panoptic mall. Throughout the day, guests are continuously instructed on where to stand, sit, walk, smoke cigarettes, how to arrange their bodies inside vehicles, and how to conform to proper standards of behavior by cast members, architecture, and signage. The extensive use of ropes is implemented to organize and control crowds by designating which spaces are for walking, standing, observing, or queuing, with figures of authority ever-present to ensure the function of these ropes is carried out. These and other systems of crowd control, such as the regulation of movement around the park's central hub during times of high traffic, are all forms of discipline on the body that allow for the automatic functioning of power.

Adding to the visible and unverifiable element of disciplinary power is the notable prevalence of security monitors that are frequently within the vision of guests at attractions, restaurants, the park's entrance, and elsewhere, but the invisibility of security cameras producing any video feed. What this accomplishes is eerily similar to the Panopticon, in that it makes guests aware that they are always vulnerable to being seen, but leaving them ignorant as to when or from where. "Visibility is a trap," and guests self-police to prevent the implementation of punishment.¹⁵ The mediating and construction of perspectives inside the park allow for complete and total enclosure of the guests' vision, removing them mentally and physically from the environment beyond the park's walls.

All of this is done in a way to make park guests either unaware or unmindful of the structures that control them, as one assumes these restrictions will presumably provide a more enjoyable and safe experience. Avila notes that the design of the park is orchestrated in a way to calm and subdue guests, allowing experiences all within a realm of relative comfort and familiarity.¹⁶ These systems, combined with the visibility of security, both in plain clothes and uniform, embodies the pinnacle of a disciplinary society, where one is policing herself/himself and being made useful as a docile body. This practice of maximizing the docility of multiplicities through tranquilization, in tandem with the appearance of constant surveillance, in an enclosed, sequestered environment, results in this formulation of the ultimate disciplinary environment. Indeed, while for many, Disneyland operates as a social relief valve that allows for the dispersal of tensions that accumulate in the everyday lives of individuals, what becomes problematic is how individuals are affected by it soon after their vacations have ended.

Considering these astounding similarities between California's most famous playground and its archipelago of incarceration, I am inclined to argue that the two institutions essentially serve the same purpose in society. Disneyland merely functions as a prison for those members of a "free" state not confined to cages. Both structures serve to indoctrinate individuals with docility to allow for the automatic, economical functioning of power, just as Bentham had intended. If it is accepted that the function of prisons is to discipline and punish, and if one agrees that Disneyland implements the same tactics employed in the prison, then it is possible to conceive of Disneyland as a carceral space for the non-incarcerated. It would appear then, that the main difference between Disneyland and the prison is that the former carries out these disciplinary technologies under the auspices of recreation, pleasure, and entertainment, while the latter's purpose is less shrouded. Indeed, many go to Disneyland for the same reasons they go to cinemas, sporting events, music festivals and the like, that is to escape, to be freed from the bonds of conventionality and regularity, and the undue stressors that come with it. However, it would appear that with Disneyland what many are getting is instead, aided by a heavy dosage of complacency, is the full disciplinary treatment. Unless their sensors are tuned with an acute awareness to the mechanisms of power that conduct and influence one's bodily movements and behaviors, their docility and complacency with this regimentation instead manifest themselves as sentiments of love and endearment for the park and its wardens.

As Avila argues and I had alluded to previously, Disneyland served as a model for the construction of Dodger Stadium and a booster for the movement toward the suburban ideal in both Southern California and across the nation. If this is the case, then is it not a possibility that many suburban developments are designed with the same function in mind? Mike Davis spotted the similarities between the panoptic mall and what he refers to as the "Haagenization" of housing in ghettos that serve the panoptic malls; "The Imperial Courts Housing Project...has recently been fortified with fencing, obligatory identity passes and a substation of the LAPD. Visitors are stopped and frisked, while the police routinely order residents back to their apartments at night."¹⁷ I would argue that these practices are not isolated to housing projects in the ghettos. Planned communities for the wealthy, that sprung up in the shadow of Disneyland during the second half of the twentieth century, in suburban Orange County, adhere to many of the same descriptions. The planned-development housing tract of Northpark in Irvine, California, is enclosed behind brick walls or steel fences, depending on the environment on the other side. There are two entrances to the community, at either of which residents must present a transponder to pass through the gates, or visitors must present identification and verification of the address, which they intend to visit –the latter of which must be confirmed by a 24-hour security guard. The neighborhood streets and community amenities are regularly

patrolled by a private security force, which upholds a strict curfew of 10 p.m. for minors (midnight for adults) and will not hesitate to ask which address visitors are under the supervision of. The labyrinthine patterns of suburban streets deter those unfamiliar with their layout from entering the community, while those who reside there are subdued and disciplined into their patterns and habits of everyday life.

The regimentation and reorientation of the body that takes place within the confines of Disneyland, and other suburban environments that were influenced by Disney's model, can be seen to work very much toward the same goal as that of the prison: to instill individuals with docility and discipline and to create a society made up of its own jailers. Instead of achieving any escape, masses are made useful as docile consumers and conducted to obey the rules in the name of order and homogeneity. As theorist and philosopher Umberto Eco writes, "guests of Disneyland are made to behave like the park's robots, to have their movements controlled and conditioned by a disciplinary authority, with effects that last even after their day at the park is over."¹⁸ With this new understanding of the ways in which discipline operates and the way its function has infiltrated society, it is prudent to remember Foucault, in his debate with Noam Chomsky, who called for society to more closely criticize the mechanics of institutions that appear to us as neutral and independent from the dispersal of power; for this close criticism would often reveal the political violence that has historically been exercised through them, and allow society to fight against it.¹⁹ ♦

1. Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of The Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 201-216.
2. *Ibid.*, 211.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, 202-203.
5. Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999/2000), 70.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 95.
8. *Ibid.*, 107.
9. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage, 1992), 232-233.
10. *Ibid.*, 242-243.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 119-121.
13. *Ibid.*, 144-145.
14. *Ibid.*, 171-174.
15. Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, 200.
16. Avila, *Popular Culture*, 125.
17. Davis, *City of Quartz*, 244.
18. Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* trans. William Waver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 48.
19. "Human Nature: Justice versus Power, Noam Chomsky debates with Michel Foucault." <<http://www.chomsky.info/debates/1971xxxx.htm>> (accessed 13 December 2012).

EARL JAMES WEAVER PRIZE

In the spring of 1993 the American Studies Student Association established the Earl James Weaver Graduate Paper Prize to honor the retirement of Earl James Weaver, Professor of American Studies, past Department Chair, and a founder of the Department of American Studies at California State University, Fullerton. With an original endowment raised from the generous contributions of American Studies students and alumni, the Weaver Prize is an annual \$250 cash award for the best paper written by an American Studies graduate student during the preceding year. Every spring, a panel of American Studies faculty reads submissions and selects the winning essay.

In 2013, the Weaver Prize went to Greg Rozsa for his essay, “The Little Economic Engine that Could: Las Vegas’s Search for Water Security Under the Shadow of Owens Valley.” The faculty committee described the essay as a thoughtful, well-written analysis of how current debates over Las Vegas’s water policies rely on public memories of Los Angeles’s early-twentieth-century water strategies. The committee appreciated Greg’s deep research into newspaper archives, fictional representations, and nonfictional accounts of the Owens Valley water debates throughout the last century and the way in which Greg anchored his ideas about collective memory in his analysis of current political choices. The faculty panel found this to be a particularly ambitious essay with extensive research and crisp writing, leading to an overall conclusion about the power of particular public memories for political resistance.

EARL JAMES WEAVER PRIZE 502: AMERICAN STUDIES

The Little Economic Engine That Could

Las Vegas's Search for Water Security Under the Shadow of Owens Valley

GEORGE GREGORY ROZSA

This essay was written for Dr. Pamela Steinle's Public Memory course in the spring of 2012. In 1989, Las Vegas set its sights on the untapped waters of the Great Basin aquifer. Opponents invoked memories of Owens Valley to contest this perceived "water grab," however, the city appropriated these for its own goals. By prioritizing growth over sustainability, Patricia Mulroy and the Southern Nevada Water Authority selectively reconstructed an "official" memory narrative that offered the potential of unfettered growth without the ecological damage caused by over-pumping. This essay examines how memory is both created and contested within the public sphere.

From the big, bold, "QUENCHING LAS VEGAS' THIRST" stretched across the screen, to the desiccated desert landscape of the *Thirst in the Mojave* video, everything about the *Las Vegas Sun's* "Water Crisis" website screams doomsday.² Experts have warned us that, "Lake Mead could run dry by 2021."³ Nothing articulates this more than the countdown timer prominently featured in the upper right hand corner of the page. Down to

the millisecond, the timer is an animated reminder that time is running out, that we must do something—Now!⁴

When you click on the video, the dry Mojave Desert transforms into a glass overflowing with water. As the camera pans out and the water evaporates, the narrator's voice-over begins. "Economic growth. More homes. More businesses. All this means more water demand."⁵ Her point is clear: water equals growth. If Las Vegas wants to grow, it will have to find a new water supply. Such declarations are nothing new, however. Boosters in Los Angeles used the same rhetoric over a century ago, before the city went in search of water 240 miles away in the Owens

Valley. Now Las Vegas finds itself in a similar situation, with a similar solution. Two hundred and eighty-five miles to the north of Las Vegas lies the untapped treasure of the Great Basin aquifer—Las Vegas wants it. The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has even devised and initiated a plan to get it. The similarities between Las Vegas's recent quest for water security and the Los Angeles/Owens Valley water transfer are striking. So much so that opponents of the SNWA's plan invoke the memory of Owens Valley to criticize it, saying, "It is the biggest urban water grab since William Mulholland plumbed Owens Valley to serve Los Angeles."⁶

The term "water grab," as used here, is both interesting and ironic. First of all, it is interesting in the sense that it implies a theft of some kind, that Los Angeles somehow stole or absconded with Owens Valley's water supply, and now Las Vegas was planning to do something similar with the Great Basin aquifer. Secondly, the use of this metaphor in connection with Owens Valley is ironic in itself. Prior to 1990, the term "water grab" had only been used once in the *Los Angeles Times*, and even then, it was used by Los Angeles to censure the Owens Valley for its seizure of Los Angeles's water, and not the other way around.⁷ I not only find it intriguing that opponents of Las Vegas's water plan would invoke the memory of Owens Valley, but I am just as curious to know how they go about it, given that none of these individuals would have had any direct recollection or experience of what had transpired in the Owens Valley nearly one hundred years ago.

Therefore, the questions I seek to address in this paper concern our memory of Owens Valley. Specifically, how has the memory of Owens Valley been conserved and reconstituted over time? By whom and for whom? And to what ends? These questions, however, are only part of a larger inquiry into the appropriation of memory for use in the construction and contestation of power. For instance, how does power, be it the state or other dominant entities, construct and reconstruct memory to suit its own needs? Moreover, what does power choose to include or exclude when constructing its preferred narrative? And alternatively, how are these narratives countered or contested within the public sphere?

I believe that Macarena Gomez-Barris's work on *memory symbolics* can assist me in this endeavor. For Gomez-Barris, memory symbolics depict "how the national public sphere in transition is mediated and constructed by state-led initiatives... and alternative forms of memory that reconstruct the past... with presentist interests in mind."⁸ I contend that these memory symbolics are not only reducible to the state and local level, but the specific form of transition need not be limited to forms of governmentality. Rather, I argue that these transitions may also be spatial or even temporal in origin, as in the case of Las Vegas as a city *transitioning* from its present to its future needs. In this regard, Owens Valley is an appropriate site of public memory. Los Angeles was facing a similar transition at the time; therefore, its actions and negotiations within the valley are interpretable

for subsequent generations to use or modify. I therefore contend that, by prioritizing growth over sustainability, Las Vegas has selectively reconstructed an "official" memory narrative of Owens Valley that offers the potential of unfettered growth without the ecological damage inflicted upon it by Los Angeles.

This official line, however, can also be contested within the public sphere through the use of what Gomez-Barris calls *alternative memory symbolics*, which "can challenge and cast doubt on these (official) renditions by suggesting that memory-making is complex, fluid, mending and incomplete; it can construct, rather than merely flatten, human agency."⁹ Therefore, I also maintain that the collective opposition to Las Vegas's water plan has contested the SNWA's preferred reading of Owens Valley with constructed narratives of its own; moreover, I argue that these narratives are client-specific and oriented toward the particular needs of each group's constituency.

In this paper, I identify two main camps of opposition to the SNWA's pipeline proposal: ranchers and environmentalists. Each of these constituencies have constructed a narrative of Owens Valley that corresponds directly to its own immediate concerns. Ranchers read *Owens Valley*, in the light of their own livelihoods and way of life, as a parable of what will become of them should the SNWA's pipeline be approved and the water tables fall from excessive groundwater pumping. Environmentalists, on the other hand, being further removed from the debate, both physically and economically, focus their attention on the Great Basin ecology by pointing to the environmental degradation of the Owens Valley in the wake of excessive groundwater pumping by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).¹⁰

Still, neither of these readings address one very important concern: how were these narratives constructed, and more importantly, from what? Gomez-Barris concludes that "[i]t is through the gathering of individual memory threads and reconstituted social experience that symbolic memory repertoires accrue and inscribe meaning to negotiate the past."¹¹ Therefore, there must have been some kernels of memory or history from which to build upon. Therefore, I needed to ask and answer one more fundamental question, (and one that echoes Gomez-Barris): where does this memory dwell?

Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* has been invaluable for pointing me in the right direction. Taylor argues that memory is both housed in the *archive*, as "documents, maps, literary texts, letters...all those items supposedly resistant to change," and in the *repertoire*, which "enacts embodied memory-performances, gestures, orality...all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, non-reproducible knowledge."¹² So where does the memory of Owens Valley reside? I hold that it lies in the initial surveys and maps compiled by the National Reclamation Service, and in the multitude of letters and correspondence of William Mulholland, J.B. Lippencott, and others involved in the creation of Los Angeles's aqueduct. It also endures in photographs and other mechanical reproductions of the time. The bulk of this memory, however, lives on in the

popular press of the day, in newspaper and magazine archives, in popular fiction, and popular history. It is also contained within the revisionist history and in academic journals. Film, documentaries, and interviews soon joined the fold. And lately, this memory has been accessible online and in real time. It exists both in a virtual space, on websites and blogs, as well as in the physical environment, as scars on the land. In short, the memory of Owens Valley resides in Taylor's archive.

Yet, this answer may be too simplistic. If we look hard at the evidence, then yes, maybe this is all that we would see. To my knowledge, there has never been a performance of Owens Valley. But then again, would I have recognized it if I had come across it? Moreover, what would the performance of Owens Valley even look like if I were searching for it? Taylor asserts that "(p)erformances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated (behavior)."¹³ Through reiterated behavior? And then it hits you—you are too close to your own evidence. What you need is distance, perspective. If you just take a step back, Owens Valley will happen, it will physically unfold before your very eyes. And when it does, you will see it clearly and wonder why you had never seen it before.

The memory of Owens Valley is invariably reproduced every time there is an inter-basin transfer of water. Most recently, you see it being played out in Nevada, in the SNWA's water petitions, but you can also see it in the resignation of federal agencies that have made way for the SNWA's pipeline. More blatantly, you witness it in the purchasing of ranches and farmland to acquire additional water rights. In short, you see it in the reenactment of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's (LADWP) original strategies and maneuvers to acquire Owens Valley's water, which I argue, due to their prior success, has become the model to follow. It appears that the former archive has now become the present repertoire by which success is assured, making Owens Valley an appropriate site to explore the performance of public memory.

The opposition, however, seems less interested in reenacting the past. A good part of this can be blamed on the failure of the former Owens Valley residents to halt or seriously impede the LADWP's bid for their water. Alternatively, opponents of the SNWA's pipeline now have a considerable wealth of legal avenues to pursue, which were not available to their counterparts in years past. Incidentally, some of these laws were enacted in the wake of Owens Valley, to prevent "it" from happening again. Therefore, in this respect, Owens Valley acts very much like a site of Kenneth E. Foote's "Accidental Tragedy," whereby accidents on the land, like the total annihilation of an ecosystem, "frequently lead to visible changes elsewhere," as in environmental protection laws and other statutes, which govern the intra-basin transfers of water.¹⁴ Moreover, Owens Valley can also be seen in light of Foote's "Rallying Points," as "a site associated with some past wrong," which "becomes the focus for further agitation in pursuit of a goal."¹⁵

In light of these three authors, Gomez-Barris, Taylor, and Foote, I not only examine how we remember Owens Valley, but just as importantly, how we use or perform that memory. Therefore, this study is historically bounded by both time and space. Temporally it is open-ended, bound on the one hand, by the early 1900s, when Los Angeles went to the Owens Valley in search of water—and yet, it extends into the unforeseeable future. My project is spatially bounded, as well. While the history is localized to the Owens Valley in California, its remembrance is primarily situated and performed in the Great Basin Desert of Nevada.

Apart from some very minor details, all of the who, what, when, where, and why(s) of the history of Owens Valley remain uncontested, although the interpretation of these interconnecting themes often collide. Memory, however, is more than just facts, if facts even come into play.¹⁶ Memory is personal, affective. Constructed. Collective memory is history viewed through the lens of our collective needs, wants, and agendas. Memories also form a basis of exclusion. You are one of us if you remember as we do, but excluded from our membership if you do not. In the case of Owens Valley, memory, on the one hand equals water security, growth, your name in history books, and a street named after you. On the other hand, memory may mean a fight you cannot possibly win, your fate scattered like the impending dust in the air, or a way of life no longer relevant to anyone outside your immediate community.

For the purposes of my arguments, I draw upon Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Macarena Gomez-Barris's *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile*, and Kenneth E. Foote's *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. Each of these authors has provided me with a methodological lens from which I scour my own evidence: From Taylor, I fall back on her discussions of what she defines as the archive and the repertoire. From these discussions, I argue that the SNWA is currently *performing* the memory of Owens Valley, as seen through the lens of a public utility geared toward the success of the constituency it serves—Las Vegas. In response to this performance, I draw upon Gomez-Barris's *alternative memory symbolics* to show how ranchers, and the rural communities they serve, challenge and contest this official memory imposed upon them by the SNWA. And lastly, I demonstrate how the memory of Owens Valley, specifically the memory of the ecological devastation produced in the wake of Los Angeles's groundwater pumping of Owens Valley, has been used to pass legislature to keep "Owens Valley" from happening again in California; moreover, it is currently being used to keep the Great Basin Desert from suffering the same fate. For this section, I refer back to Foote's sites of "accidental tragedies" and "rallying points" as sites of wrongdoing to make my argument.

Wrongdoing has always been associated with Los Angeles's dealings with and within the Owens Valley. One part of this notion has to do with the way Los Angeles secured its water rights from Owens Valley ranchers and farmers who thought they were

aiding in a reclamation project for the valley. The other part stems from the notion of theft associated with a holdout strategy initiated in 1924 with the occupation of the Los Angeles aqueduct's Alabama Gates. In either case, the ranchers and rural townfolk of the Owens Valley put up a fight before eventually succumbing to the political and financial might of Los Angeles.

Within a fortnight of the *Los Angeles Times* breaking the news that the LADWP had acquired significant tracts of land and their accompanying water rights for water export to Los Angeles, Owens Valley residents were already organizing in opposition to what they referred to as "the greatest water steal in history."¹⁷ Concomitantly, *The Inyo Register* ran headlines like, "Los Angeles Plots Destruction: Would Take Owens River, Lay Lands Waste, Ruin People, Homes and Communities."¹⁸ However, upon closer inspection of this discourse, John Walton noticed that most of these remonstrations were, in fact, "driven" by farmers and ranchers who wanted to maintain their way of life.¹⁹ These individuals extolled "the virtues of rural life" as opposed to "the pathology of overcrowded cities."²⁰ More importantly, they saw themselves as righting a wrong that was perpetrated against them by Los Angeles; therefore, they sought both justice "and the restoration of fair play."²¹ This rhetoric—the notion of theft, as reiterated in the ten-part series, "A Theft in Water," which appeared in the *Inyo Magazine* in 1908, was the dominant discourse of the opposition in the press until the occupation of the Alabama Gates in 1924.²²

The "occupation" consisted of sixty to seventy armed men from Bishop who, in their desperation, took possession of the Los Angeles aqueduct on November 16, 1924, and held it hostage pending negotiations with the city.²³ Although the occupation lasted only five days, it "marked a turning point in public opinion about the feud between Los Angeles and the Owens Valley."²⁴ Moreover, it spawned a new discourse, the *water war*, which had come to define the tenuous relationship between Los Angeles and the Owens Valley between 1924 and 1929. During the 1930s, however, as Los Angeles was completing the last of its purchases, the term fell out of favor; yet, the damage was done. Memory of this "David versus Goliath" struggle between rural, Owens Valley ranchers and townfolk, and the urban metropolis of Los Angeles would play out in Morrow Mayo's *Los Angeles*.

Perhaps the single most influential yet inaccurate book on the Los Angeles/Owens Valley affair was Morrow Mayo's 1933 *Los Angeles*, published just as the tensions between the two factions were subsiding. "Undaunted by a lack of evidence," Dave Smith, a staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, "Mayo truncated or stretched events as needed to fit his theory: that the creation of the aqueduct was the conspiratorial work of...greedy and vicious empire builders motivated in about equal parts by the passion to get rich and by the desire to destroy the lives of hapless innocents for the merry hell of it."²⁵ John Walton also described Mayo's *Los Angeles* as, "The story of 'a rich agricultural valley' destroyed by the U.S. government for (the benefit of) Los Angeles developers."²⁶ Furthermore, his chapter on the "The Rape of the

Owens Valley" portrays the city as obtaining "its water by reason of one of the costliest, crookedest, most unscrupulous deals ever perpetrated."²⁷ In Mayo's account, "The City of the Angels moved through [the] valley like a devastating plague...It was ruthless, stupid, cruel, and crooked. It deliberately ruined Owens Valley."²⁸ Lastly, in Mayo's own words, "*The Federal Government of the United States held Owens Valley while Los Angeles raped it.*"²⁹

Remi Nadeau was both agitated by Mayo's "wildly inaccurate" account of the Owens Valley affair, and perturbed that no one had "challenged" it in either the academic or popular press; therefore, he set out to counter Mayo's narrative in his *The Water Seekers*. However, by the time Nadeau published his book in 1950, the myth of Owens Valley was already ingrained in the popular imagination.³⁰ Nadeau regrettably admitted that Mayo's "distorted claims [had become] tacitly accepted as fact."³¹ What upset him most was that Mayo's version of history had become the primary source of evidence for later writers,³² including Carey McWilliams, who relied almost exclusively on Mayo's account for his book, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*.³³ Smith, though, praised Nadeau's work as "a sober, scholarly account that distributes sympathy and criticism evenhandedly to both sides."³⁴ William Kahrl, on the other hand, suggests that "(i)n attempting to balance this construction, Nadeau perhaps argued too vigorously in the city's behalf."³⁵ Still, Kahrl noted that, "until the appearance of Remi Nadeau's *Water Seekers* in 1950, the formal histories of the Owens Valley conflict...accepted the existence of a syndicate plot underlying the city's 'rape' of the valley."³⁶

Unfortunately, Nadeau's work had little effect on the public memory of Owens Valley. Mayo and McWilliams' partial accounts had cornered that market; moreover, their inaccurate tales would soon form the core of the movie, *Chinatown* (1974), which solidified the "David and Goliath" struggle and popularized the notions of theft and the "rape of the Owens Valley" that exists to this day. According to Walton, "Popular culture became, in some respects, political history and collective action proceeded from a new set of assumptions."³⁷ The movie's success, however, can be traced back to the environment in which it came out. By the 1970s, Owens Valley had depreciated to the point of legislative action. *Chinatown* was released during these struggles and by the "early 1990's, public opinion assumed that *Chinatown* represented the true history of the conflict." Moreover, "The film refueled popular interpretation and energized protest that... contributed to the success of a new county-DWP agreement limiting groundwater pumping and restoring some of the habitat."³⁸

The bulk of academic scholarship following *Chinatown*'s wake was directed at getting the story straight. Academics wanted a truer account of what had happened decades before. In 1981, Abraham Hoffman published *Vision or Villainy*, which provided a more balanced account of the struggles between Owens Valley ranchers and the LADWP. Kahrl's *Water and Power* came out the following year and remains the historical go-to book on the history of the Los Angeles/Owens Valley negotiations. However objective Kahrl set out to be, sentiment toward the valley

seeped into his work and were subsequently addressed by Walton in 1992 with the publishing of his *Western Times and Water Wars*. Despite these variegated perspectives, no clear-cut right or wrong answer could be attributed to either side. This is where Gary Libecap entered the fray as an economist, analyzing transactions in terms of absolute equity. Unfortunately, economics has a way of leaving out the human dimension. Most recently, Alexandra Sartor questioned the role of rhetoric in her 2010 dissertation: “Written in Water: The Rhetorical Protests of the Owens Valley Water Wars.” This study builds on Sartor’s work as I seek to determine the role that the public memory of Owens Valley plays in the construction of the rhetoric employed in Las Vegas’s negotiations with northern Nevada.

Earlier in this paper, I argued that we could look upon certain actions of the SNWA as a type of performance, as a reenactment of the LADWP’s negotiations and operations with and within the Owens Valley. In viewing the SNWA’s actions as a performance, and therefore, as an embodied remembrance of Owens Valley, I think it is important to revisit Gomez-Barris’s memory symbolics in terms of Taylor’s bracketing of performances as discreet objects of analysis. Taylor intimates that such performances can be “bracketed from those around them to constitute discrete objects of analysis.” “Sometimes,” she explains, “that framing is part of the event itself,” and at other times, “(t)he bracketing for these performances comes from outside, from the analytical lens that constitutes them as objects.”³⁹

Gomez-Barris, on the other hand, expands upon Lauren Berlant’s national symbolics to include “national public spheres in transition.”⁴⁰ It is this notion of “transition” that I would like to relate back to Taylor’s bracketing. Transition implies change. This change can take a variety of forms, one of which is a government in transition—from an authoritarian dictatorship to a liberal democracy as in Gomez-Barris’s example, or as I argue, a city that sees its future survival in terms of its present situation, and then acts upon this necessity. These transitions, however, are predicated upon some kind of *stressor*, or initial event or events, which then sets off a chain reaction of events directed toward some desired transformation. These stressors form the initial conditions from which we can bracket, and therefore frame, these transformative performances as discreet objects of study.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Los Angeles found itself squeezed in between an extreme booster demand for growth and expansion, and an inadequate local water supply to meet those needs. Their demand for water formed a necessary and sufficient condition for the LADWP to seek relief from the Owens Valley, 240 miles to the north. Nearly a century later, Las Vegas would find itself in a similar situation. Las Vegas was in the sixth year of a relentless drought and had nearly exhausted its allotment from the Colorado River. “Soon, if nothing was done,” reported Emily Green of the *Las Vegas Sun*, “the economic engine that drives the state, wouldn’t have enough water to support growth.”⁴¹ Las Vegas receives less than four inches of rain per year. In the dry Nevada desert, water

means high-paying union jobs, affordable housing, and no taxes. In short, water means growth. To secure this growth, the SNWA plans to build a pipeline to pump water from beneath the Great Basin Aquifer 285 miles to the north. “Investors want assurances that Las Vegas will have enough water to grow its economy...The pipeline is an essential part of (that) plan.”⁴² If the SNWA is successful, “Las Vegas will become part of” what Patricia Mulroy calls, “the burgeoning ‘New Urban West.’” If not, the city could run dry by 2015.⁴³

Las Vegas’s water crisis anchors one end of my analysis of the SNWA’s performance, which follows. Los Angeles faced a similar dilemma earlier last century, and the way the city handled that predicament became part of the archive from which the SNWA currently draws upon. As there was no previous archive for the LADWP to fall back on, the LADWP’s methods and operations were often impromptu and disorganized, and yet, highly effective. Moreover, they charted a course in their negotiations with Owens Valley by which later agencies could navigate, the SNWA among them.

The first act in the SNWA’s repertoire was secrecy. When the LADWP first concocted their plan to acquire Owens Valley River water, they sent their former Mayor, Fred Eaton, to confidentially purchase existing water rights from “unsuspecting farmers” who thought they were assigning their excess water rights over to the United States Reclamation Service for reclamation use in the valley, “rather than giving up their water to Los Angeles.”⁴⁴ Kahrl notes that these purchases “were carried out in strictest secrecy due to the fears...that publicity about the project would escalate prices.”⁴⁵ Moreover, Eaton confessed, “When our scheme gets out there is going to be an army of grafters in [the valley] filing up and buying up water rights to my discomfort.”⁴⁶

This premium on secrecy would find itself being played out again over the unclaimed waters of Nevada’s Great Basin aquifer. Anticipating an initial outpouring of protest once her plans became public, Mulroy ordered her staff to “scour” the state engineer’s water audit bulletins, in the strictest of secrecy. By their estimates, more than 1.6 million acre-feet was available for the taking, so in October 1989, her agency at the time, the Las Vegas Valley Water District, filled applications on 840,000 acre-feet of unclaimed groundwater, or roughly half of the unclaimed water in the state.⁴⁷ Even State Senator Virgil Getto, who sat on the Legislature’s Natural Resource Committee said he had “no inkling of the plan” until it went public, and even then, he “thought it was a dirty trick.”⁴⁸

Now that Mulroy had her water, “she needed Congress to instruct the Interior Department to clear passage for Las Vegas to run a pipeline across Lincoln County into the heart of rural Nevada.”⁴⁹ Once again, Mulroy would turn to the Owens Valley archive for a solution. When Los Angeles needed a right of way across federal lands for its planned aqueduct, it turned to Senator Frank P. Flint and Gifford Pinchot, head of the Forest Service and close personal friend of President Roosevelt to convince Roosevelt to intercede on Los Angeles’s behalf. Upon Roo-

sevelt's request, the House Public Land Committee removed a rider from a bill under consideration that would have prevented the right of way. Its removal gave Los Angeles the clearance it needed.⁵⁰ Whether Mulroy had direct access to President Clinton or not, she did not need it. She had Senator Harry Reid, who, at her request, took a page from the LADWP's archive and promptly attached a rider to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, which gave Mulroy the right of way she needed for her pipeline.⁵¹

With her water and the right of way for her pipeline in hand, Mulroy set her attentions to consolidating and centralizing power, just like the LADWP had done nearly a century ago with surplus water from its newly constructed aqueduct. Outlying areas which "desired to share in the surplus would have to agree to be annexed to the city."⁵² Between 1915 and 1917, Los Angeles more than tripled in size as it annexed an additional 242 square miles as part of its water delivery plan.⁵³ Mulroy appears to have followed suit. The Las Vegas Basin was served by seven separate water companies when Mulroy took control of the Las Vegas Valley Water District in 1989. Mulroy's agency was only one of them, but with the lure of excess water, her rivals agreed to be consolidated (*annexed*) into a new agency, the SNWA, with Mulroy at the helm.

The last mimetic act of the SNWA that I would like to focus on concerns the SNWA's recent purchases within Spring Valley, Nevada. Between 1924 and 1927, the LADWP purchased over 700 individual farms and ranches within the Owens Valley to obtain incremental water rights for Los Angeles. Additionally, the city sunk wells and began pumping groundwater to increase flows. These withdrawals invariably affected the groundwater tables of neighboring ranchers, who quickly brought suits for injunctions. These injunctions, however, were equally "vacated by the simple expedient of buying off the affected property."⁵⁴ By purchasing these neighboring properties, the LADWP "internalized many of the physical externalities associated with...groundwater pumping."⁵⁵ Perhaps Mulroy was entertaining these very concerns when the SNWA began acquiring huge tracts of land in 2006. Even before they had any assurances of water the SNWA announced that they had bought the Spring Valley Robinson Ranch for \$22 million. "Soon, almost every ranch in Spring Valley was in negotiation with Las Vegas," wrote Green, "and sales were going to fast to count: Harbecke, Phillips, Bransford, Wahoo, El Tejon, Huntsman."⁵⁶

Libecap sees these types of voluntary transactions as counteracting the notion of theft, which surrounds the history of the Owens Valley. "Theft," for Libecap, lies wholly within the realm of value, and since the Owens Valley farmers were "better off by selling their water and land than if they had remained in agriculture,"⁵⁷ no theft occurred. Coercion never enters the picture. However, Green gives us another perspective when it comes to the SNWA's transactions within the Spring Valley. Ranchers, believing that Las Vegas would follow

the LADWP's suit and pump their groundwater dry, sold their properties before they could lose any value. As one rancher explained to Green, "as she wept with shame...she had no choice. None of them did."⁵⁸ One thing was certain, though, by purchasing these ranches in advance, the SNWA internalized any potential externality generated from groundwater pumping, just like the LADWP had done decades before. Moreover, "if Las Vegas's pumping caused any damage in the valley, the only ones to complain would be Mulroy's hired ranch hands."⁵⁹

For some of these ranchers, "the lure of multi-million dollar payouts...proved difficult to resist." However, Gary Perea, a White Pine County resident and a Democratic commissioner, states that most of his neighbors, Dean Baker among them, stand unequivocally against the SNWA's "water grab."⁶⁰ Baker owns one of the largest ranches in the county, approximately 12,000 acres outright, plus grazing rights to another 250,000 acres. "I could have asked SNWA for \$100 million," he says, "and they wouldn't have laughed. They wouldn't have paid us that much," Baker chuckles, "but they wouldn't have laughed. It would have been the starting point for negotiations"⁶¹ In fact, Baker "recently refused a \$20 million offer from a real estate speculator," who was only interested in his water rights.⁶² Talking it over with his three sons, Baker declined the offer stating that they did not "care about the money."⁶³ Baker and his family liked it there. They liked their way of life and had no intention of leaving.

Cecil Garland, another Snake Valley rancher from Callo, Nevada, feels similarly. "Some of my neighbors have been here for five generations," Garland admits. "They don't want to leave...I've been here for 33 years and I'm kind of a 'Johnny Come Lately'...I love being here," he confesses, "I want to continue to be here."⁶⁴ But it is not easy for Garland or other ranchers like him who fear the SNWA's pipeline proposal will pump their valley dry. In another interview, Garland somberly "kneels and scoops a handful of powdery sand."⁶⁵ His worst fear is that the entire valley will end up like this if the SNWA's "water grab" is successful. When asked if he really thought the pipeline was a water grab, Garland responded, "It can't be anything else."⁶⁶ Garland is not alone in his conviction. When Mulroy's applications for the Great Basin's unclaimed water went public in October 1989, everyone cried "Chinatown."⁶⁷ Almost immediately, allegations were hurled at Mulroy, comparing her and her pipeline to William Mulholland and the Los Angeles aqueduct, which according to Green, "had reduced the once lush Owens Valley to a dust bowl."⁶⁸

Baker, Garland, and the environmental activist community personify what Gomez-Barris calls *alternative memory symbolics*. Their narratives contest the official discourse presented by the SNWA, which boils down to: There is extra water in the Great Basin aquifer that the northern Nevada residents do not need. Las Vegas as the economic engine that runs Nevada has a need for this extra water. There is no danger if we take this extra water; however, there is a danger if we do not, so therefore, we are taking this extra water. Reconstituted, the official line goes

something like: “The Las Vegas Strip uses three percent of southern Nevada’s water, but it is the biggest economic engine in the state,”⁶⁹ compared to ranching, which generates just two percent of Nevada’s income and yet consumes eighty percent of its water. You do the math, implies Hal Rothman, a professor of History at UNLV.⁷⁰ Moreover, just a one percent decline in tourism related to a water shortage would cost the state “\$163 million in net revenue annually.”⁷¹ Confronted with these arguments, Garland confesses with abandonment, “You know, to say that, to even think that, speaks to the callousness that I despair of. The true destruction,” he says, “would be to destroy the marshes and seeps and springs. And for what? For more sprawl.”⁷²

Like the northern desert, Las Vegas once had an abundance of groundwater and springs, before the city’s growth had pumped them so hard that the ground caved in and the springs stopped flowing. Now the city is fixing its attention on the Great Basin Desert to the north. With its higher altitude, and longer, colder winters, “snowmelt...drains into such highly saturated basins that it *dances* out of springs.”⁷³ The two basins Mulroy set her sights on, the Spring and Snake Valleys, are fed by Wheeler Peak in the Great Basin National Park. Mulroy’s applications in the Spring Valley totaled over 90,000 acre-feet. In the Snake Valley, she applied for 50,000 acre-feet more. “Baker was flabbergasted...How could Las Vegas imagine that he had somehow missed so much water?”⁷⁴ If there was one thing he was sure of, it was that the Snake Valley did not have an extra 50,000 acre-feet of water to give. Moreover, if the SNWA succeeded in pumping that amount from the Great Basin aquifer, it would suck Snake Valley dry, just like Los Angeles pumped the Owens Valley dry nearly half a century earlier.⁷⁵

Garland does not believe the extra water exists either. “We’re in a water deficit ourselves,” he explains, “All the springs, the seeps, the wet areas...we have are already under stress...so how can (the SNWA)...expect to take surplus water without destroying the surface water that exists there and without destroying the community and their ability to farm...there?”⁷⁶ Baker illustrates these concerns with an anecdote from his early days in the valley. “We drilled and beat our heads against the wall with four or five wells...What we learned,” Baker confides, “and you can imagine how much it cost us to learn, is that it’s a closed system.”⁷⁷ You cannot pump one area of land without simultaneously affecting another.

To drive his point home on risks of groundwater pumping, Baker escorts *USA Today* reporter John Ritter to a parched piece of land, which used to be a small watering hole. He explains to Ritter that a half a century of relentless pumping has lowered the water table to the point where the small spring that fed the pond no longer flows. And, this is nothing compared to what is going to happen to the entire valley if the SNWA gets their way. “If the water table...drops beyond its root zone,” Garland warns, “greasewood dies.”⁷⁸ And, this is everyone’s fear. “If they pull the water table down enough,” Baker cautions, “this will be a dust bowl.”⁷⁹ Once the greasewood dies, it’s gone, and it is not com-

ing back. “This is a catastrophic thing,” Garland grieves, which should not be taken lightly.⁸⁰

John Bredehoeft, former Regional Hydrologist Responsible for Water Activities in the Eight Western States, did not take this lightly. According to his calculations, between the ranchers, plants, and animals, there just was not any extra water for the SNWA’s taking. The SNWA had other ideas. Under Nevada’s “beneficial use” statutes for water usage, ranches and towns are entitled to protection, however, “most of the native flora,” is not.⁸¹ Under the SNWA’s logic, Green reports, the greasewood’s share of water could legally be taken by Las Vegas. All they had to do was to “Pump hard. Kill them fast. Then let the system return to equilibrium.”⁸²

The problem with this philosophy, however, is that the greasewood is a phreatophyte, a type of plant whose roots chase groundwater even as the water table is falling. The greasewood’s roots can effectively burrow fifty feet down. Moreover, they prevent dust storms. Without “the long roots of phreatophytes anchoring the soil,” Green notes, “Spring Valley could become the kind of dust bowl created by Los Angeles.”⁸³ In the 1970s, Los Angeles had pumped the Owens Valley so hard that springs and seeps disappeared completely. Groundwater-dependent vegetation died, followed by soil erosion then “subsidence and fissuring.” In short: desertification.⁸⁴ “The vile mix of fine sand, arsenic and assorted metals billowing out of Owens Valley,” reported Green, is “the single worst source of ‘particulate pollution’ in the nation.” The only thing standing in between Snake Valley and Owens Valley is fifty feet of groundwater.

Tragically, environmental models built to simulate the effects of the SNWA’s groundwater pumping scheme predict a two hundred foot drop in the water level over a seventy-five year period, enough to kill off the phreatophytes—and everything else in the valley. Kay Brothers, deputy general manager of the SNWA adamantly states, “It’s just a model!”⁸⁵ Moreover she states, “I’m not saying that you would never lose a greasewood, but I think you would never lose much at all by managing it properly.”⁸⁶ Timothy Durbin, a hydrogeologist with the Geological Survey’s office, compared the effects of Los Angeles’s groundwater pumping on the Owens Valley against the predictions of the SNWA’s proposed withdrawals in the Snake Valley, and said they were identical. “The Owens Valley is a model of what to expect.”⁸⁷ The mere mentioning of the two in the same breath is enough to make Brothers irate. “They’re totally different projects,” she barks back. “To even compare them is to be out of date and not understand what a groundwater project is versus surface water.”⁸⁸

The SNWA has models too, but it refuses to disclose its own findings, noting only that their evidence is inconclusive. Moreover, Brothers conveniently claims that modeling is “not exactly a science.”⁸⁹ Nevertheless, there is one thing that all of the models show—there will be a significant groundwater draw-down should the SNWA start pumping the valley. “It’s immaterial whether it drops one hundred twenty feet or two hundred feet,”

Phoebe Sweet of the *Las Vegas Sun* writes. It will still kill off everything in the valley.⁹⁰ Terry Fisk, a Death Valley hydrologist raises a similar concern stating, “There’s no doubt the aquifer will be drawn down. It’s a question of magnitude and where it will occur.”⁹¹ Dick Birger, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manager who oversees a number of desert refuges is also concerned about the SNWA’s project. The refuges he manages contain some of the world’s most endangered species, “species found nowhere else in the world. . . remnant fish and aquatic life left over from prehistoric times.”⁹² If the water level drops, they will go extinct. “There’s no place else to put them,” implores Cynthia Martinez, an assistant field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Southern Nevada.⁹³

Groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley reduced the Owens Pupfish population down to 800 and brought them to near extinction. The federal government had to step in and declare the Owens Pupfish an endangered species in order to save them from extinction.⁹⁴ At least four other species of fish were also endangered by these groundwater withdrawals: the Owens Tui Chub, the Toikona Tui Chub, the Owens Speckled Dace, and the Owens Sucker. Migratory birds, which fed on the bountiful salt flies and brine shrimp, were forced to alter their migratory patterns due to the loss of their natural food supply. Many were never able to accommodate this change, and their populations dwindled, as did the populations of most endemic species of the valley, which were not only dependent on Owens Lake, but also on the springs, rivers, and flows, which fed it. And then there was the vegetation to consider.⁹⁵

Earlier, I compared Owens Valley to a site of Foote’s “Accidental Tragedies,” whereby certain tragedies are felt far away from the sites in which they occurred due to legal and legislative efforts to minimize their reoccurrence. Although Los Angeles opened its aqueduct in 1913, the full effect of Los Angeles’s withdrawals of water from the Owens Valley was not felt until Los Angeles’s expansion of groundwater pumping in the 1970s. The negative effects of these diversions led Inyo County to file a lawsuit against Los Angeles under California’s Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This resulted in the 1989, Inyo-LA Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA), which required certain monitoring of Los Angeles’s withdrawals. Further damage to Owens Valley’s endemic resulted in the Lower Owens River Project (LORP), a legal requirement ordering Los Angeles to restore “62 miles of the lower Owens River and creating, maintaining and enhancing wetlands habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.”⁹⁶

I also suggested that we could look upon Owens Valley as a site of Foote’s “Rallying Points,” as a somehow “wronged” site that is in need of rectifying, and as such, serves as the center of such actions. While Owens Valley, proper, is currently being made “right,” through litigation, I argue that the public memory of Owens Valley serves as a *pre-devastation* rallying point for those who would keep Owens Valley from happening to the Great Basin Desert. Literally hundreds or even thousands of websites and personal blogs and comments on the web form a

virtual network that is trying to shield northern Nevada, with their tenuous filaments, from an inevitable dust cloud. The sheer magnitude of this solidarity exceeds the limitation of my study; however, certain points seem warranted to note.

“Remember Owens Valley,” read the pins and bumper stickers handed out to protesters of Las Vegas’s pipeline.⁹⁷ “Protect Snake Valley,” reads the header of the forum for residents of Snake Valley to organize and protect the valley.⁹⁸ “Utahns Opposed to Las Vegas Water Grab” heads another website formed to create solidarity against Las Vegas’s perceived “water grab.”⁹⁹ And, then there are the whole online comment sections, where the “silent” opposition can voice their counter-narratives of the official story: Terry Marasco responding to Tim Folger’s, “Requiem for a River,” states, “We in the Snake Valley, NV do not trust Pat Mulroy as her words differ from her actions.”¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the gloves really come off when Mulroy, herself, speaks out on the proposal.¹⁰¹ Areuone asks, “whether Las Vegas has the right to take Nevada’s water?” Johnny Deep states matter-of-factly, “It is still a water grab.” And Mr. Jackwraith is concerned that “all of the ecosystems. . . will die. It will ruin every rancher.” These concerns summarize the entire spectrum of opposition to the SNWA’s project.

By viewing the actions of the SNWA, as a performative discourse, in light of the former archive produced by the LADWP, we get a richer picture than what words alone can create. This is why Gomez-Barris went in search of the cultural production of memory, to flesh out the words with a visual record of memory. Furthermore, whether deliberate or not, the SNWA’s actions often collided with what it was preaching. This intersection of the performative and the discursive can add legitimacy, or shed light on illegitimate or deceptive practices when they clash. Moreover, by focusing on Gomez-Barris’s memory symbolics we can isolate how power structures utilize the archive, or even manipulate it so as to confirm to a preferred narrative or history. In the case of Owens Valley, the archive is thoroughly known. Therefore, the only option for the SNWA to construct its preferred narrative was through denial and interpretation.

For the SNWA, this meant interpreting Owens Valley as a *surface* water project while viewing their own as a *groundwater* one, and therefore, not subject to the same scrutiny that the archive would demand. Both projects, however, would lower the water table level and thereby produce similar results—the destruction of the local ecosystem—yet, the SNWA discounts these models as “unscientific.” Moreover, to assuage fears, they claim they will have monitoring in place, to mitigate any damages if they occur. Opponents, however, look to the archive of Owens Valley to predict their eventual fate. Should billions be spent on the pipeline, the fear is that no matter what the results are, the project will go forward. Performance is predictive. As the SNWA performs Owens Valley, the opposition knows what to expect, too. Both the academia and popular press have come to the same conclusion—again, the utter destruction of the Great Basin ecosystem, which attests to the

power of the archive as a store of memory, and the repertoire of memory as a predictive tool.

Gomez-Barris's investigation into the cultural production of memory is not only valid, but significant. A wealth of primary and secondary source material has been sifted through, most recently, the rhetoric employed by ranchers and farmers in their opposition to the LADWP. Yet, there have been novels written about the Owens Valley, and film, and documentaries, too. Most importantly, and only discovered after my project was nearly complete, there exist a number of architects who keep the memory of Owens Valley alive through photography. *Mammoth* is one such site.¹⁰² *Infrascapè Design* is another.¹⁰³ So is *dpr-barcelona*.¹⁰⁴ And *Architect*.¹⁰⁵ And then there's David Maisel's photography, which is beyond belief.¹⁰⁶ Maisel's work has even been used in a promotional campaign to keep the memory of the devastation of Owens Valley alive.¹⁰⁷ There is enough material on this subculture to warrant an investigation; however, there just was not enough time—here. Time. We started with time, with a countdown timer counting down until doomsday. And, now I leave you with time as well. Perhaps with more time than you will ever need. Enter: The Clock People. Members of the Long Now Foundation also have its sights on the Snake Valley, although not for its water. The Clock People “want to build a clock that will mark time for 10,000 years.”¹⁰⁸ As if to shout at the top of their lungs that the *Las Vegas Sun*'s panic is just that—mere rhetoric, that there is an alternative narrative, one which does not come with an expiration date. ◆

1. <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/topics/water/>.

2. “Water Security,” *Las Vegas Sun*, accessed May 13, 2012, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/topics/water/>.

3. “Water Security.”

4. Although the above screenshot captures the essence of the website, it fails to convey the overall sense of urgency one feels from visiting the site firsthand. In one word, I would describe this feeling as panic.

5. “Introduction,” *Las Vegas Sun*, accessed May 13, 2012, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/topics/water/>.

6. Emily Green, “Satiating A Booming City,” *Las Vegas Sun*, June 1, 2008, accessed May 13, 2012, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2008/jun/01/satiating-booming-city/>.

7. See “Water Grab Indorsed By Bishop Body,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 18, 1924.

8. Macarena Gomez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 5.

9. Gomez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells*, 6.

10. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power began as the Board of Water Commissioners and subsequently went through many transitions: Board of Public Service Commissioners, Bureau of Water Works and Supply (1910), Bureau of Power and Light (1915), Board of Water and Power Commissioners (1931). See Libecap (p. 29) for a thorough accounting of the LADWP's genealogy. Although it went through many transitions, I will be using LADWP throughout this paper in all periods covered for ease of conveyance.

11. Gomez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells*, 7.

12. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 19–20.

13. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 2.

14. Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscape of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 23.

15. *Ibid.*, 32.

16. In some cases I argue that “facts,” as in the actual material events that transpire, are subjugated to the memory of those events as they “play out” in the individual's mind or collective thought.

17. “Water Gauge Will Be Moved Up Today,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1905.

18. Alexandra Sartor, “Written in Water: The Rhetorical Protests of the Owens Valley Water Wars” (PhD diss., University of California, Irvine, 2010), 8.

19. *Ibid.*

20. John Walton as quoted in Sartor, “Written in Water,” 8.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Between 1905 and 1907, The *Los Angeles Times* ran thirty-one articles referencing the theft of the Owens Valley. Between 1908 and 1915 it published just nine more. During the next sixty-three years, however, only six more articles ran, before disappearing completely in 1984, after showing up in a five-part series on William Mulholland, written by his daughter, Catherine.

23. Six months prior to the occupation, Mark Watterson, its organizer, wrote in a letter to Mary Austin, “We are having a desperate struggle against the City and the only weapon we have is publicity, and that is about the only thing the City of Los Angeles seems to fear.” Sartor, “Written in Water,” 13.

24. Sartor, “Written in Water,” 103. This newly won sympathy can be seen in the *Los Angeles Times*' rendering of the occupiers, “It is to be remembered that these farmers are not anarchists nor bomb-throwers but, in the main, honest, earnest, hardworking American citizens who look upon Los Angeles as an octopus about to strangle out their lives. They have put themselves hopelessly in the wrong by taking the law into their own hands but that is not to say that there has not been a measure of justice on their side of the argument.” “The Aqueduct Crisis,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 18, 1924.

25. “70-Year Water Dispute: Fact, Fable Hard to Separate,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 1974.

26. John Walton, “Film Mystery as Urban History: The Case of Chinatown” in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell), 53.

27. *Ibid.*

28. As quoted in Remi A. Nadeau, *The Water Seekers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co, Inc.), 127.

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“ We, I think, are concerned with why people create and consume various forms of culture —call it high, low or Mr. In-Between—in some particular moment.”

Paul Lauter

AMERICAN FORMS

401: WAR & AMERICAN CULTURE

War On Terror

Film as Colonization

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This essay was written for Dr. John Ibson's War and American Culture course in the spring of 2013. It aims to investigate the role film plays in the construction of race and racism in a post-9/11 climate. The research presents evidence that there are Muslim women who fight against both sexism and Western Imperialism. Three relevant films were selected as primary cultural evidences: The Hurt Locker, Zero Dark Thirty, and Sex and the City 2. Additional sources are presented to support the claim that film is a powerful medium that constructs stereotypes and produces cultural narratives, which have strong impact on the larger social context.

The attacks that took place on September 11, 2001 shook the consciousness of American society, underscoring the difference between “us”—the Americans, and “them”—the terrorists. The events on 9/11 shook my consciousness, personally, as a female Muslim Arab-American. As America entered the “War on Terror,” the multiplicity of my identity became more explicitly announced. Surrounded by mainstream popular culture, themes of nationalism became more pronounced in order to destroy a threat to the West: a threat that became commonly associated with the Middle East. Although a specific group carried out the events

on 9/11, the entire Middle East was painted as a threat. It is important to recognize that there are over twenty countries that had become categorized as part of the “Middle East”—all with diverse cultural and religious practices. However, in a post-9/11 America, the entire region has been depicted in a homogenized way with the underlying assumption that “they” are all Arab and Muslim.

Popular culture, especially film, is powerful in constructing stereotypes and producing cultural narratives. The cultural narrative illustrated around the War on Terror works to typecast the Middle East as the enemy to the West, and thus underscores its cultural differences in order to cast it as an “other.” With all of that said, this paper will not be a study on Middle Eastern cultures. Rather, I hope to use film as a cultural medium to explore the cultural meaning of the War on Terror and the effects it has had – and continues to have – on American society. More specifically, I will be analyzing *The Hurt Locker*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, and *Sex and the City 2* to investigate their greater cultural meanings. I acknowledge the idea that there is a difference between the intent of films and the effects they produce; however, I am specifically concerned with the ways that these films formulate different elements of American culture. This paper will focus on the ways in which these films rely on the distinction between the West and the Middle East in order to “other” the Middle Eastern population. In this project, I argue that there is a cultural formula employed in these films that constructs a racialized and gendered power dynamic in which the West is the masculinized subject that asserts its dominance over the feminized Middle East as an object. Furthermore, I argue that the ways in which these films are consumed by American society allow the spectators of these films to play the role of the colonizer.

Before I embark on my project, I will first set up a theoretical framework: In *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race*, Falguni A. Sheth argues that the Muslim population has been racialized by Western liberalism. She further suggests that creating an outcast population, or an “other,” is inherent to liberalism, which defines the democratic ideology practiced by the West.¹ It is precisely this ideology that has allowed the dominant society to marginalize Muslim women and men. In underscoring fundamental differences including racial, cultural, and religious practices, the West is able to systematically “other” Muslim populations, thus depicting them as “unruly.”² The systematic way in which Muslims are cast as a threat to the West, according to Sheth, is created by transitions in representations of culture.

The first transition mentioned by Sheth involves the assertion of a strangeness of a culture, which then signifies the incomppliance of that culture. Usually, the strangeness of a culture is emphasized and defined by a cultural practice that is different from the dominant culture. According to Sheth, in the case of the Muslim population, the greater Western majority seems to focus on the hijab or the practice of veiling: “The shift in judgment from alien to uncompliant is an apt transition by which to understand a ‘strange’ cultural practice such as the hijab as an ‘unruly’ practice.”³ The next transition uses the notion of an incomppliant culture to justify colonialism. Here she mentions an idea (originally articulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) that “white men are saving Brown women from Brown men.”⁴ In this context, Sheth is underscoring the discourse manipulated to justify colonization by liberating Muslim women. She focuses on the veiling of Muslim women and the way this cultural practice justifies the West to colonize Muslims: “This view holds that this practice (veiling) is irrational... read as uncompliance, a deliberate uncooperativeness, and defiance in the face of right reason.” Finally, this leads us to Sheth’s last transition, which articulates the meaning of colonization, suggesting that colonization is justified when dealing with a people who are irrational. It is precisely their lack of reason that deems them as “unruly” and justifies violence exerted onto them.

I would like to expand Sheth’s position in regards to the racialization of the Muslim population. Although I agree that part of the systematic outcasting of the Muslim population is done through a cultural process of racialization, there is an aspect that is essential to recognize before racialization occurs, and that aspect is their religion. The Muslim population is originally grouped together because they share one religion, meaning that their identity is constructed by the values of their religious beliefs. This suggests that stereotypes that are constructed about the Muslim population actually become stereotypes that are indicative of beliefs inherent to Islam as a religion. Furthermore, it is because such stereotypes reflect a religion, or a system of beliefs set by a

higher divine power, that it is easy to outcast Muslims as a people. The dominant hegemonic ideology begins to “other” Muslims on the grounds of their “flawed” religion, due to the prevalent cultural belief that they have a “flawed” religion in relation to the West: Muslims are unable to be fixed because their characteristics are not solely based on cultural values, but they are following rules given to them by their deity. As stereotypes socially constructed by the West become more and more associated with Islam and the Muslim population, Muslims then become racialized.

The Hurt Locker and Zero Dark Thirty

In order to begin my project, I would like to first focus on two recent films (both directed by Kathryn Bigelow), which deal directly with the War on Terror. The first film I will analyze is *The Hurt Locker*, which takes place in Iraq and focuses on the experiences of a bomb squad. The next film I will unpack is *Zero Dark Thirty*, which centers on the capturing of America’s enemy, Osama Bin Laden. Before watching and analyzing these films, I wondered how explicit the binary would be portrayed between the West—“us” and the Middle East—“them.” Additionally, I wondered how mainstream popular culture dealt with war in a post-9/11 America; moreover, how did notions of gender as a cultural construct play into representations of the war, and what does this tell us about conceptions of racial distinctions between the West and the Middle East? With these concerns in mind, I approached the viewing of these films with a critical eye to focus on the cultural meanings of the narratives on a holistic scale.

In *The Hurt Locker*, Sergeant William James is the best soldier to disarm bombs and he loves the thrill of it all.⁵ Although the surface of the film expresses ideas of American heroism, there are notions of American masculinity, racism, and power that are also heavily embedded within the film. More specifically, this film is culturally significant in examining the meaning of the American military and the role it plays in regards to Iraq as well as the larger War on Terror. *The Hurt Locker* as a film employs cultural work in that it demonstrates the ways in which American dominant ideologies are constructed in regards to a post-9/11 America. Furthermore, the distinction between East and West is heavily illuminated throughout the film as we are presented with images of American soldiers occupying Iraqi land. However, the ways in which these images are consumed on the mainstream level is indicative of American culture on a larger scale. The main aspects that caught my eye from this film include the masculinization of the military (and therefore America), the feminization of Iraq, and the ways in which Iraq is depicted as a land in need of help by an imperial power.

As the film takes place in Iraq, it is constructed so that the spectators identify with the American soldiers. In viewing the film through a Western lens, it becomes easier to ana-

lyze the relationship between “us”—the West, and “them”—the Iraqis or the East; since the film is presented in this way, the Iraqis are therefore “othered.” The representation of the Iraqi people as a non-Western Other further underscores the distinction between the West and the East, while connoting a sense of threat with the Iraqis. Throughout the film, there is a continuous emphasis on the masculinity of the American military; this is accomplished through the ways in which the soldiers interact with each other linguistically as well as the ways in which they engage with one another on a physical level. The ways that the soldiers converse with one another in the film demonstrates that the ways in which they perform their masculinity is discursive. For instance, there is a scene towards the beginning of the film where a soldier is disarming a bomb when another soldier tells him “pretend like it is your dick.” Linguistically, this is a loaded statement to unpack what it implies about the relationship between gender and power. First, it is notable that they are disarming a bomb that could potentially explode. In “pretending it is [his] dick,” the phallus is being associated with a lethal weapon. Based on a psychoanalytic model, this suggests that masculinity is fundamental to the social framework of power. This further suggests that masculine rhetoric is an element of subtext that reveals certain values in the way culture views the American military.

The physical manner in which the soldiers engage with each other is another element that is representative of the way American culture perceives the military. The film paints the soldiers as masculine during their time off-duty as if their masculinity is inherent to their nationalism, as opposed to it being constructed by culture. During their free time, they are shown playing aggressive music and violent video games. However, there is one particular scene that I feel is necessary for my focus: this scene shows the soldiers after they have finished their duties for the day. In order to pass the time, the soldiers begin to play around by physically wrestling each other. Sergeant James, who is the representative of the quintessential American male soldier, wrestles with Sergeant JT Sanborn, who is Black, which is significant to the overall context of the scene as a competition for masculinity. As they fight, Sergeant James fights Sergeant Sanborn to the ground and begins to fool around by riding him like an animal. This moment seems like the breakdown of Sanborn’s masculinity, which ignites in him non-cognitive affects of anger, failure, and abuse; this image is suggestive of a rape scene. On a larger scale, this image illustrates a White man feminizing a Black man, which further suggests that whiteness is fundamental to an American hegemonic framework of power.

Recognizing that Whiteness is an imperative factor to the American notion of power leads me to my next point: The White masculine ideology celebrated through the institution of the military is an ideology appropriated onto American so-

ciety as a whole. This is not to say that America is inherently masculine, but rather I am suggesting that values of power embedded within the military are reflected through American society. In order to articulate this point more clearly, I will turn to the representations in the film. The image of the American military is made intelligible to the spectators of the film when placed in relation to images of their Iraqi counterparts. The portrayal of “us” and “them” between the Americans and the Iraqis illuminates a gendered relationship between the West and East, respectively. In portraying American soldiers asserting their dominance over Iraqis, Americans are essentially masculinized as the Iraqis are consequentially feminized. It is significant to acknowledge that the Iraqis are first framed as a threat to America and Western society. For instance, in the film there is a sign on a tank that reads: “Stay 100 inches back or you will be shot.” This is an interesting aspect to focus on in the film because it further develops the idea that American soldiers are deeply associated with their weapons which works to dehumanize and feminize the Iraqis. In reading such a hegemonic relationship through a psychoanalytic lens, we can again apply a psychoanalytic model to recognize that those who take up the weapon (phallus) are masculinized. It is also imperative to once again recognize the link between gender and power. Americans are masculinized through their weapons, which also work as a cultural element to assert their dominance and power over the Iraqis who they are occupying. On a larger cultural scale, as there is a power structure implemented between the United States military and the Iraqis, this reflects the gendered power structure between the West as a colonizer and the East as the colonized.

As the West is perceived as a dominant power, acts of colonialism and occupation become framed as attempts of liberation and saving. This colonization essentially gets framed into the cultural narrative of the masculine saving the feminine. In the case of the War on Terror in regards to Iraq, there is a popular belief in American society that the United States military is liberating Iraq. In regards to *The Hurt Locker*, we can see such tactics illustrated in order to justify the war and occupation. For example, in this film, Sergeant James develops a friendly relationship with a little boy, who sells DVDs on the street, named Beckham. Sergeant James talks to him, plays soccer with him, and even buys a couple of DVDs from him. As the film progresses, Beckham is found dead with a bomb hidden inside of him, which the audience can see is the only factor in the film that brings out emotions in Sergeant James that are usually associated with the “feminine.” The way the images of Beckham’s dead body are portrayed suggests that other Iraqis killed Beckham. Furthermore, it underscores Sergeant James’s emotional mission that it is his job to save good Iraqis from bad ones. Many may argue that Sergeant James’s emotion is an important element used to deconstruct mainstream notions

of American masculinity; however, I am arguing that Sergeant James's tears as well as Beckham's adolescent body are used as spectacles in order to push a colonial Western agenda. Moreover, Beckham's adolescent body is manipulated as a feminized object to symbolize a land that is in need of liberation and saving.

Overall, *The Hurt Locker* effectively utilizes cinematic tactics such as spectacle to get the audience to watch the American experience in Iraq. Taking place in Iraq, the film acts as a cultural medium to reveal aspects of popular views of American culture, especially in regards to making the distinction between the Americans and the Iraqis. Delving deeper into the film sheds light on the ways in which the American structure of power can be read in terms of gender. In viewing the ways in which the soldiers connected with each other, the audience can see the way masculinity is performed. Additionally, we can analyze the tactics used throughout the film to reveal the ways they significantly feminize the Iraqis as a people as well as feminize Iraq as a country.

Zero Dark Thirty (another Oscar-winning film directed by Kathryn Bigelow) is fundamentally about catching and killing Osama Bin Laden, works to illuminate different ideologies of American culture post-9/11.⁶ Ideas of nationalism, power, revenge, racism, masculinity, and femininity are demonstrated throughout the film. The ideological framework illustrates the power dynamics between the East and the West; in doing so, similar to *The Hurt Locker*, it works to masculinize the West while simultaneously feminizing the East. It is also fundamental to recognize that Maya, the main character and also the heroine of the film, is a female. In focusing on an interrogation-torture scene and a raid scene, I want to investigate the significance and the cultural meaning of a Western female behind the capturing of Osama Bin Laden.

The film opens with an interrogation-torture scene in Pakistan. This reveals the racial dimensions as well as the gendered dimensions that are conveyed throughout the film. Maya, the main female character, is watching her coworker torture a possible terrorist. In other words, the audience is left to see a White woman watching a White man torture a Brown man. There are two particular scenes within the beginning of the film that are especially telling. The first is when the man getting tortured asks Maya for help and she responds by saying: "You can help yourself by being truthful." This line tells the audience that she has no emotion towards this man, going against her appropriate gender role. This also demonstrates that the White woman has more power over the Brown man; in other words, the West dominates the East.

The interrogator continues to torture the prisoner, completely dehumanizing him in the process. The interrogator literally treats him like an animal by tying a dog muzz-

le around his face and making him crawl on his hands and knees. He says to the prisoner: "You're my dog; I'm going to walk you." Here we not only witness the stripping of the prisoner's masculinity but also his absolute dehumanization. The dehumanization of an Arab man is further indicative of notions of racialized power relations. This is also reflective of Edward W. Said's notion of Orientalism in that the West is portrayed as civilized while the Middle East is painted as barbaric.⁷ This scene also proves Sheth's position in that colonization is justified through the casting of the Muslim population as an "unruly" people that are in need of taming. In this scene, Maya watches as the prisoner is led into a box by a leash like an animal. Maya's presence in this scene is especially telling in relation to the prisoner in that her body is announcing the civilized in herself while underscoring the barbarian within the prisoner. In addition to representing the idea of the civilized, Maya's character also embodies the colonizer.

Another part of the torture-interrogation scene I want to emphasize takes place after the torture victim does not comply with the torturer's wishes. Here we see the torturer punish the tortured victim further by shaming him—by targeting his sexuality. He (the torturer) asks him: "You don't mind if my female coworker sees your junk, do you?" He then exposes the tortured victim's genitals. The objectification of the Brown man's body works to feminize the East while masculinizing Maya as a White Western woman in both of these scenes. In this way, I would argue that Maya represents Western nationalism while she employs Laura Mulvey's notion of the male gaze; furthermore, the spectators of the film are also employing the male gaze.⁸ In other words, Maya's character becomes masculinized and the audience identifies with her.

The techniques of interrogation and torture by underscoring sexual shame that I have just mentioned are, I argue, reflective of the events that took place in the prison of Abu Ghraib. As the prisoner in *Zero Dark Thirty* was portrayed in a fictional film, the events of Abu Ghraib add a chilling sense of reality to this depiction of torture. In 2004, controversial photographs were released from the prison of American soldiers and Iraqi prisoners who were tortured. Most of these photographs depicted Iraqi prisoners nude with their heads covered. One thing that was especially alarming about these photographs was that most of them included female American soldiers who were posing next to tortured Iraqi male prisoners. As Barbara Ehrenreich eloquently states:

A certain kind of feminism, or perhaps I should say a certain kind of feminist naiveté, died in Abu Ghraib. It was a feminism that saw men as the perpetual perpetrators, women as the perpetual victims and male sexual violence against women as the root of all injustice. Rape has repeatedly been an instrument of war and, to some feminists, it was beginning to look as if war was an extension of rape.⁹

The female American soldiers at the prison in Abu Ghraib challenged mainstream Western conceptions of femininity. In such photographs, female bodies played the cultural role of the aggressor by engaging in the torture of Iraqi men. In contextualizing these photographs with the ideologies surrounding the War on Terror, these images announce that nationalism is culturally attributed to notions of masculinity. For example, one photograph pictured a female American soldier holding a leash tied around a nude male Iraqi prisoner's neck while a bag was covering his head. Focusing explicitly on the cultural meaning of such disturbing photographs, one can draw what they tell us about the relationships between race, gender, and power. Similar to the film, it is imperative to acknowledge the racial differences between the torturers and the prisoners. Although they were American *women* involved in the acts of torture against Iraqi men, their bodies asserted Whiteness, which reveals that they embody a characteristic that is fundamental to American dominance and power. As Ehrenreich, along with many others, expresses a sense of shock and disappointment at the idea that women are involved in torture, we can understand that women can be situated in positions of power when placed in relation to a national enemy. The enemy, which in this case is represented by Iraqi prisoners, is feminized. Feminization further connotes a sense of dehumanization in order to overpower the Iraqis essentially stripping them of any sense of cultural agency.

In making a female character the heroine responsible for capturing Bin Laden, America's biggest enemy, this film demonstrates how racist violence is embedded within Western feminism. The end of the film involves a raid scene in which American soldiers go into a house where Maya is positive Osama Bin Laden is hiding. In this scene, children witness their mothers and fathers shot to death by the American soldiers, and Bin Laden is finally killed. Though it was Maya who told the soldiers where to go and what to do, it is necessary to recognize that she did not physically partake in the raid. Maya never takes up the gun and this is perhaps the main reason why she is not portrayed as monstrous in any way. In addition to being a hero and representing American nationalism, she is physically situated in a passive role: one in which she orders to kill but does not physically pursue any of the killings.

After observing some components of this film in depth, I would like to take a step back away from the film in order to examine what effect it had on the larger scale of American society. I am aware that *Zero Dark Thirty* as a film can also be read as a critique of the American government and the acts of torture; however, my project is concerned with investigating the ways in which it reflects onto American culture. In other words: how do the racialized power dynamics I have underscored throughout the film translate into cultural ideologies? In order to look for evidence I

turned to a popular form of social media: Twitter. In searching more about *Zero Dark Thirty*, I came across an article by Carina A. Mackenzie entitled "'Zero Dark Thirty' inspires Islamophobic tweets: Is the movie anti-Muslim or are people just racist?"¹⁰ This article has compiled a number of Islamophobic tweets from another blog that stemmed from watching the film.

Going through these tweets, I realized that they reinforce certain stereotypes about the Middle East, in general. For instance, in most of these tweets, there seems to be underlying assumptions that all Arabs are Muslim and that all "Brown people" are the same. In studying these tweets, I have classified them under three categories: those that explicitly hate, those that perceive Muslims and Arabs as threats, and those that promote violence. Of course, I am not suggesting that everyone holds racist positions in regards to the Middle Eastern and Muslim population. Rather, I am acknowledging such comments, or "tweets," in order to shed light on the reality of prejudice in Western society.

Hatred is a powerful emotion and when it is expressed upon a certain population, it has the potential to ignite the construction of false stereotypes. Comments that expressed hatred for Muslims were blunt due to the nature of the social media site; however, deep within them lay many heavy cultural factors that are in need of unpacking. The first comment I want to mention focused on Muslims, seemingly as a whole: "*Zero Dark Thirty* makes me hate muslims." This comment suggests that there is an aspect inherent to Muslims that is repulsive, which further demonstrates the ways in which popular culture has the power as well as the cultural credibility to generate emotions in mainstream thought. Another tweet reads: "Omg zero dark thirty... Best movie ever. Have a whole new hatred for muslims and a whole new appreciation for navy seals." This comment is more explicit in its expression of hatred; however, it is driven by a sense of patriotism. In celebrating a sense of nationalism, this tweet is perpetuating the systematic cultural outcasting of Muslims as an un-American Other. This leads to my next point, which demonizes the Muslim population by formulating their identity as a threat to a post-9/11 America.

The deeming of a cultural group as a "threat to society" contributes to the systematic outcasting of that population while significantly connoting with them a sense danger. In attributing danger to Muslims, hatred becomes justified and embedded in widespread dominant Western ideologies. This signifies a cultural transition of the representation of Muslims described by Sheth mentioned earlier. Comments that associate Muslims with a sense of threat reflect how these ideas are engrained in Western society. For example, one comment reads: "Just saying this is not racist or ignorant. Watching 'Zero Dark Thirty' with 5 Arab guys in front of you is a bit unsettling." In addition to assuming that Arabs and Muslims are one and the same, this also sug-

gests that Western Muslims and Western Arabs become immediately associated with the enemy of the West. Another commentator tweets: “Watching zero dark thirty & there is a[n] Arab family sitting behind us. #sketched.” This comment insinuates another factor that arises with framing a group as a threat. In adding that sitting in front of Arabs while watching the film is “sketched,” this Twitter user has implied that there is a sense of fear felt when sharing a space with the Other. This is particularly telling, because it demonstrates that there is a relationship between widespread dominant ideologies and emotion; additionally, this sheds light on the ways in which certain emotions can be socially constructed. Fear is implied more in another tweet which states: “That awkward moment when you’re sitting in the movie theater for zero dark thirty and the back 2 rows are filled with Arabs #DontKillMe.” The implication of the belief that one could be killed because they are in the presence of Arabs demonizes them as a population. Moreover, this raises the intensity of danger and threat associated with Muslims and Arabs. This also adds to the justification behind the hatred and the outcasting of the Muslim and Arab populations. The last comment I want to mention in regards to the idea of threat reads: “Just saw zero dark thirty. Arab guy on the bus making me nervous. should I water board him? Is that racist?” Such a disturbing comment leads me to my next point: in joking about water boarding in a serious way, the commentator allows a shift in focus to violence.

The tweet I have most recently quoted inspires the belief that the mere presence of an Arab or Muslim attributes them so strongly with the notion of threat. In being perceived as a cultural *subject* that is so threatening, the following tweets I will study perpetuate the idea that the only way to rid Western society of such a threat is to frame Arabs and Muslims as the *objects* of violence. Though this violence is discursive, it perpetuates possibilities for physical violence and is reflective of the ideology inspiring anti-Muslim and anti-Middle Eastern hate crimes in a post-9/11 America. The tweets I will be examining tell us that violence and aggression are cultural reactions to threat and fear. Inspired by the film, one comment reads: “I wanna shoot brown people now while wearing night vision goggles. just because of how b.a. [badass] zero dark thirty was. #merica.” This particular tweet is referring to the raid scene I mentioned earlier. The mentality driving this comment resonates with the idea of nationalism; this can also be read in terms of gender and more particularly, a celebrated Western notion of masculinity. Although aggression is not inherent to maleness, the cultural narrative has constructed masculinity in terms of power and dominance. Likewise, analyzing the concept of masculinity in the context of nationalism is helpful in analyzing American culture as well as the American character. Likewise, analyzing masculinity in the context of nationalism is helpful in ana-

lyzing American culture as well as the American character. The way this tweet adds “#merica” is indicative of the deeper ways American culture has associated nationalism with violence, which is telling in that aggression is associated with a traditional notion of masculinity. Similarly, another comment reads: “Zero dark thirty makes me want to shoot any Arab in the face. #patriot.” Again, this is another discursive form of violence that is justifying itself on the grounds of patriotism. In celebrating nationalism, this statement also situates itself in the position of the hero whose intentions are to defeat “evil.” The last comment I want to emphasize asserts violence bluntly: “Zero Dark Thirty makes me want to shoot at Arabs with assault rifles.” This comment especially works through the framework of dehumanizing the non-Western Other. In dehumanizing Arabs, and thus objectifying them as a population, violence is used as a way to confront them through complete debasement; this also works through a gendered power dynamic in which the West asserts dominance over the Middle East.

It is imperative to acknowledge a common element among the commentators who explicitly promote violence: they are fundamentally embodying the position of the oppressor. In other words, the cultural meaning embedded into such racist statements illuminates the commentators’ role as the colonizer. *Zero Dark Thirty* has inspired significant ideas, similar to those portrayed in *The Hurt Locker*. The use of Twitter as a social media site helps articulate the notion that values celebrated by the military, such as nationalism and masculinity, become reflected onto widespread American ideologies.

Zero Dark Thirty ultimately creates cultural distinctions between the East and the West with the main focus of a character that is a White female. Through scenes of torture and raid, the violence depicted throughout the film is heavily gendered, masculinizing the West while feminizing the East. Moreover, this film reinforces the idea that the feminization of an object is a sign of weakness while masculinization is associated with dominance. In establishing a racist and sexist framework of power, the dominant discourse embedded in the film is fundamentally tied to ideas of Western nationalism. Though there is a difference between the intent and the actual presentation of any film, *Zero Dark Thirty* serves as a powerful cultural tool that illustrates American revenge, essentially exerting Western power over the Middle East. Exploring its effects outside of the film onto the cultural realm sheds light on the notions of gendered and racialized power relations that are alive in American society.

Sex and the City 2

Sex and the City 2, directed by Michael Patrick King, takes the main cast from the television show and illustrates their experience in traveling outside of the West as they visit the Middle East as a form of escape.¹¹ Though this film

does not directly relate to the War on Terror, I am interested in the ways in which it reflects similar ideologies and stereotypes. Samantha takes her best girlfriends Carrie, Miranda, and Charlotte on a trip to Abu Dhabi, or as they refer to the area in the film: “the New Middle East.” The discourse surrounding the geography is very homogenizing and thus does not reveal the diversity of the Middle East as a region that holds many cultural practices and religions. Throughout the film, there is a continuous notion of exoticism and fetishism attributed to the Middle East, underscoring its sense of extravagance. Focusing on the way in which the characters approach the Middle East as a concept, as a cultural experience, and as a geographic region, the audience can begin to make the film intelligible in terms of gendered and racialized power relations.

As the spectators of the film are set up to identify with the main characters, they witness the experiences of Carrie, Samantha, Miranda and Charlotte traveling outside of the West and into the Middle East. Because of the way the film is structured, the audience is set to view the main characters as the subjects while perceiving the Middle East as their object. Through the utilization of this framework, the film constantly underscores differences between the West and the Middle East. The West and the Middle East are distinguished through the representations of cultural differences: although there is a sense of awe with Abu Dhabi, instances throughout the film work to suggest the superiority of the West. For example, in one scene, Samantha states: “Abu Dhabi is so cutting edge in so many ways and so backward when it comes to sex.” This comment brings up the question of women’s issues in the Middle East, which also raises questions about Western feminism. This can be analyzed through an Orientalist framework. For instance, in “Gender, Orientalism, and representations of the ‘Other’ in the War on Terror,” Maryam Khalid articulates that: “Orientalist binaries referred to an irrational, backward, exotic, despotic, and lazy ‘East,’ while the ‘West’ became the pinnacle of civilization.”¹² In suggesting that Abu Dhabi is “backward when it comes to sex,” Samantha makes this claim in relation to the West. In this way, Samantha is reinforcing Western dominance and colonialism as she occupies the position of the oppressor and performs the role of the colonizer.

Another scene that reinforces the superiority of the West with the platform of freedom, especially in regards to women is when the ladies are observing and discussing the practice of veiling. In this scene, they exoticize the culture while perceiving it as backward. Carrie states: “I could get into the head wrap but the veil across the mouth, it freaks me out. It’s like they don’t want them to have a voice.” It is important to ask, who is the “they” to which Carrie is referring? The assumption is that it is Middle Eastern men who are oppressing Middle Eastern women to cover themselves. Moreover, this mentality implies that Middle Eastern women

who choose to veil are immediately perceived as oppressed in relation to Western women, who epitomize freedom. This scene uses veiling as a spectacle to further formulate an Orientalist binary between the West and the East.

There is a clear distinction made in the portrayal of Middle Eastern women and the portrayal of Western women. As the main characters are representative of Western women as well as Western society, they are depicted in a post-feminist mentality in the way that they make judgments about Arab and Muslim women. This distinction works to further “other” Middle Eastern men, who are painted as barbaric oppressors phobic of women’s freedom. For instance, there is a scene where Samantha drops her purse and condoms fall out of it which causes a crowd of angry Arab men to surround her and bark out of rage. She responds by screaming back at the men: “I have sex!” while performing suggestive body language. The way this image is consumed in American society perpetuates Western hegemonic ideologies that celebrate Whiteness and ostracize the non-Western Other. Furthermore, this mentality constructs a cultural narrative in regards to the War on Terror: that the war is justified because of the idea that the West is liberating Middle Eastern women from their Middle Eastern male oppressors.

In “Do Muslim Women Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others,” Lila Abu-Lughod unveils the hypocrisy of Western feminism. Lughod states: “I don’t think that it would be as easy to mobilize so many of these American and European women if it were not a case of Muslim men oppressing Muslim women—women of color for whom they can feel sorry and in relation to whom they can feel smugly superior.”¹³ In other words, this demonstrates that the concern for Middle Eastern women’s liberation stems from a larger war on Middle Eastern men; this framework that is applied works to feminize Middle Eastern men. In the scene I have just described, Samantha, as a White female body, becomes a masculinized subject as she culturally penetrates Middle Eastern men by imposing her own Western ideals. This leads straight into the next scene, where the main characters finally have a conversation with Middle Eastern women in veils; this is the first time in the film where Middle Eastern women are given a voice. In this scene, the veiled women applaud Samantha for her behavior in front of the men. Though the Middle Eastern women are speaking, this scene articulates that their voice is only *granted* to them by means of Western intervention. It is also significant that in this scene, the Middle Eastern women remove their veils in front of Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte, and Miranda. This is deeply problematic in that it celebrates the idea that Middle Eastern women are in need of “saving” by the “civilized” West. Lughod argues that: “veiling itself must not be confused with, or made to stand for, lack of agency.”¹⁴ Her argument is relevant to this context because it illuminates the racism engrained within Western

feminism. Moreover, simply “saving” these Middle Eastern women from their supposed Middle Eastern male oppressors undermines the feminist groups within the Middle East that work to challenge sexism and patriarchy as well as colonialism and Western intervention.

Many may argue that *Sex and the City 2* is a form of low art that has no application to our cultural realities. However, the cultural narrative constructed in the film that Muslim women need saving by the West from their Brown male counterparts is represented in many projects pursued by Western feminist groups. For instance, in March of 2013, a Tunisian woman by the name of Amina Tyler posted topless photos of herself with words written across her chest. In one photo “F**k Your Morals” was written across her chest; in the another photo, she had written across her chest in Arabic words translating to: “My body belongs to me and is not the source of anyone’s honor.” These photos caused tension with religious fundamentalists in Tunisia. To act as a response to the events that surrounded Tyler, FEMEN, a European feminist group, held what they referred to as a “Topless Jihad Day,” in which Western women protested topless with writing on their chests such as: “Free Amina,” “No Islamism,” and “Viva Topless Jihad.” At surface value, some may argue that that this may seem like a powerful act of female solidarity; however, it is necessary to inquire where the Muslim voices are in this protest. Photos of Muslim women who expressed disapproval with the acts of FEMEN were also released. These Muslim women included both those who chose to wear the veil and also other women who identified as Muslim but chose not to wear the veil.

An example of the responses to FEMEN: “Islam is my liberation, my source of empowerment, my equality, so we won’t be needing any of that ‘white-non-Muslim-women-saving-Muslim-women-from-Muslim-men’ crap!” This demonstrates the assertion of Muslim female bodies and the refusal to assimilate by claiming their own voices in their own spaces. More than anything, this is a physical radicalization of the Muslim female to resist the racism embedded within much of Western feminism. Another example of a response to FEMEN: “Nudity DOES NOT liberate me and I DO NOT need saving.” In addition to serving as a cultural agent asserting her Muslim body and pushing against assimilation, this woman underscores the cultural discrepancy of what constitutes liberation. Another Muslim woman responds: “When you deny me my freedom to cover, YOU oppress me.” This statement suggests that veiling can take on many cultural meanings. Although Western popular thought may view veiling as a sign of oppression, this Muslim woman asserts that the dominant Western ideology fails to recognize its own oppression. Furthermore, in challenging the motives of FEMEN, these Muslim feminists are working to fundamentally combat the types of cultural narratives promoted by films like *Sex and the City 2*.

Conclusion

Popular culture, especially film, has ultimately helped articulate the construction of cultural narratives surrounding the War on Terror. In focusing on the Middle East as fundamentally “other” and threatening in relation to the West, it has become commonplace to figuratively feminize and dehumanize the Middle East through the use of film. As I have described in regards to *The Hurt Locker*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, and *Sex and the City 2*, there is a recurring formula that works to debase the “uncivilized” East while using tactics that imply they are in need of “saving” and “liberation.” This is commonly implemented through the emphasis of a feminized object in the film. Keeping gendered dimensions in mind helps shed light on the social framework of Western power. For example, investigating Twitter as a social media site reveals the ways in which *Zero Dark Thirty* has inspired racist discursive violence. As the spectators watch these films through a Western lens, they are set up to identify with the main Western characters, which consequently places them in positions to “other” the Middle East. In this way, I argue, the film allows the audience to take part in embodying the oppressor and playing the role of the colonizers. However, although films like *Sex and the City 2* construct the cultural narrative that directly addresses the status of Muslim women, we see the rise of Muslim feminism rebelling that very mentality, such as what occurred in response to FEMEN. It is this form of revolution that keeps me hopeful in working towards decolonization. ♦

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AMERICAN FORMS

442: TELEVISION & AMERICAN CULTURE

Women in Power?

Representation of Female Characters in Crime Dramas

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*This essay was written for Dr. Sandra Falero's Television and American Culture course in the spring of 2013. It explores the portrayal of women in prime-time crime dramas currently aired on major TV networks. My interest in the subject stemmed from the frustration I started to feel—as a viewer who enjoys the genre—with regard to the plot development of shows like *The Mentalist*, *Bones*, and *Castle*. Upon closer examination, I realized that the frustration originated in the discrepancy between the way women are overtly portrayed in these shows as strong, capable, and competent, and their more covert representation that ultimately reinforces traditional patriarchal stereotypes of female dependency, victimization and sexuality.*

In recent years, crime dramas, which have always been one of the most popular genres on television, seem to be undergoing a major change: they seem to be in a process of feminization. In what even twenty years ago was a hegemonically masculine world, more and more shows feature strong female characters that appear to challenge the traditional portrayal of women on TV, and in this genre specifically. They are depicted as capable, intelligent, and tough, and they often occupy positions of authority. Nevertheless, a closer analysis of three prime-time crime series, *The Mentalist*, *Bones*, and *Castle*, demonstrates that

even though representation of women in crime drama is more positive and gender-equal than in the past, it ultimately perpetuates a patriarchal ideology, reinforcing the stereotypes of female dependency, victimization, and subordination in society.

In this paper, I analyze one episode of *The Mentalist*, “At First Blush,”¹ one episode of *Bones*, “The Doctor in the Photo,”² and two episodes of *Castle*, “Tick, Tick, Tick...”³ and “Boom!”⁴ all of which first aired within the last four years of this publication. *The Mentalist* focuses on the protagonist and title character, Patrick Jane who uses his astounding expertise in human behavior to solve crimes with a CBI team led by Teresa Lisbon. In “At First Blush,” Jane convinces Lisbon, who is initially quite reluctant to open an investigation on a murder case that has already been put on trial; in fact, the jury has just begun its deliberations. Jane believes that the defendant, Eve Mulberry, charged with the murder of her dance teacher and lover, Carlos, is innocent. As the team races with time, pursuing numerous leads, Lisbon must face an angry DA, who does not appreciate the team’s meddling, and her own doubts about the wisdom of her decision. The show *Bones* focuses on a brilliant, though socially awkward, forensic anthropologist, Dr. Temperance “Bones” Brennan, who, together with her forensic team from The Jeffersonian Institute, helps FBI Agent Seeley Booth solve unusual homicide cases. The plot of “The Doctor in the Photo” revolves around the murder of a tremendously talented, career-driven surgeon whose disappearance went virtually unnoticed for several months. As the investigation progresses, Bones sees more and more parallels between herself and the victim. Starting to identify herself with the victim a bit too strongly, she is forced to confront her own deep fears of loneliness. *Castle*, finally, depicts exploits of a crime-solving couple: a bestselling mystery novelist, Richard Castle, and his partner and muse, NYPD homicide detective, Kate Beckett. “Tick, Tick, Tick...”

and “Boom!” feature the same major storyline split into two episodes. A cunning serial killer fixates on Beckett, and every time he kills another seemingly random person, he leaves her messages and calls her, addressing her as Nikki Heat—the fictional character Castle created based on Beckett. A hotshot FBI profiler, Agent Jordan Shaw, takes over the investigation, impressing Castle with her expertise and state-of-the-art equipment, which leaves Beckett feeling a little left out and jealous. Together, they try to stop the elusive killer, who threatens that his last victim will be Beckett herself. All of these episodes feature a host of strong female characters that exemplify the sort of representation of women I find so problematic.

One set of stereotypes that appears to be challenged in the analyzed episodes is the portrayal of women as “weak, ineffectual, victimized, supportive, laughable, or ‘merely token females.’”⁵ Nevertheless, although most of the featured female characters—particularly Special Agent Shaw and the three major heroines, Lisbon, Brennan, and Beckett—seem to be the exact opposite of this portrayal, one way or another they eventually reinforce it. Both Beckett and Shaw are in positions of authority, each in charge of a team comprised predominantly of men. They are both presented as incredibly competent, professional, smart, and witty—in the two episodes of *Castle*, Shaw makes numerous dry and sarcastic little comments, and throughout the series, Beckett engages in continuous banter with Castle, the male lead in the show, from which she often emerges victorious. Castle openly admires both women, and even projects a somewhat fan-like attitude towards Shaw. In turn, Castle himself is frequently portrayed as over-enthusiastic and immature; he constantly goofs around, touches things he shouldn’t, and drops sexual innuendos. He behaves like a child—though with the innuendo, perhaps an adolescent would be a better comparison—and Beckett and Shaw treat him accordingly, as exemplified by a conversation they have when all three of them sit in a car, waiting for Shaw’s team to arrive so that they can arrest a suspect:

SHAW: So, if you’re not sleeping together, why do you keep him around?

CASTLE: You know I can hear you.

BECKETT: He’s actually proven to be surprisingly helpful.

SHAW: (scoffs) Have to take your word on that.

[Castle starts playing with a Taser]

SHAW: Put. The. Taser. Down.

[Another two cars arrive]

SHAW: Okay, the team’s here. You stay in the car.

BECKETT: You heard her, Castle. Stay.

CASTLE: Could you at least crack the window for me?⁶

Throughout the whole conversation Shaw ostensibly patronizes Castle, an attitude that Beckett, with amusement, copies. Shaw first portrays Castle as a mere sexual object, implying that

he has no real use besides that; then, telling him to stop playing with the Taser, she uses the tone of voice one uses with misbehaving children; finally, she speaks to him like to a dog. The two women are undoubtedly the dominant power in this scene.

Aside from being intelligent and competent, both women are presented as very capable and tough, demonstrating what Cara Rabe-Hemp calls “grrl power”⁷—they are armed and confident, and they do not shy from the violence and danger that is inherent in their line of work. This is particularly true for Beckett, whom the viewers can often see charging in pursuit of a suspect, or drawing a gun. When the killer’s message, which says “Nikki will burn,” is complete, and Castle worries about Beckett’s safety, his mother says to him: “Let me tell you something about Kate Beckett. That gal can take care of herself. Really,”⁸ instructing not only her son, but also viewers how to perceive her. And when Castle, unconvinced, goes to Beckett’s apartment anyway, she greets him with a gun, confessing that she sent her protection detail home, clearly unconcerned about her ability to defend herself. She projects this attitude of capability and self-assurance most of the time throughout the series.

Nevertheless, the way the main plot is developed in the two analyzed episodes severely undermines this kind of positive imagery. For example, despite Shaw and Beckett being portrayed as very intelligent and competent, it is always Castle who contributes the most valuable insights that directly lead to catching the killer. He is the one who cracks the code which the murderer uses for one of his messages,⁹ the one who uncovers that the suspect who presumably commits suicide is just another victim and a scapegoat, and that the real killer is still at large,¹⁰ and, finally, the one who senses the trap set by the killer, thus saving Jordan and her team from certain death.¹¹ This establishes him firmly as intellectually superior to any other character, including Beckett and Shaw. Indeed, the fact that a mere civilian, even if he is a mystery novelist, contributes so significantly to solving the crime, whereas both Shaw and Beckett constantly let themselves be misled by the killer—which is telling, too, as it demonstrates the male killer’s superiority over them—casts serious doubts on the two women’s competence as investigators.

The development of the plot puts into question also the heroines’ capability and toughness. When Castle is worried about Beckett’s safety, he goes to her apartment, placing himself as her bodyguard. Even though Beckett scoffs at the idea, asking Castle if he is going to protect her with his “vast arsenal of rapier wit,”¹² the fact remains that he stays to sleep on Beckett’s couch, extending over her his, as Sparks calls it, “chivalrous protection”¹³ which so often could be seen in crime shows from the 1980s. What is more, Castle quickly progresses from the role of protector to that of a “chivalric rescuer”¹⁴—in the span of a two-part episode, he saves Beckett’s life twice and Shaw’s once. When at the end of “Tick, Tick, Tick...” everybody thinks that the killer committed suicide, not satisfied with what he sees as too simple a solution, Castle pores over the crime scene photos and uncovers that the victim could not possibly be the killer.

Suspecting that Beckett might be in grave danger, he calls her, giving her the warning just in time for her to take cover when the killer blows up her apartment.¹⁵ The last sequence of the episode is especially telling, as it alternates the view between Beckett, who takes a shower, oblivious to any danger, and Castle, who rushes to her rescue, frantically trying to call her. As the episode ends on a cliffhanger, when Beckett's apartment blows up, the viewers' anxieties are not allayed, but Castle's heroic actions give at least some hope for the happy resolution that is provided at the beginning of "Boom!" Castle's second and third rescue come at the end of "Boom!" When Shaw is kidnapped by the killer, and her team, through some very advanced image processing, uncovers what they think is her location, it is Castle who suspects a trap and deduces that the killer is in the building opposite the one the team charges, consequently saving both Jordan and her people. Castle and Beckett go into the right building and together release Shaw, but when Beckett loses the physical struggle that ensues between her and the killer and lies on the floor at the killer's gunpoint, it is again Castle who, in impressive feat of marksmanship, shoots the gun out of the killer's hand. Though the tension is quickly relieved by Castle's admission that he aimed for the head, it does not diminish his heroic act. Thanks to Castle, the criminal has been caught and arrested, and the viewers' anxieties can be put to rest. What these plot developments do is reinforce the stereotype of female victimization by implying that even strong heroines such as Beckett and Shaw are not safe from it. The viewers have nothing to fear, though, as the male hero is there to rescue the seemingly unlikely damsels in distress. Such a mixed portrayal of the two women in the analyzed episodes of *Castle* confirms Jason Mittell's statement that

Patriarchy today is not totalizing or determining, as many examples of both men and women actively contradict this theory, but as general social norm, patriarchal definitions of masculinity and femininity persist and structure the typical way we view gender.¹⁶

In other words, even if, as in *Castle*, the representation of women is more gender-equal than in the past, the patriarchal ideology that portrays men as more competent, intelligent, capable, and in general more fit to the professional world, and women as more dependent, helpless, and vulnerable still persists.

Similarly problematic female representation is exemplified in *Bones*, particularly in "The Doctor in the Photo." On the one hand, the show's protagonist, Dr. Temperance "Bones" Brennan is portrayed as a brilliant forensic anthropologist—very knowledgeable, tremendously intelligent, and competent. Her expertise frequently amazes and confounds her male counterpart, Seeley Booth. For instance, per Booth's request and to his delight, just by looking at the carcass of the chicken she cooked, she is able to determine how the chicken lived and died. Moreover, when she examines the victim's body, Dr. Camille Saroyan, who is Brennan's boss and another powerful

female featured in the series, has to translate Brennan's scientific and technical language for Booth—and the viewers—who otherwise would have no idea what Brennan was talking about. Such a strategy, meant to reinforce the viewers' impression of *Bones's* superior intelligence and professionalism, is frequently employed throughout the series. What is more, like Beckett and Shaw, Brennan is often portrayed as capable and quite tough. Though there are not many signs of it in "The Doctor in the Photo," in other episodes viewers learn that she is a master in martial arts and can take care of herself in dangerous situations. Finally, as she is in charge of a small team of forensic scientists at the Jeffersonian Institute, she is also depicted as a woman in position of power.

On the other hand, however, just as in *Castle*, all these admirable qualities are constantly undermined. Despite her high intelligence and vast academic knowledge, Brennan knows next to nothing about human psychology and the "real world," and her social skills are negligible, which often leads her to trouble, from which Booth, playing the role of the "chivalrous rescuer," has to save her. What is more, although Brennan provides the details he can build his theories on, it is usually Booth, with his deep insights into human nature, who is most crucial to the success of the investigations they conduct. What this implies is that even though Booth and Brennan are both excellent at their respective jobs, and Brennan is often depicted as far more intelligent and educated than Booth, it is Booth's kind of knowledge that is superior, and certainly more relevant to the professional and personal challenges they face in the series.

In "The Doctor in the Photo," the representation of *Bones* becomes even more questionable. As she sees more and more parallels between herself and the victim, she starts obsessing about the case and, not being able to sleep, spends her nights in the institute, trying to solve the murder. Nevertheless, even though Booth's contribution to the investigation this time is minor, Brennan does not find the solution to the mystery of the doctor's death on her own. Ridiculously enough, she receives critical assistance from a night watchman, Micah, who helps her through one crisis after another in an almost spirit-guide-like manner, by dispersing wisdom drawn from random lectures he apparently constantly attends at the Jeffersonian, and from what he vaguely calls "[his] own sad story,"¹⁷ which presumably refers to his personal experiences. A good example is the penultimate conversation they have:

BONES: There is nothing left for me to discover from the hard evidence.

MICAH: Well, that's the whole problem with being an empiricist, right?

BONES: What is?

MICAH: Eventually, you run out of things to measure, and smell, and count.

BONES: No, there is such a thing as objective measurement, Mika. There is such a thing as actual truth.

MICAH: I heard one of these lectures about an experiment where they give guys a pair of glasses that make them see the whole world upside-down. But after three days, guess what; they see everything right side up. And then they take off their glasses, and they see everything upside-down again. For three days. And then, Eureka! Back to normal.

BONES: Yes, it takes a brain three days to adapt.

MICAH: Well, it seems to me, you can't trust a brain that can't make up its mind about something as basic as which way is up.

BONES: (laughs) What else did you learn at that lecture?

MICAH: That there is no such thing as objectivity, and we are all just interpreting the signals from the Universe and try to make sense of them.

BONES: (musing) Signals from the Universe.¹⁸

At the beginning of this conversation, Bones is desperate, as she is stuck in her investigation. She needs the guidance of a night watchman, who first completely disregards her scientific method, and then gives her a vague message about the workings of the Universe. While amused at first, she starts musing over Micah's words, and she remembers two young patients the doctor treated, one with a dead brain and one in need of a heart, which ultimately allows her to solve the case—the surgeon was run over by a car and then buried by the driver when she went to ask the parents of the first patient to have his heart to the second. All Brennan's hard-won knowledge and expert empirical approach turn out to be inadequate. It is the superior male knowledge of the night watchman/spirit guide that is necessary to solve the murder.

What is more, not only is Brennan's mental acumen and competence as an investigator undermined in "The Doctor from the Photo," but also her ability to take care of herself. Although Booth does not play any significant part in the investigation, he still manages to save Brennan from danger once in the episode. When Brennan goes to what she thinks might be the crime scene to try and find out what happened to the victim, preoccupied and inattentive, she almost gets run over by a car. She would have been hit if not for Booth who appears out of nowhere and drags her off the street. The following conversation ensues:

BOOTH: Bones, what are you doing here?!

BONES: What are *you* doing here?!

BOOTH: I don't know, following you to the bad part of town and saving your life. You know, the usual. Your turn.

BONES: Lauren [the victim] came to Woodland to beg the family of that brain-dead boy to give his heart to Sam Dworski.¹⁹

As can be seen from this snippet, Booth, as usual, assumes the role of Bones's chivalrous protector and rescuer. The conversation implies that this is not the first time he has saved

her life. The fact that he feels it necessary to follow Brennan, and that this feeling turns out to be justified, paints Brennan as a weak, helpless female in constant need of male protection. The most telling, however, is that Brennan in no way responds to the implications of Booth's statement. She does not seem to be outraged or surprised when she learns that she has been secretly watched over, which might be read as her implicit agreement with Booth's estimation, and confirmation that she does not feel confident in her own ability to protect herself. This only reinforces the ambiguous way in which she is presented in the show.

The most pronounced, in regard to the set of the stereotypes discussed above, is the representation of women in *The Mentalist*. It is particularly true for Teresa Lisbon, the main female character featured in the show. On the one hand, as a senior special agent with the CBI in charge of the Serious Crime Unit, she is depicted as a woman in position of authority. When she works with her team, she is indisputably in control, giving orders and offering insights into the investigations. What is more, she is clearly "the muscle" of the show. She is tough and courageous, and she does not shy from violence, representing, like Beckett and Shaw, the aforementioned "grrl power." For instance, throughout the series, Lisbon is often seen drawing and firing her gun, and tackling and arresting suspects, while the male protagonist, Patrick Jane, hides behind the first convenient large object. Lisbon is also frequently the one who has to save Jane from the detrimental consequences of his immature and mischievous behavior—a major and welcome twist of the traditional stereotype of a male protector and a damsel in distress.

On the other hand, however, that is where Lisbon's power ends. In every other way, Patrick Jane is portrayed as superior to her. Any authority Lisbon shows with her team completely disappears in Jane's presence, when she assumes the role of the "supportive," and sometimes even crossing the line to the "token," female.²⁰ This is particularly well depicted in "At First Blush." Firstly, Lisbon plays only a token role in all the interviews she and Jane conduct in the episode. She usually asks only inane questions that do not lead anywhere. Jane, who uses his expertise in human behavior to identify and eliminate suspects, holds the real interview. In fact, Lisbon's only useful function seems to be to open doors and justify Jane's questioning with her badge when people are reluctant to talk to him, as happens in the episode in the case of the victim's neighbor, the old woman living across the street who wouldn't talk to Jane until Lisbon convinces her that they are conducting legitimate police investigation.

Secondly, Lisbon and Jane's collaboration in no way can be termed as an equal partnership—even though Jane is just a civilian consultant, Lisbon is clearly subordinate, which is depicted unmistakably in the following conversation:

LISBON: Bad news. That was a phone from the courthouse.

The jury didn't order dinner; they are closing in on a verdict.

JANE: Hmm... We need to hustle. Call Eve, have her come in, tell her you wanna update her on the case. I'm springing Murphy.

LISBON: No, you can't! He's our prime suspect!

JANE: Well, he didn't kill Carlos, but that doesn't mean he can't be useful to us. Um, yes, video surveillance equipment, those little cameras? I'm gonna need a few.

LISBON: Would you mind telling me one thing first?

JANE: Like what I'm planning?

LISBON: Yeah, that would be super. [Jane smiles and leaves] No?²¹

Jane has his own theories and formulates his own plans but does not share them with Lisbon. What is more, he overrides Lisbon's objections regarding releasing her prime suspect without explaining his reasons for that, and gives her multiple orders that he fully expects her to fulfill, which shows his lack of respect for her position on the team. And significantly, Lisbon does so without hesitation, thus confirming her subordination, even though technically she is Jane's boss.

With such behavior, Jane constantly undermines Lisbon's authority. He is completely beyond her control, pursuing his own leads, employing unconventional and often legally or ethically dubious methods of investigation, and generally creating mayhem, which severely damages her standing as an effective leader and competent professional. When the DA comes to Lisbon's office, angry with her for allowing Jane to meddle in an ongoing trial, he states: "You wanna know why Jane took this case? Because Eve loved her parents. It's crazy, right? You know, I thought that there was something in the water here, but I can see the problem now. It's you,"²² strongly implying that he considers her unqualified and ill-equipped for the position she holds with CBI. Lisbon is not indifferent; from her expression, it's clear that the opinion wounds her, and the range of emotions shown on her face is accentuated by a close-up and by dramatic music that starts playing at that point. Nevertheless, when she expresses her feelings on the subject to Jane, what could, and should, have been a serious discussion, is immediately deflected in the following exchange:

LISBON: Right, you're the boss on this one.

JANE: Okay, don't be like that.

LISBON: Like what?! It's what you want.

JANE: What I want is a little smile.

LISBON: Well, you can't have everything.²³

Lisbon is well aware of the completely upturned balance of power in her partnership with Jane, and she clearly resents it. Jane, in turn, seems not to understand her discontent. What starts as a serious complaint that could have led to a frank conversation by which Lisbon could have regained at least some of her authority, turns into ridiculous banter. Jane dismisses

Lisbon's feelings with patronizing comments that are probably meant to be cute or funny, and with her last statement, Lisbon adopts a similar tone. The situation isn't helped by the fact that as soon as the conversation starts the music that usually signifies one of Jane and Lisbon's teasing exchanges starts playing. The difficult issue of Lisbon's lack of authority is dismissed. Lisbon's portrayal as ineffectual, incompetent, and unfit for the position of either an investigator or a leader stays intact.

What is more, perhaps to counteract Lisbon's only saving characteristics, strength and capability, the episode features two stock characters Richard Sparks mentions as popular in 1980s crime dramas: first, represented in the episode by Eve Mulberry, is the pure woman in need of rescue;²⁴ second, represented by Summer, is the not-so-pure damsel in distress, a member of the *demi-monde* turned the hero's confederate.²⁵ Eve, although not completely pure, as she has cheated on her husband, certainly looks the part—she is blond, wide-eyed, sweet, innocent, and vulnerable. Falsely-accused of murder, she is on the verge of being convicted and sent to prison. Only the cleverness and persistence of the male hero can save her. Proving that she was framed by her best friend, Patrick Jane returns order and assuages the viewers' anxieties, demonstrating that even when the legal system fails, an individual (male) hero will ensure that justice is served. In turn, Summer, a recurring character in the show, is a former prostitute who is now the team's confidential informant. In the episode, she helps the team find and arrest a suspect, but puts herself in danger and gets hurt in the process. She has to be saved by Agents Cho and Rigsby, and she later engages in a romantic relationship with Cho. Such portrayals reinforce the stereotype of female victimization, and coupled with Lisbon's shortages, result in a representation of women that screams male power and superiority.

Another set of stereotypes that seems to be challenged in the three series, but is ultimately reinforced, is that which is connected to the ideas of presumed female domesticity and emotionality. As David Gauntlett states, "studies in the 1970s consistently found that marriage, parenthood, and domesticity were shown on television to be more important to women than men."²⁶ Amanda Lotz adds: "until recently, stories about career women have primarily chronicled their struggle and difficulty with balancing careers, motherhood, marriage, and traditional constructs of femininity."²⁷ In other words, for decades, television demonstrated that the woman's primary role in society is that of a nurturer—a mother and a wife. At first glance, nothing could be further from the image projected in *The Mentalist*, *Bones*, and *Castle*. The three main female characters in the shows, Lisbon, Bones, and Beckett, at least during the early seasons, are not only single, but seem to be happy to stay so. They are successful women pursuing their respective careers, who can boast considerable professional achievements. They are in no hurry to involve themselves in serious relationships. In fact, in all three series it is men who are more family-oriented. *Castle* is the prime example, as he is present-

ed as a magnificent father and son. He raises his daughter, while his ex-wife and the daughter's mother pursues a career as an actress, and he constantly supports his own eccentric and flamboyant mother. Similarly, although he does not have custody over his son, Parker, Booth is also a very devoted father, which he proves at the beginning of "The Doctor in the Photo" by saying, "when Parker was born, everything changed in my life, everything,"²⁸ implying that his son became his new focus and priority. Patrick Jane, finally, had a wife and a daughter once, but they were murdered by a serial killer, causing Jane's nervous breakdown, from which he never truly recovers. He starts working with CBI in hopes that he will get a chance to avenge his family, a goal around which his life now revolves. Such portrayals of both male and female characters seem to overturn the stereotypical gender roles. Nevertheless, as the series develop, the viewers learn that all three heroines have lived through some kind of trauma which left them in fear of relationships. It seems that, tormented by their past, they are not exactly happy to be single; they are just unable to be anything else, which severely undermines the progressive image painted above. Each of the episodes closely analyzed in this paper additionally subverts this portrayal.

Admittedly, the subversions of the progressive images that are present in the episodes of *The Mentalist* and *Castle* are rather minor. In "At First Blush," they are implemented not in the portrayal of Lisbon but in that of Eve Mulberry, whose story might be seen as a certain moral tale. Eve, a winemaker and a businesswoman, is framed for the murder of her dance teacher by her best friend and business partner, Amy, who wants to take full control of the winery. Eve opens herself up to the false accusation by having cheated on her husband and slept with the victim. The storyline seems to imply that Eve is punished for breaking out of the traditional role that society cast her in. She discards the image of a faithful and devoted wife by opening her own business, and thus admitting to ambitions outside her marriage, and by straying from her husband; therefore she must bear the consequences of her actions. Significant in the episodes from *Castle*, is the portrayal of Jordan Shaw, who is revealed to be a wife and a mother. Admittedly, the way she is depicted is very progressive; she is an ideal many professional women certainly aspire to, as she has it all—a brilliant career and a family. What is more, she is not presented as a "superwoman," who effortlessly breezes through demands of both work and family life.²⁹ She admits that it takes a lot of compromise and work, and that her husband shoulders many responsibilities of the everyday aspect of raising a child, which makes her situation seem more realistic and admirable. Nevertheless, she is still shown as pretty family-oriented, as she constantly juggles her work and phone calls with her daughter. Very telling are also Beckett's and Castle's reactions upon hearing the revelation:

BECKETT: Wow. She's a mom. I never would've pegged her for

that. I figured she was a career-driven woman with no time for a family.

CASTLE: Well, not everybody makes that choice.³⁰

Beckett is clearly shocked. She seems to subscribe to the stereotype that women who have families shoulder most responsibilities involved, and therefore those who want to pursue a career choose to eschew family life completely. As she is one of those who made that choice, Castle's response seems vaguely judgmental. Moreover, in later seasons, Beckett enters into a romantic relationship with Castle, and she is more and more frequently portrayed in domestic circumstances, on occasion even cooking, which never occurs in earlier episodes, and which shifts her representation to slightly more traditional parameters.

The most powerful messages infused with a patriarchal ideology about traditional gender roles can be seen in "The Doctor in the Photo." Throughout the episode the viewers can see Angela, who used to be the most free-spirited and adventurous character in the series, in a stable, happy relationship with Hodgins, and pregnant with his child. After much turbulence in her life, Angela chose a more traditional role and was rewarded with happiness and general satisfaction with life. Even more important, however, is the portrayal of Bones, which is drawn in clear opposition to Angela. Bones, who usually embodies the stereotype of detached, hyper-professional scientist, is shown cooking dinner for her friends at the very beginning of the episode, which presents her in a typically domestic setting. The dinner itself, however, paints her as rather lonely, introducing the main topic of the episode; all her closest friends are in happy relationships, Booth with his new girlfriend, Hannah, and Angela with Hodgins. Brennan is the only one at the table who is alone. Throughout the episode, the viewers can see Brennan mentally and emotionally unraveling, as she starts drawing more and more parallels between herself and the victim, Dr. Lauren Eames, which makes her face her fears about loneliness. Numerous darkly lit scenes in which Brennan is depicted alone with melancholic music playing in the background accentuate the impression of Brennan's desolation.

The story of the victim in itself can be considered a cautionary tale. She was a brilliant, career-driven surgeon, one of the best in the field, but she was lonely. Even though she was attracted to a hospital helicopter pilot, Chris Markham, she rejected his advances, and she became more and more detached and dead inside. To feel something, she started taking chances, such as buying drugs from dealers in bad parts of the city, which indirectly led her to her death. Her disappearance went without much notice, and she seems to have been forgotten until the Jeffersonian team identified her remains. The moral that can be drawn from this story is that Lauren, by rejecting the traditional relationship and focusing on her career, made herself unhappy, facilitated her own death, and doomed herself to oblivion. This point is underscored by Hannah's reply when

Brennan cannot believe that the disappearance of a surgeon of this class was not noticed: “Single, no kids. Outside of people at work, there was no one to miss her.”³¹ Lauren’s story has a special significance for Brennan, as she, too, is a rather detached scientist, and just in the previous season she rejected Booth, ruining her chances for a relationship with him. This is depicted in her conversation with Chris Markham, when she tells him about Lauren’s self-destructing impulses:

MARKHAM: God, I’d have been good for her. She should have given me a chance. She should have given us the chance. And if you look at the way things turned out, what did she have to lose?

BRENNAN: Nothing. She had nothing to lose. She knew that. It was her biggest regret.³²

Markham’s statement implies that by getting romantically involved with him, Lauren not only would have been happier, but she possibly also could have averted her death. Brennan, clearly projecting her own feelings towards Booth onto the victim, replies that not trying a relationship was something Lauren regretted the most, which indicates that she considers romantic involvements with Markham and Booth, respectively, to be the most important things that could have happened in her and Lauren’s lives. Both statements reinforce the stereotype that it is a relationship with a man that gives a woman most happiness and safety. The point is underscored when Bones finally reaches peace and contentment when she becomes involved with Booth at the end of the season, and gives birth to his child later on. After that, she can be seen more and more frequently in domestic situations, which puts her in an increasingly traditional role of a mother and an almost-wife.

The depiction of the female characters in all three series as more conventionally feminine is strongly connected to another stereotypical representation of women on TV, one that the creators of the shows do not even pretend to challenge: the portrayal of women as beautiful and sexual. Rabe-Hemp states that “Depictions of women in masculine roles violate collective gendered beliefs,” adding that “women’s toughness [can be] constrained through the use of disguise, the emphasis on sexuality and femininity, and the relationships the characters [have] with men.”³³ In other words, patriarchal order, endangered by portrayals of capable women in high-powered positions, can be at least partially restored by presenting them as physically attractive and sexual, and transforming them into objects of “male gaze.”³⁴ According to Jack Glascock, “the appearance of the television woman [is] ‘reflective of traditional cultural definitions of beauty and femininity,’ and not much changed in regard to this definition in the last decades.”³⁵ Glascock specifies that on American TV women have been depicted predominantly as white, attractive, and young—in the 18-34-age category.³⁶ This fits Beckett, Lisbon, and Bones perfectly. They are all white, beautiful women, and during the initial seasons of their respective shows they are all in their early- to mid-thirties. They

also dress in a very feminine way, which becomes increasingly visible as the shows progress. Beckett and Lisbon bring it to the point of absurdity, constantly wearing very high heels, even in the field, where they are often forced to chase and arrest resistant suspects. The same can be said about Shaw, who takes it one step further, wearing narrow skirts and stilettos. Moreover, in portrayals of all three heroines, Beckett, Lisbon, and Bones, sexuality is a significant factor. Throughout their respective series, each of them was shown engaging in several sexual and romantic liaisons, as well as flirtations, and the sexual attractiveness of each of them was highlighted. It is especially true of Beckett, as exemplified by the final sequence of “Tick, Tick, Tick...,” during which she takes a shower. The scene is constructed with long shots of her naked silhouette seen behind the shower curtain alternated with extreme close-ups of any body part she soaps at the time, clearly marking her as a sexual object. What is more, a sexual and romantic tension can be easily detected between each heroine and her respective male counterpart from the beginning of each series. And although in Lisbon’s case that tension remains vague and unresolved, in both Beckett’s and Brennan’s cases, it has bloomed into stable and monogamous relationships, transforming the portrayals of the two women into safer, more traditional images of femininity.

Crime dramas, because of their tremendous popularity and the possibilities they offer through their standard cast of character types, have a significant influence on the gender representation on television. As the genre started becoming increasingly feminized, featuring more and more strong female characters, many of them were presented in positions of power and authority; one could hope that the traditional patriarchal representation of women would undergo radical transformation, creating a more positive portrayal. As the above analysis of three shows of the genre, *The Mentalist*, *Bones*, and *Castle*, show, this hope has been mostly unfulfilled. Although depictions of women in crime dramas are now more gender-equal than in the past, featuring numerous examples of temporarily overturned stereotypes of both femininity and masculinity, these developments are very shallow, and under closer scrutiny, they disappear completely. Women are still predominantly portrayed as inferior to men in regard to their intelligence, competence, and overall ability to take care of themselves. They are often presented as vulnerable, helpless, and in need of male protection. And when they are occasionally depicted as strong, smart, tough, and self-sufficient, thus endangering patriarchal order, their portrayal is almost immediately shifted to one that is more socially acceptable, by either setting them in domestic circumstances, or objectifying them sexually. What is worrying is that although the representation of women in each of the three analyzed series was promising, even revolutionary, during the initial seasons, it became increasingly riddled with traditional gender stereotypes as the series progressed, making the hope for a positive change in the genre very slim, at least in regard to currently ongoing shows. ♦

1. *The Mentalist*, "At First Blush," CBS, 9 February 2012.
2. *Bones*, "The Doctor in the Photo," Fox Network, 2 December 2010.
3. *Castle*, "Tick, Tick, Tick..." ABC, 22 March 2010.
4. *Castle*, "Boom!" ABC, 29 March 2010.
5. David Gauntlett, *Media, Gender, and Identity: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 47.
6. *Castle*, "Tick, Tick, Tick..."
7. Cara Rabe-Hemp, "Female Forces: Beauty, Brains, and a Badge," *Feminist Criminology* 6.2 (April 2011), 139.
8. *Castle*, "Tick, Tick, Tick..."
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Castle*, "Boom!"
12. *Castle*, "Tick, Tick, Tick..."
13. Richard Sparks, "The Moral World of Television Crime Stories," *Television and the Drama of Crime: Moral Tales and the Place of Crime in Public Life* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1992), 136.
14. *Ibid.*
15. That Beckett lives is actually uncovered at the beginning of "Boom!"
16. Jason Mittell, *Television and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 330.
17. *Bones*, "The Doctor in the Photo."
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. Gauntlett, *Media*, p. 47.
21. *The Mentalist*, "At First Blush."
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. Sparks, "The Moral World," 142.
25. *Ibid.*, 145.
26. Gauntlett, *Media*, 47.
27. Amanda D. Lotz, *Redesigning Women: Television after the Network Era* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 144.
28. *Bones*, "The Doctor in the Photo."
29. Lotz, *Redesigning Women*, 145.
30. *Castle*, "Tick, Tick, Tick..."
31. *Bones*, "The Doctor in the Photo."
32. *Ibid.*
33. Rabe-Hemp, "Female Forces," 134-135.
34. *Ibid.*, 136.
35. Jack Glascock, "Gender Roles on Prime-Time Network Television: Demographics and Behaviors," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 45.4 (2001), 667.
36. Glascock, "Gender Roles," 658.

AMERICAN FORMS

350: POPULAR CULTURE

Fast Fashion

A Case Study for Exploring American Cultural Theories & Methods

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This essay was written for Dr. Elaine Lewinnek's Popular Culture course in the spring of 2013. The assignment challenged students to use a single cultural object to introduce and explain the landmark perspectives of the various cultural theorists (e.g., Benedict Anderson, Michel Foucault) explored throughout the semester in as concise and convincing manner as possible. This course demonstrated how theory can be portable and applied to practice; the assignment was meant to test the ability of the student to find that portability, and exhibit what was learned over the semester.

On the morning of April 24, 2013, an eight-story garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh collapsed due to substandard working conditions and ignored structural safety warnings. Nearly three weeks later, on May 13, after the search for further survivors officially ceased, it was reported that more than 1,100 people were killed and another 2,500 wounded.¹ The Bangladesh factory collapse has gone down as one of the deadliest industrial accidents in contemporary history.² In its wake, the international arena suddenly erupted in a frenzy. How could this have happened? Why weren't building regulations up-to-date or thoroughly enforced? Who should be held responsible for such negligence? Death toll and casualties aside, the events of April 24th, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, brought greater attention to another

surfacing crisis in the contemporary global community. In the United States, where increasing concern has voiced over health and obesity issues caused by the consumption of fast food, "fast fashion" has also become a significant societal and ecological issue. Relatively recently coined, "fast fashion" refers to fashionable and readily available clothing sold at low prices at chic and trendy clothing retailers across the nation. These include stores such as H&M, Forever 21, Topshop, and Zara. What makes the events at Dhaka even more pressing is that it was these sort of shops that the Bangladesh garment factory was producing for at the time of its collapse; clothing to be sold in American stores for American fast fashion consumers.³ On the heels of controversy and debate, contemporary fast fashion also provides a case study of the applicability and portability of American cultural studies theories and methods.

What is culture and why do we study it? Ask anyone from Benedict Anderson to Gail Bederman, culture is undoubtedly one of the most influential and significant concepts debated by modern scholars. Antonio Gramsci referred to it as the superstructure; Michel Foucault likened it to the source of power.⁴ Culture has the ability to shape opinions, produce ideas, develop structures, and create limitations. We study it to understand the needs and aspirations of a given community, as well as the influence it has on the individual, on politics, and the resultant economics. Regarding the correlation of race, class, and gender, Evelyn Higginbotham referred to culture as the source for social identity formation.⁵ It is found in books, in movies, on billboards and magazine ads, in public and private spaces. As Melani McAlister purports, culture is also something that cannot be analyzed within the text only, it is something that needs to be explored wholly, meticulously and methodically.⁶ Understanding the text in context is key to accurately grasping cultural events and potential case studies.

Examining fast fashion as a contemporary cultural phenomenon affecting America today has many urgent and important benefits. For tragedies like that which hit the heart of Bangladesh, it helps make sense of the disaster, organize an investigation, and recommend future improvement in the workplace of textile factories. As for the actual phenomenon of fast fashion, exploring its impact can shed light on the power of fashion itself, the economic network of which it relies and supports, and, in terms of environmental concerns, the ecological footprint it imposes on the planet—from factory production, to intercontinental transport, right down to the plastic bags that help you carry the garments out of the store. Suddenly, culture becomes much more tangible, noticeably influential, and entirely affecting. We study culture, as Michael Denning suggests, to conquer the labyrinth of which the end result is clarity and some sense of emancipation.⁷

According to Benedict Anderson, culture has the ability to construct “imagined communities” of which a given population relates to and partakes in.⁸ Anderson defined “nation” as an “imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”⁹ It is limited in the sense that the people within the nation, beyond economic and population statistics, are entirely unable to grasp the full dimension of the community they inhabit. Imagined communities exist independent of physical or political borders and are not only applicable to vast and powerful government entities. Fashion itself produces imagined communities. The style or subculture one possesses often suggests association with a given community. High school poses the perfect illustration. The way one dresses in school partitions them into specific classes and cliques; a hierarchy naturally manifests itself.

Fast fashion clothing too portrays a certain form of community. Staying up-to-date and in-style through the consistent and compulsive purchase of new clothing at trendy—yet cheap—fast fashion retailers is a form of social interaction and performance. Style is a physical interpretation of one’s identity, and an identity categorizes individuals into specific communities. Melani McAlister, enthused by Anderson’s iconic cultural ideas about what a nation is, related “imagined communities” to race and gender depicted in big-budget 20th century Hollywood epics—further demonstrating the portability of abstract theories into analysis of historical pop cultural artifacts.¹⁰ Fast fashion, a contemporary topic, exemplifies the significance of popular culture, in the form of clothing, as explicit social interpretations of individual and communal identity. People who wear clothing from Topshop or Forever 21 often occupy a decisively distinct social universe than that of those who wear clothing from Walmart or Kohl’s; store prices perhaps relatively similar, but almost tangibly observable are the social implications the clothing suddenly seem to inexplicably possess—this clearly denotes the abstract yet legitimate existence of imagined communities.

As formerly discussed, fashion indeed plays an explicit role in the formation of identity, yet identity itself is not fashioned from a single factor. Culturally constructed categories, such as race, gen-

der, and class, too occupy a significant task in producing seamless, distinct and inclusive identities. Not only do these groupings influence and affect identities, they also prop each other up and overlap to produce intersecting identities. Evelyn Higginbotham defined this as the “metalanguage of race”—race functioning as a “discursive representation and construction of social relations.”¹¹ Higginbotham maintains that such categories of race, gender, and class are “artificially” and “arbitrarily” constructed to exist within an existing historical hierarchy of power.¹² Gender identity, as a singular entity, is nearly nonexistent and dependent on the intersection of race and class identities to be fully present.¹³

In regards to the phenomenon of fast fashion, it is almost undoubtedly observable—the demonstrative power of clothing in terms of gender, race, and class identities. Entering a Forever 21 anchor store, it is clear the primary class and gender demographic. While Forever 21 does sell menswear, the obvious principal consumers are women. Cheap and trendy clothing associates the store to teen and young adult women, most significantly from middle to upper-middle class families. Within the store, certain styles and fashions may attract girls of different races as well. All of these factors interweave and overlap to produce intersectional identities that go beyond the independence of individually constructed categories, establishing imagined communities and cultural artifacts. Factors as simple as color and design unconsciously imply stereotypical notions of gender. The limited men’s section at a Forever 21 store is usually clearly partitioned and discernible from the vast women’s section. Fast fashion produces cheap and easily accessible clothing to costume identities in ways that allude to socially constructed norms and patterns existent in current, contemporary American society.

For Michel Foucault, in his writings on the legitimacy of sexual repression, the influence of institutions and the daily practices of citizens often combine to incite patterns of discourse.¹⁴ The power of a discourse lies in the internal realities of the community that performs it. As Gail Bederman explicates, however, these discourses are, in fact, mere social constructions—naturally malleable, often internally contradictory concepts that incite enlightening discussion among scholars.¹⁵ In the world of fast fashion, there are many inciting discourses; one of which is a discourse on the idea of “non-committal shopping.” While sifting through the racks, a ten-dollar top, just the right size and color, does not seem like a huge decision to make. It won’t break the bank; if you end up not liking it, it is not really worth the drive back to the store for a return. The economic cost does not intimidate or have any negative drawbacks at the moment. What makes this a subject of a discourse is in the accumulation of these individual “non-committal” purchases. Suddenly, your closet looks similar to one that might be revealed on an episode of *Hoarders* on A&E. Here, a common sense purchase does not seem to comply with the long-term results. Like fast food, fast fashion can be seen as unhealthy, and economically straining for the consumer over the course of time. The continual purchase and demand for these garments by Americans motivates continual production of more and

more by producers. Here, the producers, the clothing companies, the factory owners, and the trendsetters have the power.

In terms of the places these clothes are made around the world, there is a discourse of “guiltless shopping.” Like the chicken nugget one eats from McDonalds, there is a real, curiously calming ambiguity about its origins. As consumers, we enjoy a sense of vagueness as to the prior history of our purchases because often there is a negative reality associated with their production. A chicken nugget could very well be processed meat from an animal that was tortured, abused, or injected with chemicals to affect taste. Suddenly, that crispy bite may not be as savory as the last. This possibility exists within fast fashion as well. One does not want to feel guilty whilst out shopping. To some extent, people claim a sort of forced naivety so that their purchases are not ethically questioned. With the recent event in Bangladesh, we will hopefully continue to see a rise in the number of substantial and hopefully unavoidable vocal outcries by American consumers against inhumane working conditions present in clothing factories. At the same breath as this, *Weapons Of The Weak* writer, James C. Scott, would probably categorize these budding protests as rehearsals for rebellion.¹⁶ Perhaps the interest in changing these circumstances has been billowing all along within the everyday consumer, but social pressures or lack of an inciting motivation has always gotten in the way before any driving act could be established. Will these present activists make a difference in the world or is it just rebellion until the subject itself becomes archaic and out-of-fashion?

As American studies scholars, perhaps the most vital area of cultural concern has to deal with issues of hegemony. Antonio Gramsci, locked away under Italian fascist regime, theorized the interweaving and often shifting relationships undergirding economics, politics, and culture.¹⁷ Reductive Marxism contends that the economic base is the foundation upon which, the political structure, and eventually, the cultural superstructure is built. It is the superstructure, the highest tier, which is the most pressing for observation. While Gramsci associated himself with Marxism—perhaps for him a sense of existing within an imagined community—his ideas took this concept one step further. According to Gramsci, the economic base is also influenced by the political structure and the cultural superstructure.¹⁸ These hierarchal categories are not fixed; they intermingle constantly, vigorously, and fluidly within culture.

In the world of fast fashion, a trendy sweater, inspired by the runway fashion of Paris, impacts its attractiveness and cost at the store. Here, superstructure creates a foundation for economic prospectivity. The physical production of the sweater—the handling of resources, materials, and payments toward factory workers—exists as an economic reality as well. This, to an extent, affects the quality of the product, which ascends to the status of cultural artifact at the completion of its creation—the base, once again, influencing the legitimacy of a cultural superstructure. The recent factory collapse in Bangladesh, itself inciting nearly tangible cultural and economic concerns, plays egregiously well

as a political situation. Not only do factory owners have to answer to Bangladesh government authorities, they are also being scrutinized internationally by foreign governments. In this situation, the structure—the institutional and political tier—is entirely indebted to the economic and cultural events that preceded it; no one category is more important or more influential and each level has the ability to affect the other two. Thus, according to Gramsci, hegemony comes not only from the realities of the superstructure but also from economics and politics as well.

From Benedict Anderson to Antonio Gramsci, cultural studies is undoubtedly a fascinating subject to dissect and explore. Through the analysis of fast fashion, the portability of these thinkers’ theories can be demonstrated. Whether it be the existence of imagined communities, the realities of intersectional identities, the demands for discourses, or the issue of hegemony, studying culture presents fascinating finds. Fast fashion excels in existing not only as a contemporary cultural phenomenon, but also as a case study that lends itself brilliantly to intellectual analysis. Whether it be the inciting events of April 24, 2013 in Bangladesh or the fast food comparisons people are associating it with, fast fashion is a pressing subject that is undoubtedly at the heart of international and cultural controversy as we speak. ♦

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AMERICAN FORMS

445: THE COLD WAR & AMERICAN CULTURE

Puttin' 'Em Back in the Kitchen

The Creation, Containment, Escape,
and Recapture of the Nuclear Mom

JOHN CIULIK

This essay was written for Dr. Adam Golub's Cold War and American Culture course in the spring of 2013. It examines the position of women in the Cold War domestic sphere and analyzes examples of popular culture that both confirmed and contested cultural expectations of women. It then considers how the medium of television answered these demands of equality.

At the end of World War II, America entered the Cold War era, where the geopolitical battle between Soviet communism and American capitalism was of major concern to the citizenry of the United States. The American people increasingly looked toward the narrative of domesticity that was portrayed on television sets, which were owned by 87 percent of American families by the end of the 1950s.¹ Television proved to function as an effective manual that instructed people on the manner in which they should live. The situational comedy, *I Love Lucy*, which ran from 1951 to 1957, was highly rated and demonstrated two things that were very important to the makeup of the preferred image of post World War II America: family structure and suburbanization. Lucy Ricardo was rarely allowed to do any type of out of home employment and there were repeated references to the allowance given to her by her husband Ricky. The family added to

the patriarchal ideal of family when Lucy gave birth to Little Ricky in a 1953 episode entitled "Lucy Goes to the Hospital," which, to this day, ranks as the highest-rated episode in television history.² The urban dwelling Ricardos completed their migratory transition of becoming suburbanized Americans when they moved to Connecticut in 1957, and along with other television families, including the Andersons of *Father Knows Best*; the Stones of *The Donna Reed Show*; the Cleavers of *Leave it to Beaver*; the Nelsons of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*; and the Williams family of *Make Room for Daddy* (later called *The Danny Thomas Show*). Such television families perpetuated a "leisure-filled existence in which everyone owned a similar wondrous house filled with the same wondrous goods."³ This ideal image of citizenry was powerful, as it proved to be the unrealistic standard against which many Americans measured their lives.

Yet, the television image of the domestic perfection was not without its critics, and this paper examines alternative cultural documents of the time period that disparaged the ideal of the nuclear American family. These documents include: *The Bell Jar*, a novel by Sylvia Plath, which was first published in 1962, portrays American life in 1953; *The Manchurian Candidate*, a feature film also released in 1962, portrays American life during the Korean War era; and an article entitled "Is This All There Is?" written by Betty Friedan and originally published in *Good Housekeeping* magazine in 1960, and later expanded into her 1963 published book *The Feminine Mystique*. However, even these documents' critiques of the family structure, put forth at this genesis of shared viewing, do not offer much in the way of an alternative to the family structure. As we shall see, despite the alternative

narratives set forth in these articles, in the end, the author's of each text opted to support the ideal nuclear family as the structure of choice.

Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* takes place in 1953, which was the same year that Little Ricky arrived to the Ricardo Family. It was also the same year that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed for espionage in connection with the passage of American nuclear secrets to the Soviets. These two highly publicized events served to show, in the case of the Ricardos, the extreme reward for following the path of the American domestic ideal and, in the case of the Rosenbergs, the horrible consequence of deviating from being a patriotic American.

In the novel, Plath illustrates the diminishing mental health of a young woman named Esther Greenwood, an emerging adult who continually finds herself questioning the normative narrative of domesticity. Esther feels trapped by the societal constraints that she feels do not allow her to pursue her ambition to become a writer. The 1950s was a time where Americans put great faith in medical science's ability to correct both the physical and mental "defects" of its citizens. Scholar David Serlin discusses this vision of healing in the context of "progress without conflict"⁴ and how the establishment of the American way of life abroad would unfortunately be painful, due to the nature of war, and how internally Americans must also prepare for a similar dynamic in their quest to achieve "freedom from pain."⁵ Esther's inability to conform to this model, which she feels is her only choice, eventually lands her in a mental institution where, much like the Rosenbergs, she is corrected by electricity for violating the codes of America. This correction is undergone multiple times. The first time Esther endures a series of "great jolt[s]... till [she] thought [her] bones would break"⁶ causing her to contemplate 'what terrible thing it was that [she] had done.'⁷ In a subsequent application of the treatment, Esther, despite feeling as though she was betrayed by a doctor who promised to give her advanced warning of any impending shock treatment, quickly acquiesces to the will of medical science.

The terrible thing that Esther had done was that she chose not to recognize the inevitability of the conspiracy. As stated by the Reverend Nanzi Regalia,

[t]he Conspiracy owned and operated publishing industry works overtime churning out brain-numbing swill that propagates the idea that girls fret over silly things like prom dresses and personal relationships, while boys have all the exciting adventures...[and that only] through [love] will she find happiness and fulfillment. And in order to [love] someone, she has to surrender her own interests and ambitions.⁸

The conspiracy is not one of creation by a cabal but rather by the input of society as a whole. Esther's relationship with Buddy Willard was based on the collective beliefs of society. She did not want to accept what Buddy said when he told

her "that after [she] had children [she] would feel differently [and] wouldn't want to write poems any more."⁹ Esther anguished at the thought of the death of her individuality at the hands of submission to the domestic sphere that Buddy presented. At issue for Esther is one of equality with Buddy, and by extension males. However, when Buddy reveals that he had engaged in sexual relations with a waitress, Esther sets out to equalize what she perceives as societal hypocrisy – one that allows men to engage in sexual activity prior to marriage but holds that a woman must retain her virginity – by finding someone to have sex with. Although it does not work out in the end, Esther's willingness to allow the interpreter Constantine to be her sexual partner demonstrates how she is unable to break from the conspiracy. While lying in bed with him she "imagine[s] what it would be like if [he was her] husband."¹⁰ This reveals that Esther is unable to conceptualize a meaningless fling, as Buddy was able to with the waitress, for instead she held onto a thought process that attached sex with a domestic role.

Throughout the novel Esther interacts with various supportive females, which includes her mother, Philomena Guinea, Dr. Nolan, Jay Cee, and more. This group of females sends a conventional message of the role of women in America, and various young women who are trying to find their way alongside Esther's path. While the conspiracy may have imprinted the rules on Esther, her surrounding cast and her own actions appear to send a different message. For example, Philomena is a successful novelist and Jay Cee is a strong female boss at the magazine. Esther herself aspires to higher education, but seems to be her own enemy, as she does not give these factors the strength to compete against the suffocating *Bell Jar* confinement that the domesticated women and the societal sexual codes bring to her.

While the novel ends with Esther rebuilt and released from the psychiatric facility, she is wary "that someday...the bell jar, with its stifling distortions, [might] descend again."¹¹ Esther has ultimately rejected the constraints of societal expectation at this point but fears the enemy within her own mind may return to impose those restrictions on her once again.

The 1962 film *The Manchurian Candidate* also demonstrates adherence to prevailing themes of domesticity and their relationship to the American identity. More prominent in this film than in *The Bell Jar* is the concept of the enemy within. During the Cold War era in America, a culture of fear was engendered by the purported threat of communist take over. It was wide spread among published narratives that described the infiltrators as "a secret battalion of spies and saboteurs parachuted by a foreign foe inside our lines at night and operating as American citizens under a variety of disguises."¹² This style of rhetoric fueled the anti-communist hysteria that arose in what is known as the McCarthy era, a period of time where United States Senator Joseph McCarthy held hearings to sift out communists operating in the

government. *The Manchurian Candidate* utilizes this theme in its commentary on the ideal family structure. Also present is the fallibility of mental health. The plot revolves around a soldier, Raymond Shaw, who returns from service in the Korean conflict. Shaw is a member of a prominent political family with his mother, Eleanor Iselin, married to his stepfather Senator John Yerkes Iselin. Both the movie and the book were created and distributed well after McCarthy was discredited, but the narrative of *The Manchurian Candidate* models the character of Senator Iselin on him, portraying him as a buffoon. Eleanor is portrayed as domineering over both her husband and son. This family dynamic is contrasted with another family, the family of possibility that has yet to be realized between Raymond and Jocelyn, the daughter of his stepfather's rival, Senator Thomas Jordan.

The main plot line follows Raymond, who was captured in Korea and along with his platoon was transported to Manchuria where they underwent hypnosis, effectively brainwashing the entire group. The purpose was to turn Raymond into an undercover assassin to achieve communist goals. The rest of the group was only included so that Raymond's capture and reprogramming would go undetected.

The family ideal is interwoven in this plot in multiple layers. It is revealed that Eleanor, a white woman of the upper class, is conspiring with the communists. Portraying Eleanor in this role shows that the enemy within could come from anywhere. This reinforced Cold War beliefs that emerged with literature in the late 1940s and popular culture documents such as the film *Them!* Eleanor's masculine, domineering personality is disruptive to the ideal of the docile mother that 1950s Americans were programmed to believe as ideal and reinforced historical "social anxieties that stemmed from the fear of strong women who emasculated men, a condition that author Philip Wylie called 'Momism' in his 1942 book *Generation of Vipers*."¹³ The men of *The Manchurian Candidate* are portrayed as victims of this domination, their weakness excused by not only both the war and the woman, but also included as a factor is alcoholism, which was classified as a disease by the American Medical Association in 1956,¹⁴ absolving them of all blame. Eleanor further symbolizes destruction of the nuclear family ideal by twice effectively aborting Raymond and Jocelyn's relationship before it could have even spawn the ideal family. This is shown when Raymond is reminiscing about Jocelyn saving him from a snakebite, reinforcing the imagery of societal memory planted by the Wylie book, and then permanently, by happenstance, when after programming Raymond to kill Senator Thomas, he kills Jocelyn as well.

Ultimately, the only way for Raymond to redeem himself, and to stop the malfunctioning family, is by rejecting his programming and instead of killing the Presidential Nominee as instructed, he kills his mother, his stepfather, and then commits suicide. "He was wearing his medal when he

died... Made to commit acts too unspeakable to be cited here by an enemy who had captured his mind and his soul. He freed himself at last, and in the end, heroically and unhesitatingly, gave his life to save his country."¹⁵ The juxtaposition of a eulogy describing Raymond's military service over the context of what his mother controlled shows the level of monstrosity that can be achieved when the domestic positioning is disruptive.

The final document we examine is a reprint of an article by Betty Friedan, with an original publishing in *Good Housekeeping Magazine* that predated the release of the previous documents by two years. Friedan details a growing discontent of women in the domestic sphere during the Cold War era. Friedan references a previous era of feminists who fought for women's opportunities in "career...higher education...[and] political rights"¹⁶ and calls out the supposed experts who encouraged women to remain content in the feminine role. Friedan's challenges must have been difficult in the face of the television model of feminine roles that gave the appearance of homemaking as effortless. It is as though television is broadcasting a message equivalent to the "Miles, it would have been so much easier if you'd gone to sleep last night"¹⁷ that was delivered in the 1956 movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Friedan's argument does not call for a rejection of the feminine role but calls for an allowance to enter the male sphere, which will then enhance a woman's ability to influence her sons and daughters in a positive way. In comparison, Plath's argument rejects domesticity in its totality and Frankenheimer calls to maintain the Cold War status quo.

As we have seen, all three of the documents discussed in this paper center their arguments on the role of the female when demonstrating fractures in the nuclear family structure. While all three documents present a problem, none offer a solution. However, television did by making mothers absent. The 1960s saw a number of shows, such as *Gidget*, *My Three Sons*, *Family Affair*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, and *Flipper*, which all had the wise males as heads of the households with no mothers present. While all 1960s families were not sans mom, this set shows that this was not an insignificant amount of shows with this theme. Also it must be noted that several 1960s nuclear family representations were done via oddities, such as *The Addams Family*, *The Munsters*, and *Bewitched*.

Interestingly, this shakeup in the television family occurred at the peak of civil rights activism and in the midst of escalating domestic tensions regarding America's involvement in Southeast Asia. By the end of the decade, however, it was time to settle down and television brought back the nuclear family in a new package with *The Brady Bunch*. Yes, mom was dead in this show, but they replaced her with a poodle skirt-wearing pretty lady and put her back in the kitchen where she belonged. ♦

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AMERICAN FORMS

473: SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS & AMERICAN CULTURE

J.C. Leyendecker

Queering the American Image

JENNIFER RUDLOFF

This essay was written for Dr. Craig Loftin's Theorizing Sexual Orientation and American Culture course in the fall of 2012. As a queer artist living in the early 20th century, J.C. Leyendecker found a way to express his sexuality through his vibrant and telling illustrations. His work was omnipresent in American culture during his time and continues to define our understanding of the American image.

If you were to ask the average person for the most significant American artist many people would suggest Norman Rockwell. However, hidden in Rockwell's shadow is his idol and predecessor, J.C. Leyendecker (1874-1951). Between 1900 and 1940, Leyendecker's celebrated work permeated all aspects of commercial art from his trend-setting "Arrow Collar Man" to his *Saturday Evening Post* holiday covers that solidified the modern illustrations of Santa Claus and the New Year's Baby. Easily the founding father of American imagery, Leyendecker helped shape what it meant to be an American in the 20th century. Which begs the question, why do so little people know of his lasting legacy? The immense popularity of his successor, Norman Rockwell, and the decision to keep his private life out of the public eye caused his fame to wane. As a queer man living in the early 20th century, Leyendecker was unable to live such a life openly. However, within his artistic space, Leyendecker was able to assert his homosexuality and

infuse his images of American life with homosexual subtext. By exploring Leyendecker's body of work, his life, and other artists, I argue that queer representation has been included in American imagery since the turn of the century.

Queer sexualities can be defined as any sexual orientation outside the heteronormative structure. Under the overarching umbrella of "queer," there are the more widely understood terms including lesbian, gay, and bisexual. However, during Leyendecker's period, these labels were not entirely solidified in their definitions as we know them today.¹ Therefore, when describing Leyendecker's sexual orientation and the sexual themes of his work, I will use the terms, "queer" and "homosexual." It is important to note this because of the few personal effects and written records left behind in the wake of Leyendecker's death, little is known about the artist. As a researcher, I had to truly scavenge for information, as there is limited academic study on this extraordinary American figure.

Joseph Christian Leyendecker was born in Montabaur, Germany on March 23, 1874. Shortly after, his family immigrated to the United States in 1882, settling in Chicago.² His father, Peter, worked at his brother-in-law's brewing company and his mother, Elizabeth, was a homemaker.³ They were a model of the typical immigrant family, hardworking and driven by the American dream. During adolescence Leyendecker showed much artistic promise, as he would draw portraits of friends and family on oilcloths found around the house and hand them out as gifts.⁴ His two brothers, Adolph and Frank, were also gifted and pursued careers in art. However, neither would rise to the degree of success Joseph would obtain.⁵

He began his career in 1889 as an apprentice for J. Manz & Company, a Chicago engraving firm. He worked his way up to a paid job and created numerous illustrations for religious

and biblical literature.⁶ Encouraged by the work he accomplished there, Leyendecker decided to pursue a formal education. Three nights a week Leyendecker studied at the Chicago Art Institute while maintaining his recently promoted position of Staff Illustrator at J. Manz & Company.⁷ His first public recognition came during the spring of 1896 when he won first place in a cover design contest for the holiday issue of *The Century*, known at the time as “the best American magazine.”⁸ His winning cover launched his artwork onto a visible and international platform. Not only did he gain the attention of collectors and enthusiasts eager to purchase prints but also of high art critics that could brand Leyendecker with a reputation of professionalism and credibility that would be pivotal to his widespread success.

By age nineteen, Leyendecker, along with his brother Frank, demonstrated enough technical knowledge and natural talent to study in Paris at the Academie Julian. During his time abroad, Leyendecker absorbed the methods of the Art Nouveau and Impressionist movements and passionately worked toward a personal style. Leyendecker seldom over painted and used minimal and deliberate strokes to bring his artwork to life. Keeping his audience in mind I argue that he purposely included a homoerotic subtext that the general public would overlook. Handsome athletes, soldiers, sailors, and working men were the subjects portrayed in the majority of his work. In 1898, the two brothers returned to Chicago and opened their own studio at the “Chicago Center for Creativity,” the Fine Arts Building on Michigan Avenue.⁹ With his established reputation and a clear vision of what sold, Leyendecker quickly became a figurehead of commercial artwork in America.

One of Leyendecker’s crowning achievements as a commercial artist was his creation of the “Arrow Collar Man.” At the turn of the century stiff collars were necessary to a gentleman’s attire. Rather than washing the entire shirt, one could simply replace only the collar to create a fresh outfit. As this wardrobe necessity maintained popularity, it required innovative advertising. In 1905, Leyendecker approached Cluett, Peabody & Company, the manufacturer of Arrow shirts and collars, with an original marketing design. He envisioned a signature male symbol that was “Not simply a man, but a manly man, a handsome man...an ideal American man.”¹⁰ The distinctive image was of a chiseled, attractive, and highly sexual man representing ideal masculinity. Advertising director Charles M. Connolly approved of Leyendecker’s design and introduced the first legitimate marketing campaign ever.¹¹

Leyendecker’s model for the “Arrow Collar Man” was his greatest artistic muse and lifelong partner, Charles A. Beach. Not only was he Leyendecker’s muse and partner but also the one who handled his business affairs and their strictly private estate in New Rochelle, NY.¹² Described by Norman Rockwell as a “tall, powerfully built, and extraordinarily handsome”

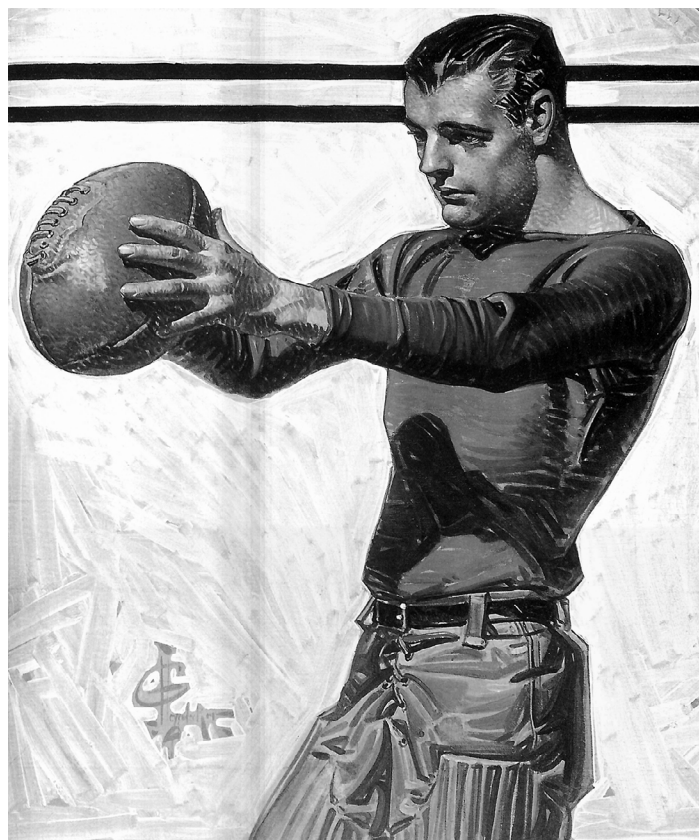


PHOTO COURTESY OF CURTIS PUBLISHING

J.C. Leyendecker. Cover Illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post*, November 30, 1912.

man, Beach perfectly exemplified all aspects of the All-American man.¹³ One can only imagine the irony of utilizing a homosexual as the quintessential American man in such a heteronormative society. Regardless, very few of the many “Arrow Collar Man” admirers knew the model’s name or his sexuality. With thirty competing collar manufacturers, Leyendecker’s illustrations propelled Arrow to the center of the industry, putting the majority of their competitors out of business. Not only was the “Arrow Collar Man” an innovation for marketing strategies but arguably the first sex symbol in advertising as well.¹⁴ The public adored the “Arrow Collar Man.” Numerous admirers begged for a mailing address to send him letters, women sent marriage proposals, and men longed to emulate his manly elegance.¹⁵

The revelation that the standard model for men’s fashion and appearance during the early 20th century was a queer man is extraordinary. Not only did the “Arrow Collar Man” set the trends in menswear for decades after but also served as a symbol of masculinity. In a society grounded in such a strong heteronormative culture, the truth about the “Arrow Collar Man” challenges these notions of what it means to be a “real” man. Especially during the early 20th century when America was emphasizing the idea of the rough and athletic male in response to the Industrial Revolution, having such an image be used as the apex of manhood is equally

groundbreaking. However, it can only be assumed, virtually none of his clientele or audience at the time was privy to the sexuality of the “Arrow Collar Man.” Through his portrayal of Beach as the “Arrow Collar Man,” Leyendecker was able to covertly present his relationship to the world. Because there was such an overwhelmingly positive response to his illustrations, Leyendecker continued to infuse his artwork with underlying homosexual meaning.¹⁶

Along with the “Arrow Collar Man,” Leyendecker is best known for his long-standing relationship with the *Saturday Evening Post*, the leading American magazine of the 20th century. In 1899, he produced his first *Saturday Evening Post* cover and continued to illustrate for them for the next forty-four years.¹⁷ No single artist would be so closely identified with one magazine until his prodigious disciple, Norman Rockwell. For the record, however, perhaps out of respect to his idol, Rockwell created 321 *Saturday Evening Post* covers, one short of Leyendecker’s 322.¹⁸ Among his most famous cover illustrations were his special holiday covers. Many modern American holiday traditions trace back to the Leyendecker images found on the *Saturday Evening Post* including the contemporary look of Santa Claus, the New Year’s Baby, and the customary giving of flowers on Mother’s Day. However, within his wide spanning career with the *Post*, Leyendecker was commissioned to paint numerous reflections of American living from Boy Scouts to Founding Fathers to football players. With this job, Leyendecker was able to subtly engrain homosexuality into these classic illustrations of American life, queering the complex texture of American imagery.

Amidst his 322 *Saturday Evening Post* covers, Leyendecker was able to incorporate his homosexual themes and style into the images of American life. One image in particular that is striking with homosexual subtext is his August 6, 1932 cover. On this cover, six muscular men clad only in white shorts and tank tops carry a caduceus with the phrase, “Mens sano in corpore sano,” Latin for the phrase, “A sound mind in a sound body.” Their bodies seem to glimmer in the implied heat of the sun and their muscles are accentuated with lighter colors. They are raised on a platform and all sustain a commanding presence. With this image, Leyendecker has quite literally placed the male body on a pedestal. The larger than life male figures are saturated in homoerotic subtext. What probably was interpreted as an innocent portrayal of summertime masculinity and health is actually quite suggestive and deliberately plays to a distinct audience.

Another *Saturday Evening Post* cover that suggests a homosexual subtext is his November 30, 1912 cover. In the spirit of Thanksgiving game day, Leyendecker presents a handsome football player, possibly a quarterback, ready to throw a toss. His uniform is tightly fit around his body as he stands in a laid back, suggestive position. His face seems to be in a smolder, with his eyebrows furrowed and head down. He is inarguably

the recognizable image of an ideal athlete and most likely modeled again after Beach. The sexuality of the image jumps off the page and demands the reader’s attention. In many of his covers, Leyendecker illustrated images just like this including fit athletic men, working class men, and military heroes. The attention to detail and strength reveal glimmers of this homosexual subtext.

J.C. Leyendecker is not the only American artist to expose hidden homosexuality in their artwork. Similar to Leyendecker in more ways than one is the artist, Paul Cadmus. An openly gay man and American illustrator, Cadmus also explored homoerotic themes within his artistic space. He was born in New York City on December 17, 1904 into a family of artists.¹⁹ Younger than Leyendecker, they most likely did not meet but it would be naïve to suggest that Leyendecker had no influence on Cadmus’s body of work. His work is characterized by a comparable glorification of the everyday man. Military and working class men were often if not always the focal point of his artwork. Contrary to the Leyendecker style, Cadmus illustrates with a rounder, satirical brush, marking him a “magical realist.”²⁰ In one of his more significant paintings, *The Fleet’s In* (1931) Cadmus was able to illustrate an exchange between a man in a red tie and sailor in the left corner. The exchange reflects the custom of “cruising” between gay men popular during the 1930’s. For example, the red tie was a commonly recognized signal of homosexuality during that period. When exhibited in 1934, the painting drew quite the controversy and was shortly taken down for its suggestive homosexual content.²¹ Leyendecker never caught any negative attention from the public or the government for his homosexual subtext but Cadmus pushed the boundaries and asserted male sexuality more aggressively. Drawing on Leyendecker’s careful admiration of the male figure, Cadmus explicitly used queer representations in his artwork.

After decades of illustrious artistic contribution, Leyendecker’s reign over the American image came to an end. Joseph Christian Leyendecker died on July 25, 1951 in his home in New Rochelle, New York.²² Contributing to the mystery of Leyendecker is the little personal affects that still exist today. Because of the homophobic world outside of their private home, Beach destroyed remaining letters and artwork that might suggest any romantic relationship between the two in an effort to keep Leyendecker’s sexuality private. It is extremely unfortunate that much of the Leyendecker story has been lost simply because of the society he lived in. However, his legacy will remain through his unparalleled artistic achievements during a career that spanned a wide spectrum of commercial and fine art. Contrary to popular belief, queer representation is not a new concept but something that has been explored by artists like J.C. Leyendecker who embedded homosexuality into American imagery as early as the beginning of the 20th century. ♦

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15. Ruhstaller, *J.C. Leyendecker*.
16. Cutler and Goffman, *J.C. Leyendecker*, 75.
17. Smith, "Leyendecker."
18. Cutler and Goffman, *J.C. Leyendecker*, 100.
19. Ken Gonzales-Day, "Paul Cadmus," *gltq* (accessed 3 October 2012).
20. *Ibid.*
21. Richard Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship & Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford Press, 2002), 42.
22. Smith, "Leyendecker."

AMERICAN FORMS

401: WAR & AMERICAN CULTURE

Oh Captain, Our Captain

America as the Hitler-Punching, Commie-Smashing, American God

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This essay was written for Dr. John Ibson's War and American Culture course in the spring of 2013. The project surveys Captain America comic books that were released during the years of American military conflict, arguing that these comics reflect Americans' feelings toward war as it occurs. I wanted to explore how Captain America's involvement in comic depictions of American wars over the past seventy years has been influential in how different generations of Americans have viewed the wars that their country has been involved in. By analyzing the words, actions, and status of Captain America in comics written during periods of American war, I hope to discuss how Captain America comics reflects America's relationships to different American military conflicts since World War II.

Before there was Captain America, there was Steve Rogers: a 90-pound art student from the Lower East Side of Manhattan New York, whose only strength was his resolve to serve his country. Through the work of science, he was injected with a super-serum that turned him into the perfect warrior specimen, and from then on he was called "Captain America." While he is currently best known for his role in contemporary summer blockbusters, Captain America's history actually goes

back to 1940 at Timely Comics (which would later become Atlas Comics and then finally Marvel Comics), where he was depicted as the first superhero to go against Hitler and the Nazis. Since his participation in World War II, Captain America has been involved with almost every single altercation that America has taken part in, with the exception of the Korean War. *Captain America* comics have provided social commentary on American life during times of military conflict for decades and have been host to portraying the growing and changing ideas of what it means to be Captain America, but also what it means to be American.

After a flurry of punches and snide remarks about the Third Reich, the last panel of *Captain America #1* says: "But the work of Captain America is never done as they plunge into new exploits against America's enemies! Watch for the next issue!"¹ Certainly this was a choice of the writers and artists of the breakout issue, namely Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, to ensure that the readership was aware that this was not going to be a one-issue comic, but surely they could have never predicted the amount of success that their American flag-clad soldier would garner in his over seventy year (and counting!) run. Nor could the dynamic duo ever foresee what kind of cultural document they were creating for future generations to unravel and understand the America of the past. According to comics scholar Jason Dittmer: "Popular culture... is one of the ways in which people have come to understand their position within a larger collective identity and within an even broader geopolitical narrative, or script,"² and it is with this understanding of popular culture that this project is set. Media that is both produced and consumed through popular culture creates a national narrative that helps raise awareness to the mythic qualities of national identity and its ever-changing relationship to history. Through Captain America's persistence as an icon of "America," this project will analyze issues of *Captain America* comics that have Captain America fighting in American conflicts and discuss

how the actions and words of Captain America and his cohorts reflect how America has viewed conflicts as they were happening as well as how the relationship of America with these conflicts after they have happened.

The authors and artists who have worked on the title of *Captain America* over the years have said much about their work on the character of Captain America and what they believe he means in regards to a larger cultural conversation or narrative that is being created everyday that defines “Americanness.” Jack Kirby, the original artist of the *Captain America* comics said of the first issue: “We weren’t at war yet, but everyone knew it was coming, that’s why Captain America was born; America needed a super patriot. He symbolized the American Dream.”³ Stan Lee, who worked on the title during the 1960s, has further commented on Kirby’s thoughts on the utility of Captain America, and has said in interviews that “Captain America represents the best aspects of America: courage and honesty.”⁴ Finally, Jim Steranko, who has worked on *Captain America* comics intermittently for decades has said: “He was not a man but all men; not a being but a cumulative god that symbolized the inner reality of man. He was the American truth.”⁵ These substantial comments from some of the industry’s most famous writers and artists who have worked on *Captain America* comics over the past seven decades show that the work of Captain America is never done; he is a powerful cultural icon that speaks to both the American Dream and American identity, and the writers and artists of the comics have had this in mind since the beginning.

This project surveys *Captain America* comic books that were released during the years of 1940-1941 (World War II), 1953-1954 (the Cold War), 1965 (the Vietnam War), and 2007 (the current conflict in the Middle East). The Korean War is excluded because there were no *Captain America* comics published during 1950 to 1953. This survey is in no way exhaustive of the entire *Captain America* canon, as the amount of cultural work that could be done with a character that is named after an entire country would be much more than the scope of this paper. In my project, I am curious to explore how Captain America’s involvement in comic depictions of American wars over the past seventy years has been influential in how different generations of Americans have viewed the wars that their country has been involved in. By analyzing the words, actions, and status of Captain America in comics written during periods of American war, I hope to discuss how *Captain America* comics reflects America’s relationships to different American military conflicts since World War II.

“Private Rogers—Fall In!”: World War II

While many different comics were being published at rapid speed to keep up with what comics historians call “the Golden Age of Comics,” the demand for pulp-paper printed superheroes to join the war in Europe was higher than the demand for the United States to join the conflict. Superheroes such as the Submariner and the Human Torch had already had storylines where

they attacked very stereotypical-looking Nazi antagonists, but Captain America was the first in the comics industry to directly attack Hitler and the Nazis. The first issue of *Captain America* was released December of 1940 (although the cover is printed with “March 1941”), which was a full year before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The cover pictures a tall, well-built, blonde-haired, blue-eyed, Aryan-for-all-intents-and-purposes man punching Adolf Hitler in the face. America was still very much on the fence as to whether or not the country should go to war, but the comic that depicted the Fuhrer being smacked around by a character dressed as the American flag sold out overnight, and arguably helped a country become more comfortable with the thought of being involved in another world war.⁶

Pre-existing superheroes like Superman could not go against Hitler because he could potentially defeat Hitler single-handedly, which would make for a very short and uninteresting comic.⁷ The success of *Captain America* quickly surpassed that of *Superman*, as Captain America was literally the only superhero who could go against Hitler, because even though he was enhanced, he was not completely infallible, which was important to the relatability of the character. Not only would having a character that was powerful enough to take down the Third Reich by himself be a short story, it also would also work as a tool to get Simon and Kirby’s point across: there was evil afoot in Europe and it would literally take a whole Army to defeat it—they just needed a captain to lead them.⁸

Through all of the hijinks of Private Rogers’s army life after being injected with super-serum, he meets one of the most important weapons, which is his young ward, Bucky. He is a young boy who is Camp Lehigh’s mascot and the only person who is still aware of Steve Rogers’s alter ego. Through the comics, Captain America and Bucky find threats against America’s democracy/sovereignty and gallivant off into the sunset to ensure that America is safe against the threat of fascism for another day. Bucky’s youth and fervor to protect America and all that it stands for is evident early on in the text. In Bucky’s first panel, he says: “Boy—how I’d like to meet [Captain America]! I wish I could be like him!”⁹ to which Steve responds: “Maybe you can, Bucky... Maybe you can!”¹⁰ Bucky may be small and young, but he is powerful for that reason. Through the rest of the issues of the comic, he tends to be a voice of reason for the Captain, ensuring that he is standing up for the core values of the American way, while also ensuring that the Captain knows of the different threats against America that Bucky hears through camp gossip. Bucky is not only Captain America’s assistant, he also serves as a reminder to the audience that anyone, even a small boy without physical enhancements, can join Captain America’s team and fight with him.

Having a sidekick that was a young boy was a very shrewd move on the part of Simon and Kirby, as many young boys found themselves relating to that character and buying more comics. Young readers could also join the Sentinels of Liberty, a Captain America fan club that would give them a club card stating that they “fought” for the same things as Captain America. Captain

American scholar Jason Dittmer notes in an article: “Captain America (and to a lesser extent his sidekick Bucky and the Sentinels of Liberty) anthropomorphized ‘America’ and enabled adolescent readers to imagine themselves as active participants in events distant from them in absolute space and maturity level.”¹¹ As their primary audience was young boys and military men, this idea of being “on the same team” as Captain America was very powerful in gaining support to fight in Europe, and to also reassert the patriotic ideals that would be fought for. The exploits of Captain America and Bucky lasted until a year after World War II, but the Sentinels of Liberty and the card-carrying country marched on.

Similar to the relatability of Bucky’s character, Captain America’s dual identity of private and superhero provided readers with an opportunity to connect to as well. While Steve Rogers is a young private who is often written as peeling potatoes at Camp Lehigh, with a quick costume change, the unassuming Rogers can become the handsome and heroic Captain America who knows exactly how to stop the Nazis and their villains, the Red Skull and Hitler, in whatever way possible. By having Captain America inhabit two different character tropes, one being the relatable work-a-day Rogers who never received any accolades from what his alter ego, the outrageously heroic Captain America, accomplished in the middle of the night. Readers could relate to and cheer for a hero who encapsulated both who the readers were and who they wanted to be. This split identity is also indicative of how the country was split as to whether the United States should go to war. In this way, whether readers wanted to go to war and fling their shield of patriotism at the Third Reich, or if they preferred to stay home and peel potatoes, readers would feel represented by whichever form of “Americanness” that *Captain America* was selling at newsstands monthly. Captain America’s presence in World War II contributed to a cultural narrative of what it meant at that time to be patriotic and American. Simon and Kirby’s choices in the creation of Captain America and his subsequent storylines that feature him giving the “good ol’ one-two” to the Third Reich isn’t just entertainment, it was part of a cultural conversation that was being had at a pre-war time in America. Americans didn’t know whether or not they were going to war with Germany, but in the comic book universe, Captain America did, and he was winning.

There is a decent amount of violence in the first four issues of *Captain America*. At least one military or political official dies in each issue, and this violence is drawn in such a way where readers can see the victims’ pools of blood and the looks of shock on their faces. In most cases, the next panel showed a letter left by the Red Skull or Hitler that threatened more violence. The violence done by Germany in the comics is very direct, but this violence is not reciprocated on the part of Captain America or even the American military. Captain America never offensively injures anyone, even the villains of the comic book, as the most that he and Bucky do is punch and kick people, and then only in self-defense. The lack of direct courses of violent action on Captain America’s part could be seen as a way to promote the idea of the United States

as being “a peace-loving America,” upon which the “ruthless war-mongers of Europe” had cast their sights.¹² Direct violence on the part of Captain America would take away the identity of being “peace-loving” and perhaps even the moral correctness that America so highly prized.

This does not mean, however, that Captain America would let his enemies get away. After all, the comics were a “call to defense [for] the youth of our country,”¹³ as Bradford Wright explains in his book, *Comic Book Nation*. As a way to navigate that dichotomy of being both peaceful and protective—essentially, to be both Steve Rogers and Captain America, the actions of Captain America against his enemies tended to be ones that were defensively violent, in which Captain America and Bucky would stop the Nazis in a way that would allow them to be heroes for stopping the Reich, but not murderers for directly killing them. The clearest example of this occurs in *Captain America #1*, which ends with Captain America and Bucky going head-to-head against a Nazi dressed in a red jumpsuit with a swastika on the front and holds a hypodermic needle filled with a fatal toxin. The Nazi drops the needle to wrestle with the Captain, and while they are grappling, the Nazi rolls onto the needle and kills himself. Captain America could have stopped the death from occurring, and when Bucky asks: “But you saw it all—why didn’t you stop him from killing himself?”¹⁴ all that Captain America can offer in reply is: “I’m not talking, Bucky!”¹⁵

This unsatisfactory and unsettling response from a superhero who is supposed to espouse the virtues of America can give some insight into the American mindset toward going into war. This liminal space between action and inaction, which can be seen in the killing or letting die that occurred in this scene, is indicative of the United States being on the fence about going to war with Germany. In this way, Captain America could inhabit the duality of the political position of America from both sides of the issue: he was doing something to fight the evil Germans, but at the same time he was not directly killing them. This careful tightrope walking on the part of Simon and Kirby encapsulates an American moment of history. Captain America’s response of “I’m not talking, Bucky!” could arguably echo the voices of politicians and citizens alike who could see the evil happening in Europe but did not want to be involved in another World War. Captain America’s voice falling into the wake of other American thoughts at the time highlights the truth of America pre-Pearl Harbor.

“Are You With Me or Against Me, Lad?”: The Cold War

Captain America’s absence from America’s popular culture ended in December 1953, when Atlas Comics brought back Captain America and Bucky for the title *Tales of Suspense*, which lasted a total of sixteen issues that was published between December 1953 and September 1954. Marvel is currently in the process of re-releasing *Tales of Suspense* in a remastered trade copy, but the story arc that includes Captain America does not currently have a release date. The lack of remastered material

made this section dependent on secondary resources, namely the scholarly work of Jacob Pearson. The running title for Captain America's story arc was "*Captain America... Commie Smasher!*" in which Captain America reprises his relationship with the U.S. government in order to fight fascism, but instead of Nazis and Hitler, Captain America battles Communism and those who threaten democracy.

Similar to the propaganda used in the World War II comics, in which Timely Comics' opinions of Germany were very clear through the depictions of Nazis and the plotlines of the stories, the visual and verbal rhetoric was just as bad or worse in *Tales of Suspense*. As comic commentator Virginia Macdonald explains of Captain America: "His was the propagandistic rhetoric of McCarthy: there's a commie under every bush; better dead than red!"¹⁶ Through this use of McCarthyistic language, the level of fear that was felt during this period was astonishing, and arguably was a reflection of the fear that America felt during the time of "the Red Scare," which can be observed through the language and actions of Captain America. His fear and the fear of his fellow Americans is understandable, after all, this war was not at all clean cut or as black and white as World War II appeared. As Pearson explains: "In the black and white world of super heroes, the Cold War was littered with too many grays."¹⁷ According to Pearson's research, these "grays" were explored through the many different faces of Communists that threatened America's ideals abroad and on the home front.

One example is a girl named Shika from the issue "The Girl Who Was Afraid!" In the comic, she appears helpless, fearing that her boss, Adu Bey, is a Communist in Egypt. Answering her call for help, Captain America goes to the scene to find that "helpless" Shika was the Communist plotting against the country the entire time, and that Adu Bey, was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Even though throughout the comic, Adu Bey speaks at length about how much he loved America and its western way of life, Captain America and Bucky were nevertheless suspicious of him from the very beginning. This contrasts to Shika who was written as a "damsel in distress" type of character until she was unveiled as the Communist. These kind of surprise plot twists in which the audience's expectations are flipped entirely, just highlight the frightened nature of the time period, where virtually anyone could be an enemy.¹⁸ It was these kind of storytelling choices that the writers and artists of Atlas Comics made that further encouraged this intense amount of apprehension to be felt about everybody. The Red Scare was everywhere, which "ke[pt] the fear of communism alive among the millions of ordinary citizens who had to take them,"¹⁹ meaning that audiences were just as angry and confused as the comic book characters that they were reading. Captain America's angst and paranoia through *Captain America... Commie Smasher!* reflected back at contemporary audiences the anxiety that defined the Cold War period.

A further example of fear in the time of the Cold War and McCarthyism happens with the theme of anti-intellectualism.

An example of this comes from the story "Captain America Turns Traitor!" in which the villain is Dr. Standish, an evil college science professor. After giving a talk about protecting the country and fighting Communism, Captain America ends up brainwashed and fighting for the side of Communism for the entirety of the issue. Again it seems that the writers and artists of *Tales of Suspense* invert the audience's expectations, because as described in this issue, not even Captain America was safe from the threat of Communism and the hidden agents who lived by its beliefs. Intellectuals, such as college professors, were usually quite liberal, this meant intellectualism wasn't much welcome in America during the time of the Cold War, and for that reason it was also not welcomed in the world of Captain America. This theme of anti-intellectualism can be seen not only through the negative portrayals of academia being paired with the evils of Communism, but also in Captain America's dialogue. When Bucky stops to question their actions, Captain America swiftly replies, "Explanations come later! This is the time for action!"²⁰ This type of gung-ho, shoot now, ask questions later behavior was no doubt spurred on by Captain America's sense of zealous nationalism. The evil influence of communism had to be stopped, no matter what the cost. When one character warns Captain America of how dangerous his communist foe is, Captain America explains, "They all are!"²¹

According to Captain America, anyone associated with communism is a threat to all God-fearing, freedom-loving people. This type of strong rhetoric caused the formation of an "us" versus "them" attitude in not only the pages of *Captain America, Commie Smasher!*, but in society as well. When Bucky once again shows reluctance to jump into action, Captain America confronts him by stating, "Are you with me or against me, lad?"²² Reluctance was weakness, and an inability to support the McCarthyistic tenets of America during this time period was seen as a threat.²³

Through this complicated schema that the Cold War provided, also came a theme of righteousness that was also present in the comics. When America could no longer follow the strategy of containment, Americans needed to know that they were doing the right thing by going to war against Communism. As Captain America scholar Jacob Pearson explains: "The use of apocalyptic imagery in the media and public discourse combined with the "godless" commies threat to [American] faith had symbolically turned the fight against communism into a holy war."²⁴ By fighting an enemy that was not seen as human, Americans could avoid any guilt from hurting anybody and would feel as if they were saving people from Communism, and perhaps saving them from themselves. This is strikingly similar to the use of propaganda in World War II that could be found in the bestial portrayals of Germans in very early *Captain America* comics. This impulse to dehumanize the enemy is quite prevalent in these earlier issues of *Captain America*, because an inhuman enemy is much easier to kill without questions or qualms, which is similar to other anti-Communist propaganda of the time period.²⁵

At this point in the Captain America comics, Captain Ameri-

ca underwent some drastic changes since his storylines in World War II. As explored previously in this section, during the Cold War, Captain America was no longer Steve Rogers by day and Captain America by night, but rather Captain America was always Captain America, the patriotic watchdog for the U.S. military. This “change” of Captain America’s portrayal during the Cold War was not a complete one, as comics scholars Michael and Virginia Macdonald explain in their article, “Sold American: The Metamorphosis of Captain America”:

this metamorphosis was a false one; his actions were limited to a handful of issues, and he once again disappeared until the mid-Sixties, when, thanks to Marvel revisionism, the over zealous patriot of the Fifties turned out to be not the Real Captain America but a shoddy substitute, authorized by the military when they thought the true symbol of America was lost forever, frozen in an ice floe in mid-Atlantic.²⁶

By Marvel revealing ten years later that the actions that occurred in *Captain America...Commie Smasher!* were not done by the real Steve Rogers, readers can then wonder why Captain America should be so lucky to be able to wash his hands so cleanly of the reign of McCarthyism in America, and what that clearly indicates about the fall out of McCarthyism in America. The storylines that are found in *Captain America...Commie Smasher!* are ones that not only contributed to a cultural narrative of America during the McCarthy era, but also illustrate that narrative in plain detail. Audiences of any time period are given the tools of the words and actions of Captain America to witness the growth and development of both Captain America and the United States, as both entities experienced the Cold War.

“As for Me, I’ve Nothing to Face but...Tomorrow”: The Vietnam War

For Captain America’s work in the Vietnam War, I could only find one comic: *Captain America* #125. The fact that there is only one issue of Captain America in Vietnam is striking, as the United States’s government was in Vietnam for over nineteen years. This one issue, published in 1965, is also striking because the events that occur don’t coalesce with any real situations happening in Vietnam at the time. In the first four comics of *Captain America* in 1940, Captain America was punching Hitler—not a man that looked and acted like Hitler, but was Hitler himself. In this comic, there is less contact with the reality of military conflict than in previous wars (besides the Korean War, of course, where he was absent completely). Within this issue, the context that this is the Vietnam War that Captain America is participating in is only plain in the cover, where it denotes “CAPTAIN AMERICA IN VIETNAM!” The rest of the comic isn’t very direct. The soldiers on either side in Vietnam could very well be in any other war, as there are no characteristics that clearly show that this is the Vietnam War that Captain America is playing a part in. Could this be the Marvel bullpen’s way of saying that while they did not completely agree with the war, they still needed to have him involved because it

was a current American event that was going on? Regardless, because of Captain America’s past involvement in previous wars, this military conflict would also need to be addressed, not only because of his moniker, but also his history as the savior of the day on the battlefield.

The issue begins with three pages in which Captain America is heartbroken over the recent break-up with his girlfriend, Sharon Carter. He tries to shake off his bad feelings by thinking of all of the other awful things happening in the world around him, and so he watches the news, where it is announced that Dr. Hoskins, a peace-agent trying to help the injured on both sides has been taken captive. Putting aside his own pain, Captain America goes to Vietnam to try to find the disappeared peace-bringer. On his quest to find answers, he interacts with both sides of the war briefly, punching people to get information. When none is given, he finds a hint that it is neither side’s fault that the doctor was taken away, instead it was the villain Mandarin, who wanted to stir up trouble on both sides because he wanted to take over the whole of Indochina. Captain America ensures that will never happen and saves the day, like he is wont to do.

Captain America’s performance in this war is very different in comparison to the other previous wars that he was involved in. He is less gruff than in the previous two wars, and much more detached from the conflicts at hand. The writers could not keep Captain America out of Europe even if they had wanted to in the 1940s and 1950s, but in regards to the Vietnam conflict as the first page and last page of the comic indicate, Captain America only went there to escape his own personal heartache, and it was only a secondary impulse to do a good deed. His good deed does not directly benefit the United States’s government, and in this project’s survey of *Captain America* material, this is the first occurrence where Captain America’s life is more colorful than his basic red, white, and blue. This development on Captain America’s part shows change in Captain America’s relationship to the U.S. government, as the first five pages have Steve Rogers in his own civilian apartment rather than at Camp Lehigh. By taking Steve Rogers out of the camp, Captain America is then also taken out of the militaristic patriarchy that is the U.S. government, which then leaves readers to more clearly understand how complicated the cultural narrative of the Vietnam War was at the time of the conflict because it wasn’t black and white, or red, white, and blue—it was real bloodshed that many in the country felt a range of emotions toward. By Captain America only seeking the peace-keeper and by making Mandarin the villain, Marvel was able to feature Captain America in Vietnam and still maintain their personal beliefs about the war in the comic. Captain America went to Vietnam because he wanted peace there, and if the protest-culture of the time period is any indication, that is what most Americans wanted as well.

This issue of *Captain America* is also very interesting in that very little of the story is actually spent in Vietnam. There are five pages where he laments the loss of his relationship and the state of the world, and then another five pages where he goes off to

prepare for the mission, and then the last five pages are of him with the Mandarin. That leaves about only ten pages of the comic where the Captain is actually interacting with the area of Vietnam. Even though Cap's time is so brief in Vietnam, he still has his two cents about the war that he throws in, which is mostly pity over the men who are injured and killed. He does not provide any commentary or enemy-shaming as he does against Nazis and Communists; rather, the commentary that he provides is much more subdued and almost remorseful for the loss of lives happening over a misunderstanding. This change in personal choice shows a growth in Captain America's identity, and again, shows the growing cultural awareness of his time period. The Vietnam War era is known just as much for the protests for the war as the war itself, and for this reason it is logical that Captain America would not be as enthusiastic to go to Vietnam as he was in previous wars. This reluctance on Captain America's part underlines for both the audiences that read the comics as they were released as well as modern readers that America was not happy about going into Vietnam.

"The Middle East Has Its Own Captain America Now": The Conflict in the Middle East

The contemporary conflicts in the Middle East are varied and complicated and have a much bigger history than I can properly contextualize in this paper, and in my research on Captain America, that may have also been the case with Marvel comics and Captain America. When I asked the comics enthusiasts that I know if they knew of any relevant story lines which showed Captain America in Iran, Iraq, or Afghanistan, I heard a variety of replies. One friend told me that he heard of a comic where Captain America was in the hallucinations of soldiers in the fields of Afghanistan, and another friend told me that she had heard of a comic book arc in which Captain America found bin Laden and Captain America's iconic shield was able to bring down the entirety of Al-Qaeda. I spent hours trying to find a hint of any of these stories, but through searches of comic book forums, articles, and Amazon, I was not able to trace either of them. Even though these stories were never actually published, this anecdote does go to show that the idea of Captain America has entered the realm of mythic expectation. Captain America has been created and re-created in such a way that there are assumptions of the actions that surround his name, and that the stories of Captain America don't necessarily have to be published in either print or online media to exist in the expectations of comic readers and non-readers alike.

What I did find in my research was a few nods to the current conflicts in the Middle East, but nothing that referred directly to a specific country or event that the U.S. military is involved in. Specifically, I found *The Ultimates*, Vol. 2, in which the main points of the plot were not focused on any combatant concerns, but rather on the development of the Avengers-like team, the Ultimates. More pages were dedicated to the relationship of Captain America and the Wasp and the death of Hawk-Eye's family

than to any worldwide conflict. Nevertheless, the comic begins in a "Middle East nuclear facility, Six Weeks Ago" in which Captain America seemingly tries to disarm a threat that is not clearly stated. When asked, "Still no trouble from the locals, Cap?"²⁷ the next panel shows a group of haggard men with guns and determined looks, but their firing at Captain America backfires as he disappears and their gunfire hits the bomb that blows them up. Not much clarification is given to this beginning scene, because arguably, like Captain America, the expectations of "haggard men with guns and determined looks" in the Middle East who need to be killed because they are the enemy has become an accepted understanding of both Captain America and his readership, rather than something that requires an explanation.

The next few scenes show the fall out of the nuclear facility's bomb, and Captain America and his team trying to save "the locals" who do not try to blow him up. Three pages after the nuclear facility has blown up, there is a panel that shows Captain America standing in a very authoritative stance next to barbed wire and a dead yellow sky saying: "Okay, I want everybody out of here and into the trucks. We got food and toilet facilities ten miles up the road. We're doing this for your own **protection**, people—" (Marvel's emphasis).²⁸ The next panel shows a close up of a "local" boy with an unamused and tired face, to which Captain America shouts: "**Move.**" (Marvel's emphasis).²⁹ The last panel of the scene shows the absolute destruction of the area, complete with American tanks driving some out, while the rest walk.

This scene is problematic in a few ways, but mostly in how little is explained. This scene takes up the first eight pages of the comic, and upon reading the rest of the story arc, the conflict of that scene is never fully explained, until in the third issue of the story arc, in which it is revealed that an evil corporation tried to make their own super team, called the Liberators, with members that have medically engineered superpowers to mimic those of the Ultimates. The boy who Captain America told so brusquely to move turns out to have a similar story to that of Steve Rogers—he was told that he was too weak to be part of his country's military, and so he jumped on board the medical experimentation train to become "the Captain America of the Middle East."³⁰ This creation of a Captain America who was not an American citizen—or even a supporter of America in any way, shape, or form—is distinct commentary on the entire cultural product that the canon of *Captain America* comic books can provide. Captain America of the Middle East is apathetic to the continuance of the western ideals, such as democracy and patriotism, and he is nevertheless referred to as a "Captain America."

This plot twist becomes much more complicated in the fourth issue of this story arc, when both "Captains" face off. The once teenager was medically engineered to become a full-grown man to fight Captain America. When asked for his name, the dubbed "Captain America of the Middle East" replies to Captain America: "I am simply **Abdul al-Rahman** and I was a farmhand in the northwest province of Azerbaijan, Captain. I'm afraid I have no interest in **super hero codenames**. Don't

you think it's a little immature to indulge in **such childish conventions?**" (Marvel's emphasis) Captain America then insults al-Rahman's weapon of choice by calling it Darth Maul's lightsaber, completely missing the point that al-Rahman made about Captain America's identity as a superhero. This lack of attention that Captain America pays to a boy that he does not recognize (as readers would be able to read Captain America's face if he gave any sort of indication that he recognized his opponent) is indicative of a bigger failure to recognize that is occurring outside of the comic book universe and inside the global theatre. The symbolism of Captain America failing to recognize and listen to al-Rahman, a man dubbed by others as the Captain of the Middle East, can easily be seen as a metaphor for the treatment of people in the Middle East by the American government. This metaphor is concretized as Captain America takes al-Rahman's weapon from his own hand, and uses it to ensure that if there are any other Captains, they are on the side of America and the western ideals that it espouses.

Our Captain: In Conclusion

To bring this project all together, I would like to look at a scene in a story arc that has Captain America of World War II who finds himself in the twenty-first century. In *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, Steve Rogers and Bucky are in a camp near the end of World War II, and all of their fellow soldiers are waxing poetic about the exploits of Captain America and Bucky. Private Steve Rogers is not as enthralled by the soldiers' enthusiasm and admiration for the superhero, and tells them: "Captain America's not a god...he's just a soldier."³¹ Steve Steranko's thoughts on Captain America being "a cumulative god that symbolized the inner reality of man" that symbolizes "American truth" seems to be echoed in this 2011 comic. While Steve Rogers may not be convinced of the godliness of Captain America, the thousands of comic issues that have been written before would say otherwise. While Captain America is not a god like the Avengers' Thor, he has risen to a god-like status in his mythology and importance to deciphering American culture. Through the form of comic books—through fusion of word and picture and the potential for revision—and the artists who have worked on the *Captain America* title have captured the United States to page and print.³² As comics scholar Jason Dittmer elucidates: "Since Captain America is so clearly a symbol of America, he provides an opportunity to analyze the changing meaning and symbolic shape of America as the region is continually (re)constructed."³³ While Captain America has punched Hitler, smashed commies, and has gotten arguably close to godliness as far as his powers and morality are concerned, he nevertheless serves as an example as to how far the United States has progressed from the "peace-loving" nation that Joe Simon and Jack Kirby so earnestly tried to encapsulate in the first few issues, to become the Goliath on the field of war that it is today. Through reading Captain America's exploits during times of war, comics enthusiasts and non-enthusiasts alike can unravel a cultural document that bleeds American. ♦

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3. Katherine G. Aiken, "Superhero History: Using Comic Books to Teach U.S. History," *OAHS Magazine of History*, 24.2 (2010), 45.
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10. *Ibid.*
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16. Andrew MacDonald and Virginia MacDonald, "Sold American: The Metamorphosis of Captain America," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 10 (1976), 251.
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23. *Ibid.*, 12-13.
24. *Ibid.*, 14.
25. *Ibid.*, 18.
26. MacDonald, "Sold American," 251.
27. Mark Millar and Bryan Hitch, *The Ultimates 2*, vol. 2, (New York: Marvel Worldwide, 2005), n.p.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. Mark Waid and Jorge Molina, *Captain America: Man Out of Time* (New York: Marvel, 2011), 10.
32. Dittmer, "Captain America's Empire," 627.
33. *Ibid.*, 629.

