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A Note from the Editor:

Historical Narratives is the undergraduate History Journal of Wesleyan University. In this fifteenth volume of the publication, we celebrate student work while providing a platform for academic discourse. The pages that follow feature a wide variety of papers, from various departments. This collection of essays consists of environmental, economic, and social histories while exploring topics of nationalism, gender, and racial identity.

The study of History enables us to engage with and make sense of the past. History actively preserves culture and the lived experiences of those who come before us. Thus, the study of History allows us to employ historical thinking to critique moments of historical immorality and constructed narratives. Moreover, studying our collective histories can inform our present and shape our futures. In 2022, historical inquiry will allow us to reconsider and deconstruct the dimensions of the current socioeconomic and political climate.

This journal would not have been possible without the enthusiastic contributions from students of different disciplines and the support of the History Department. A special thank you to our professors who believed and facilitated our undergraduate research. Your knowledge and guidance has fostered our transformation from students of history to historians-in-training.

Respectfully,
Charissa Lee
Editor-in-Chief

Historical Narratives

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Runyi (Linus) Mao
(Class of 2023)

The true origin of this paper dates back to my encounter with a tender soul last autumn, who taught me to see the shadow of death that will eventually devour us all. Human beings, nevertheless, do not give in to this fate of mortality and oblivion. And our reaction–as conscious and unconscious archival historians–towards this cruel reality of inexorable destruction and its limits, is what I want to further explore in this paper. The initial act of archiving grew out of our refusal to submit to the fate of destruction. We desire to preserve the remnants of our forefathers, for we do not want the same destiny of oblivion to befall us. It is out of the same desire that we even attempt to reconstruct the life stories of the deceased through fictionalization of the archive.

However, hypocrisy and limitation are still unavoidable in the act of archival fictionalization. On the one hand, our good will might be subverted by the interruption of our personal longing in the process of fictionalization, making it too excessive, fulfilling only our own hypocrisy instead of our inherent responsibility for the deceased. On the other hand, the failure of archival fictionalization to recreate the internal memory of the deceased proves it deficient: the archival historians fail to burden the expected ethical responsibility required of them as the ones born after. All of these aspects—fictionalization, its origin as a courageous answer to destruction, as well as its own limitation—are the dynamics that this paper wishes to discuss and explore.

To Remember, To Desire

I ran into Mr. Sea's house on my little excursion in Middletown in a mid-autumn afternoon for my German seminar class on W.G. Sebald. This excursion was for my mid-term paper for the class about a piece of nonfiction writing on the topic of destruction, history and memory. I was wandering around, taking photos of traces of destruction, debris, and the ghost of history in the air, until Mr. Sea's house, or what was left of it, caught my sight. It was a little house sitting right in the middle of a road intersection, burnt down by a fire that was ignited from an unknowable age, now with only its bare skeleton standing still. Two bulldozers stretched themselves over the relics of this building, like two vultures sucking the blood out of a body that has not been properly buried. Countless cars drive by this little relic every day, while nobody has been paying attention either to the debris itself, or to the history that lies behind.

At that moment, after I trespassed the fence and stood in the middle of Mr. Sea's house, I was struck by the inevitable force of destruction and oblivion that enclosed me, the inevitable fate that would eventually devour us all. This house was a place of memory where lives had once resided, but reduced to the lifeless waste that surrounds me. I started to take pictures of this house, trying to find traces of the previous lives that had escaped the calamity. In my tireless search, I discovered something that was luckily saved from the touch of the flame. It was a tin box where Mr. Sea had stored his important paper documents: personal letters, passport photos, birthday cards, newspaper clips… They were once essential, now forgotten and abandoned, laid bare on the floor, scattered around, basked in the sunlight, existing on the edge of oblivion. Suddenly an urge has formed in my mind, that was to bring the tin box home and to read through it, digging up whatever that has been covered up by the dust of time so that I could reconstruct his life in my own writing. I wished to make a feeble attempt to revive these lives through narrative, not in the hope of completely fighting off the tide of destruction, but to delay it until the very last possible moment.

This desire of mine voiceless burns in me: a yearn for countering the destruction and violence that make the lives wasted, a longing for attempting to portray these lives as lively and vividly possible. This desire strikes a resemblance with the desire for fictionalization based on archival material, that is, to transform the archives from simply a collection of historical material to a personal history through the means of narrative, giving birth to a life that was once lived.

If the formation and collection of the archive is the burial of the dead, then the transformation of the archival material into a coherent historical narrative is its revival. The goal of the archive lies never in its mere materiality. Rather, it is outside its materiality where

its final destination resides, "in the story that it makes possible."[1] It is in the lives revived where we find the meaning of the archive: to collect the traces they left behind and to retell their stories. When we encounter archives, we do not only encounter its material status as a "universe of the senses,"[2] instead we see its potentiality to be composed and fictionalized: "through archived documents, we are presented with pieces of time to be assembled, fragments of life to be placed in order, one after the other, in an attempt to formulate a story that acquires its coherence through the ability to craft links between the beginning and the end."[3]

And his urge for the reconstruction of past lives through fictionalization of the archival material is shared by W.G. Sebald's protagonist Austerlitz in his homonymic novel and Saidiya Hartman in her essay "Venus in Two Acts." They both desire to recover the lives buried in the archives, no matter it is their own past life or the lives of others. In *Austerlitz*, the protagonist bears no memory of his childhood, including that of his parents, as a Jewish refugee fleeing from Prague to a Welsh foster family in the 1940s. After a long period of refusal and avoidance, Austerlitz has made up his mind to pay a series of visits to archives that might contain documents related to his past life, hoping to "reconstruct his past and retrieve his putatively buried memories."[4] Similarly, in "Venues in Two Acts," through her attempts at narration, Hartman wishes to create the "impossible stories:"[5] all these lives that only occupy no more than a few lines in the archives. It is all these sounds and figures that have been submerged by the dusk of history that she tries to bring back: "stories about girls beating names that deface and disfigure, about *the words exchanged* between shipmates that never acquired any standing in the law and that failed to be recorded in the archive, about the appeals, prayers and secrets never uttered because no one was there to receive them."[6] And, despite knowing that she could not fully recover the lives of the enslaved, she still "labour[s] to paint as full a picture of the lives of the captives as possible."[7]

Fictionalization and Its Encroaching Shadow

After my careful reading through the documents that I brought back in the tin box as well as a thorough internet searching for information of the burnt down house, my initial excitement started to cool down. The particularities of this tin box force me into a position that forbids me to avoid the a series problems existing in the fictionalization of the archives

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1 Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," *Refiguring the Archive*, 2002, pp. 19-27, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_2, 21.
2 Ibid., 20.
3 Ibid., 21.
4 J. J. Long, "The Archival Subject: Austerlitz," *W. G. Sebald − Image, Archive, Modernity*, 2007, pp. 149-167, https://doi.org/10.1017/upo9780748633883.009, 158.
5 S. Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (January 2008): pp. 1-14, https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1, 10.
6 Ibid., 10.
7 Ibid., 11.

that will be discussed further in this paper. Before entering the discussion of these specific questions, in this section I will first explicate the conditions that drive my further thinking.

Firstly, I realized that the documents that I was facing were in a limbo state between private-owned documents and public-owned archival material. Part of the reasons that these documents have not become full archival material is because they have not been properly catalogued and stored yet. The concept of archives is always entangled with both the collection of documents and the storage building itself, from which the status and power of the archive are derived.[8] In my case with the documents in the tin box, they are still scattered documents that have yet been equipped with the power of the archives.

Additionally, despite my initial presumption that the owner of these documents—Mr. Sea—has passed away in the accident, it turns out that he is still very much alive at the hour of writing. He no longer lived in the house burnt down and had moved to another location in Middletown for living years ago. All the documents that I have discovered in the tin box were left behind by Mr. Sea in his old home, possibly deemed not important enough to be carried along. Consequently, despite the fact that these materials that I am holding and appropriating still belong to Mr. Sea, they are technically abandoned by him and have been buried in oblivion for years. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of ownership of the archival material is still in question in my particular case, which is a problem normally silenced by the vacuum brought by the natural death of the author. For better or worth, this problem is made visible and inevitable for me due to this limbo state where this material belongs.

Finally, some details about the accident and the documents preserved in the tin box ought to be further explicated for the following discussion. The fire, unexpectedly, had taken place in April, 2020, only half a year ago before I discovered the debris of the house. Within these six months, neither Mr. Sea nor his families have thought about taking the tin box back, which, among all the personal letters, passport pictures, birthday cards, newspaper clips, etc., contains two pieces of rather important documents. One of the documents is a letter sent to Mr. Sea by his biological daughter, Lisa, who was abandoned by Mr. Sea and his ex-wife right after her birth. This four-page long letter is one written out of despair. In this letter Lisa told her father about her extreme poverty, the unfortunate loss of her only lover, the current abusive relationship she was in, as well as her poor physical and mental health. Feeling absolutely alone and hopeless, she was begging him for nothing but a chance of reconnection with one of her few families, who, for all her life, has never burdened the responsibility of an adequate parent. Another document that I wish to explicate here is a handwritten letter to Mr. Sea from his ex-wife Jane, sent two years before Lisa's letter. In this letter, Jane harshly accused Mr. Sea for his indifference to Lisa, for saying that he could not give what she wants. Enclosed in this letter is a picture of Lisa, standing with her son

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8 Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," 19.

and looking into the camera. All these correspondences happened more than 10 years ago. And today, if the internet search result is reliable, for better or worse, Lisa is still alive.

Fictionalization: Too Much?

Facing a box of materials that has neither been blessed with the hand of archivists nor baptized by the death of their author, I find myself in a moment of intermission to ponder about the very legitimacy of the fictionalization itself.

It was clear for me that my intention for collecting these materials from the burnt-down house was to defy the force of destruction wrought by time, and to respect the dead that was on the edge of oblivion. However, was I really respecting the deceased through appropriating their once personally owned objects and forcing my own imagination onto them? Have we really thought about whether our constructed narrative will be a personal history that they want to be remembered by the public before embarking on our grand plan of fictionalization?

The creation of archive and the fictionalization thereof are indeed "born from a desire to re-assemble these traces."[9] However, underneath this lofty goal of the archive hides something that could be called hypocritical: our self-claimed ownership over the archival material. This arrogance of ours could be nothing but an unconscious ignorance of the will of the authors, for we do not know whether they want these materials to be seen, to be known, and to be owned. Most of the time we do not even think about whether the original authors will approve our doing, for the death silences them and makes them invisible. This is where our hypocrisy lies: on the one hand we disregard the will of the original owners, on the other hand we shamelessly declare that it is for their sake that we collect these materials and trans-form them into narrative, so that they could be revived.

In her essay "Venus in Two Acts," Hartmann writes down this poignant question: "For whom—for us or for them?"[10] For whose desire are we collecting the archival materials and creating the fictional narrative? For the sake of the deceased, or for our own unspeakable longing? We treat these materials that once belonged to some private owners as our public toys and frivolously impose our own fictionalization upon them, using them to assemble our own Frankenstein monster without bearing the will of its previous owners in mind. A death is required, even desired, to allow us escape the relentless questioning of our morality: "the archived document par excellence is […] a document whose author is dead."[11] The will of the author is accessory, even deemed as superfluous. We crave death so that now we can fi-nally revive it—and even transform it—into the way that we want it to be. Have I not secret-

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9 Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," 22.
10 Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 3.
11 Mbembe,"The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," 21.

ly hoped for the death of Mr. Sea, so that I could escape the ethical question of ownership, so that I can revive him as freely as I desire?

Beneath the disguise of lofty goals and pretty talks rests our selfish motives. For Hartman, when she felt heartbroken for the tragedy experienced by two girls on a slavery ship, she initially turned to fictionalization of the archival material to reconstruct the lives of these two girls, free from the violence that they have been through. She wishes to use the tool of imagination to create something that is not confined to the limits set up by the archive itself, for the very archive was established by the same force that made these two girls' lives wasted, so that lives will not be "eradicated by the protocols of intellectual disciplines."[12] However, facing the end result that she eventually comes up with—a romance—she is forced to admit that writing this fiction is more for her own sake than for them: "in the end I was forced to admit that I wanted to console myself and to escape the slave hold with a vision of something other than the bodies of two girls settling on the floor of the Atlantic."[13]

The situation is even worse on the level of government, where the archive is always the product of a political decision, which bears a totalizing force that persists throughout both its formation and fictionalization. This is to say, all the public and state archives are always not simply an accumulation of documents, but "the result of the exercise of a specific power and authority, which involves placing certain documents in an archive at the same time as others are discarded."[14] Consequently, the goal of the government is always not to preserve all the traces left behind by the dead and to respect their will, rather, it is to select the desirable ones for its own good. From the very beginning, through leaving out unwanted historical material and manipulating the historical narrative, the government has made decisions on which body to be buried as well as how the dead should come back to life, so that the dead will not "acquire a life of their own," undesirably "stirring up disorder in the present."[15]

As for my own case, I cannot help but ask myself, was I doing this for the sake of Mr. Sea, or merely for my own desire to hand in a well-written paper? Or, even worse, was I merely satisfying my own voyeuristic desire when I brought back the tin box, read through the documents, and retold Mr. Sea's story in my own writing? It becomes more and more clear to me that this personal history I wanted to reconstruct—this particular aspect of his life—is the one that even he himself wishes to abandon and to forget. All of these documents have been abandoned by Mr. Sea in that house ever since he moved out before the fire, and even their luck of escaping the total destruction has not made Mr. Sea decide to take them back. I cannot help but think, if I had truly respected Mr. Sea's will, I would not have at-

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12 Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 8.
13 Ibid., 9.
14 Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," 20.
15 Ibid., 22.

tempted to reconstruct his life story based on the collected documents. Something should be naturally devoured by the darkness of the private realm, for the void is needed to reflect the fullness of life.

Fictionalization: Not Enough?

At the very same time, however, I am also wondering about the very opposite of my previous question: is the fictionalization of the archives enough for all that is needed? There are, indeed, memories that should be forgotten and archives that should never have existed. But what about those memories that are forced to be erased, and all those tragedies that should never slip from the public memory? Could fictionalization compensate for all these lost memories, and all the misery that has been omitted by the archive? The unfortunate limits of the fictionalization appear: it is neither capable of reconstructing the ephemeral internal memory, nor enough to burden our ethical responsibility to those forebears who have suffered ahead of our time.

We reach the bounds of imagination and fictionalization when we attempt to use it to probe the innermost secrets that a human being could ever possess: our interiority. It is all these little things fleeting by in one's mind—the fragments of a misty daydream, a fugitive thought that disappears in our stream of consciousness, the caress of sunlight in one distant summer afternoon—that we try to grasp with our imagination, for nothing could be closer to oneself than these intimate but evanescent subjective memories. It is not just how the world used to be, but how one used to experience the world. These internal memories, essential to one's distinctive being in this world, are nevertheless unable to be preserved by the archives, nor through the fictionalization thereof.

For Sebald's protagonist Austerlitz, no matter how many times he tries to look at his five-year-old self in a photo, he still cannot recognize himself. "The image produces nothing but blank incomprehension in Austerlitz."[16] His hope of retrieving his internal memory of his childhood eventually fails with the "photograph's ineluctable exteriority,"[17] shared by all kinds of archival material. "He cannot narrativize the image in a way that sutures the external mnemotechnical supplement to the working of a putatively internal, spontaneous memory."[18] Later Austerlitz confesses to his friend: "yet hard as I tried both that evening and later, I could not recollect myself in the part."[19] In the photo, he sees himself wearing an outlandish costume, but has no memory of how he put it on; he looks into his own gaze, but possesses no recollection of how he held this chilling look at the camera. An encroaching void spreads itself indolently in the middle of Austerlitz's reconstructed memory. The more

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16 Long, "The Archival Subject: Austerlitz," 159.
17 Ibid., 160.
18 Ibid., 160.
19 W. G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York, NY: Modern Library, 2011), 184.

he reads about his past from the archival material, the more intolerable the void becomes for him. Austerlitz possesses nothing but documents and photos. "He will always be shut out from the knowledge he seeks."[20]

After the discussion of the failure of fictionalization to reconstruct internal memory, the same question ought to be asked again now, this time from the ethical perspective: is it enough to merely fictionalize the archive? To be clearer: is it enough to simply retell the life story of the oppressed, the tortured, and the exploited? Granted, in many circumstances, especially when the archive was formed by the same force that made the archived lives wasted, the act of fictionalization is already an ethical and courageous act. As Hartman states in her essay: "the necessity of trying to represent what we cannot, rather than leading to pessimism or despair must be embraced as the impossibility that conditions our knowledge of the past and animates our desire for a liberated future."[21] Through her efforts to "describe obliquely the forms of violence licensed in the present,")[22] she fulfils her moral responsibility as a *nachgeborene*[23] witness of this tragic history. However, the same question should be raised again: is it enough?

When Austerlitz looks at the little boy in the photo, although he doesn't see himself, he "always feels the piercing, inquiring gaze of the page boy."[24] This is the gaze of a boy from decades ago, who, not too many years after this photo had been taken, experienced the death of his parents, a permanent exile from his homeland, and an irretrievable loss of his childhood memory. In his unfading gaze, "the boy implores—not withstanding that in the past, everything already happened—us to 'avert the misfortunes lying ahead of him.'"[25] This is a "emphatic, beseeching gaze" impossible to answer,[26] casted from a boy in the past to the adults who are born later. Facing these pleading looks and hopeless gestures posed towards the future, should we do more to compensate for their loss? Should we do more to stop this from happening again than simply imagining and retelling their tragic stories? In my own case, until this very day, I still keep asking myself whether I should do more to help Lisa. Should I do more to alleviate her ongoing suffering? Should I directly intervene rather than trying to retell her unfortunate story over and over again as if it could do her any good? All these questions still remain unanswered due to my cowardice and impotence.

Enough has been said about the archive and its fictionalization. Growing out of the will to defy the destruction of time, a desire for the fictionalization of the archive appears.

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20 Long, "The Archival Subject: Austerlitz," 160.
21 Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 13.
22 Ibid., 13.
23 *Nachgeboren*—to be born later.
24 Sebald, *Austerlitz*, 184.
25 Maria Malikova, "Witnessing the Past in the Work of W. G. Sebald," *Boundary* 2 47, no. 3 (January 2020): pp. 177-184, https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-8524493, 183.
26 Ibid., 183.

Coming along are its hypocrisy and excessiveness, its limitations and deficiency. The discussion ends with unanswered questions and without a conclusion, for I do not believe that these questions could be answered frivolously. Indeed, enough has been said about the archive and its fictionalization for now.

     This journey of mine, dating back to last autumn starts with death, and eventually, ends with another death. I hope that writing this paper, which itself might not have a conclusive ending, will eventually bring this journey to a closure.

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Environmental Perspectives in the *Water Margin*

HIST 223: Traditional China – Eco-civilization and Its Discontents

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(Class of 2022)

Scholars have read the *Water Margin* (水滸傳)[1] as a reflection of the corrupted government and rebellions of bandits. However, as historical fiction, the *Water Margin* has also offered abundant ecological perspectives of the Northern Song and Yuan-Ming transition. In the novel, we see a certain level of sustainability and prosperity in the fishing industry in the south, and the vegetarian agricultural industry in the Buddhist and Taoist mountains. We also see the preservation of wildlife and a relatively peaceful relationship between humans and animals in certain mountains, rivers, and lakes. However, the bandits' extravagant meat consumption, frequent warfare, unrestrained logging, and barren soil display severe environmental challenges. The violent, antagonistic relationship between tigers and humans further illustrates this tension. From the close analysis of mountains, rivers, lakes, and agriculture in the *Water Margin*, this paper hopes to provide an alternative view that puts ecological perspectives at the forefront and makes an in-depth reflection on the environmental features and crises of traditional China.

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1 The *Water Margin* is one of the earliest novels written in vernacular Mandarin and is attributed to Shi Nai'an (1296–1372). The setting of the novel is in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), specifically around 1120 under the ruling of Emperor Huizong; the book tells how 108 bandits gather at Mount Liang and rebel against the government.

Mountains

Sacred mountains of Buddhism and Taoism seem to be prosperous and sustainable in the `Water Margin`. The Taoist Temple of Holy Purity sits on the Dragon-Tiger Mountain (龍虎山), located in current-day Jiangxi, and has a vibrant natural view:

> Grey-green the pines, gnarled and twisted; bright bluish green the cypress, leafy and luxuriant… On the verge of the sanctuary, a willow dimly droops its celebrated flowers; next to the purificational crucible, ancient pine and imperial juniper block out the sun… Below the steps, running water murmurs gently; behind the garden wall friendly slopes give shelter. There are red-headed cranes and green-haired turtles, offerings of fruit laid on the branches of trees for the green apes, fragrant white deer squatting in the sedge.[2]

The natural environment is well protected in the Dragon-Tiger mountains, where aged trees grow luxuriantly and wildlife seem to live relatively close to humans. Although humans interact with the natural environment through rather intrusive avenues, such as building temples and living in the mountains, the relationship between animals and humans is relatively peaceful: the apes enjoy the offered fruit and deer appear among the flowers. The Dragon-Tiger Mountain also has good biodiversity. In contrast with the "threatening" mountains mentioned above, where only tigers and foxes appear, the Dragon-Tiger Mountain has abundant deer, cranes, turtles, apes, as well as willow trees, "imperial juniper," and "celebrated flowers." Later, Hong Xin encounters a terrifying tiger and an immense snake on the mountain. Although the tiger fixes its eyes on Hong Xin and the snake opens its mouth before him, the animals do not hurt Hong Xin. Here, the snake and tiger do not prey on humans. Therefore, it suggests a relatively healthy and normal bio-system, where wildlife has undisturbed territory and predators have requisite prey.

Similarly, another Taoist mountain, the Two Immortals Peak (二仙山), located in current-day Jizhou, Hebei, shows an exuberant natural environment:

> The dark green pines stand thickly, the paler green cypresses are luxuriant. A bunch of greybeards listens to the scriptures, while a group of black-robed priests mixes medicines. The green Wutong trees, the green bamboos, are like a jade screen at the mouth of the cave shutting out the cold; white snow and yellow shoots seem to seal in the heat of the furnace in the pill manufactory. Wild deer wander down the paths, trampling the flowers; mountain apes leap across the gorges picking fruit. The sound of Taoists reciting the scriptures is wafted to the ears, hermits can be seen discussing the law. Veritably one thinks of oneself in heaven, for where else could one go to seek paradise?[3]

On the mountain, pine trees, cypresses, bamboo, and Wutong trees as well as cranes, deer,

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2 John Dent-Young and Alex Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1994), 4

3 John Dent-Young and Alex Dent-Young, *The Gathering Company: Part Three of The Marshes of Mount Liang* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2001), 216.

and apes suggest great biodiversity. The dark green and jade color of the plants and the agile movements of animals indicate that they have good nutrition and are in good physical condition. Furthermore, humans and animals live in harmony with each other; the sounds of Taoists reciting merge well with the breeze and tinkling sounds of the phoenixes.

The animals, plants, and people living on Mount Wutai (五台山) also appear to be in a relatively healthy, thriving condition. Flowers and trees dance in the spring breeze, breathing out fresh scents. White-faced apes and stippled deer actively appear on the mountain, near the Buddhist pagoda. Permanent raindrops drape their delicate strands, and waterfalls unfurl among flying clouds.[4] The mountain's rocks and cliff are not barren but feature fragrant green pina, flowers, and fruits, while the waterfall and stream nurture the plants and animals. The water is fresh and sufficient, unlike the Yin Ma Chuan (飲馬川) where "wild water" and "empty fields" prevail.

The sacred Taoist and Buddhist mountains in the *Water Margin* show a relatively harmonious relationship between humans. Although some scholars believe monasteries are also related to deforestation because they transformed the original forest into fruit orchards and cut down bamboo and wood to build houses, in the *Water Margin*, Taoists and Buddhists do not seem to overly exploit the forests and mountains; instead, they cultivate the land in a restrained scope and maintain a distance from wildlife.[5]

In contrast with the peaceful, prosperous mountains, wild-looking, dangerous mountains, which are frequently occupied by bandits, pose challenges to humans and animals. Qingfeng Mountain (清風山) is a paradigm for uncivilized mountains with aged plants and hungry wildlife:

> On all sides jagged ridges; dangerous peaks all around. Gnarled and ancient pines harbor eagle's nests; from forked branches of old trees dangle twisted vines. Waterfalls that hang in the air produce a cold blast that gives you goose pimples; amid the play of green shadows light dazzles the eye producing fearful visions. The sound of water carries from deep channels, the woodcutter's axe rings out; crowded peaks rear up, mountain birds cry; herds of tailed deer leap through the thorns; packs of foxes howl as they roam in search of prey. This has to be either a monk's place of retreat, or a robber's lair.[6]

The trees are old and largely unorganized by humans, except for the woodcutters. Twisted vines growing alongside hillside bushes have strong climate adaptability and are tolerant to cold and barrenness. The thriving vines indicate the mountain soil's inhospitality to other plants. The chilly atmosphere of the waterfall suggests a lack of human activities like cook-

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4 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 90.
5 Robert Marks, *China: An Environmental History*, second edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 156.
6 John Dent-Young and Alex Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1997), 212.

ing or setting up fires. The birds cry possibly because during the winter they have difficulties finding worms and grains. The foxes "roam" and call, which implies they are hungry.

The thick wood of red pine (赤松林), which Lu Da is in awe of, also implies the severe condition of the land. The trees have "curled limbs twisting every way," like "a thousand barefoot dragons lying" and "ghostly hair."[7] The red pine trees are old and luxuriant. Red pine trees are tolerant to poor soil and can grow in weathered granite and sandstone. The appearance of red pine trees in the *Water Margin* suggests some mountains are deficient in water and nutrition. Lu Zhishen enters the Red Pinewoods on his way from Mount Wutai to Kaifeng, indicating that the woods are located somewhere between Shanxi and Henann. The Yellow River also runs through the Shanxi-Henan borders and the Losses Plateau is nearby. Because the lands in those regions had been soaked in water for long periods, the soil suffered from salinization and lacked nutrition. Therefore, the Red Pine could be an indicator of local poor soil conditions.

The crest of the Yellow Mud Ridge 黃泥崗 is forested, yet the mountain base, where human activities are more frequent, is barren. Only undergrowth and boulders are visible:

> The crest is thickly wooded, but the lower slopes are clad in the yellow mire. The mountain's outline is jagged as the back of an old dragon, nothing is to be heard here but the sound of wind and rain echoing from its awesome cliffs. The undergrowth is thick and matted enough to hide an ambush and there are huge boulders behind which tigers and leopards might be crouching. Don't speak of the dangers of the Xichuan road. This is every bit the equal to Mount Taihang.[8]

The yellow mud reveals the Yellow River's issue of soil sandification. A larger portion of the river's silt was sand, so the soil was incapable of retaining water and nutrition for plants to grow.[9] The loose and infertile soil was possibly caused by large-scale, unconstrained logging during the Northern Song period to produce fascine embankments.[10] The Yellow River shifted its course northward in 1048 and floods struck southern and central Hebei roughly once every two years between 1048 to 1128.[11] The Yellow Mud Ridge is located in current-day Nanle County in Henan Province at the intersection of Henan, Hebei, and Shandong provinces. After the Yellow River was diverted to the north in the Northern Song Dynasty, it is likely to flow through Nanle Village or its vicinity, which brought floods to the villages. Due to local officials' inefficiency in flood-control, local residents autonomously cut down trees and bushes to construct physical barriers to the floods.[12] The

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7 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 142.
8 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 327.
9 Ling Zhang, "Changing with the Yellow River: An Environmental History of Hebei, 1048-1128," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 69, no. 1 (2009): 30.
10 Ibid, 12.
11 Ibid, 8.
12 Ibid, 9-10.

extensive, unregulated logging led to the depletion of vegetation and further land degradation.
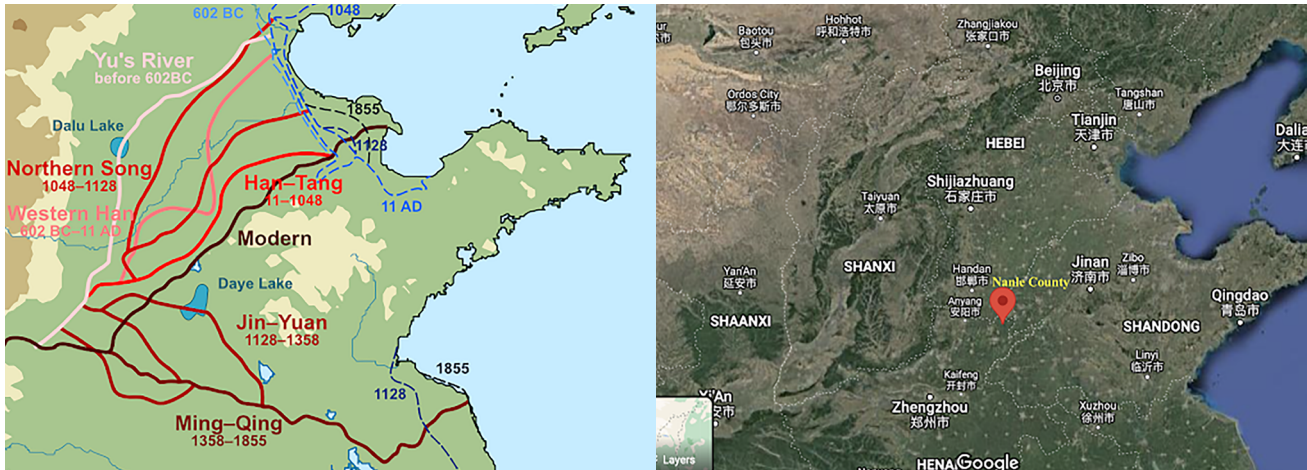

Figure: Historical Diversions of the Yellow River;[13] Location of Nanle County on Google Map.

Mount Liang (梁山) is another great example of a menacing, uninhabited mountain. The mountain has multiple ranges and is surrounded by water. A poem describes the marshes of Mount Liang:

> A mass of reedbeds could hide vast companies of sabers and lances, a forest of stunted trees could conceal armies of swords and spears. Beside the canals are found deer antlers and even whole skeletons. All the bowls and spoons in the stronghold are carved out of the bone. The skin is stripped off corpses to cover the battle drums. Human hair is plaited to make reins and bridles. To impede the progress of government troops there are countless dead-end channels. To protect the bandits there are mountain ranges and forests. Pebbles are piled in huge mounds, spears, and darts are stacked up like a forest. A deadly air pervades the gilt pavilion, and a mortal chill invests the Assembly Hall of the Heroes.[14]

Far from being fertile, the mountain is ghastly and forbidding. The use of animal and human bone, skin, and hair to manufacture daily tools also demonstrates the scarcity of local resources and the high mortality rate of humans and animals. It is a place of death, not life.

In addition to the wild-looking plants and stones, the animals on the menacing mountains also reflect environmental issues. The tigers' abnormal behavior of eating humans demonstrates the precarious circumstances of wildlife. Tigers have a hard time finding prey and they are extremely hungry:

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13 Stevenliuyi, *Historical Course Changes of the Yellow River,* 18 May 2017, accessed Jan. 2 2022, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yellow_River_watercourse_changes.svg.
14 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang,* 240.

> Every night someone is attacked [by a tiger]. Seven or eight of our fellows, hunters that is, have lost their lives already, and countless travelers, all devoured by this terrible monster. The Magistrate has made the local authorities and us hunters responsible for capturing it. But it's incredibly ferocious and dangerous to approach, no one dares get too near.[15]

The huge number of tiger victims proves that tigers' attacks on humans happen frequently. Ordinarily, tigers live in mountains and forests and rarely interact with human beings. However, as the forest was axed for farmlands, tigers lost natural habitats and food sources.[16] In Wu Song's story, humans and tigers show great hostility toward each other and this antagonism exacerbates the dilemma of tigers' survival.

When Li Kui carries his mother over the Yiling Heights 沂嶺, his mother was eaten by the tigers on the mountain. The destruction or shrinking size of the tigers' natural habitats and decreasing numbers of their prey could have forced tigers to migrate.[17] Li Kui killed a family of four tigers, which means the tigers must have traveled a long distance. Otherwise, it would be only the parents who go out and hunt. The story suggests more about the desolate, uninhabited Yiling Heights:

> Evening mist floats across distant hills; the smoke of fires obscures fantastic peaks. Rooks in ragged flocks seek the wood. A hundred bird calls fill the trees. Wild geese in their order ly formations drop and disappear among the reeds. The fireflies' points of light hover over country paths and settle in the rank grass that is their home. The autumn wind sweeps through the trees scattering dead leaves. Frosty air is wafted into
> the deepest corners of the mountains.[18]

It is not a thriving place for wildlife. There are no traces of hare or deer in the mountain; only bare rocks, frosty air, and dead leaves exist. The reader can suppose how hard it is for tigers to live and hunt.

Some of the desolate, threatening wildlife and mountains in the *Water Margin* were once inhabited as indicated by traces of gardens, houses, and farmlands. However, the mountains became uncivilized again, possibly because of migration and climate change. For example, Pei Xuan's Waterworld or Yin Ma Chuan shows a vast expanse of wild water, surrounded by blue hills. There are empty fields, an old ferry, and disappearing traces of water.[19] The name "Yin Ma Chuan" suggests the water was used to water horses. There had been green fields, abundant water, and herds of cattle and horses on the land. However, due to reasons unknown but probably overgrazing, logging, sandstorm, the fields are un-

15 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 15.
16 Marks, *China: An Environmental History*, 166.
17 Ibid., 165.
18 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 459.
19 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Gathering Company: Part Three of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 12.

suitable for farming anymore and become the bandits' shelter. It may also be possible that people overused the water to wash the horse and the water became polluted. The landscape's transformation from areas with abundant water and human activities to abandoned fields and draining lands demonstrates ecological declination resulting from natural disasters and human interventions.

In those sacred mountains that host religious sites, plants and wildlife display greater diversity and healthier relationships with humans. While in certain areas where the Yellow River runs through, typically in North China, vegetation is relatively scarce and human–animal relationships are tense. The reader can see that forests and wildlife in the mountains faced severe challenges under the influence of floods, soil degradation, and deforestation.

Rivers and Lakes

Besides mountains, rivers and lakes play significant roles in the *Water Margin* and they reveal divergent environmental circumstances. For example, the Xun Yang River (潯陽江), a tributary of the Yangtze River, demonstrates the vibrancy of wildlife:

> Distant peaks rise blue above the clouds; far reaches of the river flash like silver. Flocks of gulls and egrets swirl above the shoreline; a few fishing boats thread their way home through the reeds. [Grey-hair fisherman sits at the riverbank where red polygonum flowers thrive; green-hair cowherd rides on a cow along the river where yellow shoots grow.] White wave lets lap against the skyline; the cool wind breathes soughingly across the face of the water.[20]

The river seems to be habitable for both humans and animals: people do fishing and herding near the river, while wildlife like gulls, egrets, polygonum flowers, and yellow shoots.

Similarly, Lake Tai (太湖) also has a healthy, thriving biological system. The water surface is calm and clear as a mirror. Egrets and seagulls freely fly over and soar in groups. The appearance of seagulls and egrets also suggests abundant fish in the lake.[21] The West Lake further shows a prosperous biological system with rich plants like peaches, plums, lotus, and chrysanthemums.[22] The vegetation coverage rate is high, and the water source is well maintained.

However, the novel also describes the Yangtze River and the Qiantang River's environmental catastrophe due to extreme weather and warfare:

> Thousands of miles of the Yangtze River appear to pour the water from the top to bottom, and its running into the sea in the east sounds like thunder. Everyone is afraid of the float

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20 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 342.
21 John Dent-Young and Alex Dent-Young, *The Scattered Flock: Part Five of The Marshes of Mount Liang* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2002), 345.
22 Ibid, 370.

ing sky and snow waves, and the ghosts are also shocked by the moving smoke and strides.[23]

The Yangtze River has dangerous waters and wild winds. The fame of Li Jun (the White-Water Dragon) and Zhang Heng (the Pilot) prove the river's turbulence. Li Jun is known for surging through water with wonderful effects, and Zhang Heng could swim and leap in the water like "a water sprite" and "flying whale."[24] They are among the few people who have managed to live a life on the water.

When Zhang Heng tries to cross the Yangtze River from the northern side and reach Jiankang Fu on the southern side, a gale blows from the north, and low overhead icy clouds scuttle past. Snow drifts down from the sky like "plum blossom" and "scattered jade."[25] Frequent, heavy snow and storms put great challenges to lives on the river. The poem describing the cries of waterbirds, freezing mist, a lone goose, an ancient twisted tree, and a solitary crow illustrates the coldness during the winter, which may harm the wildlife and damage agriculture and fishing activities.

Intense battles on the river also pollute the water, and the aquatic creatures living in it. "The corpses [pile] high to rival North Peak and the waters of the Yangtze red with blood."[26] During a battle, a storm on the Yangtze River wrecked the boat of Ruan the Seventh. Ape and Yellow Dog who were also on the boat, but didn't know how to swim, drowned.[27] When Ruan the Second was confronting Fang La's boats, a total of six thousand sailors and six hundred boats were involved. In this one battle, there are about six thousand sailors fighting on the river. The sailors' bodies sank in the river and the ashes of gunpowder were scattered in the water. Similar fights also happen on Lake Tai.[28] With so many battles taking place on the river in the *Water Margin*, the reader can imagine the pollution of the water brought by wars. The sailors built their camps near the river. Kitchen, bathroom, and laundry activities take place on the river, and sailors likely also throw rubbish into the river. Additionally, the plague in Hangzhou and along the Yangtze River region implies the possibility of bad water.[29] Therefore, the risk of water pollution is very high.

Although there is not a lot of mention of the Yellow River in the *Water Margin*, the reader can tell between the lines that the river is turbulent and dangerous. Yang Zhi supervises the convoys of precious stones from Lake Tai to the capital. His boat was capsized by a storm on the Yellow River and he lost the entire cargo.[30] Yang Zhi can not return to the

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23 Ibid, 306.
24 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 324.
25 John Dent-Young and Alex Dent-Young, *Iron Ox: Part Four of The Marshes of Mount Liang* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2002), 48.
26 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Scattered Flock: Part Five of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 303.
27 Ibid, 400.
28 Ibid, 351.
29 Ibid., 403.
30 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 251.

capital and his job: the Yellow River ruined his fortune and career. The Halberdier, Guo Sheng, before becoming a bandit, was a mercury trader, but he "lost everything in a storm on the Yellow River" and couldn't return home.[31] The Yellow River made Yang and Guo lose their stable lives and sustainable jobs, throwing their lives into precariousness.

It could be indicated from the novel that major trade routes and transportation rely on the Yellow River: the river is used by both private businesses and the state. The thousand-li-long Yuhe canal was crucial for transporting grains between the central plain of North China and Hebei.[32] Yet the river is poorly regulated by the government and local people. The canal was gradually blocked by silt and declined. From the examples above, the readers can assume that besides the dangers of storms and waves in the rivers and lakes, warfare and pollution have worsened the water environment during the Northern Song dynasty.

Agriculture, Fishing, Diet

Not only could one discuss the environmental circumstances from the depiction of habitable and inhabitable mountains, peaceful water, or turbulent water, but one could also investigate the ecological situation by analyzing agriculture and diet. Liu Tang's description of Chao Gai's village in Shandong shows a well-ordered lifestyle of farming, herding, and logging in northern China. At dawn, when "the golden rooster has called three times," the shepherds and the woodcutters set off the village, and the farmers start to plow their gardens and let cows and sheep go out of the pen.[33] Shi Jin's village in Huayin, Shaanxi, is affluent with poultry and livestock:

> Turn the corner and you'll find cows and sheep everywhere, while flocks of ducks and geese wander over the threshing floor. The meadows and orchards provide ample pasture and are filled with over a thousand workers; countless women and children throng the imposing farm buildings. There's more than enough feed for chickens and dogs.[34]

Local agriculture in the villages seems stable and sustainable, with overflowing grains. Similarly, in the south, fishing culture also appears to be well developed and productive: the fishermen of Jiangzhou have developed skills of maintaining fresh fish:

> The boats on this river have part of the stern cut away, to about halfway up the hull, to let the river water flow through, which is how they keep the fish alive. The opening is closed off by a bamboo gate, which allows freshwater to enter but stops the fish from escaping. This is why Jiangzhou has such good fish.[35]

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31 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 273.
32 Zhang, "Changing with the Yellow River: An Environmental History of Hebei, 1048-1128," 15.
33 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 288.
34 Ibid, 36.
35 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 345.

Although farming in the north and fishing in the south seem to be regulated and relatively sustainable in the book, farming is not always a stable way of living. For example, Zhang Qing, who used to be a gardener at the Guangming Temple, becomes a bandit after violent quarrels with monks. No longer able to do gardening, Zhang starts a wine shop, poisons his customers, chops their flesh for pie fillings, and sells the pie in villages.[36] Zhang's dramatic turn from a farmer to a bandit and murderer shows how precarious and dangerous one's life could be without farmlands. In Chapter 7, a band of miscreants, who make their lives on gambling and begging, constantly steal vegetables from the monastic garden that Lu Zhishen regulates.[37] The lack of food and unstable plantations reveal some serious threats to the sustainability of Northern Song China's agrarian society.

While Taoists and Buddhists constrain food consumption and live on environmental-friendly vegetarian diets, the bandits' diet involves extensive meat consumption, such as beef, pork, chicken, goose, and lamb. People living on the Two immortals Mountain pick up fresh fruits and vegetables for meals. Gongsun Sheng, the Taoist disciple, arranges vegetarian food for Li Kui and Dai Zong.[38] Buddhist monks also have restrained consumption of vegetables: the monastery on Mount Wutai possesses a large garden, which Lu Zhishen supervised, provides "ten loads of vegetables" per day.[39] In contrast, the bandits like Lin Chong were served beef, fat goose, and fried chicken.[40] At Jing Yang Gang in Shandong, Wu Song consumed five catties of boiled beef, around 6.6 pounds.[41] Near the hamlet in Hebei, Lin Chong ate plates of beef with wine.[42] At Jie Yang Ling in Jiangxi, Song Jiang and his two accompanists ate two catties of beef.[43] Chai Jin "killed two fine fat water buffalo" to treat villagers.[44] After capturing the Northern Capital, Song Jiang had "three days of feasting" in the Ceremonial Hall. They butchered cattle and horses every day, indulging in the "sea" of meat and wine.[45]

Meat consumption is directly tied to raising livestock. Cattle, sheep, and pigs generate greenhouse gasses that cause a warmer climate. Livestock also consumes huge amounts of water, grain, and grass, further aggravating water shortage and grassland degradation. However, the *Water Margin* shows that people consume beef extravagantly. This could represent the abundance of cattle in society, but the unrestrained consumption of beef can also lead to a shortage of buffalos and consequently agricultural crises.

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36 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 121.
37 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 156.
38 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Gathering Company: Part Three of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 212.
39 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 151.
40 Ibid, 236.
41 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 6-7.
42 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 220.
43 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Tiger Killers: Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 300.
44 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Broken Seals: Part One of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 45.
45 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *Iron Ox: Part Four of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 87.

The absence of agriculture on Mount Liang and excessive consumption of lumber by bandits and the government further reveal environmental crises. The bandits on Mount Liang do not cultivate the land and grow wheat: they are always in a shortage of grain. Thousands of people survive by looting money and food. Song Jiang looted three or four years' supplies of grains from the Zhu Village. The bandits sent the oxen, sheep, mules, horses, and other animals to the mountain and looted five hundred thousand catties of provisions from the Zhu Village.[46]

Although the bandits get abundant provisions at one time, they run into food shortage quickly because they do not plant vegetables and grains by themselves. For example, Wu Yong advised the bandits to sack the Northern Capital and provide their stronghold.[47] Attacking Dongping and Dongchang, the bandits opened the granaries and loaded the grain supplies loaded onto carts, and sent them to Golden Sands Landing to take up the mountain.[48] These behaviors indicate that in unregulated mountains and rural areas, people could not sustain their life by planting grains. On one hand, the state did not have a sound system in place to organize agricultural activities throughout the country. On the other hand, natural disasters and human destruction of the natural environment may have turned the lands unproductive.

Logging and Deforestation

Large-scale tree-cutting and grazing must also have brought huge damage to the environment. Lumber is used for building houses and cooking, while grasses are eaten by horses and sheep. Song Jiang, who sees the growing size of troops on Mount Liang, ordered GreenEyes Li Yun and Nine-Tailed Turtle Tao Zongwang to build more houses and extend the stronghold's defenses.[49] In addition to the bandits' depletion of trees and grains, the government utilizes numerous woods and grains in preparing for frequent warfares. The army cut down trees to build boats and camps along the way. The lumbers are often not recyclable because the soldiers always burn the woods after they leave so that their enemies would not reuse them.

The battles between Gao Qiu and the bandits of Mount Liang show how soldiers extravagantly cut down trees:

Without boats, we cannot get in there. I beg you to authorize me to cut down timber in the region of Mount Liang or to use government money to buy boats from the people for use in the campaign…Each of the ten divisions [of Gao Qiu's army] set up camp and cut down timber at the foot of the mountain; they ransacked people's houses to build their shelters and did much harm to the local inhabitants… but by now the way [Gao's troop] came was

46 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Gathering Company: Part Three of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 155.
47 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *Iron Ox: Part Four of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 5.
48 Ibid, 142.
49 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, *The Gathering Company: Part Three of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 360.

blocked: the Mount Liang forces had used small craft to bring timber and debris from trees cut on the slopes of the mountain to clog the channels, making it impossible to ply the oars.[50]

As the reader can see from the heavy use of timber on the battlefield, the government and the people seem to be careless about the environmental deterioration it causes by cutting down the trees. Since the early Song, the government set up timber workshops near the Taihang Mountains to gather wood for construction and firewood for iron mining and smelting.[51]

Tree-planting had been widely used for border fortification during the Song Dynasty. Although forests as defensive tools against the Liao were protected by the Song government, local residents and officials attempted to cut down newly planted trees for timbers. From 1049 to 1076, as the price of firewood soared, the government removed the ban on logging, and not only local residents but also officials from 100 kilometers away transported large quantities of timber from the borderlands at Dingzhou.[52] Furthermore, because some corrupted officials misappropriate the peasants' sericulture income, peasants who did not receive the promised income began to see forests on borderlands as threats to their livelihood.[53] As the peasants' livelihood was worsened by natural disasters, farmers exploited defensive forests more intensively. In the Song court, conservatives and progressives in the Song court both suggested removing the forests, and none of those reasons were related to environmental or ecological concerns; instead, the officials merely worried that if the forests would be a threat to the Song's peaceful negotiation or defensive warfare with the Liao. In 1126, the defensive forests have returned to a barren, treeless "moonscape."[54]

Even though the novel's textual information may not be historically and geographically accurate, it helps the reader explore questions about sustainability and the human–nature relationship in traditional China. By scrutinizing the descriptions of mountains and forests, lakes and rivers, agriculture and aquaculture, and deforestation in the *Water Margin*, this paper explores relatively flourishing, sustainable natural environments maintained by religious, governmental, or local people's regulations. The article also reveals how natural disasters, warfare, and humans' unrestrained transformation or destruction of natural landscape for livelihood have led to threatening, deteriorating environments. The ecological perspectives are inseparable from the analyses of politics, economy, and social transformation in traditional China and therefore worth further research and attention.

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50 Dent-Young and Dent-Young, I*ron Ox: Part Four of The Marshes of Mount Liang*, 309.
51 Zhang, "Changing with the Yellow River: An Environmental History of Hebei, 1048-1128," 24.
52 Yuan Julian Chen, "Frontier, Fortification, and Forestation: Defensive Woodland on The Song-Liao Border in the Long Eleventh Century," *Journal of Chinese History = Zhongguo Li Shi Xue Kan* 2, no. 2 (2018): 329.
53 Ibid, 328.
54 Chen, "Frontier, Fortification, and Forestation: Defensive Woodland on The Song-Liao Border in the Long Eleventh Century," 330.

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Figure: Map of China with *Water Margin* Locations
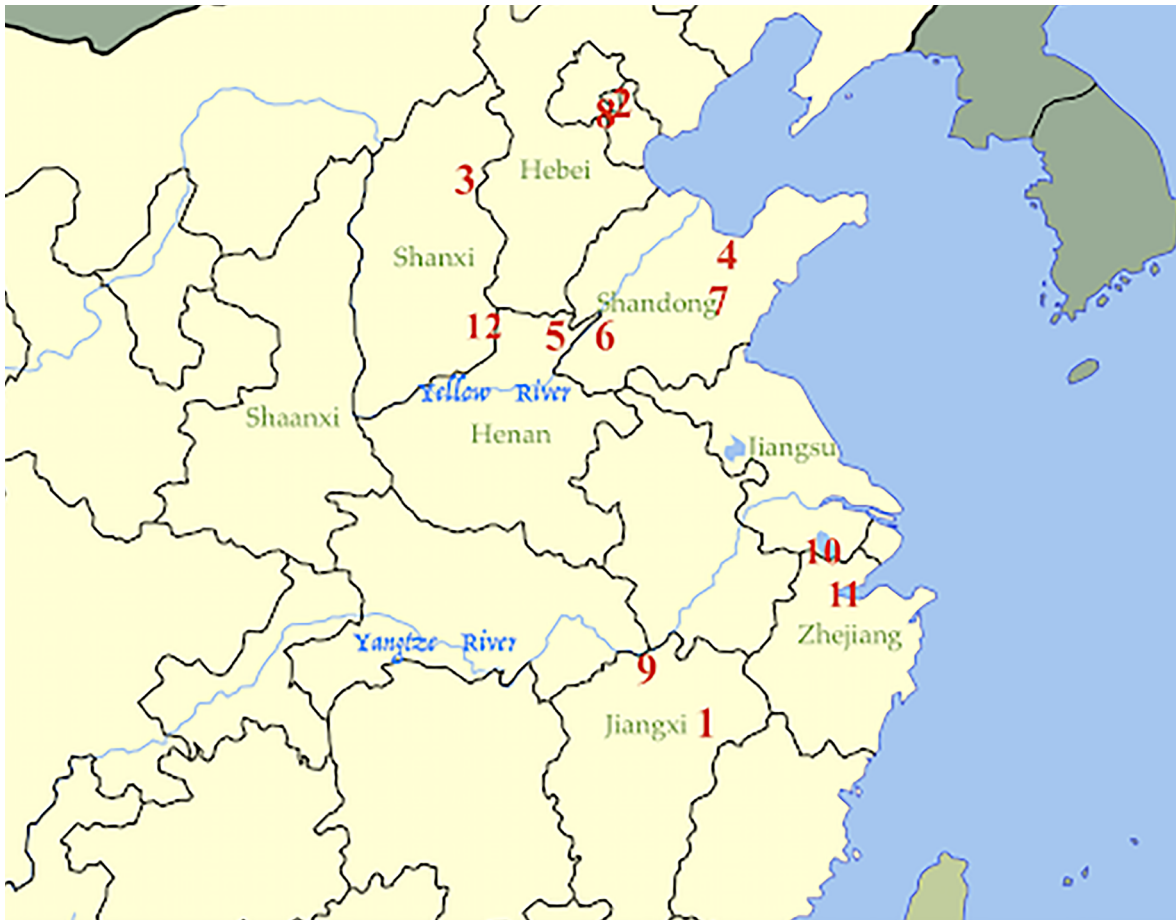
1. Dragon–Tiger Mountain, Jiangxi
2. Two Immortals Peak, Jizhou, Hebei
3. Mount Wutai, Shanxi
4. Qingfeng Mountain, Qingzhou, Shandong
5. Yellow Mud Ridge, Henan
6. Mount Liang, Shandong
7. Yiling Heights, Shandong
8. Yin Ma Chuan, Jizhou, Hebei
9. Xun Yang River, Jiangxi
10. Lake Tai, Jiangsu
11. Qiantang River, Zhejiang
12. Taihang Mountains

Women's Rights and the Question of Divorce in Republican China

HIST 224: Modern China – States, Transnations, Individuals, and Worlds

Emily Park
(Class of 2023)

The multiple legal codes throughout the era of imperial China never offered women much opportunity in the way of supporting themselves, whether it be through allowing women the ability to own property or personally petition for their own divorce. The end of the Qing Dynasty, and thus the end of the empire of China and the beginning of a new republic, ushered in a period of reform beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century with a series of Daliyuan Supreme Court rulings that decreed that women had the right to initiate divorce, and this ruling was formally instituted into the newly founded Republic of China's official new legal code. The Republican Civil Code explicitly legalized gender equality, and wives gained a new autonomy they'd never had in imperial China, being able to directly petition for divorce. However, in practice the courts still favored men in divorce cases while holding women to even more exacting standards; as a result, women in the republic did not experience divorce much more differently than those of the imperial era, and continued to struggle to escape cruelty and neglect at the hands of their husbands.

Divorce had not been especially common in imperial China, and both societal norms and official law prevented divorce from being widespread. Confucian values heavily stigmatized and looked down on the dissolution of a marriage, as such unions were seen as sacred and the basic unit of the population. A writer explicated society's view of quarrels in

marriage in the *Chinese Recorder* in 1871, at the request of a reader wondering how Chinese society viewed divorce:

> I take occasion . . . to inform [reader] . . . that cases of divorce among the Chinese are not common . . . Should a quarrel take place between a man and his wife, the matter is referred to the elders of the clan called *Chu-laou* who after assembling a few other members of the clan, hear the complaint on both sides. After hearing it, they never under any circumstance pronounce a decision, merely scolding the offending party, and finally admonishing the couple to go and live amicably, which advice, as strange as it may seem, is generally obeyed and considered as law by them.[1]

He explicitly states that a problem within a marriage is a problem to the entire community, not just the two, and that reconciliation took precedence over divorce, which would only bring shame upon the spouses and their families and disrupt the harmony of society. The author makes it clear that China views the collective peace of the community as most important, and the problems of the individuals second.

Legally as well, women did not even have the right to petition legally against her husband for a divorce. Under the Qing legal code, only a wife's natal family could bring suit to dissolve a marriage under, and only under very specific conditions: if the husband abandons her for more than three years, beats her badly enough to leave permanent damage, or if her husband, husband's parents, or grandparents commit what Qing law determines to be "violations of the marital bond, including pawning, pledging, or selling her to another, forcing her to commit adultery, or beating her enough to leave permanent damage."[2] Only under these conditions could a wife's family petition on her behalf to dissolve a marriage. Men could file on a much wider grounds, including the wife not bearing him a son or being too talkative. The court also allowed divorce by mutual consent, however, this case was exceedingly rare and as a result, late imperial women took to complaining informally to relatives and women's communities, because of their limited avenues to divorce and the social stigma that accompanied such separation.

The founding of the new republic and the subsequent new, liberal law code that followed revolutionized divorce by giving wives the right to bring suit to their husbands directly; women now had a new autonomy and freedom unheard of in the era of the Qing. China took measures to model their law code after Western laws and judicial practices, as the West was seen as a guideline for modernity, and the Guomindang, in the spirit of said modernity, explicitly legalized gender equality in the context of divorce.[3] Now, civil pro-

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1 G. Minchin, "Divorces Among the Chinese." *Chinese Recorder* Vol. 4 Issue 5 (Shanghai, China), Oct. 1871.
2 Kathryn Bernhardt, "Women and the Law: Divorce in the Republican Era," *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 189.
3 Xiaoqun Xu, "Law and Courts as Negotiating Tools: Marriage and Divorce in Republican China, 1912-1949," *One Law for All? Western Models and Local Practices in (Post−) Imperial Contexts* (Campus Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt-on-Main, 2012), 183-208.

cedural laws required that wife and husband be the primaries in litigation, and that parents could only file suit in their child's stead if the child was under twenty years of age. In 1930, the Family Book of the Republican Civil Code expanded the grounds for judicial divorce to ten conditions made available to both the husband and wife on an equal basis: bigamy, adultery, spousal intolerable cruelty, abandonment, intent or attempt to murder, incurable mental disease, incurable physical disease, lengthy disappearance, or the imprisonment or commission of an infamous crime.[4] This change in the law promoted the idea that behaviors like abuse and abandonment were no longer acceptable, and changed the concept of marriage as a whole. Marriage was now a conditional lifelong union, and divorce a viable alternative to "accepting fate." Traditional theatre story *Zhu Maichen* exemplifies this positive change in societal thinking. *Zhu Maichen* tells the story of scholar Zhu Maichen, who is divorced by his wife for his poverty; she remarries, only to find that her ex-husband obtained wealth and power after becoming a government official shortly after their divorce.[5] In imperial Chinese adaptations, the woman is seen as the villain of the story by the audience, a pathetic character that saintly Zhu Maichen extends his goodwill to at the end of the play by allowing her and her new husband to stay at his big home. In contrast, in the Republican era adaptation, Zhu and his charity are seen as oppressors, forcing his ex-wife and husband to stay at his home and gaze jealously at his new wealth. This role-reversal reflects the newfound acceptance of divorce in society. A Chinese writer lamented this new societal shift in the *China Critic* in 1933, positing that "now marriage is a private contract–not a holy bond as formerly conceived."[6] He argues that Western influence has made Chinese people consider both marriage and divorce "easy" in the spirit of newfound individualism pushed by the state in its quest for China to achieve Western modernity, reflecting the widespread increase in divorce lawsuits in Chinese courts with the new law code.

The Republican Civil Code allowed China to have one of the most liberal divorce laws in the world in theory. Lawmakers, through the code, explicitly upheld the principle of gender equality. However, the social climate of Republican China did not reflect these new modern principles, remaining backward especially in the treatment of wives: spousal abuse and adultery remained extremely common. In this climate, judges obligated themselves to uphold the law, but nearly all succumbed to influence from social issues that reared their heads in divorce cases. Cases of women requesting divorce from their husbands on the basis of intolerable cruelty best exemplify this phenomenon of the courts conforming to social standards of the time. Among divorce cases, spousal cruelty was cited as the most common reason for divorce suits; from 1934 to 1939, across the country 31 percent of reported

4 Margaret Kuo, "Spousal Abuse: Divorce Litigation and the Emergence of Rights Consciousness in Republican China." *Modern China* 38, no. 5 (2012): 523-58.
5 Josh Stenberg, "Staging Female-initiated Divorce: The Zhu Maichen Story in Twentieth-Century Drama from Opprobrium through Approbation." *Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in Early and Imperial China* 16, no. 2 (2014): 308-40.
6 Chang Shao-Wei, "Divorce Plague in China." *China Critic* Vol 16. Issue 17 (Shanghai, China), Apr. 27, 1933.

judicial divorces were granted for spousal abuse.[7]   The Republican Civil Code upheld the Daliyuan's guidelines for determining intolerable cruelty. Judges brought into question whether the abuse was habitual or occasional, as well as the severity of the damage wrought by the abuse. If the abuse was a singular incident, the damage had to be near permanent–a black eye would not suffice. If the abuse was habitual, severity didn't matter, but the courts were exceptionally exacting in judging evidence. Judges held plaintiffs to an extremely strict standard of proof, and it fell on the women to provide witnesses to the beatings, hospital records detailing the extent of the injuries, police records if she'd filed a report, and court records if she'd filed suit against assault and battery. After all of these exacting procedures, if the judge finally did admit to severity of beatings, men still had a near-surefire way of preventing the judge from ruling for a separation: demonstrating the financial burden he bore for the sake of the marriage. In most spousal abuse cases, litigants were poor. Marriage was extraordinarily expensive for poor men, and the gender population disparity present in Republican China, at a startling 156.9 males to 100 females in Beijing in 1940, meant that poor men encountered extreme difficulty in trying to marry, as women could afford to be pickier and bride prices rose.[8]   This hardship instilled in men the expectation that once they finally married, after undergoing such struggle, the marriage would be permanent. This often led to increased instances of abuse between poor men and their wives; a man detailed this phenomenon of increased abuse in 1930 in the *China Critic,* stating that men often found themselves "in wedlock before he is able to acquire means of livelihood," and thus "when poverty creeps in, at the back door, love flies out of the window."[9]   A poor man was under stress trying to provide for his family, and it was reasonable for him, as the sole breadwinner, to occasionally take out his anger on his wife, who required food and clothing and contributed no income. The court supported this economic understanding of poor men's rights, thus inherently disadvantaging women; for men and the courts, economic sacrifice equated to justice, and the more hardship he underwent, the more sympathetic the court was.

While men being advantaged in the courts because of the socioeconomic context of the times, women were actively disadvantaged by the same social climate. In divorce suits, women had to essentially make sure that her own conduct was beyond reproach. Women's behavior often became the central issue of divorce cases, given the court's inherent sympathy to men's individual rights. In one case, a man and his father shackled the man's wife for a week. When she petitioned for divorce claiming intolerable cruelty, her husband claimed that it was punishment for suspected adultery. The court rejected the petition, agreeing that "excessive behavior in a sudden fit of rage was clearly differentiable from intolerable cruelty" because one party was "dissolute in conduct."[10]   In another case, a wife was beaten severely for visiting her natal family without the husband's permission, and the court ruled the be-

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7 Bernhardt, *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China,* 197.
8 Bernhardt, *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China,* 199.
9 "Matrimonial Sanctity." *China Critic* Vol. 3 Issue 46 (Shanghai, China), Nov. 13, 1930.
10 Bernhardt, *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China,* 202.

havior of the husband understandable and the wife inappropriate. Essentially, Republican lawmakers assumed that women were of free will and autonomy, therefore responsible for their own actions. If a woman stepped out of line, an incident of abuse was understandable because a poor man was already under such stress supporting his family. A woman contributing to his troubles deserved punishment. In addition, a large proportion of female litigants were young; the *China Critic* noted in its October, 1933 issue that "of the number of divorcees under the age of 30 women exceed the number of men, while over that age men exceed women, because women over 30 have less chance of getting married again and are less likely to sue for divorce."[11] Younger women tended to be more immature and less well-spoken, which lessened their credibility even further in the eyes of the courts, who saw volatile young females ruled by their emotions. Younger women sued more often because they had better potential marriage prospects after divorce, but older women more easily and eloquently defended themselves from the suspicious, overly demanding procedures of the court. In the end, neither were advantaged and both struggled in the judiciary system.

While women were seen as autonomous individuals with their own rights in the eyes of the law, in practice the law, through the courts did not grant them the liberties and protections promised. While wives in the Republican era were slightly better off than their imperial counterparts in that they were able to petition for divorce themselves, the courts created an atmosphere of sympathy towards the husbands that nearly rendered divorce impossible through their overly exacting standards. While society began to embrace the concept of divorce as a modern institution, the actual practice fell behind, and the judicial system continued to simultaneously uplift men while oppressing women.

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11 "Canton's Divorce Statistics." *China Critic* Vol. 16 Issue 12 (Shanghai, China), Mar. 25, 1937.

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Understanding the U.S. Empire in Korea and Korean Diaspora:

The Untold Narratives of Black-Korean Adoptees

HIST 259: Asians and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. Empire

Michelle Kim
(Class of 2025)

The Origins of the Transnational Adoption Industry

Within the context of the Cold War, the aftermath of the Korean War (1950–1953) not only dramatically influenced geopolitical relations, but it also birthed the transnational adoption industry. This proxy war economically and socially destroyed a now-divided nation previously struggling to recover from a thirty-five year long regime of Japanese colonial occupation and the scars of World War II. The new Republic of Korea (ROK) itself was attempting, with all its might, to survive and establish itself on the global stage.

As the nation was rebuilding itself, there was also the issue of the resulting children of this devastating proxy war. The newly orphaned children consisted of two distinct groups of Korean children: one was full, or "pure" Korean children of Korean parentage as Koreans would describe them, and the other was mixed-race children. The mixed-race babies came to be aptly referred to as "Government-Issue (GI) babies," as their fathers were either Black or white American soldiers with Korean mothers.[1] These mixed-race GI babies were considered a newly created racial category in this ethnically homogenous nation.[2] While most

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1 Arissa Oh, "To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption," *Stanford University Press,* 2015, 19.
2 Ibid., 23.

orphans were, indeed, full Korean children, the small proportion of mixed-race children, which included both Black-Korean and white-Korean orphans, were subjected to a largely disproportionate amount of discrimination and hostility due to their racial mixture and simple presumption that their Korean mothers were unrespectable prostitutes.[3]

For better or for worse, Americans, including both soldiers and civilians, were eager to adopt these Korean orphans.[4] This was a welcome sentiment for a national government that was also equally eager to resolve this racial predicament. To the government and greater Korean society, mixed-race children posed as an antithesis to their racial ideology of racial purity; thus, as such children were a societal issue, the way to resolve the issue was to physically remove them from Korea. Ergo, the Korean government worked to establish an intercountry adoption industry.[5] Concurrently, the United States Congress passed the 1953 Refugee Relief Act; this piece of legislation allowed for a systematic yet still unprecedented influx of immigration of adopted Korean children into the country.[6] This binational cooperation between the United States the infantilized ROK in need of GI humanitarian efforts, which was a form of U.S. imperialism, demonstrated that the project of sending GI babies overseas in the name of transnational adoption was not just an exhibition of deceptively good-natured American humanitarian, but also an intentionally systematic state endeavor.

With international financial support flowing from humanitarian and Christian organizations, binational governmental cooperation, and public interest, adoption agencies and adoption practices began to emerge and systematize. The figure most frequently reference in American news coverage with regards to the topic of adopting Korean children during this time was Harry Holt, often referred to as the father of Korean adoption. The Holt family was described as the epitome of the "Biblical Good Samaritan."[7] While Holt, a white man of the Christian faith, was well-intentioned and instrumental to developing an adoption agency that would later expand to become one of the largest international agencies globally, he was not without flaws in his methods of facilitating the displacement of mixed-race orphaned Korean children.[8] His agency, employing the powers afforded by white privilege in America, sought to meet a demand, likened to the economic sense, of Korean children for prospective and interested American adoptive families. Matching children with appropriate families necessitated the negotiation of intersecting ideologies regarding race as well as adoptability.

Synchronously, Black Americans were also keenly interested in adopting GI babies,

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3 Oh, "To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption", 23.
4 Ibid., 53.
5 Ibid., 54.
6 Oh, "From War Waif to Ideal Immigrant: The Cold War Transformation of the Korean Orphan," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31, no. 4 (2012): 38, https://doi.org/10.5406/jamerethnhist.31.4.0034.
7 Senator Neuberger, speaking on S.7041, on May 3, 1961, 87th Cong, 1st sess, *Congressional Record* 107, pt. 6.
8 Oh, "To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption," 81.

specifically Black–Korean children. Amidst the discrimination and racism experienced by Black Americans in America, many of these individuals believed that the ostracism and abuse endured by Black–Korean orphans were worse than their social circumstances.[9] Many Black Americans were convinced that these mixed children needed to be rescued from Korea and would be better off in a more racially heterogenous nation. This racial minority in America viewed anti–Black racism, which was both present and experienced in Korea and America, as the central link that obligated Black Americans to be involved in Korean transnational adoption.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to make note of the fact that the desires and actions of Black American individuals, families, and communities have gone largely unnoticed with regards to the adoption of Korean children in both news coverage of the time and contemporary scholarship today. This can be attributed to the general racism and discrimination experienced by Black Americans during the Civil Rights era. In a proposal to expand the Orphan Immigration Program, Senator Maurine Neuberger details the adoption procedures, which consisted of neighborhood and employment checks of the prospective family—checks that would place Black Americans impacted by systemic racism at an inevitable disadvantage.[10] Moreover, adoption policies were designed to inherently favor white nuclear households and disfavor Black families.[11] However, Black American couples who partook in adopting Black–Korean GI babies in the early stages of transnational adoption from Korea played a significant role in facilitating this binational relationship between an imperial power and struggling new nation.

U.S. Militarism as a Tool of Imperialism

South Korea, officially known as the Republic of Korea (ROK), adopted American ideas of racial hierarchies as it was still receiving financial and infrastructural support from the United States. While not necessarily imposed upon, the nature of the asymmetrical relationship between the established U.S. Empire and the newborn Republic of Korea encouraged the colonizer-colonized dynamic to unfold. The presence of the U.S. military on Korean soil ultimately resulted in complex and tension–filled relationships between white soldiers, Black soldiers, and local Korean residents.

Prior to the Korean War and the presence of American soldiers, Korea was ideologically united through an exclusive form of ethnic nationalism, which also acted as a form of resistance against imperialism. Korean notions of race, ethnicity and the nation were and are conflated and encompassed in a single word, *minjok*, which can be interchangeably used

9 Kori Graves, A War Born Family (NYU Press, 2020), 141, https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479872329.001.0001.
10 Senator Neuberger, speaking on S.7042, on May 3, 1961, 87th Cong, 1st sess, *Congressional Record* 107, pt.6.
11 Graves, *A War Born Family*, 134.

to refer to all three aforementioned concepts. While race and ethnicity are distinct notions, with the former referring to biological characteristics and the latter referring to more cultural aspects, Korean ethnic nationalism viewed both concepts as equivalents.[12] The concept of *minjok* was further developed during the period of Japanese Occupation (1910-1945) as Koreans were subject to Japanese assimilation policies. Through the assertion of their unique racial origins separate from the Japanese, the ideology of *minjok* allowed Koreans to resist the erasure of their culture.[13] Therefore, before the occupancy of the U.S. military, Korean ethnic nationalism had already developed as a form of resistance against an imperial empire.

Following liberation from the Japanese, the first president of the ROK, Syngman Rhee, promoted the notion of a single *minjok* through his state policy of *ilmin juii,* which roughly translates to "one peopleism." This continuation of Korean ethnic nationalism envisaged the ROK and its citizens as united through a "shared bloodline and ancestry."[14] Such state policy clearly implied that there was no space for mixed-race GI babies in Korea and *minjok*. This racially exclusive sentiment explained why the Korean government was so eager to cooperate with the U.S. to ship GI babies over the Pacific. While simultaneously attempting to assert its racial unity and purity as the nation inferior to the United States, Korea was also in a position of respecting and thanking its American savior.

With an already developed conception of race, Korean residents were further influenced by the U.S. military, an entity that was representative of U.S. imperialism. In addition to priding itself on racial purity, Korean notions of race and ethnicity were also further complicated with notions of colorism. Historically, there was a preference for lighter skin, a characteristic associated with those of the wealthy ruling class, whereas darker skin was associated with lower class peasants.[15] Thus, Korean ethnic nationalism was also imbued with color prejudice. As Korean residents observed the differences and interactions between Black and white American soldiers, the Korean conception of race became suffused with Western conceptions as well.[16] Camptowns in Korea were segregated, as U.S. military presence in South Korean concurrently happened during the Jim Crow era. The conditions of Black camptowns were inferior to white ones.[17] The visual message was clear: Black Americans were inferior to the lighter-skinned white Americans. In this environment, racial triangulation emerged. Now that Koreans were aware of the American white-Black binary, they placed themselves as beings occupying the intermediate status between the superior whites

12 Yuri Doolan, "Being Amerasian in South Korea: Purebloodness, Multiculturalism, and Living Alongside the U.S. Military Empire" (Undergraduate honors research thesis, The Ohio State University, 2012), 24, https://kb.osu.edu/bitstream/handle/1811/52015/1/DOOLAN_YURI_Being_Amerasian_in_South_Korea.pdf.
13 Doolan, "Being Amerasian in South Korea: Purebloodness, Multiculturalism, and Living Alongside the U.S. Military Empire," 31.
14 A. Oh, "To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption," 54.
15 Kun Jong Lee, "The Black Amerasian Experience in Korea: Representations of Black Amerasians in Korean and Korean American Narratives," *Korea Journal* 55, no. 1 (March 2015): 17, https://doi.org/10.25024/kj.2015.55.1.7.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.

and inferior Black soldiers.

Korean perceptions of race were now informed by imported American notions of a racial hierarchy favoring one's proximity to whiteness. While mixed-race children in general were not looked favorably upon in Korea's post-war society, there were subtle differences in attitudes towards white-Korean versus Black-Korean GI babies. These differences in attitudes were apparent in Korean literature. Representations of Black-Korean orphans centered on their Blackness; their Black GI fathers were hypersexual, violent, and irresponsible men who raped promiscuous Korean women.[18] As Black soldiers were inferior to white soldiers, Black-Koreans were inferior to white-Koreans. This view of Black-Korean children resulted in their experiences of ostracization and discrimination in Korean society. On the other hand, white-Korean children were more positively portrayed in Korean literature. Despite their mixed heritage, white-Korean children had lighter skin and their fathers were the superior white soldiers. In Korean fiction, they were sometimes even endearingly regarded.[19] Overall, mixed-race Korean children were physical manifestations of the shortcomings of Korean history. Specifically, these children were reminders of Korea's painful status as an imperial subject of the United States as well as militarized prostitution producing mixed-race offspring, an anathema to Korea's *minjok* ideology.

However, Americans viewed these novel mixed-race Korean children with great interest, and many were even willing to welcome these children into their American homes. Many demonstrated their strong desire to adopt Korean children (which included full Koreans, white-Koreans and Black-Koreans) by sending requests to media outlets, Congress members, President Eisenhower, and President Rhee, and adoption agencies.[20] Of those Americans keenly interested in adopting Korean children, many were either Christians or Christian Americanists. Arissa Oh, a scholar of transnational Asian American history, stated that the ideology of Christian Americanism was a marriage of Christian duties and American patriotism.[21] The pioneer of this movement was none other than the pioneer of Korean adoption, Harry Holt.[22] For Christian Americanists, colorblindness was imperative when adopting GI babies; in the face of Christian love, race was trivial. The act of adopting a GI baby was a method of demonstrating one's faith, serving God, participating in patriotic activities, and spreading American ideologies in the Cold War world.

Ultimately, U.S. militarism, the impetus of mixed-race GI babies, particularly Black-Korean children, complicated Korea's racial ideology. Originally a form of resistance against Japanese imperialism with notions of colorism embedded, the conception of a

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18 Ibid., 15.
19 Kun Jong Lee, "The Black Amerasian Experience in Korea: Representations of Black Amerasians in Korean and Korean American Narratives," 15.
20 A. Oh, "To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption," 53.
21 Ibid., 80.
22 Ibid.

pure-blooded *minjok* was complicated with the introduction of the American white-Black binary, a U.S. military import. U.S. militarism, and even American adoption, as tools of imperialism, were under the guise of good-natured humanitarianism. The general Korean sentiment at this point and time was that American soldiers had saved and liberated the Koreans from their Japanese colonizers and oppressors. American civilians were graciously willing to adopt these Korean orphans. These forms of imperialism introduced racial triangulation and a racial hierarchy to South Korean society. This also allowed the American neocolonizer to distance itself from its wrongdoings; the U.S. Empire had wreaked havoc and engaged in a proxy war on the soil of the geopolitically weaker Korea. Thus, not only did the tools of U.S. imperialism import racial conceptions, but they also synchronously attempted to erase the harmful impacts of U.S. imperialism.

Nebulous Race Relations

Following the Korean War, Koreans began to immigrate to the United States. The various groups of Koreans immigrating to American lands included biracial Korean adoptees, Korean brides, as well as Korean men seeking graduate education and better job opportunities in the States. Both immigrating Koreans and local Korean residents who remained in their homeland experienced interactions with white and Black Americans to some degree. Such interactions, contrary to what was expected under the theory of racial triangulation, did not always unfold in a manner that conformed to American racial hierarchy. Narrowing the focus on across the Pacific, the presence of Korean immigrants and Korean adoptees in America contributed to Asian American movements.

When beginning this analysis of race relations with the experiences of local Korean residents, it is imperative to note that their interactions did not always necessarily align to or conform with the theory racial triangulation. However, the American racial hierarchy always influenced racial perceptions and race-related encounters on the peninsula. Interactions between local Koreans and Black American troops were not without tension. Koreans bore resentment with regards to the injustices they had suffered and endured because of American, specifically military, presence. In fact, in the 1970s, a couple of decades following the Korean War, there were still troops on Korean soil. According to Nadia Y. Kim, a scholar of Asian American studies and critical race theory, white soldiers overheard Koreans repeating their (referring to the white soldiers) anti-Black sayings and related appellations without full understanding of such racist slurs or the extent of seriousness that such sayings entailed.[23] The negative prejudices that Koreans viewed Black soldiers with was unfortunately reciprocated. Black soldiers responded to Korean anti-Black sentiments by abusing their military methods and power. Such interactions further perpetuated negative stereotypes of the other

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23 Nadia Y. Kim, "The United States Arrives: Racialization and Racism in Post-1945 South Korea," *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia*, January 2015, pp. 274-295, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004292932_013, 287.

group and created more animosity between local Korean residents and Black American soldiers. Notably, these interactions did not observe the maxims of racial triangulation. While white Americans were indeed still superior as a third party facilitating such interactions, the exchange of racism and prejudice between Korean residents and Black soldiers could be described as mutually transactional. Furthermore, there were instances in which Black soldiers were superior in status to Korean residents by virtue of status as Americans, the neo-colonizers. The interactions between Korean residents and American soldiers demonstrated the complexities of race relations, thereby suggesting the flawed simplicity of racial triangulation.

As for Koreans immigrating to the United States, their status transformed from neo-colonized subjects to diasporic peoples. While their geopolitical position had changed, their understanding of race had not drastically changed. This can be attributed to the U.S. Empire's influences in the ROK in the years during and after the Korean War. Such immigrating Koreans retained the Japanese and U.S. Empire's ideologies of race—in this case, to-be-diasporic Koreans subscribed to notions of racial triangulation, self-categorizing themselves as the "in-between" race occupying the intermediate space separating whites and Black people in the United States.

Korean immigration to the United States following the Korean War occurred synchronously with the passage of pieces of American legislation that commenced to abolish bans on immigration from Asian countries in general. In particular, the War Bride Act of 1946 allowed American soldiers stationed in South Korea to bring their Korean wives and children to the States; of course, such soldiers were servicemen who did not abandon their wives and GI babies in Korea.[24] Subsequently, the McCarran and Walter Act of 1952 abolished the ban on Asian immigration in general; there was still a quota in place and eligibility requirements that had to be met.[25] Nonetheless, it was a piece of legislation that legally allowed more immigration from the East. Following the Act of 1952, the Immigration Act of 1965 was passed and then fully implemented in 1968.[26] Through this piece of legislation, the result of a unified joint effort between the Black Civil Rights, Chicano, and Asian American movements, equal opportunity was now given to all countries to immigrate to the United States, not just Northwestern European nations. As a result, beginning in the 1970s, immigration increased.

Alongside such legislation, Koreans themselves had their own reasons for moving across the Pacific. The poor living standards typified by the scarcity of job opportunities

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24 Pyong Gap Min, *Koreans' Immigration to the U. S: History and Contemporary Trends* (New York City: The Research Center for Korean Community at Queens College of CUNY, January 2011), 5, https://www.qc.cuny.edu/academics/centers/rckc/documents/koreans%20immigration%20to%20the%20us.pdf.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 7.

motivated Koreans to look abroad for better job prospects;[27] such a gloomy job market was characteristic of a nation recovering from a proxy war. Moreover, an era of political insecurity catalyzed by military dictatorship regimes from 1960 and 1987 provided another reason.[28] Korean residents also had exposure to American culture. The presence of U.S. soldiers and news outlets such as the American Forces of Korean Networks (AFKN), conveyed and reinforced the image of America as the land of opportunity and prosperity.[29] Such were remnants of the U.S. Empire's influence even after the Cold War.

As such, the first significant wave of Korean immigrants coming to the U.S. in the 1970s arrived with an established awareness of the white-Black binary and American racial hierarchy. Having already interacted with both Black and white soldiers in Korea, the Korean diaspora was not suddenly having to adjust to their new racialization as the in-between Asian ethnic group. During this time, Black nationalism escalated, stoking race conflicts.[30] As expected, violence between Black and white soldiers was common, but also, conflicts between Black people and Korean immigrants were frequent occurrences as well. In both Korea and America, such racialized conflicts cannot be solely accounted for by racial triangulation theory. This framework is too simple to explain race relations between whites, Black Americans, and Koreans, including the diverse Korean diaspora.

Across the Pacific, Asian American communities were fighting the battle against racialization and racism. This movement, which accelerated post-WWII, aimed to dismantle the racist assumptions that the Asian diaspora in the United States was unassimilable and alien. At the same time, Asian Americans were, in aggregate, harmfully and inaccurately characterized as the model minority; their upwards economic and social mobility and the fact that they were not Black allowed for this stereotype to become perpetuated in U.S. institutions and systems. The objective of these Asian Americans was to fight such assumptions and fight for their individual backgrounds to be recognized. Korean adoptees, including those of mixed-race, were a part of this movement. Especially for Black-Koreans, by virtue of their biracial status, they occupied a unique role in reformulating Asianess in America. Their heritage consisted of the model minority as well as the antithesis to the model minority in the eyes of white American racial norms. As individuals, the presence of Black-Koreans in America during post-Korean War and the concurrent Civil Rights era challenged the established Black-white binary as well as the model minority myth and perpetual foreigner status of Asian Americans with regards to the constructions of race categories.

The perception of Black-Koreans in America as opposed to Korea can be character-

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27 Ibid., 8.
28 Ibid., 9.
29 Ibid., 11.
30 Kim, "The United States Arrives: Racialization and Racism in Post-1945 South Korea." *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia*," 288.

ized as more welcoming and positive. Many Black American as well as interracial Black–white couples were willing to adopt Black–Korean children from Korea. There were many Black American magazines and publications encouraging their communities to adopt the Black–Korean children; these articles emphasized the poor living conditions and racism these mixed children experienced. In Jet Magazine, a Black publication, an article with the headline, *U.S. Aide Says that Orientals Deny Food to Negro War Babies*, reported that food was "being denied some of the estimated 2,000 children of Negro-Oriental romances in Japan and Korea."[31] Thus, the article encouraged "Negro parents in the United States to adopt the children."[32] Many Black women responded to such articles; one Black woman stated that she "wanted to help my race by adopting an orphan."[33] The Black Americans who wanted to adopt knew about the abuse and racially motivated ostracism that Korean children faced, and this served as their main motivation to adopt. Unfortunately, many adoption agencies did not attempt to recruit Black couples to adopt Korean orphans; social workers did not desire to devote the extra time and resources needed to investigate the fit and eligibility of Black couples.[34] Moreover, in general, the eligibility requirements to adopt favored white Americans over Black Americans due to systemic racism; specifically, Black wives tended to work while white wives did not and Black families tended to live in neighborhoods deemed to not be suitable for adoptees while white families lived in suitable neighborhoods as a result of redlining.[35] Those families that did adopt Black–Korean children were usually living in integrated, interracial neighborhoods; such neighborhoods were deemed as an ideal environment for raising a child of dual heritage, at least in the views of American adoption agencies. Therefore, while the adoption of Black–Korean children and their integration into interracial neighborhoods symbolized the dismantling of American racial ideologies as well as modern, liberal progress, American racial ideologies were also simultaneously reinforced as places and families that were fully Black were not viewed favorably in any context.

The notion of colorblindness and racial liberalism was adopted by white Americans in this context of Korean adoption. Pearl Buck, who was a nonreligious and nonprofessional adoption reformer and writer, was a proponent of colorblind love. To encourage the adoption of biracial children, she utilized some tenets of eugenic ideologies to describe Black–Korean children as superior due their combination of the best qualities of Korean women and Black American men.[36] This contradicted her colorblind position, which was a position that was supposed to de-emphasize race and skin color. However, despite encouraging a welcoming and positive perception of mixed–race Korean children, both lines of thinking were harmful. For one, using eugenic ideologies to encourage the adoption of Korean children, while well-intentioned, was harmful as it placed such orphans on a racial

31 "U.S. Aide Says That Orientals Deny Food to Negro War Babies," *Jet*, February 10, 1955, pp. 1-64, 12-13.
32 Ibid., 13.
33 Graves, *A War Born Family*, 72.
34 Graves, *A War Born Family*, 146.
35 Ibid., 171.
36 Ibid., 206-207.

pedestal. Furthermore, the concept of colorblindness allowed many white Americans, like Harry Holt, to perpetuate racism unknowingly. Partaking in colorblind thinking evaded recognizing race, a form of erasure; erasure of race ignored oppression and discrimination experienced by Black–Korean adoptees, Korean diaspora, and Asian Americans, which was harmful.

Ida Hart: Transnational Racializations and Bridging Marginalized Communities

Ida Hart, a Black–Korean adoptee who was raised by a mixed–Black family in Nashville, Tennessee grew up in the segregated American South. She recalled being called numerous racial slurs as a child in Korea; other parents and children made obvious efforts to avoid Hart. In retrospect, she also realized that she was sent to a different school from her peers—The Institute for Mixed Blood Children. Surprisingly, she described the latter half of her childhood in America as "sheltered" because "there was more acceptance than rejection."[37] In the South, the lack of Asian Americans provided an inevitable environment for her to internalize a strictly Black–white binary. So, while Hart conveys that she did not experience extreme racism in her insulated mixed–Black community, this social and racial comfort narrowly shaped her view of herself as a mixed-race adoptee and her position in America.

However, throughout her experiences in university, she said that she had "been hurt by both races" and "felt betrayed by both races."[38] She also stated, "I felt that I always had to prove my racial heritage."[39] To make sense of her place in university as a mixed-race student as well as draw upon her experiences as a mixed-race adoptee, Hart participated in social movements and student protests at her university. Hart's distance from her Asian heritage closed as she became involved in social movements as a Third World activist.[40] As she interacted with various student–of–color collectives and organizations, Hart came to understand the value and power of unity among the marginalized peoples in America.

Hart's experiences, although rare, as the numbers of Black–Korean adoptees themselves are so few, symbolize and provide valuable insight into the impact of the U.S. Empire on formations of race ideologies. The untold narratives of Black–Korean adoptees, when told, illustrate the constant negotiation between being Black, American, and Asian in a country that favors those of white skin color. These adoptees experienced ostracism and rejection from both Korea and America in subtly different forms of racism—demonstrating the

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37 Ida Hart, "The Story of a Korean War Baby," Turning East, September 26, 2021, https://www.caroldussere.com/relationships/the-story-of-a-korean-war-baby/.
38   Hart, "The Story of a Korean War Baby."
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.

dynamics of transnational racialization. Furthermore, such narratives and individuals contribute to Asian American movements and causes; these people are living bridges between two separate and unique communities, unified by marginalized and discriminatory experiences in the U.S. Empire. Black-Korean adoptees can speak on behalf of both groups and facilitate discourse. Black-Korean adoptees have experiences like, yet different from Korean immigrants—the experience of displacement and adjustment to new imposed racialization are shared. On the other hand, Black-Korean adoptees, by virtue of being Black, also experience the struggles of being Black in America. Thus, Black-Koreans link Korean immigrants with their fellow minorities and marginalized communities in America. Not only are such experiences and narratives illuminating, Hart, as a direct product of the U.S. Empire's imperializing projects, is fighting against the structures that produced her.

The Legacy of Binational Military Exchanges

While the number of mixed-race Korean adoptees themselves were few, even more so for Black-Korean adoptees, they experienced a disproportionate amount of racism and oppression. Beyond being a new racial category in the racially homogenous Republic of Korea, these resultant GI babies were ultimately symbolic of asymmetric international relations with the United States Empire. Korea itself occupied a disadvantaged geopolitical position—one that was below America, its savior. With this mindset, Korean immigrants entered a racially triangulated nation; however, it was neither a rude awakening nor difficult adjustment since there had already been almost seventy years of American military presence.

Alongside the immigration of Koreans, there was a national desire to remove Black-Korean children from Korea, living, and breathing results of American neocolonialism. Korea's ethnic nationalism revolving around racial purity encouraged a sentiment of rejection with regards to such children. Not only was the Korean racial ideology a contributor to the transnational adoption industry, but Korea wanted to ship away its GI babies because these babies, in addition to be being of biracial heritage, were living representations of Korean anxieties–they were breathing reminders of Korean subordination to the American military and influences. As evidence of a colonized, subjugated, uneven relationship, Black-Korean children, though few in numbers, saturated the cultural and ideological space in Korea in addition to complicating the racial narratives in America.

In America, religion and patriotism were the tools of persuasion used by adoption agencies in order to encourage the adoption of Korean GI babies. Religion and patriotism, the main facets of Christian Americanism, also entailed engaging with the discourse of colorblindness. Many hopeful white Christians, white Christian Americanists, and white Americans in general viewed colorblindness and racial liberalism as possible solutions to America's Cold War era race-related societal problems while also improving its global image. How-

ever, colorblindness, as employed by adoption agencies, did not function as an anti-racism narrative; rather, it was a tool that perpetuated racism--the solution to racism does not lie in ignoring the presence of color, or race. Likewise, racial liberalism was an idea that was centered on the belief of race being a social construct, rather than rooted in different ethnicities, histories, and biologies. Thus, the logic and reasoning of racial liberalism ignored the systemic and ingrained infrastructures of oppression. Racial liberalism was the buzzword that saturated the racial discourse in the Cold War era; it was harmful and counterproductive, much like colorblindness. According to racial liberalism and colorblindness, there would be a one-size-fits-all solution to racism for all marginalized groups in America. Such Cold War American imaginings and thoughts on race were to be dismantled by the social awakenings of Black and Asian American communities alongside the contributions of Black-Korean adoptees.

The transnational racialization of Black-Korean adoptees represented the complexities of race, ultimately challenging the racial triangulation theory. These adoptees were neither *just* Asian American nor *just* Black American--they were *both*. Their nebulous proximity to Blackness and both Asianness in white America complicated 20th century American notions of race. The concept of racial triangulation is not able to address the unique position of such adoptees.

In addressing the erasure and invisibility of Black-Korean adoptees in the narrative of post-Korean War legacies as well as the waves of Korean immigration to the United States, the infrastructures of racism are ever present. To begin with, there were discriminatory institutional and systematic procedures making it very difficult, even preventing, Black American families from adopting Black-Korean orphans. Moreover, the scarcity of scholarship regarding Black American couples adopting as well as the academic documentation of experiences of mixed-race adoptees indicates the lack of recognition of what mixed-race experiences can provide to understanding the U.S. Empire, as well as how Empire notions of race and its colonizing military projects have resulted in nebulous race relations today. Understanding and researching Black-Korean adoptees within the context of Korean immigration also provides further insight into the general self-perceptions and racial awakenings of the Asian American community through the examination of their experiences and interactions with Black and white Americans.

The legacy of asymmetrical binational military exchanges illuminates the powerful and useful position that mixed-race Americans can occupy in order to further dismantle harmful and inaccurate Empire notions of race. Understanding the aftermath of the Korean War and the U.S. Empire's role in militarily occupying and racially influencing a devastated and divided nation can aid in understanding the presence of Korean immigrants and Black-Koreans in America today. Furthermore, the narratives of Black American families

who desired to adopt Black-Korean children as well as the adoptees themselves enhance the understanding of the contemporary Black Lives Matter movement and Black-Asian solidarity. The struggle to achieve racial equality in the United States is far from over--as demonstrated by the Black Lives Matter movement and rise of anti-Asian sentiments. Perhaps this close examination of Black-Korean adoptees, Black American families, Korean immigrants, and U.S. servicemen illuminates the complexities of race as conceptualized transnationally. The transnational racializations of Black-Korean adoptees in their homeland and their homeland's neocolonizer clearly prove that the racial triangulation theory is lacking and not fully applicable to conceptualize race relations in America and Korea. Listening to the untold historical narratives of Black-Korean adoptees can reveal that the U.S. Empire exported the Black-white racial hierarchy, influencing racial self-perceptions and racial experiences. Ultimately, race relations between white Americans, Black Americans, Korean immigrants, Black-Korean adoptees, and Asian Americans are inherently fluid and nebulous as dictated and negotiated in an effort to dismantle Empire notions of race.

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American Cyanamid and the Fall of OSHA

HIST 307: The Economy of Nature and Nations

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(Class of 2022)

In the 1970s, many of America's largest industrial producers introduced what they called "fetal protection policies," which prohibited fertile women from working jobs that exposed them to toxic levels of chemicals. These policies, which in effect required women to be surgically sterilized if they wanted to keep their jobs, were widespread: an estimated 15% of Fortune 500 companies had adopted one by 1985.[1] The most notorious case was the American Cyanamid chemical company, whose Willow Island, West Virginia facility saw the implementation of an especially stringent fetal protection policy in 1978. Five female Willow Island workers underwent sterilization and others were reassigned to less dangerous, and less lucrative, jobs. At first, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration viewed the policy as inappropriate and illegal, issuing modest sanctions against American Cyanamid. But federal officials overturned the fine, claiming that making employment conditional on sterilization did not violate the Occupational Safety and Health Act. In 1984, the D.C. Circuit, on a unanimous decision authored by Judge Robert Bork, agreed. Although the Supreme Court ruled sterilization policies illegal in 1991, this decision was based on a different theory, that such policies discriminated on the basis of sex and therefore violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. OSHA failed to deliver to the workers the outcome they sought.

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1 Rachel Roth, *Making Women Pay: The Hidden Costs of Fetal Rights* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000),46.

Why was OSHA unable to stop what unions, feminists, and environmentalists alike saw as a grotesque policy? The agency had been created partially in response to the rising risk of workplace chemical exposure and the environmental movement's growing influence. And it was initially granted expansive responsibility to oversee working conditions and intervene on workers' behalf. But through the 1970s and 1980s, OSHA's authority was undermined and its duties circumscribed, by both executive-branch cost-benefit review programs and hostile courts. These assaults helped to keep OSHA from ever becoming the advocate for workers that its proponents hoped it would be. In this way, OSHA's failure reflected the inability of the liberal administrative state to act in the interest of workers against capitalists. But workplace sterilization was just one part of the contemporaneous attack on women's reproductive freedoms. Female welfare recipients faced a great deal of stigma for undermining the male-breadwinner family model, fetal protection also justified new policies in hospitals and the criminal justice system, and the anti-abortion movement was growing. Cases like American Cyanamid also reflected a broader attempt to resubordinate women, often justified in the name of fetal rights.

Concerns about workplace health hazards are as old as the workplace itself. But OSHA owes its existence to the conditions of a particular historical moment. Before the agency existed, it fell to tort claims and the workers' compensation system to remedy the harms caused by unsafe working conditions. And many have argued that, especially after World War II, workers came to privilege the maintenance of labor peace and demands for programs like pensions and insurance over demands for more workplace control.[2] The consequences of this shift were meaningful: while unions of the period were very effective at servicing their members and wielding national political influence, they did not prioritize new organizing or a more radical vision of worker power. As a result, union density stagnated and workers had no vehicle through which to assert claims over the organization of production. When unions did address safety issues, they did it by negotiating for higher wages as a risk premium.[3] And when federal and state administrators attempted to protect workers' health, their programs were severely underfunded and understaffed.[4]

Things changed in the mid-1960s. Workplace injury rates started to increase between 1963 and 1966, driven by, on the one hand, falling corporate profits that drove employers to push workers harder, and on the other, the Vietnam War's industrial mobilization, which created virtually full employment, put more machinery into production, and required more workers in heavy industries that were especially accident-prone.[5] The first factor bears expansion. Unions had negotiated away a great deal of their power: they offered few challenges to managerial prerogative on the shop floor, and they were less willing to strike

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2 Charles Noble, *Liberalism at Work: The Rise and Fall of OSHA* (Pittsburgh: Temple University Press, 1986), 48-50.
3 Ibid., 51.
4 Ibid., 57-59.
5 Ibid., 62-64.

than they had been in the past. Large industrial capitalists, less concerned about the working class's ability to demand power over the workplace, felt safe taking advantage of workers, and the falling rate of profit gave them an incentive to do so. This intensification did enormous harm to workers, both physically and psychologically.[6] And it provoked a militant response from workers, sometimes outside of official union structures.[7] Strikes, especially wildcat strikes, increased dramatically in the late 1960s, and contemporary evidence suggests that they were motivated in large part by issues of workplace health and safety. The most prominent was the campaign by coal miners in West Virginia to win compensation from the state for black lung. [8] These developments greatly increased the salience of workplace safety concerns.

At the same time, a distinct movement was taking shape around issues of chemical exposure. The chemical companies had long downplayed the potential health ramifications of their products. Through the 1950s, for example, the Manufacturing Chemists' Association denied the need for any regulation of air pollution, which they did not concede had any negative effects on health.[9] But by the early 1960s, when Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* sparked a nationwide debate over chemical use, the manufacturers realized that they were under pressure to reform, and responded by advertising the positive benefits of chemicals.[10] Their public relations offensive was unsuccessful: pollution continued to take up space in the popular consciousness and the companies' reputations declined.[11] Lead manufacturers, too, came under scrutiny. Those who advanced these concerns did not focus on the workplace— for example, the lead industry was criticized for the harms done to consumers by paint and gasoline—but they were able to make common cause with the workers' movement. For example, consumer leader Ralph Nader organized a prominent investigation into state regulation of workplace health and safety.[12]

Of course, the labor movement played a central role in pushing for workplace health and safety legislation. The most important figure in this campaign was Tony Mazzocchi, then an organizer with the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers (who would later, as the union's vice president, be the most visible advocate for the women at American Cyanamid). Mazzocchi toured the country, speaking to rank-and-file workers about the dangers posed by chemicals in the workplace, made all the more dangerous by the fact that they often could not be heard, seen, or smelled.[13] The Steelworkers, too, took health and safety seri-

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6 Mike Davis, "Fordism' in Crisis: A Review of Michel Aglietta's 'Régulation et crises: L'expérience des Etats-Unis'," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 2, no. 2 (1978): 237.
7 Ibid., 238.
8 Noble, *Liberalism*, 70.
9 Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 143.
10 Ibid., 147.
11 Ibid., 155-156.
12 Noble, *Liberalism*, 78-79.
13 Markowitz and Rosner, *Deceit*, 157-161.

ously. And although AFL-CIO President George Meany was not especially concerned with the issue, one of his staffers did help organize a federal task force that, in 1965, proposed the establishment of a large, powerful Department of Occupational Health within the Surgeon General's office.[14] This coalition, combined with Richard Nixon's attempt to win over the working class and outflank the Democratic Party, was able to pass the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1970, creating both OSHA and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, which was located inside the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and empowered to conduct scientific research and issue recommendations for OSHA rulemaking efforts.

Ideologically, the new agency occupied a complicated place. In Charles Noble's words, the OSH Act "created a universal and substantive right to safety and health."[15] The law was universal because it covered all workers. More importantly, it was substantive because, rather than simply creating a new formal procedure through which workers and employers could negotiate, it entitled workers to state-established safety standards at all times. And the plain text of the law seemed to indicate that these standards would be stringent. A well-known clause in Section 6B[5] states that OSHA should "set the standard which most adequately assures, to the extent feasible, on the basis of the best available evidence, that no employee will suffer material impairment of health or functional capacity."[16] This is the law's only mention of any kind of feasibility requirement. Throughout the legislative process, industry demanded a much more explicit commitment to taking the costs of regulation into account, but after the law's passage, employers argued in court that "to the extent feasible" was a mandate for cost-benefit analysis. This argument was often successful, and its framing played a major role in the American Cyanamid case. At the same time, the OSH Act was a technocratic measure that relied on the administrative state to intervene on the side of workers. It did not include much in the way of building organic worker power. This was not entirely unreasonable—as discussed above, the union movement's recent history on safety and health issues was notably mixed—but without workers empowered to pressure the state, the agency could not serve its purpose.

In fact, OSHA was never able to carry out its promises. The closest it came was during the Carter administration, when, under Eula Bingham's leadership, the agency introduced vastly more new rules and enforced larger fines than it had under Republican leadership.[17] One of these new rules was the lead standard. The proposed new lead standard—100 micrograms of lead per cubic meter of air, and 60 micrograms of lead per deciliter of a worker's blood—represented a sharp decrease from the previous standard, which had been

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14 Noble, *Liberalism*, 72-74.
15 Ibid., 94.
16 Ibid., 96.
17 Ibid., 188-193.

set in 1957 with the lead industry's approval.[18] (The standard was initially proposed under the Ford administration, but OSHA did not attempt to implement it until 1977.) The new standard coincided with a significant increase in research into the effects of lead poisoning, and had unions' strong backing.[19]

Fetal protection was a prominent focus of the debate around the new lead standard. Women concerned about lead's impact on fetuses played a substantial role in the campaign. They made two arguments. First, they testified that the reproductive harms caused by lead exposure were serious and demanded regulation. Second, though, they argued that this was true for both male and female workers, and singling out women for special protection was pure sexist paternalism.[20] Most of the labor movement, while agreeing with the conclusion that discrimination was unacceptable and the lead standard needed strengthening, formulated the argument differently. Union leaders argued that women as well as racial minorities really were especially susceptible to lead poisoning and that, because these groups made up an increasing proportion of the workforce, they could neither be barred from working nor allowed to suffer the health consequences of lead.[21] The industry disputed the overwhelming evidence that showed lead's effects on sperm and contended that there was no possible way to set standards low enough to protect fertile women from fetal damage.[22] American Cyanamid concurred with this judgment: the company's medical director stated that a workplace that was "safe for everyone" was "totally unachievable without emasculating the chemical industry."[23] Soon after this, American Cyanamid, concerned about the new standard, announced their fetal protection plan.

The correct level for the new standard was an extremely contentious issue. One notable labor feminist argued that the proper blood lead standard was just 30 micrograms per deciliter, while the lead industry's spokesman argued that workers could withstand up to 80 micrograms per deciliter.[24] Labor responded that this was entirely disingenuous: even the lead executives themselves admitted that they did not really believe these levels to be safe, but rather understood them to be the lowest the industry could go while remaining profitable.[25] Ultimately, OSHA decided on a blood standard of 50 micrograms per deciliter and, even more dramatically, an air standard of 50 micrograms per cubic meter, reducing the previous limit by three quarters. But the new standards were not fully enforced.[26] OSHA's persistent understaffing and underfunding have never been overcome. And many attempts

18 Markowitz and Rosner, *Deceit*, 118-119.
19 Ibid., 121-122.
20 Ibid., 123-125.
21 Ibid., 126-127.
22 Ibid., 132.
23 Sara Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 127.
24 Markowitz and Rosner, *Deceit*, 130.
25 Christian Warren, *Brush with Death: A Social History of Lead Poisoning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 249.
26 Markowitz and Rosner, *Deceit*, 133.

to hold companies accountable for workplace lead exposure were stymied by the Reagan administration's total abandonment of the new standard. The position of the new head of OSHA, Thorne Auchter, was that the new lead standard was unenforceable; in fact, Auchter's agency sided with the industry when several companies sued to strike down the standard. The Supreme Court ruled against the companies, but OSHA continued to refuse to enforce the rule.[27]

The story of the lead standard is the story of OSHA in microcosm. While the agency was born out of a combination of fairly radical pro-worker sentiment and a faith in the administrative state to achieve liberal ends, it soon found its capacity greatly diminished. In many ways, OSHA was a victim of broader political-economic forces. The crisis of the 1970s saw a declining rate of profit that led capital to move to capture more of the economic surplus. New assaults on worker power were a symptom of this response to the crisis. At the same time, employers found new political routes to represent their class interests: using organizations like the Business Roundtable, as well as indirectly influencing the courts through the growth of the conservative legal movement, capitalists attempted to fight back against workers' rights. A key motivating factor for this mobilization was workplace health and safety legislation.[28] And finally (and arguably most importantly), Republican administrations beginning with Ford took advantage of the OSH Act's feasibility clause to launch White House cost-benefit review programs that subjected new rules to a stringent economic analysis.[29] The result was that the initial vision of a "universal and substantive right" to workplace safety was sharply limited.

On January 1, 1979, the *Washington Post* reported shocking news from Willow Island, West Virginia. Five female employees of the town's American Cyanamid facility had undergone surgical sterilization in order to continue working in the plant's pigment division, where lead exposure was high, while two others, who had refused the procedure, had been forced to take pay cuts and join the janitorial staff.[30] American Cyanamid had been late to hire women to traditionally male jobs like these ones in the pigment division; when the company had hired them, the new employees had faced serious resistance and harassment from their male coworkers.[31] So it was no surprise that Tony Mazzocchi, the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers (OCAW) official considered a key architect of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, accused the company of "trying to force women out of the workplace" through their new lead policy, which subjected female workers to a "draconian choice" between losing their livelihood and their reproductive capacity.[32]

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27 Warren, *Brush with Death*, 250-251.
28 Noble, *Liberalism*, 100-103.
29 Ibid., 170-174.
30 Bill Richards, "Women Say They Had to Be Sterilized to Hold Jobs," *Washington Post*, Jan. 1, 1979.
31 David L. Kirp, "Fetal Hazards, Gender Justice, and the Justices: The Limits of Equality," W*illiam & Mary Law Review 34* (1992-1993): 113.
32 Richards, "Sterilized."

Cyanamid's response was twofold. The company first argued that it was not its intention for the women to undergo sterilization. The plant's manager claimed that the women's sterilization was a "mystery", and that the company had actually convinced several women not to go through with the procedure.[33] The women disagreed, even naming the company official, Glen Mercer, who had encouraged them to be sterilized.[34] The women's later legal testimony confirmed that Mercer as well as company medical personnel had spoken to the plant's female workers and explained what the surgery consisted of, where workers could get it, and that it was covered by the company's insurance and sick leave policies. Mercer told the women that, if they refused to be sterilized, only seven of the thirty of them could remain employed. Finally, he announced the company's deadline by which they would have to be sterilized if they wanted to keep their jobs.[35]

At the same time, the company argued that the benefits of protecting potential fetuses from chemicals put the company "on the side of the angels."[36] Although, the company said, its workers were exposed to an amount of lead that fell within the new standard, it was necessary to go above and beyond to protect fetuses. But there is some reason to doubt this claim. Contemporaneous tests showed that Willow Island workers' blood lead levels were in violation of the law.[37] Moreover, American Cyanamid had vigorously opposed the new lead standard, and the company had introduced its fetal protection plan in January of 1978, as OSHA was publicly considering adopting the new rule. [38] This reflected the fact that companies throughout the industry feared costly lawsuits if exposed workers gave birth to children with birth defects as a result of lead poisoning.[39] In light of this, American Cyanamid seems to have been attempting to shield itself from one particular type of legal liability while still flouting the chemical exposure standards.

Advocates for workers also echoed the feminist line regarding the new lead standard, protesting that women were not especially likely to transmit lead poisoning to their children. Men could and did pass on the effects of chemical exposure through their sperm, but were not barred from working as a result. OSHA's position at the time was that men and women took on the same reproductive risks, but companies like American Cyanamid continued to argue that there was unique potential for harm involved for women carrying

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33 "Company and Union In Dispute as Women Undergo Sterilization," *New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1979.
34 "4 Women Assert Jobs Were Linked to Sterilization," *New York Times*, Jan. 5, 1979.
35 *Oil, Chemical Atomic Workers v. O.S.H.R.C*, 671 F.2d 643 (D.C. Cir. 1984).
36 Richards, "Sterilized."
37 *Secretary of Labor v. American Cyanamid*, OSHRC Docket no. 79–5762, 1980.
38 Laura E. Oren, "Protection, Patriarchy, and Capitalism: The Politics and Theory of Gender-Specific Regulation in the Workplace," *UCLA Women's Law Journal* 6, no. 2 (1996): 343-349.
39 Caroline Bettinger-Lopez and Susan P. Sturm, "International Union, U.A.W. v. Johnson Controls: History of Litigation Alliances and Mobilization to Challenge Fetal Protection Policies," in *Civil Rights Stories*, ed. Myriam Gilles and Risa Goluboff (Foundation Press, 2007), 8.

the fetus.[40]   The writers of the feminist journal *Off Our Backs* argued that the real purpose of fetal protection had nothing to do with protecting women or their fetuses, but was to "circumvent federal laws protecting workers from excessive exposure to lead."[41]   In this way, the fetal protection policies tested OSHA's ability to fully enforce the new lead standard.

The workers attempted to fight back against the policy. In response to the policies at Willow Island, OCAW formed a coalition with dozens of prominent labor, feminist, and environmental groups, the Coalition for the Reproductive Rights of Workers (CRROW, pronounced "crow").[42]   CRROW set to work, lobbying both OSHA and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to take action against American Cyanamid. The former effort succeeded in October 1979, when OSHA cited American Cyanamid and issued a $10,000 fine, charging that its fetal protection policy constituted a "hazard" to female workers' health because it coerced them into sterilization. As a result of the same investigation, OSHA cited American Cyanamid for violating the lead exposure standard. But it was the intervention against fetal protection that was especially notable: Eula Bingham said that the citation "[broke] new ground," while Tony Mazzocchi called it a "landmark."[43]

To the extent that the citation represented a new type of OSHA enforcement, though, it was also legally vulnerable. The company appealed, and in August 1980, all of the fines against Cyanamid, with the exception of one $1000 charge stemming from improper respirator provision, were dropped.[44]   William E. Brennan, the administrative law judge who heard the challenge to the $10,000 fine, granted summary judgment in favor of American Cyanamid on narrow technical grounds. Brennan (no relation to Associate Justice William J. Brennan) wrote that OSHA had waited too long after the women's sterilizations to issue the fine, and since all the women who the policy would have affected had either been sterilized or changed jobs by the time the agency had investigated, it was no longer the case that anyone was "'required' [as a condition of continued employment] to elect surgical sterilization to comply with the Fetus Protection Policy" (brackets in original). The statute of limitations having run out, Brennan ruled that the fine had been outside of OSHA's authority.[45]

Furthermore, Brennan ruled that even if OSHA had issued the citation on time, they still could not have exercised authority under the OSH Act, which included a clause deferring to other federal agencies when those agencies "exercise statutory authority to prescribe or enforce standards or regulations affecting occupational safety or health." The problem in this case was that the EEOC had in February 1980 issued guidance related to fetal protec-

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40 Philip Shabecoff, "Job Threats to Workers Emerging as Civil Liberties Issue," *New York Times*, Jan. 15, 1979.
41 "Sterile Workplace," *Off Our Backs* 9, no. 11 (1979): 27.
42 Bettinger-Lopez and Sturm, "Johnson Controls", 10.
43 Philip Shabecoff, "U.S., in a New Use of Law, Cites Plant for Fertility Risk," *New York Times*, Oct. 11, 1979.
44 "Pigment Plant Wins Fertility-Risk Case," *New York Times*, Sept. 8, 1980.
45 *Secretary of Labor v. American Cyanamid*, OSHRC Docket no. 79–5762, 1980.

tion, which they had authority to do under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act. This meant, in Brennan's opinion, OSHA's fine was illegitimate. American Cyanamid also argued that they had not violated the OSH Act in the first place; Brennan's opinion evinced some sympathy but did not rule on this.[46] Mazzocchi called the decision "a signal to the rest of the industry to go ahead and exclude women," and OSHA, still under Bingham's leadership, appealed it to the full Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.[47]

While Brennan had not made a judgment on the substance of the case, the full OSHRC panel did. Finally issuing a decision in April 1981 (the commission was facing a severe backlog), the panel sided with Cyanamid. The company argued that fetal protection did not constitute a "hazard" that violated the OSH Act, because the women were sterilized "outside the workplace by physicians not associated with the employer," meaning that the sterilization could not be treated as an occupational injury. Commissioners Timothy Cleary and Frank Barnako, appointed respectively by Nixon and Ford, agreed. "An employee's decision to undergo sterilization in order to gain or retain employment," they wrote, "grows out of economic and social factors which operate primarily outside the workplace. The employer neither controls nor creates these factors as he creates or controls work processes and materials." Sterilization could not be a "hazard" both because it literally did not take place at work and because, more abstractly, a woman could only come to the decision to undergo the procedure based on her particular economic choices. Cleary and Barnako were not sympathetic to CRROW's argument that it was precisely the employer's control over workers' livelihoods that gave it the ability to coerce them into being sterilized. Commissioner Bertram Cottine, a Carter appointee, wrote a fierce dissent, in which he argued that sterilization demanded by an employer did constitute a loss of "functional capacity" and therefore an occupational hazard over which OSHA had authority.[48]

By 1981, the Reagan administration was in, Eula Bingham was out, and OSHA was no longer OCAW's or CRROW's ally. But the union appealed the case once again, taking it to the D.C. Circuit, where it was heard in 1983. The panel included two leading right-wing legal minds, Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia, as well as David W. Williams, a Nixon appointee from California. Perhaps not surprisingly, the court issued yet another ruling in favor of the company. In his opinion for the court, Bork wrote that the company "found… that it could not reduce ambient lead levels in one of its departments sufficiently to eliminate the risk of serious harm to fetuses."[49] More specifically, he argued that it was "economically infeasible" to bring lead levels down appropriately, leaving sterilization the only safe and legal option. But the thrust of his opinion was the same as the OSHRC's: he argued that sterilization could not have constituted a "hazard" because it took place outside of the work-

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46 Ibid.
47 Philip Shabecoff, "U.S. Appeals Ruling on Women in Hazardous Jobs," *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 1980.
48 *Secretary of Labor v. American Cyanamid*, OSHRC Docket no. 79–5762, 1981.
49 *Oil, Chemical Atomic Workers v. O.S.H.R.C*, 671 F.2d 643 (D.C. Cir. 1984).

place and "[did] not affect employees while they [were] engaged in work or work-related activities."[50] In this way, Bork prevented the "emasculation of the chemical industry."

The D.C. Circuit decision was the final nail in the coffin of the strategy to end workplace fetal protection through OSHA. If policies like American Cyanamid's did not violate the OSH Act, the agency obviously could not punish companies for adopting them. The movement turned to anti-discrimination law instead, and in 1991 the Supreme Court, including now-Justice Scalia, ruled that making employment for women conditional on sterilization constituted illegal sex discrimination.[51] But this was not quite the same as what the workers and CRROW originally sought through OSHA. The initial OSHA citation was intended to attack fetal protection policies in the workplace, but also to force companies to follow the chemical exposure standards more closely: OSHA's goal was a universally safe workplace, not an equally unsafe one. At least one legal analyst argued at the time that the Cyanamid decision would make it more difficult for the agency, now unable to go after threats to workers' health outside of a narrow band of physical harms within the workplace, to do its job appropriately.[52] Today, though, the decision seems more effect than cause, a symptom of OSHA's dismantling and decline.

The failure of workers' attempts to overturn fetal protection policies did not only reflect OSHA's failure to live up to its initial mission. These cases took place at a key moment for female workers in particular. As union officials pointed out during the hearings on the new lead standard, women had been entering the formal labor market in large numbers.[53] This was a major shift in both production and social reproduction. The French economist Michel Aglietta wrote in 1976 that the increasing diversity of the formal workforce demonstrated that America's emerging post-Fordist economy would do away completely with labor market segmentation by race and gender.[54] Any American today can testify that Aglietta was incorrect, but his prediction speaks to the enormity of the social shift he was observing.

At around the same time, the feminist theorist Silvia Federici observed that, although many women still spent a great deal of time on unwaged domestic work, increasing numbers were getting jobs as part of a "revolt against housework" with profoundly destabilizing effects for the existing social system.[55] For Federici, women like those employed at American Cyanamid were showing a distinctly contemporary set of priorities: they would rather

50 Ibid.

51 Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn,* 135.

52 Lewis, Richard, "OCAW v. American Cyanamid: The Shrinking of the Occupational Safety and Health Act," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 133 (1985): 1179-1182.

53 Markowitz and Rosner, Deceit, 126.

54 Davis, "Fordism' in Crisis," 246.

55 Silvia Federici, "The Restructuring of Housework and Reproduction in the United States in the 1970s," 1980, in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework Reproduction and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland: PM Press, 2013), 43.

have kept their jobs than have children and be homemakers.[56] This analysis seems flawed. Most of the women at the Willow Island plant—all of whom had already taken employment in heavy industry—chose not to undergo sterilization, some of those who did already had husbands and children, and, most obviously, all of the women who were sterilized sued on the basis that their giving up their reproductive capacity constituted an assault on their workplace safety. These women argued that they should never have been subjected to the choice in the first place.[57]

A different, though related, way of thinking about the case might start from the Willow Island plant manager's claim that management did not believe any women would actually undergo the procedure, even though they were told that if they did not, fewer than a quarter of them could remain employed. As discussed above, this does not seem to have been an entirely truthful defense. But if the company really did mean to get women out of the plant, they would have been acting on an anxiety that was common at the time. The Fordist "family wage" had served as a form of social control, fostering a dominant family structure that featured a male breadwinner as the head of household. By the 1970s, as this structure seemed to be fading, neoliberals were making common cause with social conservatives to cut welfare programs that risked allowing single women to live independent lives.[58] It is easy to read the American Cyanamid case, in which the company's supporters used the rhetoric of both paternalism and anti-regulatory neoliberalism to make it more difficult for women to work, through this framework.

The parallel between female welfare recipients and female workers is especially strong because the former, too, sometimes were pressured to undergo sterilization. The New York Wages for Housework Committee, led by Silvia Federici, warned apocalyptically that the United States was attempting to "enforce compulsory sterilization on all those who are wageless but refuse to starve."[59] Industrial workers were of course not wageless, but the Wages for Housework movement also argued that the state wanted to sterilize women on welfare in order to increase the proportion of families led by working men—in other words, to restore the family wage. I am not suggesting that there was a grand conspiracy to push women back into the home. But political and economic elites did push for a return to the Fordist family structure, and the period's feminist and labor movements both worried about the extent to which assaults on reproductive freedom functioned as attempts to make wom-

56 Ibid., 47.
57 When Judge Bork was nominated to the Supreme Court, he echoed Federici's judgment that the women who had been sterilized had simply not wanted children. One of the case's plaintiffs wrote to Washington, appalled. (Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn*, 128.)
58 Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2017). See esp. Chap. 2, "The Moral Crisis of Inflation: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and the Demise of the Family Wage."
59 New York Wages for Housework Committee, "Forced Sterilization Pamphlet," n.d. (1970s), *MayDay Rooms*, https://maydayrooms.omeka.net/items/show/3183.

en dependent on working men. It is also obvious that there was a great deal of sexism at play during the American Cyanamid case: in the refusal to take seriously the scientific evidence of lead poisoning's effects on men, in the gendered harassment that the female workers reported receiving,[60] and in the medical director's judgment that making the plant safe would "emasculate" the industry. This is evidence to support Tony Mazzocchi's initial claim that the company was trying to "force women out of the workplace."

At the same time, concerns about fetal safety came to the fore outside of the labor market and the welfare system. These were articulated the most clearly in hospitals. In the 1970s and '80s, doctors requested court orders to perform caesarean sections and blood transfusions over their pregnant patients' refusal. It is not at all clear how often these cases took place, because they were rarely reported on or appealed in court, but there is some anecdotal reason to think that they were significantly more common than the public record shows.[61] These surgical procedures were overwhelmingly approved by courts, on the basis that the state, as well as the pregnant woman, was obligated to make a decision to the benefit of the fetus's health.[62] Overall, C-sections rose dramatically, and one of the reasons was the increasing attention paid to fetal pain by the medical establishment.[63] Courts and doctors often treated women who would refuse treatment as either irrational or callous to expose their unborn children to health risks. This same logic underwrote workplace policies, as companies like American Cyanamid implied that their fertile female workers were behaving selfishly if they did not submit to the fetal protection plan.[64]

In addition to forcing pregnant women to submit to medical procedures against their will, courts also frequently ruled against pregnant women who faced criminal charges for drug and alcohol use beginning in the late 1970s. These cases included such disparate charges as murder, assault, child abuse, and drug trafficking.[65] And most obviously, the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 catalyzed a massive backlash against abortion that was able to place significant restrictions on women's reproductive freedoms.[66] All of these changes had to do with fetal protection in the workplace: besides the structural political-economic forces that were quickly changing the way the state regulated gender and labor, the increasing prominence of the discourse of fetal rights had major policy effects. Workplace fetal protection, though, reveals something larger about the entire phenomenon. Companies like American Cyanamid were both constraining the choices of their female workers and making sure that they could continue to maximize profits while exposing all their workers to toxic chemicals.

60 Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn*, 126.
61 Roth, *Making Women* Pay, 94-97.
62 Ibid., 104-105.
63 Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn*, 116.
64 Ibid., 121.
65 Ibid., 139; Roth, *Making Women Pay*, 145-146.
66 Judith A. Scott, "Keeping Women in Their Place: Exclusionary Policies and Reproduction," in D*ouble Exposure: Women's Health Hazards on the Job and at Home,* ed. Wendy Chavkin (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984).

We would do well to remember that there was also an economic dimension to the other fetal protection policies, which most often targeted poor and working-class women.

The American Cyanamid case is an important episode in the capitalist crisis of the 1970s and the transition to neoliberal governance. Although it directly affected a relatively small group of workers, it holds insights into the evolution of both the administrative state and the gendered division of labor in the United States. More specifically, it can help us chart the failure of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. While OSHA's foundation may have provided reason for optimism in the cause of liberal workplace reform, American Cyanamid showed the limitations of a model of worker empowerment that relied on benevolent state intervention. OSHA promised workers that their health and safety would be protected, but from its very foundation, these efforts were undermined by other organs of the state. Congress never funded or staffed the agency appropriately. The conservative administrations of Ford and Reagan launched external cost-benefit review programs that stripped it of much of its power to impose regulations. And the courts read its mandate narrowly. Equally importantly, capitalists resisted the agency, stoking political opposition and refusing to let it carry out its duties. Without a strong independent labor movement, the state was not a reliable or effective ally to workers. Especially when working-class women faced numerous incursions on their reproductive rights, OSHA was ill-equipped to resist all of these pressures.

In the legal battle between OCAW, OSHA, and American Cyanamid, the agency was denied authority in two ways. First, the OSH Act had barely mentioned feasibility, and it had not explicitly mentioned economic efficiency at all. Nevertheless, industry, the executive branch, and the courts all determined that the law was more reasonably interpreted to mean that "no employee will suffer material impairment" unless preventing it was costly for their employer. Thus, chemical companies like American Cyanamid could avoid following the contentious new lead standard. Precisely this phenomenon was described by Karl Marx, who explained that English factory legislation required 500 cubic feet of breathing space per person in the name of safe ventilation. But because no small firms would have been able to comply with this rule, it was functionally abandoned. "The sanitary officers, the industrial inquiry commissioners, the factory inspectors, all harp, over and over again, upon the necessity for those 500 cubic feet, and upon the impossibility of wringing them out of capital," Marx wrote. "They thus, in fact, declare that consumption and other lung diseases among the workpeople are necessary conditions to the existence of capital."[67] When the needs of the workers conflicted with capitalist profits, the latter won out, becoming the established law in the process. Second, Judge Bork tendentiously redefined a workplace "hazard" by denying that company-mandated sterilization could constitute one if it was performed outside of work hours by a doctor not affiliated with the employer. Again, the formal rights of the

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67 Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume One*, Marx/Engels Internet Archive, 1867, 1995, 1999, Chapter 15, Section 9.

workers under the OSH Act were less important than their subordination as both workers and women. The capitalist's economic power took precedence.

Eventually, the Supreme Court struck down workplace fetal protection policies. But the turn from workers' rights to antidiscrimination on the way to the 1991 *Johnson Controls* decision left workers clinging to an extremely narrow set of protections. While employers could no longer subject workers to sterilization as a condition of employment—a meaningful victory for women's attempts to gain greater independence by joining the formal workforce—the idea of enforcing the lead standards properly was more or less abandoned. The perverse effect is that women won the right to perform hazardous jobs, with the potentially horrific consequences for their health that Tony Mazzocchi warned of when he was campaigning for OSHA's establishment. They won an expanded formal right against discrimination, as long as they could practice it without coming into conflict with the boss's right to profit. But it would not be fair to blame the workers. The OSHA strategy relied on state institutions to protect workers' interests, rather than facilitating democratic control of the workplace; when the state instead chose to protect capitalists and affirm new methods of control over women's economic and personal choices, workers had no recourse.

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Two Coups in Haiti:
Investigating the Divergent Outcomes of the 1991 Coups against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide

GOVT 302: Latin American Politics

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(Class of 2022)

When the liberation theology-preaching, leftist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected to the Haitian presidency in 1990, it was something of a departure from previous Haitian history. The Haitian military has, since the country's successful revolution and independence from France, constituted a "military-ruling elite" which has been the country's dominant domestic political actor.[1] Aristide, however, did not come to power with the support of the military. Instead, his election was the culmination of a popular movement against the dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who *had* ruled with the support of the military. Though Duvalier had been ousted, Aristide did not remain in power for long. A military coup came in September 1991 which removed Aristide from the presidency and replaced him with a governing junta. Oddly, however, the military led this coup only after it crushed an earlier one, which had attempted to prevent Aristide from even acceding to the presidency in January 1991. Herein lies the historical puzzle this paper seeks to address: why did the Haitian military defend Aristide's rise in January, only to overthrow him mere months later? The two coups of 1991 obscure the military's interests and raise questions about the body's relationship with Haitian democratic reforms. Given that the military remains a dominant political actor in present-day Haiti, it is important to disentangle the events of 1991 into a coherent historical narrative, in order to fully understand Haiti's past,

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1 Jean-Claude Gerlus, "Revolution and Nation-State Formation: The Economic Origins of the Haitian Military," *Caribbean Studies* 29, no. 2 (1996): 240, JSTOR.

present, and future. This paper finds that the military was wary of Aristide from the beginning, but that domestic financial and social support for an action against Aristide, as well as confident and committed foreign support for Aristide's removal from power, neither of which existed in January, were necessary to embolden the military into executing a coup.

First, it will be productive to examine Aristide and his electoral coalition. Prior to his entry into politics, Aristide had been a Catholic priest with strong connections to the liberation theology-based popular movement against the Duvalierist regime. He had been educated by and then worked with the Catholic Church in Haiti for essentially his entire life, studying in a seminary program and traveling abroad at the behest of the Church to complete his education.[2] By his own recollection, he began preaching "liberation theology" in 1979, and he argues that he played only a small part in the religious and political movement that grew up around the country during the waning years of the Duvalierist regime. This movement grew around individual Catholic cliques called "small church communities or *ti legliz*." [3] Aristide and the many other Haitians involved in this popular movement were victims and opponents of the Duvalier government, and they demanded not only the dismantling of the ruling Duvalier dynasty—Jean-Claude had been groomed for power by his father, President François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, and the family had wielded dictatorial power since 1957—but general socioeconomic justice. The movement's essential platform included subjects as diverse as the redistribution of property to the basic human rights denied to them by the abusive incumbent government.[4] Aristide himself felt as though it was his religious duty to defend "the poor, the hungry and the naked" of Haiti, and his apparently genuine compassion for the underprivileged sections of Haiti's population eventually won him an extraordinary degree of popularity among the members of the anti-Duvalierist movement, which would eventually be coalesced into a pro-Aristide political party called the Lavalas Political Organization (LPO)—*lavalas* meaning "flood," a name used to refer to the *ti legliz*-based popular movement.[5]

Popular pressure forced Jean-Claude Duvalier to resign from the Haitian presidency and flee the country in 1986, and the state was eventually compelled to host free elections in 1990.[6] The LPO and Aristide won these elections, including the presidential contest which brought Aristide to power. Though Aristide and his supporters were incontestably popular with Haiti's poor, the LPO's redistributive economic program "threatened the economic in-

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2 Geoffrey Kain, "Spirit Confronts the Four-Headed Monster: Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Mistik-Infused Flood-Rise in Duvalierist Haiti," *Humanities* 9, no. 4 (December 2020): 149, https://doi.org/10.3390/h9040144.

3 Jean-Bertrand Aristide, "'One Step at a Time': An Interview with Jean-Bertrand Aristide (Former President of Haiti)," interview by Peter Hallward, *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies* 2, no. 1, September 11, 2007, transcript, 108-109, https://doi.org/10.1080/18186870701384301.

4 Alex Dupuy, *The Prophet and Power: Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the International Community, and Haiti* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 63, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wesleyan/detail.action?docID=1351119.

5 Celucien L. Joseph, "Toward a Politico-Theology of Relationality: Justice as Solidarity and the Poor in Aristide's Theological Imagination," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 30, no. 2 (2014): 271, Project MUSE.

6 Fran Quigley, *How Human Rights Can Build Haiti: Activists, Lawyers, and the Grassroots Campaign* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 145, ProQuest.

terests of Haitian elites."[7]   Moreover, much of the country's administrative and military personnel remained committed to violent authoritarianism, and many former members of the Duvalierist governments and the Tonton Macoute, the Duvalierist paramilitary which had brutally beaten back opposition to the Duvaliers during their years in power, remained hostile to the LPO and Aristide. Aristide's ascension made a number of foreign states profoundly uncomfortable, as well: the government of Haiti's neighbor, the Dominican Republic, treated Aristide with a great deal of suspicion, and Aristide's association with left-wing politics and liberation theology made both the Catholic Church hierarchy and many international powers—most consequentially, the United States—uneasy.[8]   Although Aristide denied that he was a political Marxist, he was nonetheless perceived as a Marxist by many of his enemies, both at home and abroad.[9]   The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the international Communist Bloc left the aspiring Aristide with few potential international allies, and none that could compete with the influence of the United States.

Domestic fears of Aristide's accession came to a head in early January 1991 when, in an effort to prevent Aristide from taking office, the neo-Duvalierist Roger Lafontant attempted to seize Haiti's National Palace alongside a number of defectors from the Haitian military.[10]   Lafontant had served as Minister of the Interior under the younger Duvalier, and had been the *de facto* leader of the Macoute.[11]   Lafontant's attempted seizure of power was feeble, and boasted little support outside of the Macoute. Though Lafontant claimed to be acting on behalf of the Haitian armed forces, his small gang was quickly defeated both by the military and by mobs of civilian Aristide supporters, both peaceful and violent.[12]   His ineffectual bid to undemocratically assume the presidency has become overshadowed in historical accounts by the later, successful coup which took place in September. Lafontant's coup has been overlooked by many academics working on Haitian politics (perhaps understandably, given its failure), which is why this paper is using a number of primary sources to describe the coup's events. Some academic sources omit mention of the coup entirely, while others deal with it only in passing, treating it as little more than a forgettable step down the path to the September coup: in an egregious example, Suresh Naidu, James Robinson, and Lauren Young's article on the elite networks which backed the September 1991 coup and a 2004 coup against Aristide's second government ignores the January 1991 coup entirely,

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7 Suresh Naidu, James A. Robinson, and Lauren E. Young, "Social Origins of Dictatorships: Elite Networks and Political Transitions in Haiti," *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 3 (2021): 902, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000289; Dupuy, The Prophet, 64.
8 David Malone, *Decision-Making in the UN Security Council: The Case of Haiti, 1990–1997* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998), 60; Joseph, "Toward a Politico-Theology," 278-279.
9 Kain, "Spirit," 150.
10 Lee Hockstader, "Haitian Army Crushes Coup by Duvalierist; 37 are Killed," *The Washington Post*, January 8, 1991, ProQuest; "Troops Put Down Haiti Coup Bid Caribbean: Soldiers Storm the National Palace and Arrest Roger Lafontant. At Least 34 People are Killed," *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1991, ProQuest.
11 "Leader of Haitian Coup Attempt Shunned by his Kin in Montreal," *The Toronto Star*, January 8, 1991, Nexis Uni.
12 Hockstader, "Haitian Army."

explicitly referring to the September 1991 event as "the first coup" against Aristide.[13] Oddly, even Aristide appears to treat the January 1991 coup dismissively, as he vaguely attributes the action to a cadre of "opponents" who he believes to have been likewise responsible for the September 1991 coup.[14] Yet the same parties were not responsible for the two coups: while the military enacted the September takeover, it violently suppressed Lafontant's January attempt.

The September coup is more thoroughly covered by academics. In late September, 1991, the military-led coup "[seized] a number of key State installations" before forcing Aristide out of office.[15] The coup did not take Aristide completely by surprise: two days prior to the coup, he had made a speech to his supporters predicting the coup and calling on them to respond to military and Macoute violence; this appeal to his supporters reflected his inability to control the military or pursue an institutional action against them, despite his foreknowledge of the coup.[16] Though the military had remained mostly loyal to Aristide during the January 1991 coup and had acted against disloyal soldiers who supported Lafontant, it acted decisively against Aristide in September. How, then, can the dramatically different roles of the military in these cases be accounted for?

Two related factors explain this discrepancy: first, Aristide's alienation of the Haitian military and second, the turn of international powers, particularly the United States, against the LPO government. To address the former, Aristide pursued a number of policies during his time in office that attacked the military's interests. Immediately after becoming president, Aristide ruffled feathers by dismissing many of the military's highest-ranking leaders, as well as launching judicial investigations into some of the military and police's abuses during the Duvalier years.[17] Although academic Peter Hallward and Aristide himself argue that the reforms Aristide pursued while in office were moderate and did not harshly target the military, most historians and political scientists who have written about Aristide's first presidency contend that these reforms were decisive in turning the military further away from Aristide.[18] David Malone estimates that Aristide's reforms discomfited the military's junior officers, who would go on to be the initiators of the September coup.[19] Others draw attention to the sometimes violent rhetoric that Aristide directed against the military in speeches. For example, Alex Dupuy cites a speech Aristide made only a few days before the coup as an extreme case, in which Aristide seemed to openly call for vigilante action against disloyal

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13 Naidu, Robinson, and Young, "Social Origins of Dictatorships," 902.
14 Aristide, interview, 110.
15 Malone, *Decision-Making*, 61.
16 Alex Dupuy, "Indefensible: On Aristide, Violence, and Democracy," *Small Axe* 13, no. 3 (November 2009): 168, Project MUSE.
17 Peter Hallward, *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment* (London: Verso, 2007), 33.
18 Aristide, interview, 111.
19 Malone, *Decision-Making*, 58-59.

military personnel.[20] Aristide and his supporters also targeted those with connections to the Tonton Macoute. The Macoute had been formally disbanded after the overthrow of Jean-Claude Duvalier's government in 1986, though many Macoutists remained in Haiti by 1991 and its former leader Lafontant had called attention to the paramilitary's veterans when he launched his attempted coup in January.[21] Macoutists were the victims of a great deal of popular violence in 1991 following the Lafontant action, with Lafontant himself having to be "rescued…from the hands of a mob intent on killing him, and setting fire to his remains" just as dozens of former paramilitary soldiers were being killed or robbed by Aristide's supporters.[22] The Haitian military, witnessing the violence Macoutists were subjected to, undoubtedly feared the implicit threat that the violence of the LPO's carried for soldiers' personal safety.Given the Aristide government's investigation into military abuses, the longer the military continued to allow the LPO's grip on power, the more popular anger against the armed forces threatened to grow.

By September 1991, the Haitian military came to believe that Aristide represented too critical a threat to their own interests. Though they had been wary of him before he took power, it was not until after he acceded to the presidency—and after the January coup attempt—that the military came to view cooperation with him as unworkable. At first, the military likely saw Aristide as potentially susceptible to corruption, which the force could have employed against a pliant leader in order to retain the vaulted position in Haitian governance that it so enjoyed. The armed forces were disillusioned, however, by Aristide's insistence on pursuing genuine reform and his clear intention to take power away from the military and its commanders.[23] The military was also offered more significant support for a destabilizing action in September than it had been in January. There had been broad, cross-class public backing of the LPO and Aristide leading into 1991, which left the January 1991 putschists starved of any popular or financial weight, and ensured that the military would have felt isolated had it actually joined the attempted coup.[24] During his time in office, however, Aristide often publicly "chastised and threatened" the middle and upper classes of Haiti, and his leftist economic reforms annoyed these crucial segments of Haitian society.[25] Where the military had seen little public appetite for a coup in January 1991, by September they saw "wealthy Haitians offer[ing] as much as $5,000 apiece to soldiers and police officers for their participation in the coup."[26] The military had been aware in January 1991 that it would have "acted alone" if it intervened in favor of Lafontant's coup, but by September the

20 Dupuy, *The Prophet*, 123.
21 Thomas M. Leonard, "Tonton Macoutes," in *Latin American History and Culture: Encyclopedia of Modern Latin America (*1900 to the Present) (Boston, MA: Facts on File, 2017), Credo Reference.
22 Barbara Kohl, "Haiti: Summary of Developments on Attempted Coup," *Latin America Digital Beat*, January 8, 1991, University of New Mexico Digital Repository.
23 Hallward, *Damming the Flood*, 33; Malone, *Decision-Making*, 59.
24 Dupuy, "Indefensible," 162.
25 Dupuy, *The Prophet*, 102; Hallward, *Damming the Flood*, 33-34.
26 Naidu, Robinson, and Young, "Social Origins of Dictatorships," 902.

military felt empowered to act thanks to Aristide's alienation of wealthy Haitians and the shrinking of his own financial and popular base.[27]

Also playing a critical role in the success of the September 1991 coup was the attitude of the United States, which had meaningfully shifted since the failed January 1991 action. Though from the beginning U.S. diplomats and leaders had regarded Aristide as a "radical firebrand" and viewed him with suspicion, international observers widely agreed that the 1990 Haitian presidential election had been fairly conducted and legitimate.[28] This ensured that the administration of U.S. President George H. W. Bush felt obligated not to intervene in Aristide's ascension in order to save international face, though they were always opposed to him wielding power; indeed, they actually attempted to privately convince Aristide to simply decline the presidency and instead allow the distant second-place finisher in the election to take office in his stead.[29] Despite this opposition, the U.S. ambassador to Haiti actually played a crucial role in convincing the Haitian military to suppress Lafontant's coup, as the Americans were afraid of appearing to be an opponent of democracy in Haiti.[30] During the course of Aristide's presidency, however, his repeated failure to disavow the violent actions of some of his supporters—in particular, the infamous killing of some Lafontant loyalists by forcing a burning tire around their necks, in an act called "necklacing" or "*Père Lebrun*"—emboldened the United States, which publicly disapproved of this "mob violence."[31] The United States' more confident opposition to Aristide was a significant factor pushing through the success of the coup, and Hallward convincingly argues that the military "would [not] have so much as contemplated overthrowing Aristide without US approval and support."[32] A number of reporters have found "covert US support" for the military's coup, and regardless of the United States' direct level of involvement, it is clear that it was no longer making any effort to preserve Aristide and the results of Haiti's 1990 election.[33] After the coup, the United States publicly called for the establishment of a new democratic regime, but the U.S. Secretary of State openly suggested that it would be "more prudent" to leave Aristide in his deposed condition, and to move past him with a less radical leader for Haiti.[34]

Although the military and the United States had independent reasons for opposing Aristide, their mutual opposition to the January coup and shared support for the September coup were inextricably linked. The military acted, in both cases, in accordance with American wishes and after consultation with American representatives. The respective responsibil-

27 Dupuy, *The Prophet*, 127.
28 Amy Wilentz, "Foreword," in *The Parish of the Poor: Writings from Haiti, by Jean-Bertrand Aristide* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), xiii; Erica James, *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 27, JSTOR.
29 Hallward, *Damming the Flood*, 37.
30 Dupuy, *The Prophet*, 103.
31 Dupuy, "Indefensible," 167; Dupuy, *The Prophet*, 103.
32 Hallward, *Damming the Flood*, 40-41.
33 Ibid, 40.
34 Malone, *Decision-Making*, 62.

ities of the Haitian military (and Haitian economic elites) and the United States have become the subject of a contentious academic debate. One group of scholars, including Hallward, Nick Nesbitt, and Valerie Kaussen, are especially critical of the United States' intervention in Haiti, attributing the success of the September 1991 coup primarily to American action.[35] Other writers, however, including Dupuy and Jean–Germain Gros, attribute more of the responsibility to domestic Haitian actors, and directly criticize Aristide's first presidency for unnecessarily antagonizing the Haitian military and allied social elites. Much of the debate centers around interpretations of Aristide himself: Gros, for example, dramatically alleges that "Hallward seems to have concluded from the beginning that Aristide was a saint with minor imperfections, and opposition to Aristide the Devil Incarnate."[36]

The differing viewpoints on culpability for the September 1991 coup can, however, be reconciled; as this paper has argued, no single actor, foreign or domestic, was solely responsible for the September 1991 coup. The Haitian military, the Haitian upper classes, and the United States were all crucial to the putsch's success, and it is pointless to attempt to disentangle the exact share of the responsibility between each involved actor. It is difficult to determine whether Aristide might have avoided the September 1991 coup had he pursued a different path while in office, though it is worth observing that both Haitian military and American government were essentially hostile to him from the beginning.[37] While Aristide did, in some respect, provoke the military by targeting it for reforms his own vulnerability to the military exposes an obvious rationale for the pursuit of these reforms. In all, authors on both sides of this debate should treat the September 1991 coup with a greater deal of nuance, and accept that it is neither necessary to assign predominant responsibility for the coup to a single party, nor to neatly conclude whether Aristide himself was perfectly virtuous and deft.

35 Dupuy, "Indefensible," 167.
36 Jean-Germain Gros, review of *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment*, by Peter Hallward, *Journal of Haitian Studies* 14, no. 1, 2008.
37 Malone, *Decision-Making*, 61; Dupuy, *The Prophet*, 123.

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Re-presenting History in Popular Indian Cinema:

An Analysis of *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) and *Padmaavat* (2018)

FILM 329: Bollywood and Beyond - Introduction to Indian Cinema

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Re-presenting history on film has often been a site of ideological struggle in popular Indian cinema. History and cinema are both "institutions" and "forms of narration," in which a nation seeks to either glorify its past or shed light on its present through a careful selection of historical events.[1] This is particularly the case in India, where historical accuracy in filmmaking is not as prioritized due to ancient traditions of historiography and storytelling in which history is "not separable from myth, legend, and drama."[2]

This indifference is a legacy of Sanskrit literary traditions, where the word for 'history,' *itihāsa*, referred to any account of the past regardless of its factuality.[3] For ancient Sanskrit writers, the purpose of referring to the past was to relate it to the goals of present traditions in whichever way was most effective.[4] As such, historical representation in Indian film acts as an amalgamation of mythology, legend, and folklore. Indian historical films are not focused on depicting truth, but instead interested in providing interpretations of the past to create value in the present, whether that is sheer entertainment, socio-political commentary, or both. Though they are an invitation to escape to a world of high-production-value,

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1 Sumita S. Chakravarty, "The Recuperation of History and Memory," in *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema: 1947-1987* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1993), pp. 157-173, 158.
2 Ibid., 160.
3 Ibid., 162.
4 Ibid.

sweeping melodrama, and stylistic excess, the historical film tells us that it is not real history, but merely a version of it. Given that it is a conscious choice to selectively include, exclude, or alter historical accounts, the goal of approaching an Indian historical film is then not to scrutinize fact versus fiction – but to ask why a film engages Indian history in the first place and how it re-presents it in a cinematic medium.

For many storytellers, the Indian historical film becomes a meditation on contemporary socio-political contexts. As critic Bilal Qureshi writes, "In a country as historically contentious as India is today, a period film cannot help but inflame and inform modern political debates."[5] To explore how Bombay cinema responds to – and is simultaneously informed by – its socio-political backdrop, I will use the films *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) and *Padmaavat* (2018) to anchor my discussion. Both films are magnanimous successes of their respective eras, with legendary production value, enormous star power, and lasting cultural legacy– all while being some of the most expensive films produced in South Asia.

This paper will first examine *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), observing the film through the lens of rising authoritarianism in the 1960s and the changing attitudes towards the citizens' place in the nation-state. It will then focus on *Padmaavat* (2018), analyzing the film in light of contemporary Hindutva politics and the growing Hindu-Muslim divide.

Mughal-e-Azam (1960)

K. Asif's *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) is celebrated as a landmark of Indian filmmaking. Even today, it continues to remain the highest-grossing Indian film of all time when adjusted for inflation. Although predominantly black-and-white, the ending three reels of *Mughal-e-Azam* were filmed in color, dazzling viewers across the country in an era of early color technology.[6] Set in the lavish 16th-century Mughal courts, the film narrates the ill-fated romance between royal prince Salim and Anarkali, an ordinary court dancer, and the family drama that ensues between Salim and his father, Akbar, because of it.

Asif was determined to put his own spin on the iconic love story of Salim and Anarkali: between a Mughal prince who historically had eighteen wives and a woman whose historical presence continues to be disputed.[7] Whatever the actual reasons may have been to motivate Prince Salim to rebel against his father, *Mughal-e-Azam* makes Salim's love for Anarkali the cause of it.[8] In doing so, the central conflict of the film becomes one between love and duty– between private passion and public responsibility, which centers on

5 Bilal Qureshi, "The War for Nostalgia: Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Padmaavat*," *Film Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2018): pp. 46-51, https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2018.71.4.46, 50.
6 Ramna Walia, "Techno-Nostalgia: Colorization of K. Asif's *Mughal-e-Azam*," *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies* 4, no. 2 (2013): pp. 137-158, https://doi.org/10.1177/0974927613503233, 137.
7 Ibid., 137.
8 Chakravarty, "The Recuperation of History and Memory," 171.

the relationship between Emperor Akbar and Prince Salim.

While Mughal-e-Azam can be, and was, enjoyed for its sheer spectacle and entertainment alone, what arguably propelled Asif's film to lasting commercial and cultural acclaim was how it remarkably spoke to its time. In order to understand Asif's portrayal of characters – primarily Akbar and Salim – and what they came to thematically symbolize, it is important to understand the socio-political context of 1960's India. At the time of the film's production and release, India was very much still a young nation concerned with reshaping a new vision for itself post-independence. What forms of government will India embrace? What attitudes towards its citizens would it subscribe to? These were some of the questions that framed the backdrop of *Mughal-e-Azam*.

Although Asif's Akbar deviates from historical legend in having Anarkali live through his moral redemption, it ingeniously reflects the political environment of 1960's India. The Nehruvian-era state was seen as the moral guardian of the country, infantilizing its citizens, and portrayed itself as a larger benefactor that took the reins and provided comfort to society. This idea of governance – of the country being the benefactor over the self – is powerfully encapsulated through the character of Akbar, who has a selfless allegiance to the Mughal nation-state.

With Akbar, we see a particular form of governance: a firm authoritarian ruler with an unwavering duty to the nation no matter the cost. This is symbolized through Akbar's scales of justice, where he, as the Mughal Emperor, is seen as the great, impartial guardian who is bound by duty and honor to propagate justice throughout his realm. He gives his utmost allegiance to his country, while demanding for the same allegiance in return– whether it is his subjects, his wife, and even his son, whom he is willing to be sentenced to death in the name of duty. Akbar's steadfast rule echoes that of India in this period, reflecting the delicate balance between socialism and authoritarianism that began to tip over in the seventies under Indira Gandhi's iron fist.

This is precisely why the character of Salim becomes interesting, as he, the heir-apparent, represents a political philosophy that differs from Akbar's. This brings the two into conflict, which frames the entire narrative. Salim represents a 'self' that is more individualistic compared to Akbar; one who doesn't always put the community and nation before himself. He is in love with Anarkali – so much so that he ignites a rebellion against Akbar when the emperor bars their marriage and imprisons her. To Akbar, Salim's marriage to a court dancer flies right in the face of his duty as the heir to the throne. But as we see in the film, not everyone holds his vision of justice. For Salim, sacrificing love is not a price he is willing to pay in the name of duty.

In having Salim be the protagonist of the film, Asif is staging a complex question between love and duty. It reflects a conversation that India was having at the time: "what kind of rule do we want? Do we want what Salim represents – a more individualistic notion? Or what Akbar represents – a notion of the state as identity? It is centered on a question of separation of the self and citizenship. For Akbar, there's only one self: being a citizen of India. On the other hand, for Salim, the self exists beyond citizenship, and is rooted in the individual. As such, *Mughal-e-Azam* is a very relevant rumination about the shifting forms of citizenship that the state of India was invoking in the '60s and early '70s, where Akbar represents one way of what it means to belong to a country, and Salim represents another.

Another significant context that framed *Mughal-e-Azam* was the Hindu-Muslim politics of the early sixties. Given the bloody conflict between Hindu and Muslims during the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, it becomes important to scrutinize what it means for Asif to make a film glorifying the Mughal Empire post-partition. This religious tension was reflected even in the making of the film, where Asif wrote the film back in the forties during pre-independence– taking him fourteen years to realize it on the screen. This was directly related to the partition of India and Pakistan, as there was heightened communal stress between Hindus and Muslims at the time. Consequently, the film was shelved during its development since India wasn't emotionally ready for it.

It's fascinating how Asif's story of the Mughals, which was a Muslim empire, was able to achieve such remarkable success given the religious and cultural trauma India recently experienced from the partition. But even more remarkable is how the Mughals were painted in a positive, dignified light – all while achieving widespread acclaim and adoration from viewers. This is very much tied to the socio-political context of the Nehruvian era, which "projected India's past as a pluralist one that emphasized religious tolerance in accordance with Nehru's vision of India,"[9] in which India was a secular nation with both Hindus and Muslims having an equal stake. According to some scholars, this vision of India was able to be realized because Nehruvian politics helped suppress the trauma of the partition in its initial decades; public discussions on the partition were considered sensitive and a danger to communal harmony, which thereby produced a religious environment that wasn't as politically charged.[10]

This is very much a vision that Asif, an Indian Muslim, aligns his film with – where he centers the film on Akbar's reign, who was seen as a syncretic ruler that attempted to mend Hindu-Muslim communities together through social and political reform. Asif makes it a point to show Akbar's unified vision of Hindustan, highlighting many scenes of Akbar, a Muslim, sponsoring and engaging with Hindu festivals through his Hindu wife, Jodhaa.

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9 Baijayanti Roy, "Visual Grandeur, Imagined Glory: Identity Politics and Hindu Nationalism in Bajirao *Mastani* and *Padmaavat*," *Journal of Religion & Film* 22, no.9 (2018) https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol22/iss3/9, 3.
10 Ibid., 5.

Additionally, Asif makes the Rajput chief of staff Salim's guardian and closest confidant, underlining how Akbar found a way of uniting both Hindus and Muslims.

All of this shields the film from the demonization of Muslims, which starts to occur in later historical films such as *Padmaavat* (2018). Instead, *Mughal-e-Azam* is very much a celebration of the Mughal's Islamic culture; dialogue is spoken in Persianized Urdu while the grandeur of the sets, costumes, and Mughal traditions all speak to the wonder and enchantment people felt towards the ancient empire. This political environment and messaging of the sixties is a sharp deviation from present-day India, where the Hindu-Muslim context becomes increasingly important in reframing history – which we will explore through *Padmaavat*.

Padmaavat (2018)

Padmaavat (2018), based on a 16th-century epic poem of the same name, depicts the story of 14th-century Muslim emperor Alauddin Khilji's attack on a Rajput kingdom after he is besotted by the beauty of its queen, Padmavati. The film, like *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), is one of the biggest box office successes in Indian history, featuring the top stars of its decade while being directed by a celebrated auteur– Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Bhansali, in what journalists described as a '*Black Panther*' moment for India and its diaspora, brings a new perspective to the epic poem in his magnum opus, making *Padmaavat* a particularly fascinating case as the source text is considered a blend of both history and fable.[11]

Though 16th-century poet Malik Muhammad Jayasi describes his poem Padmaavat as fiction, it centers around a real historical event with real historical figures, engendering considerable debate over what is fact and what is fiction. For example, while Alauddin Khilji is a historical character who conquered the Rajput kingdom of Chittor in 1303, there is little evidence that Padmavati existed– though some historians based in Rajasthan disagree.[12] As such, Bhansali is able to draw on both history and fictional poetry in his adaptation, making it all the more interesting when he controversially deviates from the two.

Padmaavat became embroiled in severe controversy for its portrayal of both Hindus and Muslims, sparking civil unrest domestically– while being banned internationally in Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia for its negative portrayal of Khilji.[13] Even before the film was released, right-wing Hindu nationalist groups alleged that the (unseen) film showed "their revered queen dancing and romancing the film's Muslim villain" in a dream

11 Qureshi, "The War for Nostalgia," 46.
12 Roy, "Visual Grandeur, Imagined Glory," 17.
13 "Malaysia Bans *Padmaavat* over Portrayal of Muslim Ruler," *Cinema* | *Al Jazeera* (Al Jazeera, February 3, 2018), https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/2/3/padmaavat-banned-over-films-depiction-of-muslim-ruler.

sequence.[14] Members of the right-wing organization then vandalized the film set and slapped Bhansali during filming, launching protests across the country.[15] Despite Bhansali publicly stating that the rumors of Khilji and Padmavati's intimacy were unfounded, it was enough for the film to be banned in four states, highlighting the mass hysteria and tense socio-political relations between Hindu-Muslims that frames *Padmavaat's* context.[16] Ultimately, the supreme court cleared the film's release throughout India, but this growing Hindu-Muslim divide in contemporary India makes it even more pressing to understand how and why *Padmavaat* engages with different interpretations of Hindu and Muslim history – and re-presents it on film.

The fraying Hindu-Muslim relations are captured through Bhansali's portrayals of Alauddin Khilji, Ratan Singh, and Padmavati. Khilji, the Muslim Sultan smitten by Padmavati, is portrayed as a lustful, ruthless savage who is both unkempt and brutish. This is accomplished by stressing his tribal Afghan origins and locating him in a dark, ominous, and inelegant hillside fortress, conjuring Khilji as a menacing super-villain – or as some critics lamented, a "screen stereotype of a barbaric Muslim."[17] This branding of Khilji as a foreign invader is somewhat paradoxical considering that he was born and raised in Delhi and was the Sultan who warded off foreign Mongol invasions six times, protecting the subcontinent from Mongol rule.[18]

What makes Khilji's undignified depiction particularly noteworthy is how he is contrasted with the shining magnificence of the Rajputs. Ratan Singh and his wife Padmavati are covered in glory, acting as models of dignity and morality – similar to how Asif portrays his Mughals in *Mughal-e-Azam*. But unlike Asif, who also portrays the Hindu Rajputs in an illustrious light, Bhansali's Muslims receive unfavorable treatment. As film scholar Baijayanti Roy writes, "Rajput integrity as a foil to Muslim dishonesty is advertised [throughout] the film," particularly emphasized in Singh's one-on-one combat with Khilji in the finale.[19] Singh is made into a tragic hero; as he is about to defeat Khilji, he is cheatingly shot in the back by Khilji's aide, signifying the Muslim's deceit compared to the Rajput honor. Hence, though the Rajputs lose, Bhansali turns the defeat of Singh into a "moral victory" against the uncivilized Muslim invaders, where the Rajputs fought with principle and the Khilji's fought (and won) through fraudulence.[20]

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14 Queshi, "The War for Nostalgia," 46.
15 "*Padmaavat*: Why a Bollywood Epic Has Sparked Fierce Protests," *BBC News* (BBC, January 25, 2018), https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-42048512.
16 Ibid.
17 Roy, "Visual Grandeur, Imagined Glory," 20.
18 Seshadri Kumar, "India Should Be Grateful to Alauddin Khilji for Thwarting the Mongol Invasions," *The Wire*, n.d., https://thewire.in/history/india-grateful-alauddin-khilji-thwarting-mongol-invasions.
19 Roy, "Visual Grandeur, Imagined Glory," 24.
20 Ibid.

This is particularly ironic given that the original epic poem *Padmaavat* was written by a Muslim who sought to extol Sufi philosophy and values. Additionally, the original poem depicts a third element – a separate Hindu neighboring kingdom of Kumbhalner – and it is actually this king who kills Singh after pining for Padmavati, not Khilji. Hence, Bhansali's rendition of Khilji's immorality in the final battle is unfounded in the source text; rather, Bhansali changes the plot from a complex Hindu-Hindu and Hindu-Muslim conflict into a sole Hindu-Muslim war, where an unscrupulous Islamic king breaks the rules of battle to defeat the Rajputs.[21]

The depravity of Khilji is further emphasized in the way he treats women. Khilji oppresses his wife Mehrunnissa while treating other women as objects of lust, whereas Singh conducts himself with grace, treating Padmavati with relative equality and genuine love. It is also interesting how Bhansali depicts Singh as quasi-monogamous, despite Padmavati being Singh's second wife.[22] Singh is one who is solely devoted to Padmavati and completely negligent to his first wife Nagamati, who Bhansali hardly addresses in the film– and with zero explanation.[23] As such, it is surprising when the word "harem" is used only to describe the Muslim Khilji, who is depicted with one wife, and not Singh, who has two.

This demonization of Khilji as an uncouth, bestial invader is a significant departure from the source text on which *Padmaavat* claims to be based. Jayasi paints him neutrally as he does Singh– neither are disparaged nor denigrated to further a message. Khilji is not a licentious ruffian nor is Singh a moral, glorious king. However, it is worth stressing that Khilji in Jayasi's text does deceive Singh by glimpsing Padmavati and capturing him when invited into Chittor – but Bhansali takes this element and applies it to every other aspect of Khilji's character, mischaracterizing a ruthless yet brilliant warrior-king into a deranged and psychopathic savage.[24]

When we examine other historical interpretations of the tale, Bhansali's rendition of Khilji and the Muslim invaders become far clearer. Notably, between the late 16th and early 18th century, different versions of the *Padmaavat* legend permeated across regions of India – particularly resonating in Rajasthan, where Rajput kings felt threatened by Mughal ambitions.[25] Unlike the original tale of Padmaavat that focused more on Singh's Hindu-Hindu conflict, these Rajput narratives centered on the conflict with Khilji, debasing him into a caricatural immoral Muslim invader who stands in sharp contrast with the courageous and virtuous Hindus.[26] As such, though Bhansali's film claims to be inspired by the poem *Pad-*

21 Khandakar Rubyat Mursalin, "Padmaavat (2018): A Successful Adaptation or a Tool for Propagating Grandeur of a Particular Sect," *SSRN Electronic Journal,* July 1, 2018, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3665135, 4-5.
22 Roy, "Visual Grandeur, Imagined Glory," 22.
23 Ibid.
24 Kumar, "India Should Be Grateful to Alauddin Khilji for Thwarting the Mongol Invasions."
25 Roy, "Visual Grandeur, Imagined Glory," 18.
26 Ibid.

maavat, Bhansali borrows more from Rajput memories propagated by nationalist Hindu traditions rather than the actual authenticity of the poem and historical event.

While Khilji's barbarism can be written off as him being the villain of the film, many would argue that it's impossible to detach the politicized messaging from the "artistic liberties" Bhansali takes to render his characters in a particular way. This is due to the specific socio–political context in which *Padmaavat* exists – one in which Hindu nationalist politics reigns supreme under India's ruling party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), precipitating a Hindu–Muslim divide across the country that has arguably not been seen since the partition.

The BJP's cultural project is known as Hindutva: a Hindu nationalistic ideology that "aims to transform India from a pluralist secular state to an exclusively Hindu one," which is a significant departure from India's delicately negotiated multiculturalism under the Nehruvian era.[27] As has been made known, the BJP has sought to "rewrite India's centuries of Muslim rule… as eras of invasion, infiltration, and subjugation," finally consolidating power in 2014 under PM Narendra Modi to propagate this nationalistic messaging.[28] Bhansali's cartoonish portrayal of Muslim invaders and overzealous representation of Rajput glory fits right into the discourse of BJP's Hindu nationalism, where challengers to the Muslim dynasties are championed and coveted.

In fact, Bhansali himself has revealed his admiration towards Modi's goal to reinvigorate India's lost confidence, saying in 2013:

> Narendra Modi has something magical about him. I am enamoured by the nation being obsessed with him. The ability to have people follow you is important. Charisma is important. I like the fact that he has something to say and something to achieve and a practical agenda to follow. I need to be inspired. I need to follow you. I think he is astute and that is important for a leader.[29]

It seems that Bhansali's attitudes haven't changed years later, as Bhansali is set to produce a biographical epic on Modi titled *Mann Bairagi*, which is to be released in December of 2022.[30]

A final element of *Padmaavat* that has come under controversy for its aligning with the Hindu right is the film's portrayal of Jauhar, the ancient Rajput custom of mass self-immolation to evade enslavement and rape by foreign invaders. As a final act of victory, Pad-

27 Ibid., 3.
28 Qureshi, "The War for Nostalgia," 48.
29 Ibid.
30 "Akshay Kumar Unveils the First Look Poster of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Film on PM Narendra Modi Titled 'Mann Bairagi'" (*The Times of India,* September 17, 2019), https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/bollywood/news/akshay-kumar-presents-the-first-look-poster-of-the-special-feature-on-pm-narendra-modi-titled-mann-bairagi/articleshow/71163006.cms.

mavati and hundreds of Rajput women run into an open fire to disallow Khilji from achieving his goal– to see the face of Padmavati. While the original 16th-century poem praises the virtue of Padmavati's Jauhar to protect the honor of her fallen husband, Bhansali has received criticism for glorifying it – as it is a condemned and outlawed ancient practice today.[31] Bhansali, through cinematic language, makes the Rajput's Jauhar a heroic moment, conveying it in such a way that is both savage and beautiful, despite it being steeped in questionable patriarchal and misogynistic ideals. Through her self-immolation, Padmavati is shown to have agency and control over her fate, as it results in the ultimate victory of the Rajputs against the Muslims.

This glorification of Jauhar as an empowering act reflects the cultural imaginations of far-right Hindu nationalists, where the ancient Rajput tradition is viewed with pride in its use of defying Muslim conquerors. Though Jauhar is a regressive practice steeped in patriarchal and misogynistic notions, Padmavati's final act of defiance is still held as an emblem of female honor among Rajput descendants and the far-right, highlighting its problematic undertones.[32] Undoubtedly, the final scene of *Padmaavat* had to be Padmavati's Jauhar, but many critics questioned the way Bhansali lionized it – instead of depicting it as a patriarchal act forced upon Rajput women.[33]

In light of *Padmaavat*'s unfaltering imagery of Muslims and romanticization of casteist ideas of Hindu women's purity and honor, Bhansali's film reflects a narrative that "creates an imaginary past" which conforms to the "Hindu nationalist discourse dominating present-day India."[34] His historical representation speaks to India's shift to Hindu majoritarianism, in which tyrannical Muslim invaders are branded as the 'other' – an image that, despite many of its historical fallacies, cannot be easily broken.

Conclusion

The Indian historical film is both informed by and informs its socio-political context, whether that is *Mughal-e-Azam*'s exploration of different forms of governance in the 1960s or *Padmaavat*'s reflection of present-day Hindutva politics. Indeed, the relationship between history and popular Indian cinema has always been complex, but as *Padmaavat* has shown, the risk of period pieces that simplify complex history cannot be overstated in a country like India, where popular cinema can often animate or confirm existing prejudices – which can inspire targeted violence against vulnerable groups.[35]

31 "*Padmaavat*: Why a Bollywood Epic Has Sparked Fierce Protests."
32 Ibid.
33 Haroon Khalid, "View from Pakistan: 'Padmaavat' Puts Together Every Stereotype of Muslims in India" (Scroll. in, February 2, 2018), https://scroll.in/article/867116/view-from-pakistan-padmaavat-puts-together-every-stereotype-of-muslims-in-india.
34 Roy, "Visual Grandeur, Imagined Glory," 16.
35 Ibid., 28.

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The Guthrie Dawn Raid of 1981:
What Does Economic Decolonisation Entail?

HIST 362: Issues in Contemporary Historiography

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On the morning of the 7th of September 1981, the prominent British rubber and palm oil conglomerate based in Malaysia, Guthrie Corporation Limited (GCL), was brought into Malaysian control in under four hours at the London Stock Exchange (LSE) via the Guthrie Dawn Raid (GDR). A 'dawn raid' refers to an unexpected acquisition of shares of a target company by a 'raider' upon the ringing of the bell of the LSE.[1] Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB), Malaysia's investment agency which only has *Bumiputera* (the indigenous and indigenous–Malay ethnic groups in Malaysia) investors and shareholders, was the 'raider' who increased their stake in GCL from 24.88% to 50.41%.[2] The GDR of 1981 was significant because it brought formerly British–owned assets into the ownership of the Malaysian government, although independence from the British was achieved in 1957. In *Ownership and Control in the Malayan Economy* (1960), James Puthucheary argues that Malaya's independence was a sham because the control of the "commanding heights of the economy" was dominated by British investors even post–independence.[3] In 1970, 65% of all foreign capital in Malaysia was owned by the British since many British companies remained in Malaysia as major investors in industries that exploited natural resources and sold valuable

1 Shakila Yacob and Nicholas J. White, "The 'Unfinished Business' of Malaysia's Decolonisation: The Origins of the Guthrie 'Dawn Raid'," *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 5 (September 2010), 920.
2 P.Y. Chin, "PNB Grabs Guthrie: In Just Three Hours, Britons Lose a Giant," *The Star,* September 8, 1981.
3 "Imperial Icons to Malaysian Flagships: The Fall of British Business in Malaysia - ARTICLES | Economic History Malaya," accessed November 30, 2021, https://www.ehm.my/publications/articles/imperial-icons-to-malaysian-flagships-the-fall-of-british-business-in-malaysia.

export commodities, such as rubber, tin and palm oil.[4]   Hence, the legal takeover via share acquisition of GCL by PNB was perceived as a reclamation of land and assets from a former colonial power into the hands of a local, independent corporation. Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia, views the GDR as the beginning of the end of British economic colonialism in Malaysia. However, the GDR, although celebrated, remains a "contested juncture in contemporary Malaysian memory," especially with regards to the impact of the event on Indian plantation workers, as argued by Sivachandralingam Sundara Raj.[5]   In this paper, I will primarily demonstrate how the GDR constructs the understanding of economic decolonization in Malaysia in 1981. Secondarily, I will present how the GDR has been investigated over time in both Britain and Malaysia, highlighting the differences in these sources and the implication in selecting one line of investigation over others.

There are two prominent scholars who have contributed to the literature of the Guthrie Dawn Raid: Shakila Yacob and Nicholas J. White. Together, they co-authored an article entitled *The 'Unfinished Business' of Malaysia's Decolonisation: The Origins of the Guthrie Dawn Raid* (2010), where they argue that GDR achieved economic decolonisation because ownership of Guthrie land and assets were transferred to PNB. Yacob and White present two main drivers of the GDR: the poor outcome of the 'Malaysianisation' of Guthrie subsidies and the lack of consultation of PNB during Guthrie's diversification of assets. Guthrie's plan for 'Malaysianisation' entailed making some estates locally registered Guthrie subsidiaries with a few Malaysians in management and on the board; this plan was called Guthrie Ropel. In 1966, Guthrie Ropel Sendirian Berhad, the resulting subsidiary, was floated on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE) and offered only 40% of the shares of the subsidiary to potential Malaysian investors, since the majority control had to be maintained by British investors.[6]   Thus, this effort of 'Malaysianisation' was merely performative, as it was done to appease the Malaysian government without any intention to tangibly return land and assets to the government. This is further proven by the fact that the Guthrie estates that were turned into subsidiaries were the worst of their agricultural estates since a large percentage of the land was on hilly land.[7]   Further, Guthrie underwent geographical diversification without the consultation of PNB despite PNB being the leading minority shareholder; PNB was refused representation on the board.[8]   Hence, Malaysian interest was not taken into consideration during the decision-making processes at Guthrie's headquarters, although the Malaysian economy would have been the most severely affected due to such decisions. These main issues led to PNB's secretive decision to takeover Guthrie via a 'dawn raid' because Guthrie was reluctant to sell-out to the Malaysian government. With the assistance of N. M. Rothschild & Sons Ltd. (a London merchant bank) and Rowe & Pitman (an English brokerage

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4 T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 363.
5 Yacob and White, "The 'Unfinished Business' of Malaysia's Decolonisation," 920.
6 Ibid., 929.
7 Ibid., 930.
8 Ibid., 931.

firm), PNB bought each Guthrie share at GBP9.01, a favourable price at the time. [9] This resulted in PNB attaining majority stake ownership of 50.41%, which was achieved in under four hours. Thus, the GDR was an aggressive, yet legal, nationalistic takeover of the plantation company. Although Yacob and White fail to define 'decolonisation,' it is clear that their understanding of economic decolonisation entails the change in ownership of national assets: from British ownership to Malaysian ownership, and therefore allowing Malaysian interest to shape the direction of Malaysian assets. Yacob and White conclude by asserting the importance of the GDR because it ensured "the repatriation of profits to the former imperial power and guaranteed that the wealth generated by Malaysia's natural resources was fully enjoyed by Malaysians."[10] Thus, decolonisation is viewed through this narrow lens of ownership alone. Yacob and White fail to discuss the change in systems and structures that resulted from the GDR.

Sundara Raj, who authored *The London Dawn Raid and Its Effect on Malaysian Plantation Workers* (2012), argues that economic decolonisation was limited because the Indian plantation workers were subjected to even harsher conditions after the GDR, which caused the "present plight of the Indian community in Malaysia."[11] Sundara Raj argues that there was no good infrastructure to help the Indians when the Malaysian government gained control over the estates from the British.[12] The GDR caused redundancies, the denial of housing for plantation workers, forced dislocation of workers and restricted the freedom of movement and the freedom of speech among the workers. When foreign plantation owners sold their estates to local companies, the plantations were fragmented, causing thousands of Indian labourers to lose their jobs. Those who decided to stay in the plantations settled for lower wages and they were denied healthcare.[13] Based on oral interviews conducted by Ramachandran Selvakumaran for *Indian Plantation Labour in Malaysia* (1994) and S. Nagarajan for *A Community in Transition: Tamil Displacements in Malaysia* (2007), researchers concluded that Tamil (South Indian) estate workers believed that European managers were more humane than Malaysian managers. Moreover, Indian plantation workers were silenced should they bring attention to their deteriorating living conditions to the press.[14] With the takeover by PNB, Indian plantation workers had hoped for better security and higher wages, as well as improved working conditions. But, the new PNB management was solely focused on increasing profits. Thus, PNB kept wages low.[15] Sundara Raja argues that the GDR only benefitted Bumiputeras, who controlled PNB, because they were able to rapidly expand the rubber industry at the cost of depressing living conditions of Indian labourers.[16] Therefore,

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9 Ibid., 944.
10 Ibid., 959.
11 Sivachandralingam Sundara Raja, "The London Dawn Raid and Its Effect on Malaysian Plantation Workers," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no. 116 (March 1, 2012): 74, https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2011.648999.
12 Ibid., 75.
13 Ibid., 77.
14 Ibid., 83.
15 Ibid., 80.
16 Ibid., 81.

"the economic decolonisation failed to take care of those same workers who had been the backbone of the plantation economy during and after British rule in Malaya."[17] This secondary source starkly contrasts with White's and Yacob's argument because it highlights the limitation of defining 'decolonisation' solely based on ownership. Instead, Sundara Raj highlights the differences in experience based on ethnicity, which is clearly reflective of the larger ethnic hierarchy that exists in Malaysia: *bumiputeras* (Malays) at the top and Indians close to the bottom. Sundara Raj argues that it is fallacious to argue that the GDR brings national pride because the backbone of the industry, Indian plantation worker, were left worst off than before. Hence, should one select White's and Yacob's macro-perspective, one would minimize the on-the-ground impact on the welfare of those affected by the GDR.

T.N. Harper's *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (1999) argues that the GDR signaled economic decolonisation because of the change of ownership. The process of decolonization in former British colonies prioritized the safety of British businesses in newly independent, post-colonial nations. Thus, "economic decolonization was a much slower process than the transfer of political power."[18] Harper argues that British companies sustained themselves in Malaysia by aligning themselves with local interest, such as Malaysia's New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1971. The NEP was a public policy initiative that aimed for social re-engineering via affirmative action programs to reduce economic disparities among ethnic groups and promote racial unity, which resulted in an increase in *Bumiputera* ownership of capital. In an effort to comply with the NEP, Guthrie's established locally-registered subsidiaries which appointed retired Malay politicians and civil servants, instead of trained professionals, to be board members. Harper argues that the GDR was the beginning of a larger legacy of anti-British policy as the Malaysian government dealt with the "unfinished business" of colonialism; it started the process needed for "Malaysia [to shake] away the psychological residue of colonial rule."[19] Thus, Harper views the GDR as the catalyst for the complete economic decolonization in Malaysia. Similar to White and Yacob, Harper presents a narrow understanding of 'decolonisation' since it is limited to ownership of capital. Thus, Harper grants too much praise to the GDR and fails to acknowledge the plight of the Indian plantation workers.

Yacob, White and Harper maintain that the GDR signaled the beginning of economic decolonisation because it resulted in the Malaysian ownership of plantation assets. But these three secondary sources offer contesting views of 'decolonisation.' Sundara Raj argues that the narrative of decolonisation with regards to the GDR fails to account for the negative effects it had on Indian plantation workers and contest the grounds for celebration due to the change in ownership, causing him to conclude that the GDR did not signal decolonisation. This alludes to a much larger question: who is a Malaysian? As much as the

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17 Ibid., 82.
18 Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*, 363.
19 Ibid., 364-365.

NEP was an economic policy, it was also a state effort to define the Malaysian nation–state, and ostensibly defining Malaysian identity. Due to the affirmative action policies within the NEP, the *Bumiputera* population, particularly the ethnic Malay population, increased their wealth ownership, business participation, educational attainment, and public sector employment and promotion.[20] Thus, the NEP was successful in decreasing the incidence of poverty among the *Bumiputera* population but it led to an unintended consequence of side-lining non-*Bumiputera* ethnic groups. The NEP attempted to define Malaysian identity based on racial unity in a multiracial state. However, by 1981, it could be argued that the Malaysian economy was structured to benefit only the *Bumiputeras*, causing the non-*Bumiputera* population to feel excluded from the project of the nation–state; one had to be a *Bumiputera* individual to be 'Malaysian.' This subverted the original intention of NEP's Malaysian identity. Thus, when argued in context, it is not wrong for Yacob, White and Harper to argue that the GDR was in fact an act of decolonisation because British assets were taken over by the *Bumiputera*-controlled PNB, the 'Malaysians.' Nevertheless, in this line of investigation, although one fails to acknowledge the worsening working conditions for Indian plantation workers (many of whom were born in Malaysia but failed to register their births and gain citizenship), one can still argue that decolonisation occurred because Indian labourers are not deemed to be 'Malaysians.' However, beyond the narrow understanding of 'Malaysian identity' that supports the argument of decolonisation via the GDR, the lack of systemic change after Guthrie was nationalised magnifies the argument that decolonisation did not materialize due to the GDR. This is because colonial practices in the plantations remained: estate management continued in its rigid, hierarchical mode that kept workers under conditions "of near slavery."[21]

This notion of economic 'decolonisation' is discussed in primary source material which corroborates ideas presented by Yacob, White and Harper, particularly archival British newspapers. British newspapers offer a mostly negative view of the GDR, but one that sustains the premise of ownership as a signal of decolonisation. The Economist presents a harshly negative perspective of the GDR. In an article entitled *Requiem for a Rubber Planter* (1981) published by The Economist, Ian Coates, Guthrie's managing director, is quoted saying, "there is nothing to be said except a requiem mass … (it's) front-door nationalisation"[22] Further, it acknowledges that Guthrie failed to restructure their equity to be aligned with Malaysia's NEP, while providing a Malaysian perspective. It states that Malaysia refuses "outright nationalisation … (but) prefers open purchases of shares or by negotiation … reject allegations that this is nationalisation in disguise."[23] This article ends poignantly, with a quote from a Malaysian cabinet minister, who says, "why is it that when the Kuwait Investment

20 K. S. Jomo, "Malaysia's New Economic Policy and 'National Unity," in *Racism and Public Policy, ed. Yusuf Bangura and Rodolfo Stavenhagen* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2005), 182–214, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230554986_8.
21 Sundara Raja, "The London Dawn Raid and Its Effect on Malaysian Plantation Workers," 81.
22 "Requiem for a Rubber Planter," *The Economist*, September 12, 1981, The Economist Historical Archive.
23 Ibid.

Office buys a large block of shares, it is investing but when we do it, it is nationalization?"[24] *Requiem for a Rubber Planter* presents the GDR as a nationalistic takeover, one that angered British stakeholders and required Malaysian officials to defend the action. Although the term 'decolonisation' is absent in the article, the tense reactions and emotions demonstrated in the article prove that British and Malaysian parties were at odds, and indeed ownership of Guthrie held high importance to both parties.

In an article published in *The Times*, a London-based newspaper, entitled *Malaysia Angrily Fights Legacy of British Colonialist Attitudes* (1981), we see a narrative of decolonisation that arose due to the GDR.[25] The article provides a nuanced perspective of the anti-British sentiment by discussing Dr. Mahathir's resentment towards the British. It draws from his book, *The Malay Dilemma* (1970), where he argues that the ethnic Malay is economically disadvantaged because of British colonialists who refused to give Malays economic opportunities during British colonisation. Thus, during an interview in 1981, Dr. Mahathir articulates, "Malaysia wants to be treated for what it is – a member of that newly-recognised aristocracy of nations, the raw material producers – taking control of its birthright."[26] Since PNB is a *Bumiputera*-controlled company, Mahathir's view presents a vengeful victory that rights the wrongs of British colonisation that side-lined the Malay ethnic group. Moreover, the article provides a snippet of an interview with Mahathir: "we were not doing anything more than going to the market to buy things that were being sold – willing buyers, willing seller."[27] Hence, *The Times* clearly viewed the GDR as a signal of decolonisation because the Malaysian government was fighting the legacy of British colonialist attitude by reclaiming land and natural resources from British investors. The discussion of decolonisation in British newspapers are aggressively negative, with the use of words, such as 'requiem' and 'angrily fights.' Hence, although it acknowledges the GDR as a signal of economic decolonisation in Malaysia, the effort is not celebrated.

The Star, an English-language Malaysian newspaper, presents a nationalistic view of the GDR in 1981 and highlights the change of ownership as a signal of decolonisation, supporting the views of Yacob, White and Harper. In an article entitled *PNB Grabs Guthrie* (1981), The Star calls the raid "the lightning coup, the most amazing in Malaysian corporate history."[28] In another article entitled *PNB Coup: How they Took Guthrie* (1981), *The Star* praises PNB for its planning and execution because Guthrie "didn't know what hit them and simply had no time to mount a counter-offensive."[29] Moreover, the article is accompanied by a comic strip (see below) depicting four British men, drinking or being served tea, glancing up towards the flying superman-esque Ismail Ali (the chairman of PNB in 1981), who wears the PNB logo on this chest and holds 'Guthrie shares' certificates under his arm; the four British men are under an umbrella with words reading "Guthrie" and "summer holi-

24 Ibid.
25 "Malaysia Angrily Fights Legacy of British Colonialist Attitudes," *The Times*, November 17, 1981.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Chin, "PNB Grabs Guthrie: In Just Three Hours, Britons Lose a Giant."
29 P.Y. Chin, "The PNB Coup: How They Took Guthrie," *The Star*, September 9, 1981.

day," while Ismail Ali has wings on his shoes, alluding to Hermes, the Greek god of thievery.[30] These two articles center the heroic and nationalistic aspect of the GDR. Underlying this attitude of praise for PNB and the Malaysian government at large are the joyful recognition of active decolonisation and the nationalistic pride for reclaiming land and assets into the hands of the Malaysian government.

Figure: Comic Strip Depicting the 'Guthrie Dawn Raid'
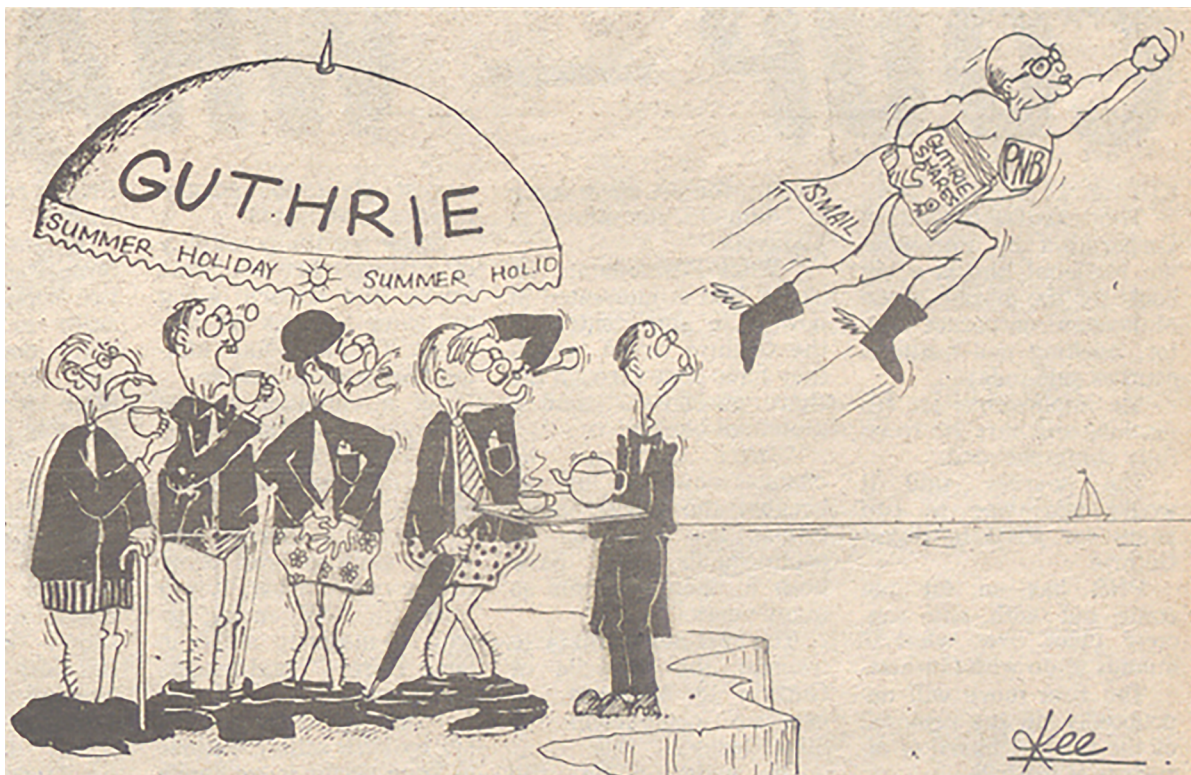
Source: PNB Coup: How they Took Guthrie, The Star (1981)

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30 Ibid.

In another article, *PNB – The Bumi Giant* (1981), the Guthrie acquisition was viewed as a morale booster because "Guthrie's plantation and manufacturing activities would … give PNB access to international markets and technology which Malaysia needs to join the ranks of the industrialised nations."[31] This article portrays nationalistic pride for the GDR because the Malaysian ownership of assets was thought to bring improvements in technology, making Malaysia more competitive internationally. In *After the Lightning Coup – What's Next?* (1981), the takeover is depicted as one that prevented about USD100 million from "falling into the hands of foreigners."[32] This article also presents an anti-British sentiment and alludes to the notion of decolonisation with the ownership of Guthrie under Malaysian control. In *Message: Don't Ignore Malaysians* (1981), *The Star* quotes Ian Coates who called the takeover "grotesque."[33] In response, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (the Deputy Chairman of PNB at the time) maintains that "no one can accuse us of nationalization by the front-door. PNB only plays by the rules of the game taught to us by the British."[34] In 1981, *The Star* clearly presents a clear narrative of decolonisation by the act of Guthrie falling under Malaysian ownership and referred to the event using nationalistic language, similar to the argument presented by Yacob, White and Harper. The British and Malaysian media depict the transfer of ownership as a signal of decolonisation, though the former's depiction has undertones of loss and agitation while the latter is triumphant and prideful.

In more recent coverage, a video released by The Star in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the GDR, begins with "the plan was set in motion on behalf of a nation wrestling for economic independence from its former colonial master."[35] Snippets of interviews with Tengku Razaleigh and Mahathir are shown in this video. Tengku Razaleigh says, "we felt like we had no choice … [because] we do not have enough land [to expand our plantations]."[36] Mahathir states that he was "elated" and "very happy" with the outcome of the raid.[37] Even after 40 years, The Star maintains a narrative of decolonisation vis-à-vis "independence from its former colonial master," and continues to use nationalistic language. However, The Star fails to mention the impact of the GDR on Indian plantation workers; it still fails to provide a holistic picture of the GDR. This may be due to the fact that The Star is owned and funded by the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the leading Chinese political party in the country. Although the Chinese did not directly gain from the GDR, MCA is in a coalition with the ruling Bumiputera party, United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which has close ties to PNB. So, there could be a larger political agenda with the absence of mentioning the plight of Indian laboureres which came at the expense of

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31 "PNB -- The Bumi Giant," *The Star,* September 9, 1981.
32 "After the Lightning Coup -- What's Next?," *The Star,* September 9, 1981.
33 "Message: Don't Ignore Malaysians," *The Star,* September 9, 1981.
34 "Razaleigh: We Followed the Rules -- The Birith Rules," *The Star,* September 10, 1981.
35 "Guthrie Dawn Raid: A Look Back in History" (Kuala Lumpur: *The Star,* 2021), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKCUZUthjts.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.

PNB gaining ownership over Guthrie.

Other Malaysian media also discusses the GDR in nationalistic terms and highlights the event's signaling of decolonisaiton. In an article published by the New Straits Times entitled *Recalling the Guthrie Dawn Raid* (2020), Yacob writes, the GDR's "amazing story of success … should be shared with governments in emerging economies worldwide. Malaysia demonstrates that market-based approaches could be successfully applied by newly emerging nations in the pursuit of achieving economic independence."[38] It is unsurprising that Yacob's argument remains consistent: the legal takeover of Guthrie into Malaysian ownership is a signal of economic independence or economic decolonisation. During Malaysia's 2018 Independence Day address, as published by The Edge, Dr. Mahathir stated that, "independence gained will only be meaningful when we are able to wean neo-colonialism or economic colonisation from our tarnished independence … we were able to … redeem our wealth … [through the] Guthrie Dawn Raid."[39] In his speech, 37 years after the GDR, Dr. Mahathir evaluates Malaysian independence based on the nation's ability to remove economic colonisaiton from the nation's economic system. Clearly, Dr. Mahathir maintains his view that Malaysian ownership of the Guthrie assets was an important step in economic decolonisation in Malaysia. Similar to other Malaysian newspapers, New Straits Times and The Edge fail to acknowledge the practical aspects of decolonisation and solely focus on the change in ownership, as argued by Yacob, White and Harper.

In conclusion, primary and secondary sources about the Guthrie Dawn Raid prove that 'decolonisation,' as it was understood in 1981, is defined by the transfer of ownership of assets from former colonial masters to Malaysian actors, such as PNB. This understanding of decolonisation fails to take on a more nuanced understanding of Malaysian ownership, which ostensibly limits the definition of Malaysian identity; *Bumiputera* as the de facto Malaysian identity. More importantly, this notion of decolonisation fails to critically look at the practical outcome of the GDR: the lack of change in the systems and structures of rubber plantations and the survival of colonial practices. The concept of decolonisation is poignantly relevant as the Malaysian government sees foreign direct investment (FDI) as an essential part of economic development. In fact, as of 2020, foreign investment accounted for around 38% of the total capital investment in Malaysia, with China being the primary foreign investor in the country.[40] Leaders have raised concerns over the impending issues of national sovereignty with the ever-increasing presence of Chinese interest in the Malaysian economy, but Malaysian scholars and leaders are yet to recognise the Belt and Road Initiative as a form of Chinese colonisation and Chinese hegemony in Malaysia. Essentially, the process

38 Shakila Yacob, "Recalling the Guthrie Dawn Raid," *NST Online*, February 2, 2020, https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2020/02/561707/recalling-guthrie-dawn-raid.
39 Mahathir Mohamad, "Dr Mahathir's National Day Message," *The Edge Markets*, August 30, 2018, http://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/dr-mahathirs-national-day-message.
40 "Investment Statistics," *MIDA | Malaysian Investment Development Authority* (blog), accessed December 17, 2021, https://www.mida.gov.my/why-malaysia/investment-statistics/.

of decolonisation is not a linear one, as economic colonisation can take different forms and the role of a coloniser is not relegated to a white actor. Therefore, the study of the Guthrie Dawn Raid demonstrates the dangers of how a narrow understanding of economic decolonisation fails to challenge the existing systems that perpetuate the exclusionary 'Malaysian' identity and colonial frameworks.

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How the East was Won:

Pepsi, Politics, and the Societal Cold War Between the USSR and the West

HIST 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present

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A 1937 Russian painting entitled *Collective Farm Festival* depicts a parade of peasants dancing around a table overflowing with food. The procession passes under a banner bearing Stalin's likeness, which reads, "Life has become better! Life has become more cheerful!"[1] To Russians who had endured Stalinist leadership during the Great Terror and World War II, life had neither improved nor become happier. Frequent shortages of basic goods that had marked Soviet life in the 1930's and 1940's continued in the early post-war period, albeit masked by false promotions of a "conflictless" society that blamed the shortcomings of the state on subversive foriegn agents.[2] While Stalin's vision of an ideal Socialist state of oppression and deception died with him in 1953, rising Party boss Nikita Khrushchev's dream of a Communist utopia characterized by material satisfaction and ideological devotion came to define Soviet policy during the mid-twentieth century. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of 1956 rang in his new era of liberalization by denouncing Stalinist practices of censorship, rationing, and purges.[3] In a drastic departure from Stalinist-era isolationism, Khrushchev touted the West as a benchmark for Russian societal advancement. To a crowd gathered

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1 Victoria Smolkin, "Stalinist Culture and Society," History 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present (class lecture, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, October 6, 2021).
2 Victoria Smolkin, "Postwar Reconstruction and Late Stalinism," History 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present (class lecture, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, October 27, 2021).
3 Victoria Smolkin, "Khrushchev and Destalinization," History 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present (class lecture, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, November 3, 2021).

to watch the 1959 "Kitchen Debate," Khrushchev promised, "We haven't quite reached 42 years of independence, and in another 7 years, we'll be at the level of America, and after that we'll go further."[4] In a gamble to match Western material prosperity and affirm Soviet superiority, Khrushchev embarked on a quest to bring home Chrysler cars and Dior dresses, with a distinctly Communist flair. Yet this appropriation of Western products and ideas threatened to topple the Soviet project, as it engendered crime, industrial inefficiency, and ideological skepticism. The Soviet Union attempted to create a superior society by combining Communist ideology and Western cultural and economic notions. However, Eastern and Western beliefs proved incompatible, and ultimately degraded the civilization they were meant to elevate.

In 1951, sociologist David Reisman unveiled an American invention more threatening to the Soviet way of life than the atomic bomb: consumerism. He deduced, "if allowed to sample the riches of America, the Russian people would no longer tolerate masters who gave them tanks and spies instead of vacuum cleaners and beauty parlors."[5] Commercial products were introduced to Soviet soil with the invitation of the American National Exhibition to Moscow. American organizers of the showcase commented that, "'American toys proved so fascinating that some disappeared in the crowds. One man…opened and sampled a package of frozen pastry to find out how it tasted.'"[6] Khrushchev lamented this Western perception of Soviet citizens, so mired in their scarcity that American trinkets could easily tempt them.[7] In a repudiation of these impressions, Khrushchev undertook a variety of cultural reforms that were meant to attain "superabundance and unprecedented prosperity"[8] for his citizens, while still remaining true to Communist doctrine. The issue of limited housing, a chronic problem in the Soviet Union, was at the forefront of his policies. *Khrushchyovkas* were affordable houses that sported "central heating, a well-equipped kitchen, a gas stove, garbage chute, [and] a hot water supply."[9] Yet these abodes were far-removed from the average suburban American house. Russian apartment buildings were intended to combat anti-Soviet ideals of excess and individualism. A common Muscovite home was furnished with "light, simple, and multifunctional furniture" that reflected the "austere 'contemporary' taste" of Khrushchev's regime.[10] Communal kitchens, bathrooms, and gathering areas rejected the insular nature of the nuclear family by emphasizing a collectivist work ethic.[11] In theory, these cultural developments would satisfy the desire for consumer goods and improved living conditions while staying within the bounds of Communist ideology. In

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4 Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev, "The Kitchen Debate," *Teaching American History,* July 25, 1959, https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/the-kitchen-debate/.
5 Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (Summer, 2002), 222.
6 Ibid., 240.
7 Ibid., 224.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 227.
10 Ibid., 244.
11 Ibid., 243-244.

practice, however, this fusion of Socialist preachings and Capitalist practices undermined the society it aimed to uplift.

Khrushchev's 1959-65 economic plan established bold aspirations for Russia's fiscal future. His 1959 address to the twenty-first Soviet Congress summarized the premier's ambitious intent, "A decisive step will be taken in…the implementation of the basic economic task…overtaking, within the historically shortest period of time, the most developed capitalist countries."[12] shchev's strategy promised to elevate the Soviet standard of living to match that of the United States by shifting the economy away from military production and towards consumer-oriented fields of development.[13] The Kosygin Reforms of 1965 embodied this renewed focus on "light industry," which included a stipulation that allowed factories to freely invest leftover profits not collected by the state.[14] Soviet economist Evsei Liberman described the new policy, "We must change over to a system whereby the enterprises themselves have a material incentive to provide the best possible service to the customer. It is clear that to do this we must free the enterprises from the excessive number of obligatory indicators."[15] In the name of advancement, the Soviet Union shirked elements of economic regulation, liberating industries to act more autonomously. However, Liberman asserted, "my point is to encourage enterprises, by means of bonuses from profits, to draw up…plans which are advantageous both to themselves and society."[16] In true Socialist fashion, this profit, the proof of man's outstanding industrial capability, was to be reinvested into society. A marriage of centralized planning and capitalist incentive would theoretically establish a state that boasted an efficient industrial complex whose profits funded healthcare, education, and retirement pensions for all citizens.[17] By securing both industrial capability and social services, the Soviet Union could truly declare economic superiority over America.

The incongruence of Soviet and Capitalist ideologies led to the failure of economic and cultural reforms and the degradation of Soviet society. For all their economic theorizing, Kosygin and Liberman could not overcome the old adage of the Soviet worker: "They pretend to pay us, and we pretend to work."[18] Since there was no tangible reward for working harder, there was no motivation to break one's back to create the high-quality goods produced by capitalist industries. Additionally, quotas were now placed on the amount of product sold, not produced. To keep pace with these new production requirements, facto-

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12 Nikita Khrushchev, "Control Figures for the Economic Development of the USSR for 1959-1965," in *Report Delivered at the 21st Extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Foriegn Languages Publishing House, 1959), 74.
13 Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen," 225.
14 James von Geldern, "The Responsive Economy," *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*, September 1, 2015, http://soviethistory.msu.edu/1968-2/the-responsive-economy/.
15 Evsei Liberman, "Are We Flirting With Capitalism?", in R*eadings in Russian Civilization Volume III: Soviet Russia, 1917 to Present,* ed. Thomas Riha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 807.
16 Ibid., 807.
17 Ibid., 806
18 von Geldern, "The Responsive Economy."

ries churned out shoddy products in small quantities.[19] American observer Maurice Hindus witnessed the deficiencies of the Soviet industrial system, noting that "there was something wrong about these permanent [hair styles]: naturally lustrous tresses had been baked to a frizzled stiffness…"[20] Second-rate Soviet commodities were inescapable; "state-of-the-art" *khrushchyovkas* were stocked with laundry machines that more closely resembled "glorified tin pail[s]." [21] The scarcity of even these inferior products created an immense black market in which almost every Russian citizen was involved. Dealing in contraband was profitable yet also led to the proliferation of crime syndicates and compounded already present industrial stagnation.[22] Economic and cultural reforms inspired by Western concepts put the Communist utopia of both material abundance and revolutionary fervor further out of reach. For workers, the illogical demands imposed by the state promoted complacency, not productivity. The dearth of quality goods produced drove citizens to embrace the black market, which further crystallized doubt in the Soviet message.

Via a synthesis of Communist ideology and Western consumer enhancements, the USSR tried to construct the ideal Soviet society. Just like the tsarist reforms before them, these economic and cultural changes seemed to accomplish the opposite of what they intended. Instead of ushering in the Communist paradise envisioned by Khrushchev, interaction with the West promoted decay and longing. Subpar homes, hair products, and washing machines cheapened the Socialist message, highlighting its inability to provide quality goods without forgoing its founding principles. Furthermore, the failure of these hybrid reforms demonstrated how the Eastern and Western ideologies could never reconcile their differences. Khrushchev somberly reflected on this tragic truth of the Cold War, "But we couldn't agree then, and we can't agree now… Maybe it's impossible for us to agree."[23]

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19 Ibid.
20 Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen," 236.
21 Ibid., 228.
22 von Geldern, "The Responsive Economy."
23 Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. by Edward Crankshaw and Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 520.

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From World War to Cold War:

The Evolution of Soviet–Western Relations through the Post–war Years

HIST 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present

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From Peter the Great's westernizing social and economic reforms of the 18th century to the German invasion of 1941 to the longstanding geopolitical tensions between the USSR and the US during the Cold War, the West's impact on Russian and Soviet history is immeasurable. Since the Bolshevik overthrow of the post-monarchy provisional government in 1917, the Soviet Union represented the ideological antithesis to the emerging capitalist systems of Western Europe and the United States in the industrial age. Even in the pre-war years, Soviet leaders' understanding of their country's precarious position on the world stage largely informed their social and economic policies and the ways in which they—and ordinary citizens—imagined the West and themselves. Lenin's subscription to the Marxist notion of the inevitability of an international proletarian revolution motivated his calls to withdraw Russia from World War I. Stalin's recognition of the capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union led him to enact the first Five Year Plan and a complementary propaganda campaign in 1928 to rapidly industrialize and promote a sustained sense of revolutionary enthusiasm. Furthermore, his paranoia about internal sabotage and Western infiltration was the driving force behind the Great Terror of the 1930s, which instilled a widespread sense of anxiety about Western bourgeois-backed "wreckers" deliberately undermining the Soviet industrialization project. However, the period from World War II to the beginning of the Cold War perhaps best demonstrates the evolution and complexity of Soviet-Western relations and the ways in which they affected Soviet life socially, economically and politically. This peri-

od was defined by a dizzying mix of antagonism, competition, and, at times, collaboration which can largely be credited not only to broader contingent factors, such as World War II, but to the erratic and inconsistent nature of Stalin's governance. Thus, it is important to understand the complex relationship between Russia and the West during this period in order to grasp the evolution of Soviet life and policy through the 20th century.

Although the governments of the West were diametrically opposed to the Marxist ideology that was so foundational to the Soviet way of life, during World War II and the years leading up to it, the Soviet Union under Stalin sought a collaborative relationship with European capitalist countries in the interest of collective security against the rising tide of fascism. Politically, this conciliatory attitude manifested itself in the 1934 Soviet entry into the League of Nations and agreements such the 1935 Franco-Soviet Pact to defend Czechoslovakia from Nazi aggression.[1] Although these moves ultimately proved to be unfruitful due to Western ambivalence towards collective security, countries such as England and the United States would eventually come around to an alliance with the Soviets after Germany had already embarked upon Operation Barbarossa in 1941. [2] Still, in the pre-war years before the West acquiesced to Soviet requests, Stalin elected to go the "realpolitik" route with his ratification of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany, an example of the often contradictory nature of Russian-Western relations that would endure into the Cold War. Wartime society and politics saw a brief deprioritization of ideology in favor of the pressing needs of the war effort. In a desperate appeal to Western powers to open a western front, Stalin dissolved the Comintern, the Soviet Union's central vessel for the proliferation and support of communist movements abroad.[3] On the home front, Stalin appealed to a nationalist, patriotic sentiment rather than an ideological one in order to galvanize popular support for the war effort.[4] This nationalist framing of World War II as a "Great Patriotic War" would persist in the Soviet imagination into the post-war years. Thus, the ideological divide between the USSR and non-fascist Western countries was briefly overcome in service of the international struggle against fascism.

In the immediate post-war years, Soviet life began to evolve as the provisional wartime alliance expired despite Stalin's initial optimism for Western aid and recognition of a Soviet sphere of influence. With the USSR economically decimated by the war, Stalin sought Western support and German reparations through pragmatic diplomacy.[5] This political pragmatism was reflected by the Stalin-approved "moderate" tactics of radical communist parties in countries like France and Italy so as not to jeopardize efforts to gain Western support and Stalin's honoring of the 1944 "percentages agreement" with Great Britain—

1 Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 321.
2 Victoria Smolkin, "The Great Patriotic War." History 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present (Class lecture, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, October 13, 2021).
3 Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, 353.
4 Victoria Smolkin, "The Great Patriotic War"; Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, 343.
5 Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 75.

which designated Soviet influence over the Balkans and British influence over Greece—despite growing leftist sympathy in Greece.[6] However, any hopes for a mutually beneficial relationship with the West were dashed as Western powers resumed their suspicious treatment of the Soviet Union, as demonstrated by Truman's termination of Lend-Lease and denial of a Soviet loan request in 1946 and George Kennan's infamous "Long Telegram" outlining the "problem of Soviet communism."[7] In response—and out of a renewed fear of Western aggression and "capitalist encirclement"—Stalin withdrew from his conciliatory position and retreated to a defensive one, thereby marking the dawn of a "new pre-war period."[8] This period saw the return of pre-war anti-westernism in the social and cultural spheres of Soviet life. For instance, despite Soviet citizens' hopes for more liberal social conditions after the war—fueled in part by Red Army soldiers' exposure to Western society and culture—Stalin imposed a culture of strict "anti-cosmopolitanism" which denounced Western "bourgeois" materialism and cast suspicion on Soviet Jews for their suspected loyalty to the West and the newly established nation of Israel.[9] Conspiracy theories such as the 1952 "Doctor's Plot"—in which multiple Soviet physicians, many of whom were Jewish, were accused of deliberate malpractice to kill Soviet officials—embodied the renewed paranoia that "hired agents of foreign intelligence services" were actively infiltrating Soviet society.[10] Perhaps the most glaring betrayal of the free and liberalized society imagined by Red Army soldiers upon their return home was the fact that the gulag and labor camp populations were larger in 1945 than during period of the Great Terror.[11] Moreover, Soviet society was plunged further into avid anti-westernism by the ongoing "Zhdanovshchina" campaign endorsed by Stalin and his political ally Andrei Zhdanov, which aimed to discipline artists and intellectuals to extol the glory of Soviet achievements, promote the "conflictless" character of Soviet society, and explicitly condemn Western lines of thought.[12] Cultural crackdowns, such as Zhdanovshchina and the Doctor's Plot, also demonstrated the continuity and evolution of Russian nationalism in response to Western influence since the outbreak of World War II.

The Soviet Union's subsequent political and economic tactics in the immediate postwar years also reflected the cooling relations between it and the West. Stalin's renewed belief that the capitalist world—namely the newly hegemonic United States—aimed to undermine and ultimately attack the Soviet Union was confirmed by the Soviet ambassador to the U.S.; Nikolai Novikov's 1946 telegram which described American plans to enlist its

6 Suny, *The Soviet Experiment,* 369, 374.; Donaldson & Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia,* 76.
7 Suny, *The Soviet Experiment,* 377.; George Kennan, "Long Telegram," 22 February 1946.
8 Yoram Gorlizki & Oleg Khlevniuk, "Stalin and his Circle," in *The Cambridge History of Russia,* vol. 3 (Cambridge University Press), 258.
9 Victoria Smolkin, "Postwar Reconstruction and Late Stalinism," History 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present (Class lecture, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, October 27, 2021); Suny, The Soviet Experiment, 400.
10 Gorlizki & Khlevniuk, *History of Russia,* 264; Vladimir Minayev, "Spies and Murderers in the Guise of Physicians and Scientists," *Pravda,* 1953, 484.
11 Smolkin, Victoria. "Postwar Reconstruction and Late Stalinism."
12 Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, 396-400.

capitalist allies in the struggle against the Soviet Union, maintain a network of military bases abroad, and remilitarize Germany in order to "prepare the conditions for winning world supremacy."[13] In response, Stalin aimed to balance the world power dynamic by creating a pro-Soviet coalition of states in Eastern Europe. During the re-Sovietization of these "satellites," Stalin created one-sided joint stock agreements that tied their economies to that of the Soviet Union and forced the states to reject the Marshall Plan, which he viewed as a calculated maneuver by the U.S. to impose their economic will on a vulnerable Europe.[14] Furthermore, Soviet-controlled East Germany imposed a blockade on Berlin when Western powers attempted to install their own currency in the western half of the city, demonstrating Stalin's continued defensive economic stance towards the West.[15] These economic measures all but consummated the division of Europe between the Western and Soviet spheres of influence, further isolating the Soviet Union and jeopardizing any prospects of salvaging the spirit of collaboration and compromise achieved during World War II. At home, the 4th Five Year Plan aimed to invest tremendous resources in the development of capital goods, industry, rocket propulsion, and atomic energy in order to keep pace with the U.S. and break their nuclear monopoly. Furthermore, Stalin's reaction to the "postulated persistence of the capitalist encirclement" extended to his own inner political circle, which he reshuffled to prevent any sort of oligarchical arrangement and to consolidate his personal powers.[16]

The brief alliance between Russia and the West during World War II was proven to be an anomalous product of mutual opposition to a common enemy, which was swiftly reframed according to ideological incompatibility. The deterioration of diplomatic relations with the West can be traced through the regression of Soviet social, political, and economic policy through the early 1950s. The late Stalin/early post-war years in the Soviet Union were thus defined by a budding competition with the United States and their Western coalition that spread to all aspects of Soviet life. Although the nature of the Cold War would ultimately evolve under Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, the wartime and post-war eras were formative in defining the Soviet Union in relation to the West and setting the stage for the geopolitical struggle that would come to capture the rest of the 20th century.

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13 Nikolai Novikov, "The Novikov Telegram," 27 September 1946.
14 Donaldson & Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia*, 76-77.
15 Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, 386-387.
16 Ibid., 264.

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Doctors, Reforms, and Kitchen Remodeling:

Western Influence on the Soviet Project from World War II through the Cold War

HIST 219: Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present

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At least since the rule of Tsar Peter the Great, the Western world has played an important role in defining aspects of Russian life and shaping Russian politics. More recently, in the twentieth century, throughout Joseph Stalin's, Nikita Khrushchev's, and Leonid Brezhnev's reigns over the Soviet Union, the influences of the Western world complicated and even dominated much of Soviet life. From World War II through the Cold War, various aspects of Western society were tangible in the Soviet world and greatly influenced Soviet politics, economics, and culture. I will first explore incidents when the Soviet government acted purely in response to perceived threats of Western influence. Second, I will discuss how Soviet leaders emphasized sharp distinctions between Western and Soviet consumer cultures to maintain support for the Soviet economic system. Finally, I will examine how the West's capitalist and market philosophies were an ongoing source of conflict within the USSR. Ultimately, these problematic interactions not only reveal how Soviet officials regularly used Western opposition as a defining aspect of the Soviet agenda, but also show how this opposition frequently undermined the original ideals of the Soviet project.

Following World War II, Western foreign political activity across Europe spurred fear and unrest in Soviet internal political circles. The goals and outcomes of the Doctors Plot show how, at the end of his life, Stalin artfully combined his own paranoia with wide-

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spread anti–Semitism and populist Soviet anti–Western nationalism to fuel the beginning of yet another purge. By claiming that the Kremlin medical corps had been infiltrated by Western governments, Stalin erroneously believed that he could easily destabilize and eliminate potential political threats while reinforcing his role as the only force of true Soviet stability. In his 1953 report of the Doctors Plot for *Pravda*, Vladimir Minayev referred to the (primarily Jewish) Kremlin medical corps as a "terrorist group."[1] He further claimed that the doctors "had sold their body and soul to a branch of American intelligence—the international Jewish bourgeois-nationalist organization, the Joint," referring to the international Jewish humanitarian Joint Distribution Committee as a "repugnant" and "sordid Zionist espionage organization which operated under a cover of philanthropy."[2] Minayev's overwhelming anti–Semitism notwithstanding, the fact that even the *idea* of Western spies infiltrating the Kremlin medical corps could instill this level of fear in the USSR evidences how much influence Western foreign policy and economic activity had in fueling Stalin's nationalistic agenda. Furthermore, these fears would carry serious ramifications for the fate of the Soviet Union and even Stalin himself when the few doctors who remained were unwilling or unable to operate on Stalin for fear of retaliation, contributing to his death and the political turmoil that followed.

Similarly, during the Prague Spring of 1968, Leonid Brezhnev reacted quickly and harshly to crush what he perceived as the growing influence of Western political ideologies in the Eastern Bloc. Despite the fact that the 1968 Prague Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party claimed only that they were "reviving socialism" by developing "in broad measure the democratic and humane principles of socialism," the Soviet central government responded with what it euphemistically called "aid by the armed forces" in the form of a military invasion comprised of Warsaw Pact troops.[3] Pravda repeatedly blamed Czechoslovakian "counter-revolutionary forces" in collusion with "external forces" and "instigators from the imperialist camp" for the uprising.[4] The Kremlin's response made it clear that USSR leaders viewed the Czechoslovakian reformers' call for additional liberties that had led to the Prague Spring--such as freedom of the press and assembly--as insidious imports from the West. Although the Soviet Union itself had been founded and established on the principle of political dissent, by 1968 the Soviet project lost sight of this ideal. In a bid to restore order and authority after Khrushchev's largely erratic rule that ended with the Cuban Missile Crisis, Brezhnev crushed the Prague Spring in a move that he justified as an opposition to the influence of Western ideologies.

In matters of culture Soviet leaders criticized Western consumer policies even as they

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1 Vladimir Minayev, "Spies and Murderers in the Guise of Physicians and Scientists," *Pravda*, 1953, 484.
2 Ibid., 484.
3 "Appeal by the Delegates to the Extraordinary 14th Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party to the Communist Parties of the Whole World," Aug. 22, 1968, 22. "Tass Statement," Pravda, Aug. 21, 1968, 14-15.
4 "Tass Statement," *Pravda*, Aug. 21, 1968, 14. "In the Interests of Socialism and Peace – Our Common Concerns," *Pravda*, Aug. 22, 1968, 17.

felt forced to respond to them. During perhaps the most famous Soviet-Western cultural encounter, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev debated the differences between Soviet and United States consumerism with then US Vice-President Richard Nixon in Moscow in 1959. Nixon considered the American consumer culture to benefit the consumer who receives consistently newer and, presumably, better goods, even regarding large investments like houses. But Khrushchev retorted, "Some things never get out of date--houses, for instance, and furniture, furnishings--perhaps--but not houses. I have read much about America and American houses, and I do not think that this… exhibit and what you say is strictly accurate."[5] Here, Khrushchev argues that products that last longer are most effective (presumably like those made in the USSR for Soviet consumers), contending that the culture of consumerism in the United States encourages wastefulness primarily to promote unnecessarily frequent consumption. He points to this distinction as a key difference between the culture of ownership in the West and the Soviet Union. Khrushchev maintained that the USSR's planned economy created a healthy attitude toward consumption that avoided the problems of the West's conspicuous overconsumption under capitalism. Khrushchev uses examples from everyday Soviet life to demonstrate the supremacy of socialism over capitalism in how it affects the day-to-day life of its people. He points to Soviet women homemakers, for example, contending that they have significantly better lives (and greater respect) within the Soviet Union's planned economy than US homemakers. Moreover, he derides the United States and the rest of the Western world for its wasteful consumerism while standing in a mockup of a typical American kitchen. Yet, the very fact of the Kitchen Debate illustrates how Soviet leaders felt forced to define the benefits of Soviet life on the West's terms.

In addition to political clashes like the Prague Spring, Brezhnev also had to confront economic reforms such as those proposed by Alexei Kosygin, which Brezhnev and other defenders of the traditional Soviet planned economy denounced as being motivated by Western capitalism. In her lecture, "Brezhnev, Developed Socialism, and Stagnation," Professor Victoria Smolkin discusses the economic impacts of Premier Alexei Kosygin's reforms that sought to incentivize Soviet enterprises by rewarding those enterprises for how much product they sold, as opposed to how much product they produced. While for many years state-owned enterprises had been rewarded according to the *amount* of product produced, Kosygin sought to place greater emphasis on presenting consumers with *more desirable* products.[6] As a result, his proposals drifted away somewhat from traditional Soviet economic policies, and some perceived them as having swayed toward that of the consumer-influenced capitalist West.

Ultimately, the hardline response of Soviet economists and Brezhnev demonstrate

5 Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev, "The Kitchen Debate," *TeachingAmericanHistory.org*, 1959, http://www. TeachingAmericanHistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=176, 2.
6 Victoria Smolkin, "Brezhnev, Developed Socialism, and Stagnation (Course lecture, HIST219-01-Fa2021 - Russian and Soviet History, 1881 to the Present, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, Nov. 15, 2021).

the continuing resistance to Western capitalist influences. Evsei Liberman, in his essay, "Are We Flirting with Capitalism?" discusses the fundamental differences between Western and Soviet economic policy, criticizing that of the West and uplifting that of the Soviet Union. He writes, "Under socialism, profits can be a yard-stick of production efficiency to a far greater degree than in the West, for in the Soviet Union profits follow, in principle, only from technological and organizational improvement" and will be used, ultimately, "wholly for the needs of society" as opposed to the monetary benefit of individuals.[7] Here, Liberman criticizes the wayward glances of Kosygin-minded Soviets. Throughout this essay, he considers that under socialism, money has less potential for impractical and detrimental use than in capitalist systems, as well as that socialism, is a more economically viable and successful alternative to capitalism. He considers any move toward capitalism the wrong one. Although there were those, like Kosygin, who argued that socialism could be reformed to benefit the Soviet people, economists like Liberman considered pure socialism to be the only true economic system. Brezhnev, of course, rejected these reforms outright because of their perceived Western capitalist influences.

Western foreign policy and activity greatly impacted Soviet politics, economics, and culture from World War II through the Cold War period. The contentious relationship between the ideologies of the Soviet Union and those of the Western world helped to shape both Soviet and Western history throughout this period. More significantly, these interactions clearly demonstrate how the oppositional interactions between the USSR and the West both defined and, ultimately, limited Soviet advancement throughout this period.

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7 Evsei Liberman, "Are We Flirting with Capitalism?" in *Readings in Russian Civilization, Vol. III, Soviet Russia, 1917-Present,* second edition, revised, ed. Thomas Riha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969): 808-9.

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