Vanderbilt Historical Review

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VHR

Vanderbilt Historical Review is an undergraduate-run, peer-reviewed research journal that annually publishes substantive articles and book reviews that demonstrate exemplary historical research, argumentation, and contribute uniquely to historical scholarship. VHR welcomes submissions from current undergraduates of national and international four-year institutions.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

It is with the utmost pride and pleasure that I present to you the Fall 2024 issue of the *Vanderbilt Historical Review*. This year, we pioneered a new publication schedule of biannual publications, increasing our publication of original undergraduate historical scholarship. We here at VHR would like to express our appreciation to the Vanderbilt Department of History, our editorial staff, our authors, and of course the readership that makes this work possible. The study of history is not meant to be sequestered to the footnotes of a textbook; rather, history is meant to teach us about the world and about ourselves. I hope, as you read the articles and interviews we have selected and edited for publication this fall, you keep this idea in mind.

This fall, we accepted an interview with renowned historian and filmmaker Uma Chakravarti for publication. Just as important as historical research is a focus on historiography, the study of the methodological approach to the way we view history. Chakravarti's impact on feminist literature and activism in Southeast Asia was transformational to public opinion and social movements in much of the latter half of the 20th century. Her innovative and relatable approach to the study of history underscores the need for an understanding of the importance of historical communication, and to express analytical ideas without preconceived notions of constraints on the scholarship.

It is with this intention that VHR did not continue with thematic groupings of articles in publication this year. The editorial board believed that it was more important to ensure as many original, diverse submissions as possible were able to be published than it was for individual articles to perfectly complement each other. This choice by the editorial board emphasizes how crucial it is to historical research and historiography to be open minded, and to utilize primary sourcework to develop a well-researched thesis. Whether in pieces exploring the erasure of South African women's contributions to the Soweto Uprising through newspaper articles, or utilizing original textual resources to comment on the role of Victorian culture in the looting of Yuangmingyuan in the mid-19th century, the pieces we have selected to publish this fall demonstrate the utmost level of academic integrity and dedication.

It has been an absolute honor to serve as Editor in Chief this past fall, as well as to learn and grow alongside the entire editorial team. *Vanderbilt Historical Review* has been the highlight of my undergraduate education, and I cannot thank all those who made this possible enough. I hope that after reading the articles and interviews published in this issue of VHR, you too feel the joy and curiosity that this work has sparked in the editorial board and me these past few months.

With those words in mind, I present to you the Fall 2024 edition of the *Vanderbilt Historical Review*. To many more issues to come, it has been a pleasure to serve as Editor in Chief.

Warm Regards,
Simon Rosenbaum
Editor in Chief

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An Interview with Uma Chakravarti

University of Petroleum and Energy Studies

Jahnavi Kumar

UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM AND ENERGY STUDIES

Dr. Uma Chakravarti *is an Indian historian and filmmaker. She has extensively contributed to gender scholarship in the Indian subcontinent by proposing a framework to analyze accounts from gender, class and caste based lenses simultaneously. Her seminal work spans more spheres such as the social history of Buddhism in the Ancient Indian period. She established her career as an invested educator by teaching in Miranda House (Delhi University) for over three decades. The impact of her work through books such as* 'Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism (1987)' *and* 'Gendering Caste through a Feminist lens (2002)' *cannot be understated in the field of women's history. Her film catalog, consisting of multiple documentary films such as,* 'Prison Diaries' *and* 'Fragments of a Past'*, prioritizes locating the female voice in historical accounts.*

Professor Uma Chakravarti was interviewed by Jahnavi Kumar, a second year undergraduate History and Politics student in the School of Liberal Studies at the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies.

In the interview, conducted in Dehradun, India, Professor Uma Chakravarti comments on a wide scope of issues primarily concerning the state of patriarchal structures through the adoption of a historical and legal approach, in order to contextualize the norms that continue to persist. This exercise takes place by analyzing the notion of agency, critiquing the institution of marriage and concluding with a retrospective on effectively navigating such an institution.

Jahnavi Kumar: Professor, you have written extensively about the nature of Brahmanical patriarchy and its embeddedness stemming from various forms of reinforcement throughout the years. Would you consider the gendered nature of the laws in our legal system to be an extension of this argument?

Professor Uma Chakravarti: Definitely in part, but I think there may be things here which go beyond the laws, going back to a more generic aspect of gender. It was also part of the colonial laws. There was a way that the legal system reflected both the customary and formal law inherited from the pre-colonial past, which is where I think the bulk of the Brahmanical patriarchy[1] laws may have arisen. Say, for instance, adultery. I think adultery was formulated on more generic patriarchal terms because then it was actually seen as an offense against the husband. It was conceded that when crimes related to the notion of a violation of the rights of the husband were committed, it would mean that certain kinds of legal remedies would be conceded to a perpetrator who retaliated.

The Nanavati case is an extension of that kind of argument.[2] The Naval officer was initially not convicted, and there's a whole host of reasons why that was the case. In part, because there was a huge amount of sympathy for this man as his wife had been unfaithful. Therefore, the idea that the husband has remedy by virtue of being a husband and other people do not have access to the remedy exists informally. It is a slippage between the law and the justice one is granted.

JK: Marital rape remains a contentious issue in both institutions and public consciousness. Have we arrived at a point where awareness of the public and private scrutiny women are subjected to can lead to a revaluation of marriage as a sacrosanct institution?

UC: I don't think we've got far enough in re-evaluating it as a sacrosanct institution because it's embedded in the ideology of people. Whether it's formally conceded as an aspect of the legal system, it certainly seems to be strongly rooted in the manner in which the law is perceived. If you push it to its logical conclusion, then you might find that marital rape is, in a sense, integral to the structure of Indian marriage. Marriages in the modern era were arranged between children younger than the age of consent. In fact, the idea of consent is interesting. It was formally put into the law because of the peculiarities of the Indian marriage system. In the traditional Indian system, you marry children to each other, not adults. The idea of marriage as a contract didn't exist at all, and you

1 This is a reference to one of her seminal works titled, Brahmanical Patriarchy.

2 Kawas Manekshaw Nanavati was a naval commander who was charged with and later sentenced for the murder of his wife's lover Prem Ahuja.

will find that throughout the 19th century there were famous cases centered around this. They had to legislate the age of consent rather than the age of marriage because that would have been too radical for the public. In 1861, they formally introduced a legal provision, and the age of consent was fixed at ten. At that stage, it went uncontested as most marriages would be just beyond that age.

There was a very famous case in Bengal. It was called the Phulmani case. She was twelve, and the husband was significantly older. A prevalent practice required them to live in their respective homes and occasionally visit each other. It was then that the husband would be given access to the bride. He was in his thirties and Phulmani died as a consequence of the actual consummation of the marriage. It was very highly contested and word got around. Pandita Ramabai, who was a feminist for her times, was of the opinion that the age of marriage should be raised to twelve, because what kind of informed consent is a child going to give? In fact, what kind of consent is presumed in the Indian arranged marriage system? Even the boys don't actually consent to the marriage.

Within the Indian context, it is common to see patriarchal consensus define the relief granted to women. That is precisely why consent remains contested. The idea of consent as actual consent, which would mean seeking permission rather than deeming it implied because of a legal union, is not widely accepted. When you accept marriage, you accept the rights of the husband over your body. This remains the subtext of the institution. Any implied, radical changes have yet to touch this aspect of marriage.

JK: Does the prioritization of analysing overtly sexual violence invisibilize other culturally rooted forms of compliance and can we see this compliance as violence?

UC: I think the compliance should certainly be seen as violence. You know, because it's the presumption that you are negotiating. If we analyze the sanction for the use of violence against women, it does not solely come from the husband. It can also be traced to the parental rights of a child. The idea that women are under the authority of men and that ultimately it is the man who has legal possession over her, is crucial to contextualize the entrenched acceptance of violence. This subtext is essential. Even though it may not formally be written into the law, the culture shapes everything.

JK: This is now related to an essay you had written about the Bhakti saints. Figures such as Andal have been utilized by different schools of feminist thought to propagate varied ideas about women's agency in India, and relative autonomy is often portrayed as evidence of absolute agency. So how should one navigate the subject of women's agency in Indian history?

UC: Bhakti literature is unique for the way in which it allows individuals to express themselves. The oral sphere was always available to you as a space in which you could participate and you could culturally pass down narratives. The accounts of Bhakti women are interesting because they are actually critiques in their own time, of the social structure. Through Bhakti, an expression of your poetry allowed you to democratically access God. Ritualisation was not given primacy. Men did not have to deal with internal contradictions regarding devotions. The Bhakti saint, householder or husband did not have a dilemma the Bhakti women dealt with. Full-scale devotion in the sphere of spirituality would take away from the devotion necessary for being a wife. It challenged the notions of marriage, domesticity and religiosity.

Even devotion to God is not acceptable within the structure of the patriarchal ideology. Devotion to anything beyond the husband is an interrogation of the whole system. If you return to the narratives, in many of these cases there is a contradiction. You can't actually live the life of a full-scale devotee and be the wife. Andal's verses represent bridal mysticism. She never married and is supposed to merge with God. The narrative tells you that, but it also captures a conundrum. There's this tension between marriage and Bhakti, full-scale Bhakti, because it means that you are devoted to something beyond the husband, and even that is not acceptable.

Cultural conditioning and cultural consciousness govern conformance. You conform to the ideology of the social codes under which you live, both caste and patriarchy. Even in the modern era, a woman interrogating these caveats would be considered insufficiently schooled. Women are not taught to value themselves. They can have access to food but may not know their dietary needs. Rassundari Devi's autobiography for instance demonstrates that in her life, the labor requirements of domesticity led to instances wherein she did not have the time to sit down and eat. She narrated such incidents in a casual tone that was not critical of the experience itself. Such evidence is proof that the impact of literacy cannot be understated. More than imparting an education, schools were training people to think in a certain manner. Students were always schooled into conceding their roles and were being shaped for the roles they were supposed to follow. In the 19th century, with the advent of formal learning, there was a crisis because the men were getting access to education, especially the upper caste man, who went in for colonial education to benefit from the new occupational structure. A structure which kept these educated Indians in the bottom rungs, in service of the empire.

Due to the vocation based utility of providing education, women were not brought into the schooling system. The young educated men began to perceive gender roles differently. A bourgeois domesticity was desired in a wife. I have mentioned such expectations in my book on Pandita Ramabai. There is an instance where a man is explicit about the education of a woman being aimed at pleasing her husband. Her skills in music or her knowledge of Shakespeare were desired. Not as a demonstration of her proficiency. Such skills were seen as prerequisites, their presence was emblematic of her competency with regards to satiating her husband.

Formal English education reached women so that they

may remain pliable wives of their husbands. However, they could do a lot with this access. Pandita Ramabai herself is a classic example. In an age of print and publishing, they began writing memoirs. Which is not to say such a platform was being used to primarily document oppression. In reality, when they got the pen, they did what they liked. There are several classical pieces of writing which explore several themes. For instance, Tarabhai Shinde writes a very angry text called Stri Purush Tulana. She writes about the dichotomy found within the experiences of men and women and through such a comparison, directly attacks the patriarchal system. Rassundari Devi, on the other hand, writes a memoir where she details the style of a good wife and good woman. She did not talk about the ills of patriarchy. I do not think there is much of a reference to formal violence against women in what she writes, but it is soaked with the differences between men and women in small ways.

From the fact that she is married off and sent to her husband's house when she was eight years old. She was begging her mother, asking her why she was sending her daughter off to a stranger. Through her writing, we can see an indictment of the system. Labour of women is essential in the household. A matter of fact tone was used to speak of issues such as the girl not being allowed to visit her mother's home very easily, and such visits requiring formal arrangements between both families. She did not complain about such circumstances, but their documentation can be read as critique. She once went hungry for about seventy-two hours, and she wrote that down as well. Once again, she was not complaining. She was simply, very candidly, documenting her reality. She wrote about how she was blessed to live in Kaliyuga, where girls were granted access to education. The dimensions of culture and the manner in which women have to conform thus, determines their agency.

JK: In the case of Akka Mahadevi for instance, she clearly states that her mortal husband could never satisfy her. How does this fit into the notion of autonomy?

UC: According to the legend, she was a beautiful woman. She had made a pact with the prince who became her husband. He was not to 'take her' against her will. He violated this contract by raping her, and she leaves home because of this breach. After leaving, she discards her clothing. She says if I can't be protected, what's the point of wearing this clothing? There are multiple ways in which you can read the same story. It is a challenge to patriarchal domesticity. The narrative is able to contain them and also provide us the tools used to break them. These days, she has been reduced to a devotee. It is interesting to witness the fact that her portrayals will rarely depict her nakedness. Her long hair is used to mask her figure. Her contract did not protect her from violence, her marriage perpetuated it.

There are forms of media which claim to be very radical, and they're being accepted as radical by those marketing the content and the public. The act of consuming such media is often perceived as non-conformist, but these are not radical critiques, as they are palatable to the society at large. Should we criticize these forms of media for actually operating within these permissible limits?

UC: We should. Look at controversies that generate when you do actually show full scale agency. You violate the 'unstated norms.' They might give you agency for everything. Let's begin with arranged marriage. Powerful tropes of love and choices hold the audience captive. This is a structure that has been allowed. However, it has to stay within certain boundaries for it to function in the concerned market. The market will not provide the public something they will not consume. The institution of marriage sells. Cultural practices that glamorize and reinforce the importance of marriage sell. It has to work within the ideological norms of that society. The market is important, but the ideology of the main consumers is also important and you must constantly uphold it. It is very common to encounter advertisements that bank on the affinity our society has with endogamous marriage. Perhaps this media might display social complexities but will not sufficiently interrogate the system. Such an interrogation is crucially not desired by the masses. Any changes we have seen in the media have arisen because what is 'acceptable' can always be redefined. Norms are subject to change.

JK: How would you interpret the proceedings of the Supreme Court case concerning the legalisation of same-sex marriage?

UC: I believe the legalisation of same sex marriage is caught in a balancing act between challenging the notion of a normative marriage and operating within the ideological strands that already exist. Some were seeking remedy under the transformed Hindu law. There are demerits to this, as a normative heteronormative ideology based on the reproductive family is reinstated in the underpinning of all aspects of society. Interrogating patriarchal structures cannot occur without interrogating the institution of marriage. We must confront the whole structure. Why should reproduction or the passage of property remain so integral to an individual's religious identity or identity for that matter? We are not sufficiently interrogating the inequality of this whole system, which cannot accept transformation based on desire. We have to separate desire from questions of reproduction. That is the challenge. It is an absolute challenge, and I'm not sure how many people are ready for it. You have to concede that the structure of relationships is deeply patriarchal, and it's deeply unequal from the point of view of hierarchy, including caste hierarchy. I don't think anyone's ready to go that route.

Transporting Female Convicts to the Andaman Islands

A Strategy to Achieve Imperial Objectives

This research paper examines convict marriages in the Andaman Islands during the late nineteenth century, with a focus on female convicts' multifaceted role in the penal colony. This study critically interprets colonial archives to reveal how these marriages served the British colonial administrations' broader imperial objectives. The main arguments emphasize female convicts' centrality to the Andaman's stability and functionality, underscoring the colonial intentionality behind transporting women to the penal settlement. Exploring the interactions between gender, colonialism, and penal reform unveils the settlement's socio-economic landscape. The conclusion highlights these marriages' dual purpose within this context: reinforcing colonial control while facilitating social rehabilitation. This paper ultimately delves into a historically understudied group—female convicts—to provide a nuanced understanding of agency in the Indian Ocean World.

Ava Lorusso

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

Introduction

For centuries, the colonial government turned to punitive relocation as a means of imperial organization and discipline—a practice often associated with the New South Wales colony.[1] Nevertheless, penal transportation (its presence and significance) has been historically ignored, especially in Indian Ocean studies. The Indian Rebellion of 1857, known as the Sepoy Mutiny, compelled the British Empire to reassess its colonial governance.

Following this incident, the British colonial approach shifted towards leveraging Indian resources and manpower to advance its interest in the Indian Ocean arena.[2] The establishment of penal settlements spurred this changing policy. These colonies were used to manage and regulate individuals deemed as threats or deserving of punishment in the eyes of colonial authorities. Essentially, these penal colonies were integral to the empire asserting colonial supremacy and control over India.[3]

Established in 1857, the Andaman Islands were a settlement for the British, acting as a main destination in their penal transportation system in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The male convicts sent to this colony have been heavily studied and have been credited with a significant role in settling the island through manual labor.[4] The experience of female convicts in the Andamans, however, remains comparatively unexplored. Little has been written about the distinct expectations, treatment, and opportunities for female convicts in this penal system, allowing for their contribution to British imperial expansion to be widely overlooked.

This study delves into the multifaceted role of female convicts in the Andaman Islands during the late nineteenth century. Historical sources reveal that beyond their function as marriage partners, female convicts were integral to the penal colony's operations as they undertook domestic responsibilities. This dual role highlights the wider imperial objectives behind bringing female convicts to the Andamans: first, to have women provide support to men in fulfilling their labor duties effectively, and second, to have the institution of convict marriage serve as a means of social control, rehabilitation, and colonial expansion in the islands.

Review of Scholarship

Scholarship on the Institution of Penal Transportation

Scholarship on penal transportation in the Indian Ocean World falls under two waves, a decade removed from one another. Published in 2000, Satadru Sen's work represents an early wave of research—one which focused on how colonial discipline established "social, political, and physical"

1 Clare Anderson, *Convicts: A Global History* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 9; Anand A. Yang, *Empire of Convicts: Indian Penal Labor in Colonial Southeast Asia* (University of California Press, 2021), 14.

2 Habib Manzer and Ashfaque Ali, "Female Convicts and Andamans Penal Settlement During Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 70 (2010): 635, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44147710.

3 Manzer and Ali, "Female Convicts," 635.

4 Anand A. Yang, *Empire of Convicts: Indian Penal Labor in Colonial Southeast Asia* (University of California Press, 2021), 12.

structures and confirmed the hierarchies of colonialism.[5] A prevalent movie of the time, *Kaalapani* (1996), perpetuated colonial convicts as heroes who fought against metropole oppression. It is in this context that Sen addresses a fact often overlooked at the turn of the twenty-first century: that over 10,000 convicts were already transported to the Andaman Islands before the first nationalist prisoners even arrived.[6]

This early scholarship added to penal transportation studies as it emphasized that political prisoners made up only a small minority of the total convict population in the islands.[7] While Sen stresses that his work tells the story of ordinary convicts, the field did not use convicts' individual stories to understand penal transportation.[8] Scholars, like Sen, only drew from colonial archives as the central primary source to support their analysis. This early wave was simply a documentary approach to understanding penal transportation. It offered a framework of colonial punitive society and argued that convicts were transported to settlements to be rehabilitated and to demonstrate loyalty to the empire.[9]

In the decade following, scholarship transitioned to a biographical approach to understanding convicts' experiences. Since then, the field has adopted this "subaltern" framework, moving beyond a narrow focus on how "crime" and "rehabilitation" appeared in the colonial context.[10] This methodological shift, sparked by historian Claire Anderson's *Subaltern Lives* (2012), views marginality as a dynamic process. The new scholarship argues that convicts maintained agency, continuing to live their lives after being transported.[11]

Anderson's subsequent work and contributions of Anand Yang, history professor at the University of Washington, have further advanced the field's exploration of subaltern histories. Through a subaltern lens, the scholarship argues that convicts played a pivotal role as the workforce behind penal settlements' infrastructure.[12] This shift is also reflected in primary source use. Early works solely relied on colonial archives, leading to a limited perspective, while modern scholarship has progressively incorporated journals, personal accounts, online sources, newspapers, factory records, and oral histories.[13] Recent scholarship essentially situates penal transportation in terms of empire, forms of coerced labor, and the broader global context.

Scholarship on Female Convicts in the Andamans

While the field has made clear methodological progress, its influential works primarily concentrate on male convicts. Scholarship on female convicts receives less attention in prominent monographs, yet it still offers valuable insight into their purpose on the islands. This scholarship delves into the complexities of convict marriages, specifically highlighting the colonial administration's challenges in establishing and managing families within the penal colony. It explores how marriage was central to imperial colonization objectives. Scholars collectively maintain that colonial authorities believed women would bring familial stability to the colony, reflecting socio-sexual norms and social reproduction.[14]

The colonial administration faced difficulties in encouraging convict families to relocate, leading them to turn to convict women as a solution. Here, marriage among convicts became a tool for domesticating the Andamans.[15] Accounting for this, the scholarship underlines how colonial powers framed the Andamans as fertile ground for expansion, emphasizing the broader socio-political agenda behind convict marriages in the Andamans—namely, establishing permanent settlements.[16]

This scholarship's notable limitation lies in its narrow range of primary sources. Much like earlier studies on penal transportation, scholarship on female convicts only draws on colonial records, occasionally supplemented with personal papers from male convicts, as evident in Habib Manzer and Ashfaque Ali's reference to Maulana Mohammad Jafar Thanessari's writing.[17] This limited scope results from the scarcity of documented female experiences, especially those that have survived to the present day. Consequently, scholars focusing on female convicts often adopt an imperial lens—one which situates women within the broader colonial framework, rather than as individuals. This creates a significant gap in the scholarship: It overlooks the specific roles and activities women performed beyond their marriages.

As a whole, scholars argue that female convicts were transported to the Andamans to marry male convicts, with marriage facilitating the settlement process.[18] This perspective stems from the empire's view that women and families in the Andamans were key to controlling and rehabilitating male

5 Satadru Sen, *Disciplining Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 248.

6 Sen, *Disciplining Punishment*, vi.

7 Sen, vi.

8 Sen, vi.

9 Sen, 8, 12, 86.

10 Clare Anderson, *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 196–99.

11 Anderson, *Convicts: A Global History*, 390.

12 Anderson, 390; Yang, *Empire of Convicts*, 8.

13 Sen, *Disciplining Punishment*, 116; Anderson, *Subaltern Lives*, 196–99.

14 Satadru Sen, "Rationing Sex: Female Convicts in the Andamans," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 22, no. 2 (1998): 38, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856409808723342.

15 Suparna Sengupta, "'Intimate Violence' and the 'Sexual Contract': Female Convicts and Marriage 'System' in Andamans, c. 1860–c.1920," in *Kala Pani Crossings, Gender and Diaspora*, ed. Judith Misrahi-Barak, Ritu Tyagi, and H. Kalpana Rao (Routledge, 2023), 72, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032639437; Sen, "Rationing Sex," 32.

16 Aparna Vaidik, "Settling the Convict: Matrimony and Domesticity in the Andamans," *Studies in History* 22, no. 2 (2006): 249–50, https://doi.org/10.1177/025764300602200203; Manzer and Ali, "Female Convicts," 635.

17 Manzer and Ali, 639.

18 Manzer and Ali, 638.

convicts, as they would introduce domesticity, incentivize order, and discourage homosexual behavior.[19] The consensus in the field is that marriage and family structures were tools for regulating behavior.

Adopting a Methodology

This study will adopt a "reading against the grain" approach, drawing inspiration from Anderson's methodology, to conduct a thorough analysis with limited colonial archives.[20] Discursive reading is important as it uncovers hidden or alternative perspectives within historical narratives. It challenges traditional interpretations and assumptions, revealing complexities and nuances that might be overlooked in a surface-level reading. This approach is crucial in historical and literary analysis as it encourages critical thinking, promotes a deeper understanding of historical events or texts, and helps to avoid simplistic or biased interpretations. By reading against the grain, scholars can unearth marginalized voices, question imperial narratives, and construct more comprehensive representations of the past.[21]

Aligned closely with existing scholarship concerning female convicts, this paper contributes to a nuanced understanding of penal transportation and convict life. It argues that female convicts were essential to imperial ambitions, just as scholars argue male convicts were. Unlike the predominant focus on matrimony in female convict scholarship, this paper introduces a vital dimension to the field using Anderson's method: Colonial powers strategically transported female convicts to the Andamans for immediate operational purposes before their eventual marriage. This argument sheds light on overlooked aspects of convict experiences.

Intentions with the Andamans

Settling the Land

An article in *The Times of India* from 1883 discusses the British Empire's decision in 1859 to establish the Andaman Islands as a penal settlement, reflecting a broader colonial strategy to colonize.[22] The article reports that the colonial power characterized the Andamans as savage, framing the land as untamed territories requiring civilization. This portrayal specifically focused on the indigenous population—depicting them as in need of control—to justify imperial intervention.[23]

The Chamber's Journal, published in the *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature*, echoes this intent. The entry provides geographical and administrative details about the Andaman Islands, highlighting their location in the Bay of Bengal and plans for eventual colonization of the mainland.[24] Manzer and Ali also note how Governor-General Canning proposed establishing a penal colony in the Andaman Islands, as an initial intervention in the region.[25] The decision to designate the islands as a penal settlement was presented to serve a dual purpose: addressing overcrowded prisons on the subcontinent while advancing colonial territorial expansion.[26]

The selection of Port Blair as the administrative center reinforced this narrative, as described by a visiting government commissioner in 1866; he depicted the land as ideal for expansion and labeled the native people, once again, as savage.[27] The transformation of the once sparsely inhabited island into a colony for European settlers and officials symbolized the colonial powers' colonizing mission. Using male convicts for infrastructure development and jungle clearing, and female convicts to help them effectively do so, allowed the empire to impose its authority.[28]

The imperial government attempted to populate the Andamans with released convicts to achieve their expansion goal—essentially, they intended for convicts to settle, marry, and establish homes after serving part of their sentences. This strategy reflects colonization through rehabilitation and convict settlement. In fact, the *Times of India* article from 1883 ultimately described the Andamans as fertile land and expected a thriving population within fifty years, further emphasizing the colonial approach to land development and settlement.[29]

Bringing Women to the Islands

There was a consensus among colonial authorities that women would be vital to achieving this settlement goal.[30] According to Sen, government officials, such as C. J. Lyall and A. S. Lethbridge, perceived women in two lights: one where women could potentially bring moral disorder, particularly regarding sex, and the other recognizing them as valuable assets in compelling men to remain on the islands.[31] In May 1858, J. P. Walker, the superintendent in Port Blair at that time, endorsed women's presence as they were seen as essential. This prompted early colonial efforts to incentivize

19 Vaidik, "Settling the Convict," 231; Manzer and Ali, "Female Convicts," 637.

20 Anderson, *Subaltern Lives*, 32.

21 Anderson, 28.

22 "Port Blair and the Andaman Islands," *Times of India*, June 25, 1883, https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/port-blair-andaman-islands/docview/234566550/se-2.

23 Government Commissioner, "A Visit to the Andaman Islands (The Convict Settlement for India)," *Good Words*, May 1866, 307, https://www.proquest.com/historical-periodicals/visit-andaman-islands-convict-settlement-india/docview/3311710/se-2.

24 "The Andaman Islands," *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature*, February 1861, 278, https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/andaman-islands/docview/89737407/se-2.

25 Manzer and Ali, "Female Convicts," 635–636.

26 "Port Blair and the Andaman Islands."

27 Government Commissioner, "A Visit to the Andaman Islands," 312.

28 "Port Blair and the Andaman Islands."

29 "Port Blair and the Andaman Islands."

30 Sen, "Rationing Sex," 30.

31 Sen, 30.

male convicts' families to relocate to the Andamans.[32]

Efforts to encourage relocation involved land allocations and agricultural opportunity proposals sent to the men's families back in India. These notices aimed to portray family relocation as integral to the colony's stability, productivity, and overall success.[33] In 1860, with only three out of 143 families contacted agreeing to move, the Government of India deemed these efforts unsuccessful and terminated them.[34]

Following this, a new strategy was implemented to meet imperial goals. Rather than convincing free women to relocate, authorities transported convicted women to the settlement beginning in 1860.[35] The women transported were typically those convicted as or accused of being murderers, abusers, or ill-suited mothers.[36] This showcases how imperial social control was imposed across the Indian Ocean. Not only were Indian women uprooted from one context and placed in another, but the transportation aimed to rehabilitate convicted women while simultaneously keeping women on the subcontinent in line. This underscores that women were part of a larger colonial strategy to maintain social governance.

Objective One: Take Care of the Men

Female Convicts' Roles and Responsibilities

The Cincinnati Enquirer released statistics in 1896 regarding three major Andaman Islands—Chatham Island, Ross Island, and Viper Island—used as stations for convicts. The report documents that these islands accommodated around 17,000 individuals, including approximately 2,500 women.[37] While there were comparatively few women, secondhand accounts unveil female convicts' diverse roles in the settlement. They were not just martial companions but were also tasked with domestic work (cleaning, cooking, etc.) before marriage. These responsibilities underscore the first imperial objective of transporting female convicts to the Andamans: to support male convict laborers.

In 1898, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published an account by an independent traveler who visited the Andamans. The article delves into an unnamed Imperial Army sea captain's perspective of the penal settlement. The captain detailed the various tasks female convicts carried out in the jail, including weaving clothes for both male convicts and themselves, as well as maintaining the grounds.[38]

Similarly, Colonel Horsford, a chief commissioner and superintendent of the Andamans, submitted an annual administrative report published in the *Calcutta Review* in 1893. The report outlined several activities related to prison labor and manufacturing. It mentions that female convicts were involved in weaving cotton clothing and sooji-sifting (a process related to grain or flour), with those at Viper specifically engaged in wool weaving.[39] A critical detail is included in this report: Hosford explains that female convicts were restricted to working within the jail.[40] With no other approved activities sanctioned by the commission, female convicts were specifically tasked with domestic-like responsibilities intended to sustain male convicts.[41]

Ensuring Their Compliance

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* account also discloses the measures colonial authorities took to ensure female convicts' compliance with these supporting responsibilities. The captain lays out the different disciplinary forms in the female jails, which escalated if misconduct persisted. The first level of punishment involved cutting the convicts' hair; notably, the author referred to the women in these jails in a derogatory manner, voicing that they must be vain if their punishment was this superficial. This detail implies that female convicts were not viewed humanely—they were, instead, seen simply as a means to aid male convicts.[42]

The second, more severe, punishment involved forcing women to wear low-quality men's clothing and perform men's manual labor tasks. Specifically, the source mentions that the trousers and jackets provided were made of rough, low-grade material, and the tasks assigned to women are described as involving pushing wheelbarrows and working in dirty conditions similar to the male convicts. The phrase "very unbecoming" is used to describe the unattractive nature of this punishment, reinforcing the degrading treatment these women endured.[43]

The final, and most extreme, punishment was carried out if the initial punishment failed to correct their behavior. In this case, female convicts were subjected to sleeping in a cell covered with branches arranged in a grill-like pattern. These branches are described as having sharp thorns, making women extremely uncomfortable in any position. The intention was to create such discomfort that one night of this punishment would be sufficient to reform even the most resistant

32 Sen, 30; Suparna, "'Intimate Violence' and the 'Sexual Contract,'" 72.

33 Suparna, 72.

34 Sen, "Rationing Sex," 32.

35 Sen, 32.

36 Vaidik, "Settling the Convict," 238.

37 "Great: Penal Colony of India: Sketches of Life on the Andaman Islands," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 22, 1896, https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/great/docview/895582025/se-2.

38 "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 25, 1898, https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/marriages-among-convicts-at-andaman/docview/579433650/se-2.

39 "Report on the Administration of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Penal Settlement of Port Blair for 1891–92," *Calcutta Review* 97, no. 194 (1893): 413, https://www.proquest.com/historical-periodicals/report-on-administration-andaman-nicobar-islands/docview/5269855/se-2?accountid=15053.

40 "Report on the Administration."

41 "Report on the Administration."

42 "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman."

43 "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman."

individual.[44] While punishment is still customary for convict rehabilitation, in this context, it specifically targeted women for incomplete work, pinpointing how female convict labor was aimed to meet colonial objectives.

Objective Two: Permanent Settlement

The Purpose of Convict Marriage

With the first objective of having female convicts support male convict laborers achieved, the subsequent objective of the transportation was for female convicts to marry. These marriages were not merely individual unions but formed a strategy for social control, rehabilitation, and territorial expansion within the islands.[45] Imperial authorities incentivized compliance through marriage, aiming to maintain order in the settlement after release; further, it was believed that women, particularly in their roles as wives, could effectively regulate male convicts' behavior.[46] The *Times of India* article from 1883 confirms that this was a primary reason female convicts were brought to the islands. It voices that the government intended for convicts to populate the Andamans after marriage and release.[47] Therefore, through the institution of marriage, colonial authorities not only controlled men's actions but also engineered familial structures and social norms, allowing their jurisdiction and governance to extend into private lives.[48]

The Marriage Process

A key component of the marriage process was the self-supporter system. This system is designed to reform convicts while reducing the government's maintenance costs. Well-behaved convicts, known as self-supporters, received a ticket of leave to pursue a profession, such as farming, trading, skilled labor, or clerical and government roles within the settlement.[49] This system, as detailed in an 1897 piece from *The London Journal*, integrated with matrimony, as self-supporters were allowed to marry.[50]

Henry Du Pré Labouchere, a British politician, published a letter from an unknown source about marriages in the Andmans, further expanding on this system's connection to marriage. This letter highlighted that the self-support status was difficult to attain. Both parties needed to be serving a life sentence of exile on the islands, with permission for marriage contingent upon their demonstrated conduct over time. The status required a decade of good behavior for men and five years of penal servitude for women.[51] The fact that women did not have to demonstrate prolonged good behavior for this status confirms that the colonial authorities deliberately made it possible for their marriage objective to be fulfilled; with a surplus of male convicts compared to their counterparts, ensuring the marriage of all women was crucial for settlement.

The process for convicts seeking marriage is detailed in the Labouchere letter and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article. Male convicts first need permission to visit the female jail to find a spouse.[52] When the jails had enough men and women with a ticket of leave, they organized a marriage ceremony. Men were individually brought into a reception room where eligible women were lined up, with gaps to distinguish between different castes and religions, reflecting the government's strict attention to social distinctions.[53]

Both sources outline that the convicts' information was submitted for superintendent approval if a match was found, which checks for caste compatibility. The Senior Medical Officer then conducted health checks. Upon passing, the couple expressed their wish to marry. Formal consent was given, and they declared their marriage before the superintendent after a week or ten days. The declaration was added to their application, and inquiries were made to confirm previous marital status. Only after confirmation was a marriage sanctioned, ensuring thorough verification at every step.[54]

The Broader Imperial Strategy

Two critical aspects of these marriages underscore their role within the broader imperial strategy of expansion and settlement. Firstly, the colonial authorities fabricated and oversaw the entire process; this is best seen through the Chief Commissioner assuming ultimate authority in convict matrimonial matters, acting as the licenser, registrar, officiant, and witness all in one.[55] Further, an 1892 article from *The Times of India* explains that the authorities ensured the legality of the ceremony after permission was granted.[56] Together, these examples underline the empire's meticulous efforts to legitimize and actualize marriages, framing marriage as necessary. This objective was central to transporting female convicts to the region, as it was a means for the empire to colonize the Andamans.

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44 "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman."

45 Suparna, "'Intimate Violence' and the 'Sexual Contract,'" 78.

46 Sen, "Rationing Sex," 38.

47 "Port Blair and the Andaman Islands."

48 Sen, "Rationing Sex," 40.

49 Vaidik, "Settling the Convict," 227.

50 "Wives on Probation," *London Journal, and Weekly Record of Literature, Science, and Art*, July 10, 1897, 22, https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-periodicals/wives-on-probation/docview/3806747/se-2.

51 "Marriage in the Andamans," *Times of India*, July 8, 1891, https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/marriage-andamans/docview/234274643/se-2.

52 "Marriage in the Andamans."

53 "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman."

54 "Marriage in the Andamans"; "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman."

55 "Wives on Probation."

56 "Convict Marriages at Port Blair," *Times of India*, March 31, 1892, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/convict-marriages-at-port-blair/docview/603210851/se-2?accountid=15053.

Additionally, a competitive atmosphere pervaded these marriages, as is particularly evident when a self-supporting convict would visit the female jail to choose a partner. The 1897 piece from *The London Journal* vividly portrays how women eagerly displayed their qualities and vied for attention. When the overseer was momentarily distracted, the women became more assertive in their attempts to win over the self-supporter; the piece includes how women shouted "No—me!" or "Here, take me!" to the man.[57] This eagerness among the women alludes to imperial accomplishment; in these moments, marriage became synonymous with purpose for these women, reflecting the empire's success in framing marriage as essential.

Life After Marriage

The marriage process, however, did not end after sanctioning. According to the piece from *The London Journal*, once all the necessary steps were completed, the woman was given to the man for a seven-day trial period. During this time, they lived together as a married couple. If the trial period went smoothly, they returned to the commissioner's office to be officially married.[58] Following this, they were permitted to travel to the Nicobar Islands and settle on government-owned land, once again showcasing the empire's control over this process.[59] If issues ensued, the man proceeded independently, and the woman returned to the female jail.[60] This process reveals a stark gender disparity: The fact that women faced reincarceration highlights their limited agency compared to men and their role as mere instruments for marriage on the island.

Even after successful marriages, the state continued to exert control over the lives of those released from jail. Marriage did not grant convicts freedom from their "criminal identities."[61] As a result, domesticity offered temporary relief from a convict status. This marked a liminal existence between social integration and state control: Despite building familial ties, convicts remained subject to government oversight and surveillance.[62] Thus, postmarital life serves as a final piece in illustrating how the transportation of female convicts was integral to imperial social control in the Andamans.

Nuancing Agency in the Indian Ocean World

Studying historical actors offers valuable insight into the Indian Ocean World. A significant theme arises in doing so: Agency exists among groups like indentured servants, soldiers, and migrants. Sugata Bose challenged earlier perspectives that viewed nineteenth-century indentured servitude as a new system of slavery, emphasizing instead that indentured laborers were active agents in their migration.[63] By delving into personal papers, Bose also uncovered Indian soldiers' self-perception as agents of the British empire.[64] Building on this narrative, Sunil S. Amrith categorized these historical actors as migrants and drew attention to how they had autonomy in their movement.[65]

Examining the female convict experience offers a nuanced understanding of agency in penal colonies. Female convicts did not have the same agency as indentured laborers, soldiers, migrants, or even male convicts who could choose their wives. While marrying as a convict initially appears as an exercise of agency, the reality is more complex. For female convicts, marriage was not a matter of personal choice but rather a strategic mechanism of social control, rehabilitation, and colonial expansion orchestrated by colonial authorities. Convict marriages also promoted male entitlement to these women's bodies, leaving women devoid of self-ownership.[66]

Paired with this, female convicts not only lacked control of their relocation but also had no autonomy over their responsibilities while in jail. Their purpose was determined prior to their transportation, and colonial objectives were indoctrinated into them. This is evident through the three levels of punishment they faced and their eagerness to marry.[67] Therefore, the combination of penal transportation, labor, and matrimony formed a systemic strategy to colonize the Andamans, highlighting the broader imperial objectives.

Conclusion

Female convicts were significant actors in the late nineteenth-century Andaman Islands. Beyond their role as marriage partners, female convicts were pivotal to the functioning of the penal colony through their domestic-like tasks. Here, it is clear that female convicts were brought to the islands first, to provide essential support to the male convicts, and second, to marry. Examining transportation, labor, and marriage through the lens of female convicts reveals their presence as a strategic tool of colonial governance and settlement.

The British administration used the Andamans not just for rehabilitation but also as a means to extend their imperial reach—only in analyzing the female experience is their objective fully revealed. By reading against the grain, insights are also offered about how these women's experiences differed from their male counterparts, notably in their limited agency. This study ultimately unveils the intricate layers

57 "Wives on Probation."
58 "Wives on Probation."
59 "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman."
60 "Wives on Probation."
61 Vaidik, "Settling the Convict," 249–50.
62 Vaidik, 232.
63 Sugata Bose, "Flows of Capitalists, Laborers, and Commodities," chap. 3 in *A Hundred Horizons the Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2006).
64 Sugata Bose, "Waging War for King and Country," chap. 4 in *A Hundred Horizons the Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2006).
65 Sunil S. Amrith, "Human Traffic," chap. 4 in *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Harvard University Press, 2006).
66 Suparna, "'Intimate Violence' and the 'Sexual Contract,'" 78.
67 "Marriages Among Convicts at Andaman"; "Wives on Probation."

of colonial rule and gender dynamics within the Anadamns: Female convicts contributed to and were influenced by broader imperial goals.

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Invisible to the Lens, Invisible to the Mind

The Erasure of South African Women's Involvement in the Soweto Uprising from Historical Narratives in Newspaper Coverage

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The Bantu education system was a segregationist effort to ensure substandard educational opportunities for Black students in South Africa during the apartheid era. The later introduction of Afrikaans as a mandatory language of instruction to further impede Black students' ability to leverage a beneficial education sparked a wave of public outrage that quickly morphed into the Soweto uprising, a set of protests led by schoolchildren on June 16, 1976. Young South African women were at the forefront of this act of resistance helping organize and coordinate these protests. However, despite their important contributions to the Soweto uprising, South African women were excluded from the historical narratives conveyed in newspaper coverage around this landmark event. This paper sheds light on the vital role and sacrifices of South African women in the Soweto uprising in the absence of archival work that celebrates them. Aside from exploring the gender dynamics of the Soweto uprising, this paper delves into how prominent newspapers at the time failed to include women in their coverage of the event through a selective gendering of social documentary photography and an omission of eyewitness accounts from female participants. As a result, this erasure of South African women helped circulate an exclusionary historical narrative around the Soweto uprising, depicting this struggle as a male-led initiative only and minimizing the impact of these women who put their lives on the line for freedom.

Introduction

On June 16, 1976, the atrocities committed by the apartheid regime were exposed to the world. The picture of a young Black student shot by the police for protesting against an oppressive authority circulated in newspapers across the world, sparking public outrage. This incident took place during the Soweto uprising, a set of protests led by South African youth in opposition to the repressive educational system they were subject to. Violence between schoolchildren and the police quickly broke out, and journalists rushed to cover the uprising. Newspaper coverage, in particular, was extensive across the world, giving international exposure to the Soweto uprising and making it a global matter. These protests, however, were reported in contentious ways, sparking debate about distortions to the historical narrative around the uprising. These distortions often demonized protest leaders and depicted the uprising as an isolated and unjustified violent instance. Women, in particular, were invisible to the coverage of these protests, giving the illusion of their absence in the Soweto uprising. The omission of women's involvement in the Soweto uprising in newspaper coverage thus allowed for the creation of a historical narrative that excluded women from this struggle and underestimated their contributions and sacrifices in their resistance to apartheid.

Pam Warne once wrote about the South African struggle for liberation, saying that "from the 1980s onwards, the presence of women's voices can be consistently heard."[1] The same, however, cannot be applied to the 1970s, a period during which women became extremely active in the fight against apartheid and yet were never recognized for their efforts. This paper sheds light on this overshadowed part of South African history by analyzing the discrepancy between South African women's participation in the Soweto uprising and the gendered rhetoric around the uprising crafted by journalists at the time. I argue that newspaper coverage of the Soweto uprising erased South African women's involvement in the uprising through a selective gendering of social documentary photography and an omission of eyewitness accounts from female participants, creating an exclusionary historical narrative that depicts these protests as a male-led initiative only. The male participants of these historical narratives, in the eyes and minds of the world, became the sole heroes of the fight for freedom in Soweto.

1 Claudia Marion Stemberger, "Spot on South Africa: Women Photographers—An Interview With Pam Warne, Curator of Photography and New Media at Iziko Museums in Cape Town," Eikon: International Magazine for Photography and Media Art 70 (2010), quoted in Kylie Thomas, "History of Photography in Apartheid South Africa," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, April 26, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.706.

In the first section of this paper, I delve into the literature surrounding the Soweto uprising and the limited work addressing the involvement of women in these protests. In the second section, I explore the gender dynamics in the Soweto uprising, highlighting evidence of women's involvement in the planning and organization of these protests. The primary sources analyzed in this section are a compilation of interviews and accounts of female participants. In the third section, I dissect some newspaper coverage of the Soweto uprising to highlight the absence of information on women's involvement during this event. The primary sources I rely on are the coverage of the June 1976 events in issues of *The World*, *Southern Magazine*, and *The Anti-Apartheid News*.

By delving into these driving themes, I analyze the Soweto uprising from a feminist lens to shed light on an exclusionary historical narrative around this landmark event. This paper is a celebration of the women who put their lives on the line in their struggle for freedom and yet were invisible in the eyes and minds of everyone else.

The Soweto Uprising

Soweto, a township of Johannesburg, was a predominantly Black region of seven hundred thousand people in the 1970s.[2] The five hundred thousand White residents rarely interacted with their Black neighbors because of segregation policies that required government passes to move around the township.[3] Black communities in Soweto were only allowed in the township by consent of the government and therefore subject to the mandated apartheid laws.[4] These laws included limits on water supply and electricity alongside restrictions on the establishment of Black-led stores and businesses.[5] Consequently, the living conditions of Black Sowetans had been deteriorating in comparison to those of White suburbs in Johannesburg.[6] These economic barriers were paired with social policies to further impede any prospect for success and development for Black South Africans. One of the mandated social policies was the Bantu education system, which made it compulsory for schools in Soweto to teach subjects in Afrikaans even though most students and instructors spoke English, Sotho, or Zulu.[7] Considering that few teachers were trained to instruct in a foreign language, Afrikaans, this policy heavily affected the quality of education provided to Sowetan students.[8]

Outrage among Black Sowetans with this education policy reached its apex on June 16, 1976, when a large group of Black students marched the streets of Soweto in opposition to the Bantu education system.[9] Thousands of students in school uniforms protested in front of their schools, shouting, raising their fists in the air, and holding placards denouncing apartheid.[10] These protests increased in size throughout the day and across the township, amounting to fifteen thousand students.[11] The crowd, however, was quickly ambushed by armed police, which responded violently to the demonstrations.[12] The commission tasked to look into the role of police in these uprisings found that law enforcement agents used over fifty thousand rounds of ammunition, killing 284 students and injuring 2,000 others between June 16 and 18.[13]

These protests were led by the Soweto Student Representative Council, an organization that coordinated students across the township and planned the uprising.[14] To ensure mass mobilization, the Soweto Student Representative Council called on parents and students to participate in the uprising and put an end to the Bantu education system.[15] The reach of these protests quickly expanded to include Black workers, who announced a general strike against the oppressive labor restrictions of apartheid.[16] As anti apartheid opposition continued to escalate, Prime Minister John Vorster announced that "law and order will be maintained at all costs."[17] This threat was accompanied by numerous killings of students, house raids, and mass arrests of children across Soweto.[18] The uprising had escalated to a national crisis and helped disrupt the control of apartheid over the region.

The role of the Soweto uprising as a turning point in the history of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa cannot be overstated. These protests served as a foundation for other rebellious movements and acts of resistance across the country involving South African students, teachers, parents, and other community members.

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2 "In Soweto Township, Living is a Mixture of Privilege and Passes," *New York Times*, June. 17, 1976, 3, https://www.nytimes.com/1976/06/17/archives/in-soweto-township-living-is-a-mixture-of-privilege-and-passes.html.

3 "In Soweto Township," 3.

4 Rebecca Ginsburg, "'Come in the Dark': Domestic Workers and Their Rooms in Apartheid-Era Johannesburg, South Africa," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Sally McMurry and Annmarie Adams, vol. 8, *People, Power, Places* (University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 90, https://doi.org/10.2307/3514408.

5 "In Soweto Township," 3.

6 "In Soweto Township," 3.

7 Allison K. Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad: Gavin Jantjes's Screenprints of the 1970s," *Art Journal* 76, nos. 3–4 (2017): 11, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2017.1412742.

8 Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad," 11.

9 Christabel Gurney, "The 1970s: The Anti-Apartheid Movement's Difficult Decade," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 2 (2009): 480, https://doi.org/10.1080/03056247808703347.

10 Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, "'I Saw a Nightmare . . .': Violence and the Construction of Memory (Soweto, June 16, 1976)," *History and Theory* 39, no. 4 (2000): 25-26, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2678048.

11 Archie Mafeje, "Soweto and Its Aftermath," *Review of African Political Economy* 5, no. 11 (1978): 18, https://doi.org/10.1080/03056247808703347.

12 Gurney, "Anti-Apartheid Movement's Difficult Decade," 480.

13 Mafeje, "Soweto and Its Aftermath," 18.

14 Mafeje, 18.

15 Soweto Students' Representative Council, "Students and Parents of Soweto," Digital Innovation South Africa, https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/cir19770900032009796.

16 Gurney, "Anti-Apartheid Movement's Difficult Decade," 481; Mafeje, "Soweto and Its Aftermath," 19.

17 Mafeje, 21.

18 Mafeje, 21.

The experience of South African women in the Soweto uprising was characterized by the intersectionality of their identity. While they faced similar race-related restrictions to their male comrades, South African women were also exposed to a patriarchal society that subjected them to abuse and different forms of sexual violence. Despite these struggles, however, South African women actively participated in the Soweto uprising at different levels.

At home, young female activists challenged their parents' reluctance to allow their involvement in the Soweto uprising.[19] Their houses were often raided by the police as the anti apartheid organizations used them to hide important documents and arms.[20] In schools, young women were subject to sexual violence and rape perpetrated by teachers and male classmates, especially in the 1970s.[21] The existing legal structures set by the apartheid regime prevented any accountability and promoted impunity for these types of crimes.[22] Female students were also often beaten with a "sjambok," a heavy whip made out of leather or animal hides, when failing to clean classrooms.[23] In the streets, female participants relied on numerous strategies to conceal their femininity and facilitate their involvement in the protests.[24] Despite the concrete efforts of female participants to lead and contribute to the Soweto uprising, the absence of detailed membership records from anti apartheid organizations due to government persecution makes it extremely difficult to track their involvement and assert the role they played in these protests.[25]

Existing Scholarship on the Soweto Uprising

The historical importance of the Soweto uprising led to extensive scholarship on the matter, as scholars and journalists delved into the intricacies of these protests. Scholars were particularly concerned with the portrayal of the Soweto uprising in newspaper coverage as it often depicted these efforts as an unjustified display of violence. Helena Pohland-McCormick explains that the rhetoric around the Soweto uprising was largely shaped by the silencing of victims.[26] The apartheid authorities took control of this historical narrative, distorting the ideological motivations that sparked these protests.[27] Pohland-McCormick finds that members of the apartheid regime tampered with evidence of police brutality by destroying records of the Magistrates Courts, discarding the bodies of murdered children, and concealing the identities of dissenters.[28] The shooting of schoolchildren was also often justified by demonizing participants of the Soweto uprising or asserting the right to self-defense.[29]

These distortions to the historical narrative around the Soweto uprising depicted a violent image of the protests to the international community, further exacerbating efforts of the apartheid regime to justify police behavior. For example, *The Times*, a British newspaper, displayed on its front page a photograph of South African youth marching the streets of Soweto accompanied with the caption "black rioters hurling stones at the police."[30] *The Daily Mail*, another British newspaper, referred to a picture of students running toward the camera as a group of "young rioters run[ning] wild in Soweto."[31] This type of coverage raised different clashing historical narratives, most of which were often conditioned by apartheid's efforts to protect its legitimacy.[32]

In an attempt to regain control over the historical narrative around the Soweto uprising, South African activists relied on a number of means to convey their situation and the atrocities committed by the apartheid regime. Social documentary photography, or the use of photography to reveal social issues, became a prominent strategy to bridge between South Africa and the international community. Okwi Enwezor, a prominent art curator, argued that photography frightened the apartheid regime because of its ability to "expose and counteract the sanitized propagandistic images working in the government's favor."[33] South African photographers such as Peter Magubane took on this serious role, capturing intense scenes of violence between children and the police during the Soweto uprising.[34]

Considering the unexpected nature of the Soweto uprising, foreign correspondents were not able to cover the beginning of the protests, relying on local South African photographers in their reporting.[35] A range of photographs representing tortured political activists and injured Sowetans

19 Emily Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid: Gender, Youth, and South Africa's Liberation Struggle* (Boydell & Brewer, 2021), 42, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1675cpn.

20 Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid*, 42.

21 Emily Bridger, "Soweto's Female Comrades: Gender, Youth, and Violence in South Africa's Townships 1984–1990," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44, no. 4 (2018): 563, https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1462591.

22 Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid*, 51.

23 Bridger, 52.

24 Bridger, "Soweto's Female Comrades," 560–61.

25 Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid*, 52.

26 Pohlandt-McCormick, "'I Saw a Nightmare . . .'," 25.

27 Pohlandt-McCormick, 27.

28 Pohlandt-McCormick, 29.

29 Pohlandt-McCormick, 30.

30 Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad," 23 (internal quotation marks omitted; *black* is spelled with a lowercase *b* in the source).

31 Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad," 23.

32 Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, *"I Saw a Nightmare . . .": Doing Violence to Memory: The Soweto Uprising, June 16, 1976* (Columbia University Press, 2006), http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/.

33 Thomas, "Photography in Apartheid South Africa."

34 Thomas, "Photography in Apartheid South Africa."

35 Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad," 10–31.

were made available to journalists, rendering the anti apartheid movement a global matter.[36] The usage of the photographs, however, was contested by scholars like Allison Young, who argued that these images were often used ambiguously, resulting in fractured and often contradictory historical narratives.[37] Nevertheless, social documentary photography played a crucial role in revealing to international audiences the crimes committed by the apartheid regime and its efforts to erase South African agency.[38]

Even when the historical narrative of the Soweto uprising was not entirely distorted by the apartheid regime, it often failed to recognize the different participants and their sacrifices. Pohlandt-McCormick explains how the focus in these historical narratives was on the male leaders of this movement, failing to give similar attention to the involvement of female students in these protests.[39] The scholarship on women's involvement in the Soweto uprising is limited, with few scholars covering the crucial role that female students and teachers played in the organization of the Soweto uprising.[40] This issue lies in that most sources on the Soweto uprising rely on accounts from male participants who rarely bring up their female comrades unless prompted to do so.[41] The argument that women simply did not participate in the Soweto uprising, however, is not supported by the evidence that indicates extensive involvement and participation from South African women in these protests.

In her interviews with South African female activists in the 1970s and 1980s, Emily Bridger finds that women's involvement extended from their life at home to their efforts in the streets.[42] She explains how the Bantu education further exacerbated the racial and gendered struggles South African women faced as it presented them with fewer opportunities to pursue their interests and succeed in their fields of predilection.[43] Bridger argues that, because of these barriers, it was with no surprise that female students felt strongly in favor of the protests in Soweto to challenge the system that continuously repressed them on the basis of their race and gender.

The Role of South African Women in the Soweto Uprising

To address the discrepancy between women's involvement in the Soweto uprising and newspaper coverage of the event, it is important to first introduce evidence of the experiences of young women in the Soweto uprising. In the absence of academic and popular narratives that delve into the experiences of young women during the Soweto uprising, I relied on the testimony of female participants in these protests to explain the gender dynamics that took place.

The primary sources I relied on are a set of testimonies from South African women involved in the 1976 protests. The testimonies of Patience Tshetlo and Lilli Mokganyetsi were recorded interviews with Pohlandt-McCormick in June 1995[44] and December 1993.[45] It is worth noting that these interviews were conducted in the 1990s during a salient period of negotiations to terminate the apartheid system, which could have influenced the way the events of June 1976 were talked about. The experience of Antoinette Musi, while not reported directly in an interview, is described by Pohlandt-McComrick in her investigation of the Soweto uprising in 2006.[46] The account of Thandi Modise's involvement is narrated by Vicky Diepkloof, an anti apartheid activist in the 1980s, in her interview with Bridger in May 2014.[47] This interview was conducted amid the 2014 South African general election, the fifth democratic election since the end of apartheid.[48] This election was particularly relevant as it revealed dissatisfaction with the African National Congress, the winning party whose vote share began to decrease considerably.[49] The increasing public resentment of the ruling party because of issues of corruption and unemployment could have impacted the way the Soweto uprising, an event involving the ANC, was remembered. While these testimonies and accounts were produced at different times, they are connected in their ability to shed light on the gender dynamics of the Soweto uprising.

Lilli Mokganyetsi was sixteen when students marched against Bantu education in the streets of Soweto in June 1976.[50] While she was not initially involved in the planning of the uprising, she quickly joined the movement, running the streets of Soweto and gathering people from different schools to join the march.[51] In her interview, Mokganyetsi recalls the persecution of the police as they drove their cars into large groups of students while shooting at them.[52] Despite being discouraged by her parents from getting involved,

36 Thomas, "Photography in Apartheid South Africa."

37 Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad,", 11–12.

38 Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad,", 31.

39 Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid*, 58.

40 Bridger, 58.

41 Bridger, 157.

42 Bridger, "Soweto's Female Comrades," 566–67.

43 Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid*, 51.

44 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Patience Tshetlo," in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/pmh04f.html.

45 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Lilli Mokganyetsi," in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/pmh02x.html.

46 Pohlandt-McCormick, "The Narrative," chap. 2 in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/PM.c2p1.html.

47 Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid*, 64.

48 David Smith, "ANC Seals Fifth Successive Election Victory in South Africa," *Guardian*, May 9, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/09/anc-wins-fifth-election-south-africa-jacob-zuma.

49 Smith, "ANC Seals Fifth Successive Election."

50 Pohlandt-McCormick, "The Participants," in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, para. 22.

51 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Lilli Mokganyetsi," para. 9.

52 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Lilli Mokganyetsi," para. 18.

Mokganyetsi marched with her fellow students, risking her life when shot by a police officer.[53]

In her interview, Mokganyetsi also spoke about the crucial role that young women played in facilitating these protests. Female students relied on their "invisibility" in the eyes of male police officers to help their male classmates in hiding. She also interviewed students who were persecuted by the police and connected them to Dr. Nanaoth Ntshuntsha, who helped them hide from the authorities.[54] Despite the dangerous work that Mokganyetsi was involved in during the Soweto uprising, she remained committed to the cause, working closely with other activists to expand the size of the protests.

Another prominent woman in this struggle for liberation in June 1976 was Antoinette Musi (Sithole), who despite not knowing what to do at the beginning, joined the march in the streets of Soweto.[55] Her brother, Hector Pieterson, would later in the day be shot dead by the police, marking the beginning of mass killings of students by the police.[56] Musi, despite being in shock, was able to help guide the person carrying her brother to the hospital.[57] She continued to speak up against the apartheid regime despite the dangerous consequences that she was exposed to and rallied classmates to honor students who were murdered by the police.

Thandi Modise, who was seventeen years old during the Soweto uprising, was sent to exile after marching with her classmates against the Bantu education system.[58] She received military training in exile, becoming an active female combatant who continued to challenge the apartheid regime in the 1980s.[59]

Patience Tshetlo was forty-four years old when the Soweto uprisings took place in 1976. She was a domestic worker, nanny, cook, and mother of four children.[60] Her experience, while slightly different from that of the young students, nevertheless reflected the involvement in these protests by participants of various ages and genders. In her interview, Tshetlo recalled the experience of her younger daughter who was extremely involved in the planning of the uprising as a member of the Soweto Students' Representative Council.[61] Her daughter, despite being warned that she risked exile, was still committed to the cause and participated in an attempted march on Vorster Square to protest against the illegal detainment of Sowetan students during the Soweto uprising.[62] Tshetlo confided in her interview that she hoped someone would write down her and her children's story so they could be remembered because she did not know how to write.[63] She explained that people have forgotten about the events that took place in Soweto and that while she might not be able to convey her story in writing, she hopes others will.[64]

While there is little information available on them, other prominent women involved in the Soweto uprising include teachers like Winnie Motlalepule Kgware and Nozipho Joyce Maxakathi (Diseko), who worked closely with students as part of the South African Student Organization and helped guide preparations for the Soweto uprising.[65] Sibongile Makhabela was also a prominent female activist in the Soweto uprising, being the only female executive member of the Soweto Students Representative Council and General Secretary of the South African Students Movement.[66] Other victims of police violence, such as Hermina Leroke, were shot while protesting for their right to a better education; yet their names and identities were never recognized.[67]

These testimonies and accounts of female participants in the Soweto uprising emphasize that these protests were not solely a male-led initiative. This uprising heavily relied on women's involvement as they played a crucial role in planning, coordinating, and protecting the participants.

Newspaper Coverage on the Soweto Uprising

The unprecedented violence against children displayed during the Soweto uprising sparked large coverage across the world. Because these protests were sudden, foreign correspondents were not present at the beginning of the uprising; they relied mainly on local journalists and photographers to document the event.[68] In this sense, the newspaper coverage of the Soweto uprising in different countries was tightly correlated and used similar sources. To understand the historical narrative conveyed in newspaper coverage about the Soweto uprising, I looked at the June 1976 issues of three leading newspapers: *The World*, *Southern Africa*, and *The Anti-Apartheid News*. *The World*'s coverage was meant for a domestic audience and served as the foundation for the international coverage provided by *Southern Africa* and *The Anti-Apartheid News*.

53 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Lilli Mokganyetsi," para. 18.

54 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Lilli Mokganyetsi," para. 42.

55 Pohlandt-McCormick, "The Narrative," in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, para. 19.

56 Pohlandt-McCormick, "The Shooting," in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/PM.c2p1.html.

57 Pohlandt-McCormick, "The Shooting," in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, para. 6.

58 Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid*, 64.

59 Bridger, 64.

60 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Patience Tshetlo," in *"I Saw a Nightmare . . ."*, para. 3.

61 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Patience Tshetlo," para. 26.

62 Pohlandt-McCormick, "Interview: Patience Tshetlo," para. 18.

63 Pohlandt-McCormick, "'I Saw a Nightmare . . .'," 38.

64 Pohlandt-McCormick, 38.

65 "Winnie Motlalepule Kgware," South African History Online, updated November 10, 2020, https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/winnie-motlalepule-kgware.

66 Thando Sipuye, "Herstory: Soweto Uprising and the Erasure of Black Women," *Pambazuka News*, June 22, 2017, https://www.pambazuka.org/gender-minorities/herstory-soweto-uprising-and-erasure-black-women.

67 Sipuye, "Soweto Uprising and the Erasure of Black Women."

68 Young, "Visualizing Apartheid Abroad," 10–31.

These specific newspapers were chosen for this analysis because of their wide reach and their reputability in the content they cover. They also build on each other, creating one historical narrative of the Soweto uprising. Furthermore, the oppressive nature of the apartheid regime and the restrictions imposed on journalists served as a disincentive for record and archival collections of local newspapers. In this sense, while these primary sources might not extensively address the various views in South Africa during the apartheid regime, they are nevertheless often regarded as reflective of the popular opinion of the time. In my analysis of these primary sources, I delved into the historical narrative conveyed through these newspapers. This is crucial to exploring how people understood and discussed the Soweto uprising in June 1976.

The World, previously referred to as *The Bantu World*, was a South African daily newspaper founded by a white farmer and intended for an audience of Black elites.[69] Black editors at *The World* were subjected to restrictions by White editors and had to seize coverage related to politics until 1974.[70] Sam Nzima, a Black South African photographer, took over the newspaper shortly thereafter and reintroduced contentious topics, including coverage of the Soweto uprising.[71] On June 16, 1976, Nzima captured the image of Hector Pieterson's dead body being carried by another student, Mbuyisa Makhubu.[72] Pieterson was twelve when he was shot by the police for marching on the streets of Soweto in opposition to the Bantu education system.[73]

This photograph of Hector Pieterson was first published on the front page of *The World* on June 17, 1976, next to a paragraph describing the protests in Soweto. The coverage discusses the altercations between the schoolchildren and the police. It also refers to the number of victims, highlighting the murder of young students like Pieterson. Despite her presence in the photograph alongside Pieterson and Makhubu, Antoinette Musi is not identified nor mentioned in this discourse. Her account about rushing to the hospital following the shootings is omitted, erasing her from the Sowetan struggle in this historical narrative. This picture is particularly important as the Argus newspaper group quickly relaid it to international newspapers.[74] Foreign correspondents who were not present at the beginning of the uprising relied on this source and continued to omit the presence and role of Musi in the protests.

Southern Africa, also referred to as *The Rhodesian News Summary*, was produced by the Southern Africa Committee from 1965 to 1983.[75] The magazine was predominantly written by volunteers involved with the Black Consciousness Movement and covered issues across the Southern African region.[76] Coverage of the Soweto uprising in this magazine was thorough in giving an extensive historical narrative about the conditions in South Africa. This section of the magazine begins with a picture of Black students running toward the camera. It covers reports of journalists like Alf Khumalo, who witnessed the murders of students as the police fired into the crowd. Khumalo, like Nzima, captured pictures of these young male students who sacrificed their lives for these protests, leaving their imprint embedded in the history of South Africa.[77] This tragedy involving young female students like Hermina Leroke, however, was not documented, omitting their involvement from the historical narrative around these protests.

Southern Africa's coverage also included eyewitness accounts like that of Schadrack Kaunsel, who after his arrest, was locked in a room with injured and dead bodies of Black children.[78] This experience is not isolated and reverberates the experiences of participants like Lilli Mokganyetsi, Patience Tshetlo, Winnie Motlalepule Kgware, and Nozipho Joyce Maxakathi. Yet none of these accounts were included or hinted at, further giving the impression that young women were absent in this struggle. This approach was then relied on in the crafting of a larger historical narrative in other newspapers.

The Anti-Apartheid News was a newspaper produced by the Anti-Apartheid Movement from 1956 to 1996.[79] This movement was initially launched in Britain by South African activists who were exiled by the apartheid regime.[80] It later expanded to include multiple organizations ranging from political parties to local churches. The newspaper's coverage of the Soweto uprising included the landmark photograph of Nzima alongside a photograph of students escaping police violence and another one displaying a murdered child. The associated paragraphs delve into the violence displayed in Soweto and the actions of the police. To emphasize the international opposition to the apartheid regime, the writers of this piece included the perspective of different people and organizations, including South African journalists, United Nations representatives, and foreign leaders. This information is valuable in contextualizing this coverage; yet the absence of testimony from participants of the Soweto uprising omits their efforts

69 Fred St. Leger, "The World Newspaper 1968–1976," *Critical Arts* 2, no. 2 (1981): 27, 34, https://doi.org/10.1080/02560048108559041.

70 Leger, "The World Newspaper 1968–1976," 27.

71 Aryn Baker and Time Staff, "This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid: Here's the Story Behind It," Time, June 15, 2016, https://time.com/4365138/soweto-anniversary-photo graph/.

72 Baker, "This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid."

73 Baker, "This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid."

74 Gary Baines, "The Master Narrative of South Africa's Liberation Struggle: Remembering and Forgetting June 16, 1976," *International Journal of African History Studies* 40, no. 2 (2007): 286, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40033914.

75 Gail Hovey, "Media for the Movement: Southern Africa Magazine," in *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950–2000*, ed. William Minter, Gail Hovey, and Charles Cobb Jr. (Africa World Press, 2008), http://www.noeasyvictories.org/select/15_sam.php.

76 Hovey, "Media for the Movement," in *No Easy Victories*.

77 Southern Africa Committee, *Southern Africa* 9, no. 7 (1976): 44, https://jstor.org/stable/al.sff.document.nusa197608.

78 Southern Africa Committee, *Southern Africa*, 44.

79 "Anti-Apartheid Movement Collection," JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa, accessed November 23, 2024,https://www.jstor.org/site/struggles-for-freedom/southern-africa/anti-apartheid-movement-collection/?so=item_title_str_asc.

80 "Anti-Apartheid Movement Collection," JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa.

and sacrifices. While male students are slightly represented in photographs, female students are not mentioned anywhere in the article, further reverberating the historical narrative that they did not contribute to these protests.

The absence of women in the historical narrative around the Soweto uprising in the aforementioned newspapers is further emphasized by the selective gendering of the images included. Apart from Musi's appearance in the background of one picture, these newspapers did not use available photographs of young women to reflect their participation in the struggle. Social documentary photography was a prominent activity around this time, with photographers like Peter Magubane extensively covering the involvement of women in the Soweto uprising and making valuable photographs available for newspaper coverage. For example, some of Magubane's photographs show schoolgirls marching on the streets of Soweto in June 1976 despite the heightened violence.[81] Other photographs highlight the violence that women faced during the Soweto uprising, with some of them being beaten and shot by police.[82]

These photographs, a few examples of abundant samples, support the testimonies and accounts of Patience Tshetlo, Lilli Mokganyetsi, Antoinette Musi, and Thandi Modise, among others, and provide concrete evidence of the involvement of women in the Soweto uprisings. Considering how important social documentary photography was to the creation of a global rhetoric around the Soweto uprising, the inclusion of these photographs would have encouraged a historical narrative that involves women in its discourse. Instead, these pictures were never used in the front pages of newspapers despite the atrocities that they highlight. In this sense, the omission of testimony and photographs depicting South African women's involvement in the Soweto uprising in newspaper coverage helped shape a historical narrative that suggests that these protests were solely the result of a male-led initiative.

This approach to the coverage of the Soweto uprising sheds light on ways through which South African women were erased from the historical narrative around this struggle. This is not to say that these newspapers failed to accurately report the Soweto uprising but rather that their omission of female participants contributes to a male-centered historical narrative, one that depicts male participants as the sole heroes of the fight for freedom in South Africa. I recognize the resource limitations and the legal constraints that could have hindered journalists' ability to extensively cover female involvement. However, several photographs and testimonies, as discussed in this paper, were available for usage in the reporting of the Soweto uprising.

Conclusion

By delving into the different historical narratives of the Soweto uprising, this paper attempted to put South African women at the center of the historical discourse to celebrate their efforts and sacrifices too often forgotten. It emphasized the crucial role that women played in the liberation struggle in South Africa even before the 1980s, when their efforts finally became more visible to the public eye. This perspective helps us think differently about the Soweto uprising and ponder on the different times South African women were involved in the fight against apartheid without ever being recognized.

On a larger scale, this paper addressed the erasure of South African women from historical narratives and its repercussions on the position of women in a post apartheid society. The exclusionary historical narrative depicted around the Soweto uprising through newspaper coverage highlights patriarchal tendencies that persisted in the retelling of historical moments such as the Soweto uprising. This paper celebrates the school girls who lost their lives, like Hermina Locke; the activists who led protests, like Sibongile Makhabela and Thandi Modise; the teenagers who marched the streets of Soweto, like Lilli Mokganyetsi and Antoinette Musi; the parents who protected their children, like Patience Tshetlo; and the teachers who guided their students, like Winnie Motlalepule Kgware and Nozipho Joyce Maxakathi; all in the name of freedom.

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81 "'To Fight with My Camera, To Kill Apartheid': Peter Magubane – A Life in Pictures," *Guardian*, January 12, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2024/jan/12/to-fight-with-my-camera-to-kill-apartheid-peter-magubane-south-african-photographer.

82 "Magubane's South Africa," International Center of Photography, accessed April 25, 2024, https://www.icp.org/exhibitions/magubanes-south-africa.

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Possessing the Palace

Victorian Culture's Role in the Looting of Yuanmingyuan

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This paper examines the role of material culture in Victorian England, especially as influenced by Orientalism and domesticity in the looting of Yuanmingyuan, an imperial palace complex in Beijing, China. In 1860, British and French troops sacked Yuanmingyuan and stole valuable objects: vases, clothing, religious objects, and anything that appealed to their tastes or that of their state leaders. Beginning in 1832 (the start of the Victorian period), media and culture crafted British fascination with Chinese objects. The distinct role British media and culture played in the looting of Yuanmingyuan becomes apparent through examinations of military accounts of the raids, travel diaries, plays, and exhibition catalogs. British military and political leaders justified the raids as the consequence of China's wartime offenses and inferior culture. However, this essay assigns status and imperial ownership over "exotic" cultures as larger motivations for the looting. In that respect, the paper contributes to a larger understanding of material and popular culture's role in the history of imperial plunder.

In October of 1860, British troops in Beijing rushed through Anglo-French camps. Under the command of British nobleman Lord Elgin, they posted flyers to notify their allies and the Qing court: by October 18th, Yuanmingyuan—or, the Old Summer Palace—would burn.[1] Yuanmingyuan, translating to "Garden of Perfect Brightness," was built as a lavish summer palace for the Qing court.[2] Before razing the palace, the troops looted anything of value for British figureheads and themselves.[3] That day brutally concluded the Second Opium War, the second of two British invasions aiming to open up trade with China. British accounts like Lord Elgin's cite a need to punish the Qing state as justification for the violence.[4]

Yet, his explanation oversimplifies the motivation to raid Yuanmingyuan. In the decades leading up to 1860, a fascination was brewing in the metropole surrounding Chinese culture. The everyman and aristocrats alike grew a taste for Chinese objects. The objects featured as status symbols and part of a zeitgeist fixated on foreign delicacies and domestic furnishings. From the beginning of the Victorian period in 1832 until the raid, an exploding interest in Oriental, domestic, and Chinese material culture contributed to the conditions for the violent raid.[5] The looting of Yuanmingyuan was a direct result of Victorian material culture and desires for ownership.

Imperial pride and superiority defined the Victorian era. This zeitgeist manifested in a declining opinion of China. In 1851, Prince Albert (husband to Victoria) hosted the Great Exhibition, a lavish display of the growing industry of the empire. For the exhibition Albert brought in his favored thinkers and businessmen to witness the budding ideas and innovations of Great Britain. The Prince claimed Victoria's era would accomplish "the realization of the unity of mankind."[6] His claim and the exhibition summarized the Victorian imperial attitude: the world was coalescing, and it revolved around Britain. Victorians popularized the term "foreign intervention" and grew projects abroad amidst these shifting norms.[7]

Albert and his contemporaries used the "lesser development" of colonized cultures to justify such interventions.[8] The Second Opium War serves as a strong example. In the early nineteenth century, Victorians viewed China as somewhat of a peer—a land of essentially limitless possibility. However, over the course of the era, Victorians adopted a demeaning view of China.[9] Britain handily and somewhat surprisingly defeated China in the First Opium War in 1842, sharply deteriorating the British opinion of Qing China. The war gave Britons license to view China as a client, especially as it forced the Qing into a disastrously uneven trade relationship.

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1 Henry Brougham Loch, *Personal Narrative of Occurrences During Lord Elgin's Embassy to China, 1860* (London: John Murray, 1869), 271.

2 Haiyan Lee, "The Ruins of Yuanmingyuan: Or, How to Enjoy a National Wound," *Modern China* 35, no. 2 (March 2009): 155.

3 James L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 76.

4 Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 268.

5 In 1832, the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed the 'Great' Parliamentary Reform Act. The passage of the act ushered in the distinct political, demographic, and economic modernity more so than the beginning of Queen Victoria's rule in 1840. So, for the purposes of this essay, I use that date. On Victorian periodization, see Martin Hewitt, *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 22–23.

6 Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, "Speech Given at a Banquet at the Mansion House" (London, England, March 21, 1849).

7 Hewitt, *The Victorians*, 28.

8 Hewitt, *The Victorians*, 51.

9 Ross G. Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 8.

The war also transformed Britain's cultural relationship with China. The British understanding of China fell into the framework of Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said. Said described Orientalism as a distinctly British and French tradition. Orientalism was a "way of coming to terms with the Orient [Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa] that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience." In Said's historiography, the tradition of Orientalism developed as China and other Asian powers became a "cultural contestant" to European imperial ambition.[10] Prince Albert's globalist aspirations demanded that Victorians face China as a foe.

The declining view of China following the First Opium War exemplified a "cultural contestant" relationship. Britain declared itself the victor by demeaning China. To "[come] to terms" with China, Victorians increasingly consumed Chinese goods and exhibitions, literature, and plays about Chinese goods during the 1840s and 1850s.[11] This consumerism gave China its "special place" in the Victorian experience. If Victorians could claim expertise over Chinese artifacts and objects, they could claim an understanding of China and have ownership over it. The looting of Yuanmingyuan was the natural extension of a possessive attitude towards China and the Orient. Orientalism provides a structure for understanding Victorian consumption of China as a desire for cultural dominance.

At the same time Orientalism gained a foothold in England, so too did the sanctity of domestic space. Victorian industrialization made home decoration into social currency.[12] Victorians, and especially Victorian men, saw the home as refuge from an increasingly unforgiving work culture.[13] A Victorian man's masculinity partially revolved around the quality of his home.[14] The connection between masculinity and the domestic extended into society beyond aristocratic Victorians. Although associated with bourgeois values, the middle class fully participated in patriarchal domesticity. The practice flourished even as business hierarchies supplanted patriarchal hierarchies in the working world across England.[15]

In some ways, domesticity was actually more central to middle class than bourgeois life. As an increasingly urban group, the middle class had to spend much of their time at home—certainly more than countryside aristocrats who spent time outdoors and traveled to London as they pleased.[16] So, home ornamentation grew into a central part of the middle-class identity. Middle-class Victorians would decorate their homes to express their tastes and assert their status. An evolving version of domesticity opened the door for materialism into the everyday home, and the British thirst for Chinese objects would soon trade on that interest.

Domestic culture provided the breeding ground for Orientalism to weave into everyday tastes. As the Victorian era roared on, the middle class gained increasing access to objects from or mimicking the Orient. Chinoise, a style of European furniture and other objects mimicking Chinese motifs, came into fashion beginning in the eighteenth century. But, Chinoise became passé after the First Opium War.[17] The war opened trade with China, supplanting Chinoise; Authentically Chinese items made Chinoise imitations obsolete. Suddenly, aristocratic Victorians could buy fine Chinese goods. The middle class also gained access to these goods through exhibitions that paraded artifacts brought back from the war.[18] The finest Victorian homes featured iconic blue and white porcelain, cementing it as a symbol of class.[19]

Exemplifying Orientalism, Victorians sought to use Chinese objects in terms they understood: for the ornamentation of domestic space. Even as the opinion of the Qing state and Chinese people deteriorated, Britons still thought highly of Chinese objects.[20] While the middle class could not purchase the finest goods, they consumed vast amounts of affordable silk and porcelain made for British markets after the war.[21] British buyers bent the markets to their desires. Even the famous blue and white porcelain motif was a manufactured product for the new European market.[22] The middle class mimicked aristocratic domestic spaces with affordable objects. Through class divides, this market fed into the imperial desire to own the Orient by boxing Chinese culture into objects Victorians could own.

The Chinese Collection of Hyde Park Corner was one of the most influential of the exhibitions that brought Chinese artifacts to the middle-class viewers. The collection also fed into Orientalist tropes. At Hyde Park Corner, Victorians could reconcile their deteriorating view of the Chinese people with their enthusiasm for Chinese objects.[23] The collection's first catalog, published in 1844, began with an advertisement for "massive arm chairs," "a table, handsomely carved," a "specimen of crimson drapery," and "cap

10 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 2014), 1.

11 Catherine Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998), 30.

12 Hewitt, *The Victorians*, 46.

13 Janet Phillips and Peter Phillips, *Victorians at Home and Away* (London: Routledge, 2016), 98.

14 John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1.

15 Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 6.

16 Phillips and Phillips, *Victorians at Home*, 91.

17 "Chinoiserie: An Introduction," Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d., https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/chinoiserie-an-introduction.

18 Qi Chen, "Aristocracy for the Common People: Chinese Commodities in Oscar Wilde's Aestheticism," *Victorian Network* 1, no. 1 (August 14, 2009), 40.

19 Chen, "Aristocracy for the Common People," 42.

20 Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture," 28.

21 Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture," 29.

22 Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture," 33.

23 Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture," 36.

stands and ornamental articles."[24] The choice to lead with these pieces demonstrates that Britons sought out decorative domestic objects, describing them as "ornamental articles."

Famed satire magazine *Punch* mocked the exhibition as a failed attempt to understand an inferior people. *Punch* used the willow-pattern plate, a blue and white porcelain tableau, as an example of how ridiculous and overconfident the British conception of China was. According to the magazine, the plate's scene lacked realism. *Punch* writes: "From [the plate] it would appear that the Celestials are in the habit of fishing from the tops of bridges, with baits something like oranges, by means of lines not long enough to reach the water."[25] The magazine's deadpan humor implies that Britons' curated, overzealous taste in Chinese culture had little grounds in reality. *Punch* also recognized the role of consumerism in how Britons understood China, poking fun at Britons whose conception of China was "obtained from the shop-windows of tea dealers."[26] In conversation with the catalog, *Punch*'s satirical account exhibited how social opinions of Chinese people and Chinese culture shifted leading up to 1860. China was considered with little respect for realism of the habits of its people, and much more so for their material appeal. By obscuring Chinese people's humanity in favor of consumerism, the Victorians could rationalize plunder, including the later sacking.

A catalog from the British Museum's 1850 exhibitions told a similar story of a particular Victorian fixation on Chinese domesticity. The museum claimed to offer the "Chinese as they [were]." It advertised primarily two kinds of artifacts to patrons: Chinese instruments and Chinese sporting equipment. Among those objects advertised were a "'two stringed' Chinese fiddle," a "balloon shaped guitar," "Chinese clarinets," and "a Chinese shuttlecock, made of feathers and lead."[27] Although not directly related to domestic life, music and instruments were an integral part of the Victorian household. Industrialization made instruments more compact and affordable, so teaching children to play classical music became a core part of a middle-class upbringing.[28] Along with music, sports also featured in Victorian domestic life. Sports were especially important for young men, as they served as a boy's opportunity to show his fitness and masculinity.[29]

The British Museum's exhibition, then, further demonstrates the tie between Victorian domesticity and interest in Chinese objects. Whether through sports, music, or other avenues, Victorians explored Chinese objects in terms familiar from their quotidian lives. Also notable in the catalog is the absence of any mention of the Chinese people who used these objects. Amidst the Victorian opinion of Chinese people propagated in places like *Punch*, the catalog epitomizes how Britons separated Chinese objects from Chinese people. Victorians saw Chinese objects as a grand curiosity. Nonetheless, the Orientalist worldview had little to gain from an exploration into the inferior, backward people from whom they came. Victorian material and domestic culture worked in tandem to abstract Chinese objects away from Chinese people, eliminating any room for sympathy in plunder.

Orientalist sentiment about China spread from museums and exhibitions to other areas of Victorian life, including the theater scene. Staging China in Victorian theater featured elements of Chinese domestic space as all-encompassing representations of Chinese culture. Playwrights could not resist bringing white and blue porcelain onto the genre's centerstage.[30] A play titled *The Mandarin's Daughter* put on at Punch's Theatre in London exemplifies this phenomenon. The play features the same willow-pattern plate as mentioned in *Punch*; it tells the fictitious story of a Chinese man coming to the Great Exhibition, where he sees the willow-pattern plate and recognizes it as a famed Chinese tale.[31]

The play opens with a monologue from the traveler: "I perceived…On plate, cup and saucer, dish, basin, tureen / A picture which is but a full illustration / Of an olden love story, well known in my nation."[32] The mention of a "plate, cup and saucer, dish, basin, [and] tureen" all displaying the willow-pattern alluded to how ubiquitous white and blue porcelain became in Victorian Britain. The idea that a pattern created for Britons would show an "olden love story well known in [China]" exemplifies Victorians' Orientalist overconfidence in understanding Chinese culture through objects. By demonstrating a false understanding of China through porcelain, the West could assert itself as the authority over Chinese objects. The eventual violence at the Yuanmingyuan extended that mentality; decades of media like *The Mandarin's Daughter* taught the public that it could claim cultural ownership of Chinese objects.

Broad Grins From China, a work published in 1852 by famed publisher Richard Bentley, exhibits a similar Orientalist mentality toward objects as the embodiment of Chinese culture. Bentley posthumously published the accounts of traveler Thomas Henry Sealy in the work as a part of his "Railroad Library," proudly sold at "all the railway stations" for just one shilling.[33] The book's price and advertising indicated that Bentley intended the book for a wide public audience. One of the stories in the book, "The Porcelain Bath," tells the story of a young empress who beautifies the Imperial palace after

24 The Chinese Collection, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Collection*, 1844, 7.

25 "Punch's Guide to the Chinese Collection," *Punch*, 1844, 6.

26 "Punch's Guide," 6.

27 The British Museum, *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 1850, 7.

28 Phillips and Phillips, *Victorians at Home*, 93–94.

29 Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 111.

30 Ross G. Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 172.

31 Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination*, 173.

32 Francis Talfourd, *The Mandarin's Daughter* (London: Thomas Hailes Lacy, 1859), 4.

33 Thomas Henry Sealy, *Broad Grins From China* (London: Richard Bentley, 1852).

coming into power. The book details the fictitious empress' bath: it was "of most fantastic form, the sides and edges of which formed a filigree of flowers, birds, shells, and figures; the whole to be contrived with great intricacy and elaborated with extreme minuteness."[34]

The book demonstrates the Victorian fascination with Oriental ornamentation. In the Victorian imagination, Chinese objects had an unmatched level of intricacy—"most fantastic," as Sealy wrote. Furthermore, it extends the British ownership over Chinese objects into the domestic, including into imperial homes. In that sense, *Broad Grins From China* perhaps above any other work laid the groundwork for the eventual raiding of Yuanmingyuan. The book exoticized and romanticized Chinese porcelain and artifacts. Along the way, it endowed its readers with the right to enjoy Chinese objects as they pleased.

When Yuanmingyuan fell in 1860, thirst for Chinese artifacts overshadowed a need for retribution. Lord Elgin claimed that the looting and destruction of Yuanmingyuan was a "necessary mark" to remind the Chinese of their actions in the war.[35] According to Elgin, no monetary price would make up for British life lost in the war. Retribution required the shame of the royal grounds' destruction.[36] The arrest of diplomat Harry Parkes, Elgin's secretary Henry Loch, and their escort while carrying a flag of truce fueled Elgin's personal anger.[37] The incident and maltreatment of prisoners certainly played a role for some military leaders. But, an Orientalist desire for the Summer Palace loot featured more prominently in their soldiers' narratives.

Accounts nearly universally expressed astonishment at the beauty of the palace's gardens and residences.[38] One British officer, Garnet Wolseley, even stood in front of the emperor's throne and remarked on his taste: "the Chinaman loses sight of grand or imposing effects, in his endeavours to load everything with ornament."[39] Wolseley's critique and fascination demonstrated that the British felt they had authority over the court's objects. Victorian media and museums taught men like Wolseley that they had a great expertise and a right to access China's objects. The widespread theft from Yuanmingyuan by British soldiers stemmed from their collective mindset.

The account of another British officer, Frederick Stephenson, exemplified how fixated the looters were on the domestic space of Yuanmingyuan. He wrote of the Emperor's home: "the rooms…which are floored with marble, and especially the Emperor's bedroom, were literally crammed with the most lovely knick-knacks you can conceive."[40] Stephenson's account demonstrated how Victorian fascination with China's material and domestic culture came together in the looting of Yuanmingyuan. His fixation on the Emperor's bedroom showed a particular interest in the domestic. Stephenson's calling its contents "the most lovely knick-knacks" revealed that he treated them more as Orientalist curiosities than personal belongings. When describing the final destruction of Yuanmingyuan, he recounted "being able to indulge in the pleasure of smashing looking glasses and porcelain."[41]

For Stephenson, demolishing Yuanmingyuan was more joyful than vengeful. The "pleasure" came from the allure "looking glasses and porcelain drew," and the looting did nothing to evoke sympathy for the items' owners. Stephenson reported soldiers taking robes from the palace, and "those that did not please the eye [were] thrown aside and trampled under foot." Stephenson spoke for the general attitude of the soldiers raiding Yuanmingyuan: the looting was targeted at curious and alluring items based on Orientalist taste. As objects like the Emperor's robes and porcelain flooded into exhibitions in the 1840s, only the upper classes could hold or own these items.[42] At Yuanmingyuan, an opportunity to finally own the unattainable colored accounts like Stephenson's and drove other soldier's actions.

Lord Elgin, too, betrayed his Orientalist fascination with Yuanmingyuan's domestic spaces in his accounts of the raid. Lord Elgin was unimpressed by the exterior of Yuanmingyuan. His narrative, authored by his personal secretary, relayed that "the buildings themselves possessed but little architectural beauty."[43] The palace's residences and bedroom interiors, like in Stephenson's account, drew Lord Elgin's interest. In particular, Lord Elgin's account treasured "beautiful blue inlaid enamel vases with imitation flowers, made of the blood, cornelian, jade, and other stones."[44] These vases were likely familiar to Lord Elgin, as blue and white porcelain had come to represent China in Victorian Britain. These, "made of the blood, cornelian, jade, and other stones," were finer versions of what Lord Elgin came to see as defining China.

Even an aristocrat like Lord Elgin, a British Lord, found the bedrooms and private spaces of Yuanmingyuan alluring. The Victorian fascination with Chinese craftsmanship came through in Elgin's descriptions of the sacking, even if the focus of the raid was ostensibly retribution. Lord Elgin discerned between the exterior of "little architectural beauty" and the "beautiful…vases," demonstrating that the Victorian

34 Sealy, *Broad Grins From China*, 66.
35 Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 268.
36 Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 270.
37 Hevia, *English Lessons*, 104.
38 Hevia, *English Lessons*, 100.
39 Hevia, *English Lessons*, 101.
40 Frederick Charles Arthur Stephenson, *At Home and on the Battlefield* (London: John Murray, 1915), 272.
41 Stephenson, *At Home and on the Battlefield*, 272.
42 Chen, "Aristocracy for the Common People," 40.
43 Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 272.
44 Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 272.

upper classes had a trained taste in Chinese goods; Lord Elgin felt he had the right to decide what signified quality in Chinese aesthetics. All ranks of the British army—from Lord Elgin to the soldiers who trampled the Emperor's robes—exhibited a self-assigned, Orientalist ownership over China developed in the metropole.

An examination of the items from Yuanmingyuan later given to the British Museum also revealed a particular fascination with the Emperor's domestic space. The Qing state objected especially to the plundering of the Emperor's personal possessions, but the museum still accepted the items and displayed them.[45] A seemingly insignificant item the museum held was a red molded candle, half-melted by the time it reached the museum archives.[46] However, the candle helped to show that Victorians had a special interest in acquiring items that peered into the Emperor's quotidian home life. At this time, candles were still a large part of the daily life of Victorians—they often offered a more affordable, reliable lighting option than gas.[47] The possession of a candle, clearly used by the Emperor, allowed Victorians in Britain to connect their own lives with Chinese objects.

Museum curation mirrored how soldiers at Yuanmingyuan understood and claimed the Emperor's belongings: by connecting them to the objects they encountered in their lives in Britain. The British Museum also acquired a Cloisonné altar, symbolizing this phenomenon of Victorians understanding China through domestic routines they themselves practiced.[48] Even in the age of Thomas Huxley and Charles Darwin, religion remained a cornerstone of Victorian life.[49] Family prayer was a part of the daily Victorian domestic routine.[50] The altar-vase, perhaps part of the Emperor's daily prayer, created another avenue for Victorians to understand China through domesticity. Domestic culture remained essential to how Orientalist Victorians came to terms with China after the sacking.

As an institution, museums contributed to the colonial violence of abstracting objects from the people who created them after Yuanmingyuan fell. Both during the looting and in exhibitions, Victorians treated objects from Yuanmingyuan more as curiosities than art. Since they came from the palace, objects from Yuanmingyuan received a special title: *royal exotica*.[51] The term shows how Victorians both exoticized and demeaned Chinese art through their rhetoric. Museum exhibitions of Yuanmingyuan's loot sought to show the tastes of Chinese people by displaying *royal exotica*, never meant for market sale.[52] Ironically, this practice separated these objects from actual Chinese experiences by building exhibitions to show objects revolving around British taste.

In Ariella Azoulay's analysis of imperialism, museums contribute to colonial violence by cleansing histories of plunder under the auspices of "protecting" artifacts. By treating objects as more as museum pieces than personal possessions, they obscure their original purpose and their home cultures.[53] In the case of Yuanmingyuan, British museums displayed items as "from the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China" as a marker of curatorial pride.[54] So, museum practice transformed Yuanmingyuan's sacking from a violent event into an excitement for 'tasteful' Victorians. Museums also helped to separate Orientalism from the violence at Yuanmingyuan. They distanced the objects taken from Yuanmingyuan from imperial plunder by supporting official accounts of the sacking as solely about retribution. In the metropole, museums contributed to the looting's violence through an abstracted, possessive narrative of their Chinese collections.

In the aftermath of the looting, Victorians' growing private interest in Chinese goods reinforced the Orientalism that enabled the army at Yuanmingyuan. Pro-war Britons claimed China's "less civilized" status justified the war's violence. A significant bloc in government opposed the war. However, the official account, pushed by the popular prime minister Lord Palmerston, asserted that the clash between civilized and barbaric peoples necessitated war.[55] Palmerston's narrative represented how the war only pushed China further into its "special place" in Victorian Orientalism. By degrading China with its defeat, Palmerston and others relegated China's society further into barbarism; it had little to offer civilized Victorians.

Chinese objects only grew in importance, though. The looting of Yuanmingyuan brought a new class to Chinese collecting. If an object originated from the palace, its value surged, and sellers advertised its provenance.[56] As a result of the war, treaty ports opened for trade in fine arts and curios with China. By the end of the century, well-established roots and dealers were commonplace for those interested in buying directly from China.[57] This desire to consume China through its objects while denigrating its society embodies Orientalism.

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45 Richard Curt Kraus, "The Repatriation of Plundered Chinese Art," *The China Quarterly* 199 (September 1, 2009), 839.

46 *Red Moulded Candle*, 1850–1893, 1850–1893, The British Museum, London.

47 Sarah Milan, "Refracting Progress: The Slow Acceptance of Domestic Gas Lighting, London 1800-1890," *RSA Journal* 146, no. 5485 (1989): 122.

48 *Altar-vase; Lid*, 1501–1550, The British Museum, London.

49 Martin Hewitt, "Why the Notion of Victorian Britain Does Make Sense," *Victorian Studies* 48, no. 3 (January 1, 2006), 420.

50 Phillips and Phillips, *Victorians at Home*, 96.

51 James L. Hevia, "Looting Beijing: 1860, 1900," in *Tokens of Exchange*, ed. Lydia H. Liu (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 198.

52 Craig Clunas, "China in Britain: The Imperial Collections," in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998), 44.

53 Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (New York: Verso Books, 2019), 64–65.

54 Hevia, *English Lessons*, 98.

55 Andrew Phillips, "Saving Civilization From Empire: Belligerency, Pacifism and the Two Faces of Civilization During the Second Opium War," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 1 (October 27, 2011): 20–21.

56 Ai Weiwei, *Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals*, ed. Susan Delson (Munich: Prestel Publishing, 2011), 194.

57 Hevia, *English Lessons*, 132–34.

The sacking of the palace and its consequences only added to both aspects of the Orientalist conception of China. China's defeat proved the Orient's inferiority, and the palace's loot added new grails for collectors. Once Yuanmingyuan's loot found its place in British homes, museums, and private collections, Orientalism heralded owning it as the utmost value China offered.

Before, during, and after the looting of Yuanmingyuan, Victorian Orientalist, domestic, and materialist cultures intersected to drive the looting and how Victorians treated plundered artifacts. In the leadup to 1860, Victorian Orientalism and domesticity created an obsession with Chinese objects, teaching Victorians they had ownership over the Orient. The sacking fed off of that mindset, creating an insatiable allure to Yuanmingyuan's housewares for British soldiers. In the aftermath, museums and Orientalism worked to obfuscate the objects' origins in violence and Chinese society.

The fall of Yuanmingyuan lends to a larger history of collection and plunder. Whereas imperialist actors insisted on retribution as the motivation and looting as a side effect, Victorian Orientalism drove soldiers, officers, collectors, civilians, and legislators alike. Orientalism and the interests of the public have a crucial role in how imperialism treats objects in colonized spaces. When soldiers flooded the residences of Yuanmingyuan, their tastes had been curated, their interests defined by Orientalism and domesticity in the metropole. Quotidian life and popular media influenced the violence at the palace more than the processes of war or British "civility."

After Lord Elgin stepped out of the palace, Yuanmingyuan burned into ashes and ruins. China slinked into a once-great backwater land in the British conception—a defeated dragon. But the violence did not begin the day Lord Elgin's men lit their torches. It began with inconspicuous practices. A couple attending a play about a willow-pattern plate. A nobleman decorating his home with porcelain. A curator writing a catalog for his new Chinese collection. Understanding the plunder of Yuanmingyuan requires this window into how collection, rhetoric, and social practice built its foundation. Collectively, they belittled China until it became a toy for the metropole to play with. Every fire begins with a spark, and Yuangminyuan's was no exception.

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Madness in the Dock

Psychiatric Perceptions and Legal Implications of Puerperal Insanity Defenses in mid-Victorian England

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In April 1857, Dr. Wildbore was called upon by London's Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey) to diagnose Sarah Price's mental state. Price, tried for drowning her three-month-old son, was compelled by distinctive impulses rather than rationality, exhibiting 'delusions,' 'confusion,' and 'despair.'[1] Faced with the question, "During the whole of these different days, did she appear in that wild, distracted state which you have described?", it is difficult to determine what held greater sway over the jurors: the attorneys' strategic questioning or the expert testimony provided by medical professionals like Dr. Wildbore.[2] Though eventually acquitted on the grounds of *non-compos mentis* (of unsound mind), Price's case exemplified a grim phenomenon in mid-Victorian England: puerperal insanity-induced infanticide.[3]

To grasp the impact of the medicalization of puerperal insanity on perceptions of criminality in England, one must closely examine the role of emerging medical defense testimonies within nineteenth-century courtrooms.[4] This work shifts the historical emphasis from the *event* of diagnosing female insanity to the *attitudes* toward women deemed insane. Such an effort is far from novel. However, it outlines an interesting process of proceedings, attempting, chronologically, to demonstrate that medical explanations of maternal insanity did not rest exclusively on women's reproductive biology. Initially viewed through a lens of rigid categorization that stigmatized affected women as rejecting femininity, this condition gradually transitioned into a legally acknowledged form of illness through two divergent yet complementary approaches.

Firstly, physicians underscored the impact of exacerbating symptoms of puerperal insanity, particularly among lower-class women. Such understandings highlighted the absence of spousal support and financial strain as factors that intensified the impulse towards infanticide. In doing so, psychiatry wielded considerable influence by framing infanticide as a problem more significant than its etiology of childbirth.

Secondly, in emphasizing the cross-class affliction of puerperal insanity in middle-class women, psychiatrists solidified the diagnosis as physiological rather than a shirking of conventional maternal responsibilities. Framed as angels of the household, wealthier women who committed infanticide redefined maternalism, wherein postpartum experiences of shame, anxiety, and sadness emerged as natural experiences of motherhood.

While it remains questionable whether the social aspects that affect female insanity should be viewed as an intrinsic component of scientific history broadly, conceptions of maternal immorality significantly stemmed from early nineteenth-century economic legislation. Socioeconomic concern for public morality involved redefining notions of femininity and charity. The English New Poor Law of 1834 (the Law) was thus deployed to emphasize self-reliance, substantiating the position that mothers should bear the costs of illegitimate pregnancy alone. The Bastardy Clauses (the Clauses) contained within the Law created a rich, plot-driven narrative of the 'bastard bearer'—a seductress who wrongfully accused innocent men of paternity by demanding financial compensation.[5] An informant to The Law reported that:

> An eminent surgeon at Camberwell, relat[ed]…the case of a respectable young man…who had been sworn by a young woman as the father of her child; he had no means of disproving it but by submitting to an examination by medical gentlemen, when his utter impotency was proved beyond doubt; but the woman went unpunished.[6]

The pervasive stigma associated with premarital sexual activity fostered an environment in which infanticide could be perceived as a means of mitigating the social consequences of illegitimacy, not as a manifestation of mental illness. Drawing significantly upon Thomas Malthus' *The Principle of Population*, the Clauses maintained that intercourse without a contract was more blamable in a woman than in a man—"the inconvenience to the society at the same time the greatest, there, it was agreed, the largest share of the blame should

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1 *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), April 6, 1857, trial of SARAH PRICE (t18570406-480), accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18570406-480?text=puerperal%20mania.

2 *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, trial of SARAH PRICE, April 6, 1857, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18570406-480?text=puerperal%20mania.

3 In defining puerperal insanity, this paper operates within the framework of contemporary definitions of the illness—post-partum anxiety, depression, and psychosis. Within all court cases and newspaper articles discussed, the women tried for infanticide suffered from puerperal insanity. However, the specific clinical manifestations of this condition, such as manic or melancholic features, are not consistently detailed in the analyzed sources.

4 Joel Peter Eigen, "Lesion of the Will: Medical Resolve and Criminal Responsibility in Victorian Insanity Trials," *Law & Society Review* 33, no. 2 (1999): 431.

5 Thomas Nutt, "Illegitimacy, Paternal Financial Responsibility, and the 1834 Poor Law Commission Report: The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New," *Economic History Review* Vol. 63, no. 2 (2010), 338.

6 Poor Law Commissioners, *The Poor Laws, Their Present Operation, and Their Proposed Amendment, Chiefly Drawn from the Evidence and Reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners* (London: C. Knight, 1834), 216.

fall."[7] As a "further step towards the natural state of things," the onus of care for bastard children was to fall solely on the mother—"Any relief occasioned by the wants of the child should be considered as relief afforded to the parent."[8] Under this new legislation, if a woman could not support her child, she would have to enter a workhouse.

By increasing the economic hardship of single women, the Law was received by the general public as leading to an increase in infanticide. In tandem, the question of whether such legislation was a deliberate attempt to stimulate infant death among Britain's poor came to fruition.[9] The repeal of the Clauses in 1844 thus marked a turning point prompted by their perceived ineffectiveness in reducing bastardy rates.[10] Wherein the authority of medicine in court is bolstered by the extent to which it reflects new scientific discoveries, correlations between socioeconomic factors, and their brunt on puerperal illness, led to a growth of social conscience.[11] Puerperal insanity began to disentangle liability when considering the capacity conceptualization of criminal responsibility. As exemplified by the case above, these cultural trends also informed the moralistic standpoint on the sexual behavior and reproductive patterns of the "unrespectable" poor in their attack on the educated middle classes.

It was a reality that by 1850, statistics from England and Wales indicated that 63% of women had five or more children.[12] Concurrently, English lunatic asylums reported varying rates of female admissions due to puerperal insanity, ranging from less than 5% to over 20%, with an average of approximately 7.5%.[13] Against this decades-long depiction of women as inherently abusive of power, prominent physicians advanced their physiological theories of puerperal insanity.[14] While the sad or erratic behaviors women exhibit around childbirth have not gone unnoticed, they are often perceived as intrinsic and expected aspects of the birthing experience.[15] Such manifestations were typically addressed as isolated incidents and not recognized as systemic issues with the potential to impact a significant portion of the female population.

Presented to the London College of Physicians in 1820, puerperal insanity is first described in obstetrician Dr. Robert Gooch's work, *Observations on Puerperal Insanity*.[16] Predominantly focused on middle-class patients treated in his private London practice, Gooch delineated two distinct postpartum diagnoses: mania and melancholia.[17] For most doctors, the defining feature of puerperal insanity was its likelihood of being curable.[18] At the Grove House Asylum in Bow in 1843, Dr. Palmer documented that out of 467 patients, nineteen were diagnosed with puerperal insanity, with an average treatment time of four months.[19] Among this group, fourteen patients eventually recovered; two were in the process of recovery; one was discharged and likely recovered; one experienced recurrent mania; and one had irreversible dementia.[20]

It is important to note that the insanity defense is more likely to change over time because it is dependent upon medicine to define insanity, and the scientific understanding of insanity itself is constantly shifting.[21] Confrontation with puerperal insanity cases in the 1840s led to the development of complex explanations for a woman's loss of reason based on a *collection* of factors rather than a *specific* medical event. For some physicians, puerperal insanity is linked to morbid disease or a predisposition to mental illness or related to hereditary influences. For others, it is a natural risk of becoming a mother, the result of the very act of giving birth.[22] Dr. James Reid, serving as physician to the General Lying-In Hospital in London in 1844, noted that a mother is more "accessible to an attack of puerperal mania" resulting from "great exhaustion after labour, sleepless nights caused by the infant."[23] Similarly, Dr. John Conolly, a consulting physician at the Hanwell Asylum in 1858, asserted that puerperal insanity is partly attributed to the demanding process of "furnishing the only food […] to sustain the new life."[24] Subsequently, Dr. John Tuke in 1865 later categorized such findings as "lactational insanity," which was chiefly encountered in mothers of large families who prolonged nursing to save money.[25]

In the same way that physicians argued for the etiology of puerperal insanity stemming from socioeconomic

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7 Thomas Malthus, ed. James Bonar. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1885), 202.

8 'Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws,' 195.

9 R. Sauer, "Infanticide and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Population Studies* 32, no. 1 (March 1978): 89, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2173842.

10 Nutt, "Illegitimacy, Paternal Financial Responsibility, and the 1834 Poor Law Commission Report," 359.

11 Rebecca Hyman, "Medea of Suburbia: Andrea Yates, Maternal Infanticide, and the Insanity Defense," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 3/4 (Fall - Winter 2004): 206, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40004588.

12 Sarah E. Maier and Brenda Ayres, eds., *Neo-Victorian Madness: Rediagnosing Nineteenth Century Mental Illness in Literature and Other Media* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 178.

13 I. Loudon, "Puerperal Insanity in the 19th Century," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 81 (February 1988): 77.

14 Fay Bound Alberti, *Medicine, Emotion and Disease, 1700-1950* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 55.

15 Ibidem.

16 Morag Allen Campbell, "Noisy, Restless, and Incoherent: Puerperal Insanity at Dundee Lunatic Asylum," *History of Psychiatry* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 45.

17 Ibidem.

18 Hilary Marland, "Under the Shadow of Maternity: Birth, Death, and Puerperal Insanity in Victorian Britain," *History of Psychiatry* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 80, https://doi.org/10.1177/0957154X11428573.

19 James Reid, *On the Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment of Puerperal Insanity* (London: T.C. Savil, 1848), 121.

20 Fay Bound Alberti, *Medicine, Emotion and Disease, 1700-1950* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 55.

21 Hyman, "Medea of Suburbia: Andrea Yates, Maternal Infanticide, and the Insanity Defense," 205.

22 Alberti, *Medicine, Emotion, and Disease*, 59.

23 Reid, *On the Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment of Puerperal Insanity*, 19.

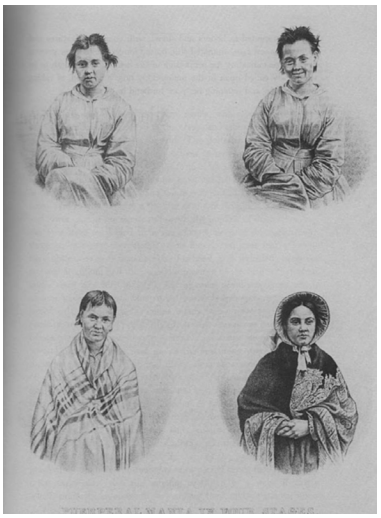
24 John Conolly, "No.8—The Physiognomy of Insanity," *Medical Times & Gazette*, June 19, 1858, 56, https://archive.org/details/s3591id1378444/page/n7/mode/2up

25 Sarah E. Maier and Brenda Ayres, eds., *Neo-Victorian Madness: Rediagnosing Nineteenth Century Mental Illness in Literature and Other Media* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 177.

stressors, it would seem that medical views of proper womanly behavior influenced their perception and definition of puerperal insanity.[26] Though the catalyst for infanticide may be something specific to the present, the act is at once inserted into a new set of psychiatric categories that strip it of its particular context and make it instead a manifestation of an illness.[27] Placing the onset of the disorder was an insidious and gradual process, as it crept unnoticed into the core of the family or was remarkable for sudden and violent onset.[28]

Recognizing the visual manifestations of this disorder became critical and enabled psychiatrists to document the evolving state and expression sequences of patients across various periods of disease development. Conolly spearheaded the integration of diagnoses with psychiatric photographs taken by Dr. Hugh W. Diamond in 1858—striking before-and-after sequences of puerperal sickness and cure best represented by changes in fashion and self-presentation.[29] When patient photographs were the primary focus of the investigation, four configurations of the patient image dominated medical literature: the repressive frontal headshot; the dramatized, feminized hysteric; the disinterested, neutral, clinical photograph; and the restoration to appropriate female respectability.[30]

In the first of Diamond's four portraits, the depiction portrays an early phase characterized by dullness and apathy:



Hugh Welch Diamond, 'Puerperal Mania in Four Stages', from photographs, in *Medical Times and Gazette* (June 1858), between 632 & 633. Reproduced by the Royal Society of Medicine, London.[31]

According to Connolly, the woman appeared very quiet, with her hands crossed and resting on her knees; "the eyes are forward […] this patient was indeed not only sullen when spoken to but refused food."[32] In the second portrait, a phase of animation is evident, marked by a sly smile. The third photograph signifies improvement, although "a tension of the facial muscles […] [which] prevents the experienced Physician from concluding that all the malady has yet passed away", hinting at a potential relapse into "drollery."[33] It is in the final picture, as described by Diamond, where the patient is "clothed and in her right mind," and by Conolly, where she is "represented in bonnet and shawl," that the patient is deemed cured.[34]

At its simplest, puerperal history is not a fundamental reinterpretation of actual medicine. Rather, it is a lens through which we can observe the changing perceptions of mentally ill women's morality, societal stigmas, and definitions of health in a broader historical context. Illustrating the insane involved imposing preconceptions of both photographer and psychiatrist of what a "mad mother" looked like. The photographs not only document the progression of recovery but also illustrate how deviation from stringent social norms of femininity placed a mother's sanity into question. In Appendix B, the portrait captures the transition stage of a puerperal manic patient from sadness to renewed excitement:[35]

No Caption.[36]

Described as an "unhappy-looking woman" with clasped hands for weeks, she is depicted later with "curled and ornamented hair," displaying an "air of vanity and restored grace."[37] As in many of Diamond's other pictures, hands remain an essential

26 Nancy Theriot, "Diagnosing Unnatural Motherhood: Nineteenth-century Physicians and 'Puerperal Insanity,'" *American Studies* 30, no. 2 (Fall 1989): 69, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40642344.

27 Hyman, "Medea of Suburbia: Andrea Yates, Maternal Infanticide, and the Insanity Defense," 202.

28 Pearl Sharrona, "Through a Mediated Mirror: The Photographic Physiognomy of Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond," *History of Photography* 33, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 628.

29 Ibidem.

30 Ibidem.

31 Pearl Sharrona, "Through a Mediated Mirror: The Photographic Physiognomy of Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond," *History of Photography* 33, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 297. https://doi.org/10.1080/03087290902752978

32 Conolly, "No.8—The Physiognomy of Insanity," 56, https://archive.org/details/s3591id1378444/page/n7/mode/2up

33 Hilary Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood: Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 137.

34 Ibidem.

35 Sander Gilman, *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origin of Psychiatric Photography* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976), 63.

36 Sander Gilman, *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origin of Psychiatric Photography* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976), 63.

37 Sharrona, "Through a Mediated Mirror", 298.

point of communication with the viewers. Here, an attending nurse's positioning of her hands symbolizes a lack of control. Only in the final recovered state are the patient's hands calmly clasped, implying a return to expected behaviors.[38] Similarly, Appendix C shows the recovered woman standing and dressed in 'respectable' attire, reading a book:[39]

No Caption.[40]

Maternal pressures for mothers to conform to subservient roles and uphold decorum led to the pathologization of behaviors deemed nonconformist, particularly those related to maternal expression or deviation.[41] As the psychiatric profession operated under the premise of objectivity and scientific rigor, offering sanitized explanations for the phenomenon of the "mad mother" rose to new importance for determining criminal culpability.[42] Expert testimony has played a pivotal role in infanticide trials since the mid-eighteenth century. Reliance on the opinions of surgeons, general practitioners, midwives, and testimonies from witnesses, including neighbors, friends, and passers-by dominated trial hearings.[43] However, the introduction of new psychiatric labels, like puerperal insanity, allowed for a broad interpretation of mental disorders, extending the defense of insanity to cases where the accused exhibited distress, unusual behavior, poverty, or cognitive impairment.[44]

A pivotal aspect of the pathologization of puerperal insanity was the categorizing of the impulse to commit infanticide as a distinctive feature of the disease. This association was prominently highlighted in two widely read cases. Reported by the *Staffordshire Chronicle* in October 1860, the newspaper recounted the case of an unmarried woman who, after breastfeeding for some time and being "attacked by fits," threw her six-week-old son into the Walsall Canal at Bentley Bridge.[45] The article drew upon a medical explanation of puerperal mania, noting that "the first attitude of the patient [is] to take the life of the child, which should be immediately taken from them."[46] Similarly, in April 1880, Miss Ann Noakes was acquitted at the Old Bailey for the murder of her sixteen-month-old son, William George Noakes.[47] Her physician, Dr. John Walters, attributed her actions to puerperal manic symptoms, in which "there is generally a tendency to suicide or child murder, sometimes one, sometimes the other."[48]

The classification of infanticide as an ordinary, irresistible impulse allowed doctors to argue in court the non-conscious nature of the act.[49] Poor women who were alleged to have concealed, abandoned, or murdered their illegitimate newborns did so not because of cruel behavior. Instead, judges and juries became increasingly aware of the physical and mental distress associated with labour, leading to irrationality. The infanticidal woman's conduct was regarded as *caused* behavior, for which she had at most a limited moral responsibility.[50] Such pleas of mental disorder began to extend to encompass a defendant woman's behavior more generally before her diagnosis. While legal discourse could examine infanticide only in terms of the death of an infant shortly after birth, the psychiatric profession could discuss infanticidal impulses throughout the whole period in which the body might be said to be in a "maternal" state.[51]

The question of criminality occasioned by medicalization in the mid-nineteenth century significantly disrupted Victorian conceptions of maternalism. In 1858, Connolly explored the concept of puerperal mania by contrasting the emotions of the father, biological mother, and nurse.[52] Aiming to illustrate the intense postpartum emotions that resulted in rejecting maternal instincts, Conolly noted that after childbirth, the father often experienced a heightened sense of importance. The nurse exhibited pride in the baby as a pseudo-mother, almost considering it her own.[53] However, this joyous atmosphere was disrupted by the noticeable changes in the young mother's demeanor—her altered tone, manner, or temperament—and her apparent detachment

38 Ibidem.

39 "Images and Impulses: Representations of Puerperal Insanity and Infanticide in Late Victorian England," in *Infanticide: Historical Perspectives on Child Murder and Concealment, 1550–2000*, edited by Mark Jackson (London: Routledge, 2002), 208.

40 "Images and impulses: Representations of Puerperal Insanity and Infanticide in late Victorian England." In *Infanticide: Historical Perspectives on Child Murder and Concealment, 1550–2000*, edited by Mark Jackson, 208. London: Routledge, 2002. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315252308

41 Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987), 171.

42 Cath Quinn, "Images and Impulses: Representations of Puerperal Insanity and Infanticide in Late Victorian England," in *Infanticide: Historical Perspectives on Child Murder and Concealment, 1550–2000*, edited by Mark Jackson (London: Routledge, 2002), 193.

43 Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 181.

44 Ibidem.

45 "Infanticide at Willenhall.—Verdict of Wilful Murder," *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 6, 1860, accessed April 10, 2024, https://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000345/18601006/033/0006

46 Ibidem.

47 *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), April 26, 1880, trial of ANN NOAKES (t18800426-428), accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18800426-428?text=puerperal.

48 Ibidem.

49 Quinn, "Images and Impulses", 200.

50 Ibidem.

51 Ibidem.

52 Conolly, "No.8—The Physiognomy of Insanity," 56.

53 Ibidem.

from her child and husband.[54]

In the thirty years since the introduction of the Clauses, a newfound 'humanitarian approach' criticized the lack of responsibility shown by men for their inappropriate behavior.[55] This shift in perspective is best exemplified by three criminal cases in London from 1862 to 1863. Sarah Emily Mitchell, who had originally worked as a maid for her father's child, found herself abandoned by him after exhibiting symptoms of puerperal mania.[56] Harriet Goodliffe, married to a shoemaker, was portrayed as the primary caretaker for their three children despite her working status and her frequently "uninvolved" husband.[57] Adelaide Cole, whose husband was a cabinet-maker, ignored her pleas to remove the child from her care.[58] Each of these three women were acquitted under *non-compos mentis*.

The influence of poverty and the absence of paternal support thus emerged as significant factors contributing to the circumstances leading to the exacerbation of puerperal-insane symptoms and its ultimate manifestation—infanticide.[59] In this sense, the concept of "moral insanity" was drawn by physicians in court defenses to demonstrate how external signs of stress—such as those impacting one's capacity, conduct, and character—reinforced internal features of psychology.[60]

Infanticidal poor women thus emerged as passive, compassionate, tragic, and innocent.[61] The doctors called upon for diagnosis noted that mothers were often impoverished, malnourished, had borne too many children in quick succession, and sometimes physically disabled.[62] In the case notes of the three women above, the language physicians employ is viscerally striking. Casebook descriptions such as 'desponding,' 'distressed,' and 'alone.' While on the face of the law, the conduct of these women remained criminal—Mitchell strangled her fourteen-month-old daughter, Sarah Emily Adeline Chappell; Goodliffe threw her eight-month-old son, James Goodliffe, from a window; and Cole slit the throat of her fifteen-month-old son, Charles Cole—social meanings stemming from medical descriptions changed. Women who were charged with killing their newborns were to be pitied, with juries avoiding conviction and punishment if possible.[63]

It is essential to note that the mother's actions were not devoid of horror or condemnation. In cases of puerperal-induced infanticide, doctors often attributed *partial blame* to poverty for exacerbating the factors leading to puerperal insanity. For instance, in April 1858, Dr. Henry Parsey, the Medical Superintendent of Warwick County Lunatic Asylum, provided evidence in a child murder case in Berkswell, near Coventry.[64] The accused, Selina Cranmore, was reported in the *Warwick Advertiser* as being responsible for managing the family finances and became convinced that her husband was facing financial ruin. Feeling overwhelmed and unable to sustain the baby compared to her other children, Dr. Parsey recognized the impact of her impoverished circumstances on her mental state.[65] Nicola Lacey argues that by the late Victorian era, criminal adjudication processes evidenced a conception of responsibility and non-responsibility representing a mix 'of character and engaged psychological capacity.'[66] The increasing medicalization of puerperal experience and its relevance to individual responsibility simultaneously posed coordination problems for criminal law—the capacity to recognize 'psychological' excuses to undermine the law's prohibitions.[67] When societal pressures were coupled with violent manifestations of puerperal mania, it provided a biologically determined defense that emphasized the impact of physiological factors on the individual's mental state.[68]

As previously mentioned, considerable debate existed between psychiatrists regarding the onset of puerperal insanity. Some doctors, such as Dr. Skae and Dr. Clouston, in the 'Morisonian Lectures on Insanity for 1873,' maintained that puerperal insanity occurred in a three-month duration, reflecting on a case where a middle-class woman strangled her child eleven weeks after its birth.[69] Contrastingly, Dr. Joseph Wiglesworth, Assistant Medical Officer at Rainhill Asylum, noted in February 1886 that of twenty-seven puerperal insanity cases, the average duration of insanity was a little

54 Ibidem.

55 Christina Forst, "Creators, Destroyers, and a Judge: Infanticide and Puerperal Insanity in Victorian English Courts," *Historical Perspectives: Santa Clara University Undergraduate Journal of History Series II* 17 (2012): 20.

56 *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), October 26, 1863, trial of SARAH EMILY MITCHELL (t18631026-1201), accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18631026-1201?text=puerperal mania

57 *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), May 11, 1863, trial of HARRIET GOODLIFFE (t18630511-716), accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18630511-716?text=puerperal mania.

58 *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), September 22, 1862, trial of ADELAIDE COLE (t18620922-957), accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18620922-957?text=puerperal mania.

59 Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 181.

60 Nicola Lacey, "Psychologising Jekyll, Demonising Hyde: The Strange Case of Criminal Responsibility," *LSE Law, Society and Economy Working Papers*, no. 18/2009 (London School of Economics and Political Science Law Department, 2009), 16.

61 Arlie Loughnan, "The 'Strange' Case of the Infanticide Doctrine," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 32, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 694.

62 Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 183.

63 Loughnan, "The 'Strange' Case of the Infanticide Doctrine,"

64 Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 189.

65 Ibidem.

66 Lacey, "Psychologising Jekyll, Demonising Hyde", 14.

67 Ibidem, 15.

68 Elaine Showalter, "Victorian Women and Insanity," *Victorian Studies* 23, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 171, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3827084.

69 "Images and Impulses", 196.

under nine months each.[70] To this end, puerperal insanity altered from its original definition of immediate post-birth behavioral changes to encompass sometimes over year-long bouts of, what is contemporarily defined as, psychosis. Such discrepancies in the length of illness were called upon during trials to prove women innocent.

Like their lower-class counterparts, the widening sphere of middle-class female experience and opportunity after 1860 brought new problems of criminal definition. Such evolutions prompted psychiatric physicians to establish themselves as trusted advisors to troubled middle-class women.[71] In doing so, puerperal insanity broadened its scope of victims in the public mind and courtroom. While poverty was used to bolster the innocence of poor women, the illness' cross-class targeting reinforced its physiological elements.

In addressing the success of psychiatric diagnoses of puerperal insanity in influencing court constructions of criminality, this is true. The difficulties of convicting women accused of infant murder, combined with a new sensationalizing of cases committed by middle-class women, led to pressure for a change in the criminal law. In the mid-1860s, barristers and judges appearing before the Commission on Capital Punishment urged the creation of a new category of crime for mothers accused of infanticide, one that would not be a capital offence and would not require medical evidence of separate existence.[72]

Hilary Marland notes that since crime was often linked to perceived moral deficiencies attributed to the poor, sensationalized cases of puerperal insanity-induced infanticide involving wealthier women struck the heart of Victorian criminal understandings.[73] Typical of infanticidal reports, in October 1851, the young Maria Stewart was reported in the *Morning Chronicle* as having suffocated her two illegitimate children, one being her two-week-old daughter.[74] The paper noted that Stewart "incorrectly represented [her] superior station in life" and that the "rumor stating that the father of her children was an extensive landowner in Suffolk" was inaccurate.[75] Demonstrated in the case of Stewart, the notion of wealthier married women being capable of harming their children because of mental illness was, in public view, unfathomable. Medical opinions on married, affluent patients in the 1860s reflected an immense variation from the image of the 'typical' infanticidal mother that appeared in the popular press—that of a young, poor servant girl.[76]

The middle classes, who dominated Victorian society economically and politically, constructed idealized social identities for women regarding their maternal potential. If a male's 'natural role' was in the aggressively constructed public sphere, the passive female role was suited to the private domestic domain.[77] Yet, one of the critical features of puerperal insanity-induced infanticide that emerged in the late 1850s was its ability to strike at the heart of wealthier families—those whose women lived lives of relative luxury and comfort.

An examination of medical opinions on wealthier infanticide cases tried in the Old Bailey suggests that infant murder could not be understood simply as a typical response to the problems of illegitimate, poor motherhood. Instead, these trials demonstrate how psychiatric diagnoses of puerperal insanity gained legitimacy and became recognized as a universal diagnosis capable of influencing legal acquittals. Puerperal insanity transcended class boundaries and marital status, challenging the notion that infanticide was solely linked to socioeconomic circumstances.[78]

In the Victorian mind, middle-class women who killed their children 'represented the very antithesis of womanhood.'[79] In court, the diagnosis of puerperal insanity thus allowed a 'neat societal explanation for [this] outrageous behavior,' which relieved such women of liability while still protecting the 'state of femininity.'[80] A highly publicized trial that exemplified this phenomenon was that of Adelaide Freeman in November 1869.[81] Freeman, who was accused of poisoning her one-month-old daughter, was portrayed as an outlier in society—she was married, had a previous child, and belonged to the upper middle class. During the trial, Freeman's surgeon, Dr. Henry Letheby, supported a diagnosis of puerperal depression, stating, "I think the depression, the melancholy, may be so great that, though she knew the result, still it would be an uncontrollable impulse."[82] Letheby's testimony reveals himself, and psychiatrists broadly, as a willing and active participant in highly charged courtroom dramas.[83] His concentration on the moral consequences of physical pathology—even to the point of pronouncing Freeman as "unanswerable"

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70 Joseph Wiglesworth, "Puerperal Insanity: An Analysis of Seventy-Three Cases of the Insanities of Pregnancy, Parturition and Lactation," *Transactions of the Liverpool Medical Institution* 6 (1885-86): 356, https://shorturl.at/jpR05.

71 Showalter, "Victorian Women and Insanity", 177.

72 Ann R. Higginbotham, "'Sin of the Age': Infanticide and Illegitimacy in Victorian London," *Victorian Studies* 32, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 331.

73 Hilary Marland, "Under the Shadow of Maternity: Birth, Death, and Puerperal Insanity in Victorian Britain," *History of Psychiatry* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 80, https://doi.org/10.1177/0957154X11428573.

74 "The Case of Infanticide near Bury St. Edmunds," *Morning Chronicle*, October 1851, accessed April 10, 2024, https://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000082/18511023/030/0007.

75 Ibidem.

76 Marland, "Under the Shadow of Maternity", 78.

77 Quinn, "Images and Impulses", 194.

78 Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 181.

79 Ibidem, 200.

80 Campbell, "Noisy, Restless, and Incoherent: Puerperal Insanity at Dundee Lunatic Asylum," 46.

81 *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), September 22, 1862, trial of ADELAIDE COLE (t18620922-957), accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18620922-957?text=puerperal%20%20mania.

82 Ibidem.

83 Eigen, "Lesion of the Will", 457.

for her actions—reinforced that there is more to *madness* than acting like a *mad person*.[84]

As the jury expressed their unanimous opinion that Barnwell and Freeman were in such a mental condition as to be incapable of distinguishing right from wrong, discourse among reformers argued that the acquittal of infanticidal women based on puerperal insanity was not an indication of the innocence of the suspect. Instead, such legal decisions were the result of the overly sympathetic attitude of judges, juries, and the general public.[85] One reformer by the name of Charlotte Winsor argued in the *Cheltenham Mercury* in 1865 that "juries almost habitually recommend the offending mother to mercy." Claiming that "the aberration of the mind which is often produced by the pains labour […] must be exaggerated" at trial.[86]

By painting the cross-class application of the diagnosis—further reinforcing puerperal insanity as a physiological predisposition—the notion of maternalism altered as well. Maternalism was not *rejected* in cases of puerperal infanticide; rather, maternalism as a definition was reframed into being a difficult experience puerperal patients tried to embrace. Many wealthier women were depicted by physicians as being overly anxious about their ability to be good mothers, expressing worries about breastfeeding their infants, which were no doubt stimulated by the fact that many newborn children failed to thrive.[87] Doctors framed such fears as part and parcel of the emotional ambiguities surrounding maternalism, which could be marked by distress and worry as much as joy.

In what can be considered a 'breaking news' story by modern standards, the *Warwick Advertiser* reported in 1867 on the case of Elizabeth Barnwell, who drowned her infant son, George Branwell, in the Warwick and Napton Canal.[88] Her physician diagnosed her previously as suffering from postpartum "great mental excitement," attributing her actions to a temporary mental state that was wholly uncharacteristic of her previous behavior. Before this sad occurrence, Elizabeth was described by her physician as an orderly, respectable, middle-class woman and loving mother.[89] Reid, in his essay from 1858, highlighted that it was not uncommon for young females of a higher social class to feel pressures of societal shame in their puerperal recovery.[90] Among the fatal cases attended by Reid, two were similar to Barnwell's disposition—highly educated, married, and with a sensitive disposition.[91]

Psychiatrists thus presented maternalism as a severe physical and mental challenge despite wealth and marriage. Doctors saw themselves as being up against something much more extensive than women's biological vulnerability and, in particular, recognized that motherhood could be disruptive, overdemanding, overwhelming, and disappointing.[92] The supposedly opposing poles of maternal instinct and murder were thus not as antithetical as they appeared. The boundaries between intense motherly care and murder were very fine and, in many scenarios, non-existent.[93]

Acquittals and sentences to private psychiatry care comment as much on the concept of insanity itself as they do on particular cases. To call for such women to be found not guilty because of insanity is not only to sanction the psychological entity of postpartum psychosis but also to argue that infanticide is a manifestation of the public's disengagement with a mother's needs.[94]

Historically, access to diagnosis, treatment, and legal responses varied significantly by class. In this sense, Victorian findings on puerperal insanity provided a way of avoiding the fundamental problems of healthcare by offering a simple, even comforting, explanation of infanticide.[95] The Victorians could grapple with the issue of crime. Solving all the problems of puerperal insanity, however, would have required rethinking fundamental assumptions about parental responsibility, the role of the state, and the allocation of medical resources for the health of mothers.[96]

The diagnosis of puerperal insanity not only reframed perceptions of criminal behavior but also highlighted disparities in class and access to healthcare. Lower-class women, lacking support and resources, often bore the brunt of societal condemnation, while middle-class women's experiences helped redefine maternalism in the face of mental health challenges. Thus, puerperal insanity is a prosperous site through which to investigate the doubled nature of the law because that which constitutes insanity itself is particularly mutable and reflects popular conceptions of mental illness.[97]

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84 Ibidem.

85 Higginbotham, "'Sin of the Age'", 323.

86 Charlotte Winsor, "No Title," *Cheltenham Mercury*, August 5, 1865, accessed April 10, 2024, https://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001636/18650805/021/0002.

87 Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 3.

88 Ibidem, 168.

89 Ibidem.

90 Reid, *On the Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment of Puerperal Insanity*, 21.

91 Ibidem.

92 Alberti, *Medicine, Emotion, and Disease*, 73.

93 Andrew Mangham, "'Murdered at the Breast': Maternal Violence and the Self-Made Man in Popular Victorian Culture," *Critical Survey* 16, no. 1 (2004): 24.

94 Hyman, "Medea of Suburbia: Andrea Yates, Maternal Infanticide, and the Insanity Defense," 207.

95 Higginbotham, "'Sin of the Age'", 337.

96 Ibidem.

97 Hyman, "Medea of Suburbia: Andrea Yates, Maternal Infanticide, and the Insanity Defense," 205.

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Omissions Are Not Amends

Evelyn Gandy's Racial Politics and Legacy, 1920-2007

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Evelyn Gandy, Mississippi's first female Lieutenant Governor, is an important, yet woefully under-researched political figure in Mississippi's history. Gandy's career spanned from 1947 to 1983, and for sixteen of these thirty-six years, she was an ardent defender of segregation and a close associate of the notoriously racist Mississippi senator Theodore Bilbo until his death in 1947. When the Civil Rights movements ended legal racial segregation in the South, Gandy responded by omitting her prior racial positions and remaining silent on race issues. Unfortunately, most media coverage of the politician follows her lead by omitting her massive resistance platform, or association with Bilbo. Considerations of Gandy's legacy rarely mention her white supremacist beginnings. This paper seeks to answer whether Gandy's racial politics did meaningfully change. The paper utilizes the extensive Evelyn Gandy Papers Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi's McCain Archives to find compelling evidence that Gandy had meaningfully evolved her racial positioning—evidence that was not found. Despite her long life and career and glowing media coverage to the contrary, this paper argues that, despite ample opportunities to address her white supremacist politics, Evelyn Gandy never meaningfully did.

Introduction

In December 2007, Mississippians mourned the death of Edythe Evelyn Gandy: a stateswoman who carved out a successful and impressive career in twentieth-century Mississippi politics that culminated in her Lieutenant Governorship in 1976. Carroll Ingram—Gandy's longtime friend and one of the "Gandy Boys" during their time in the state senate together—eulogized Gandy at her funeral. Ingram cited a specific instance from Gandy's tenure as Commissioner of Public Welfare in 1965 whereby she desegregated reception rooms at all welfare offices in Mississippi. He recalled Gandy's bravery, "She simply acted out in courage and did what was right."[1] While touching, Ingram's remembrance of Gandy omits and obscures important information. First, it omits Gandy's position as an avowed segregationist—one who ran for Lieutenant Governor in 1963 on a platform that leveraged her connection to Mississippi statesman, virulent racist, and Ku Klux Klan member, Theodore G. Bilbo, and stated in campaign literature, "Evelyn Gandy Believes In, and Will Fight Effectively and Courageously – For States' Rights, For our way of life in Mississippi, For racial segregation."[2] Second, it obscures the context in which her actions occurred. She did indeed desegregate the reception areas and the services of the Department of Public Welfare; however, she did so under the directive of Governor Paul Johnson Jr.—a lifelong friend of Gandy's—and the federal mandate of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[3] Certainly, Gandy was brave to do so as a Democratic politician with ambitions for higher office in Mississippi, yet she did so out of necessity rather than out of a desire to do what was right.

Ingram's story of Evelyn Gandy is one discursive example of many that elide the reality of the stateswoman's support of white supremacy, which she publicly espoused and maintained for sixteen years of her thirty-six-year career. The journalists, politicians, lawyers, and—few—scholars who talk about Gandy take their cues from the woman herself. Once the reality of legal racial segregation in the South was overturned, Gandy changed tack by omitting any connection to Bilbo and remaining silent on race. Likewise, considerations of Gandy's legacy—during her career and posthumously—either omit her white supremacist politics, or they absolve her of them. Despite her long life and career as a Mississippi Democrat, Evelyn Gandy never meaningfully addressed her white supremacist racial politics; she instead chose silence and omission as her means of navigating post-Jim Crow racial politics.

While Gandy, now, is largely unknown to many Mississippians, growing attention is being redirected, rightful-

1 Demetrica Smith, "Gandy Remembered for Selflessness," *Hattiesburg American*, 29 December 2007, in the Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 24, folder 18.

2 Evelyn Gandy 1963 Lieutenant Gubernatorial Campaign Flyer, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 8, folder 1.

3 Evelyn Gandy, Mississippi Department of Public Welfare News Release, 26 February 1965, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 5, folder 12.

ly, toward her life and legacy. Gandy's position as a trailblazer in twentieth-century Mississippi politics, while stunning and important, has shielded her from meaningful criticism of her racial politics. Given the recent building interest in her legacy, a critical look at how Gandy navigated race in her political career is increasingly important.[4]

While academic interest in Gandy is increasing, the scholarly corpus on her career and life is rather bare. Though her career spanned decades and was largely successful, Gandy has not received the attention devoted to either her mentors, such as Bilbo, or her contemporaries like Paul B. Johnson Jr. and William Winter. No biographies chronicle and explore Gandy's life, accomplishments, and failures. Instead, the current corpus consists of merely two academic journal articles, both of which were published in 2017. Pete Smith explores in his article, "'*A Lady of Many Firsts*,'" the harmful gender stereotypes and press framing Gandy experienced throughout her career. Smith, however, pays no attention to her racial politics, or how they manifested in the media.[5] Victoria L. Brown, Seth Fendley, and Casey Malone Maugh Funderburk's article, "*A Mississippi Woman of First* [*sic*]," is a positive overview of and reflection on Gandy's life and political efficacy.[6] The authors mention, but do not interrogate, Gandy's affiliation with Bilbo and her segregationist politics; they also readily absolve Gandy of responsibility for her racial politics based on two brief events that will be explored in detail in this paper.

Both articles, understandably, focus on Gandy's experiences as a woman in twentieth-century Mississippi politics. However, they do so without paying adequate attention to the most obvious tension in Gandy's life and career—race. This paper seeks to contribute to the minute scholarly corpus by interrogating Evelyn Gandy's relationship with one of the most influential and notorious white supremacist politicians in Mississippi history, and her handling of racial politics as a Democratic politician before and after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

This exploration of Evelyn Gandy's political career relies heavily on the Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection housed at the McCain Library and Archive at the University of Southern Mississippi, as well as online newspaper databases. The Gandy Collection holds a large amount of information from Gandy's career. This paper uses correspondence, political and commencement speeches, campaign advertisements and flyers, press releases, state department reports, interview transcripts, and newspaper clippings to explore how race appeared in Gandy's career and how she handled the issue. Bilbo's book (housed in the Theodore G. Bilbo Collection at McCain) *Take Your Choice — Segregation or Mongrelization*, a ranting defense of white supremacy that Gandy admitted to doing the research for, is also used. Despite the extensive archival material in the Gandy Collection, there are notable archival silences. There is little material from her time in the Mississippi House of Representatives (1948-1952). And while there is a great deal of correspondence, much of it is one-sided, offering few examples of Gandy's voice outside of curated political and formal speeches, advertisements, and press releases.

Narrative History

Edythe Evelyn Gandy was born in Forrest County, Mississippi in 1920—the year women in the United States achieved enfranchisement. She was raised by her parents, Kearney C. Gandy and Abbie Whigham Gandy, who owned a successful farm. Both being supporters of white women participating in politics, Kearney encouraged Evelyn to pursue her childhood dream of becoming a lawyer.[7] Evelyn took that advice to heart and, as the only woman in her class, graduated from University of Mississippi School of Law in 1943. She became the first woman president of the Law School student body, and the first woman to edit the *Mississippi Law Journal* during her time as a student.[8] After graduating, she moved to Washington D.C. and worked as an aide to Gandy family friend, Senator Theodore Bilbo, for three years.

After returning to Hattiesburg, Gandy ran for Forrest County State Representative in 1947, and won a victory which marked the start of her decades-long political career.[9] In 1959 she won the election for State Treasurer, becoming the first woman in the state to be elected to statewide constitutional office. She then unsuccessfully ran for Lieutenant Governor in 1963, losing to Carrol Gartin, a prior two-term Lieutenant Governor and one of Gandy's many personal friends in state politics.[10] Soon after, Governor Paul B. Johnson appointed Gandy State Welfare Board Commissioner (1964-1967), a position she was, again, the first woman to hold in the state. She resigned from the position to run again for State Treasurer, an office that she won and in which she served

4 Interest in Gandy has particularly been increasing at her alma mater, the University of Southern Mississippi, where her archival collection is housed, and through which a newly published online encyclopedia about Gandy's life and career has been created under the direction of Dr. John Winters. There are also efforts to turn the Gandy House into a museum. https://aquila.usm.edu/exhibit/the-encyclopedia-of-e-evelyn-gandy/; Ashton Pittman, "'The Lady' Who Hit Mississippi's Glass Ceiling," *Jackson Free Press*, 26 June 2019, https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2019/jun/26/lady-who-hit-mississippis-glass-ceiling/ (accessed 25 September 2023); Laura Lee Leathers, "Remembering Evelyn Gandy: A Trailblazer in Leadership," *Magnolia Tribune*, 7 August 2023, https://magnoliatribune.com/2023/08/07/remembering-evelyn-gandy-a-trailblazer-in-leadership/ (accessed 25 September 2023); Lynn Fitch and Jennifer Ingram Johnson, "History Is Lunch: Lynn Fitch and Jennifer Ingram Johnson, "'The Life and Career of Evelyn Gandy,'" filmed 9 March 2022 at Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS, YouTube video, 1:00:30, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOsmA-JYO8I.

5 Pete Smith, "'A Lady of Many Firsts': Press Coverage of the Political Career of Mississippi's Evelyn Gandy, 1948-83," *American Journalism* 34, no. 4 (September 2017): 407–26, doi: 10.1080/08821127.2017.1382295 (accessed 02 October 2023).

6 Victoria L. Brown, Seth Fendley, and Casey Malone Maugh Funderburk, "A Mississippi Woman of First: The Legacy of Edythe Evelyn Gandy," *Mississippi Law Journal* 86, no. 4 (2017): 811-832, https://heinonline-org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/mislj86&id=843&collection=journals&index= (accessed 25 September 2023).

7 Interview - Gandy Family History/Gandy Civil War Soldiers Buried in Mississippi, transcript, 19 August 1999, tape 1, side A, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 14, Folder 6, 10-11.

8 1942 Press Release, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 1, folder 10.

9 Evelyn Gandy 1947 Campaign Pamphlet, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, box 2, folder 5.

10 Evelyn Gandy, Interview by Ray Skates, 10 October 1972, transcript, Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, The University of Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS, 17-18.

from 1968-1972.[11] Gandy then won the 1971 election for State Insurance Commissioner, again as the first woman to do so in the state.[12] In 1975, she once again made state history by winning the election for Lieutenant Governor. That victory would be Gandy's last, as her two campaigns for governor in 1979 and 1983 both ended in defeat. Gandy left political service afterward. She remained active in Democratic Party politics and devoted her life to law practice and feminist causes until her death in 2007.

Gandy's Politics

Evelyn Gandy grew up surrounded by populist segregationists. Her father, Kearney Gandy, though not involved in electoral politics, was a politically-connected farmer who was friends with many important Democratic politicians including Paul B. Johnson Sr. (Gandy's neighbor who appointed Kearney as a sergeant at the notorious Parchman Farm prison in 1940), Bilbo, and W. Joe Pack.[13] Gandy gained her first political campaigning experience on Pack's successful campaign for circuit judge by delivering a speech while still in high school.[14] Gandy later worked intensely on Paul B. Johnson Sr.'s successful 1939 campaign for Governor. According to different interviews with Gandy, she gave between 70 to 200 speeches on behalf of Johnson Sr.[15] Gandy's campaigning experiences throughout her youth on behalf of populist segregationists and her later stint working for Bilbo had a lasting effect on her politics. She campaigned throughout her career on expanding education access and funding, expanding benefits for the elderly and the disabled, funding better infrastructure and increasing support for farmers.[16] However, through 1963 she sculpted her platform specifically for white Mississippians.

After the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Acts of 1964 and 1965, Gandy dropped her white supremacist language and omitted her connection to Bilbo from her platform.[17] Whether this was a politically expedient move or a genuine evolution in Gandy's racial politics is unclear. Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk give mixed messages about this time in Gandy's career. Near the opening of their article, they attribute the change in Gandy's racial messaging to Gandy having meaningfully changed her racial politics, yet they are unable to decide later in the paper if it was a genuine shift or simply political savvy.[18] They later point to Gandy's casting all but one of Mississippi's votes at the Democratic National Convention of 1976 for Jimmy Carter—alongside the president of Mississippi's state NAACP chapter and civil rights leader, Aaron Henry—instead of segregationist George Wallace as proof of a genuine shift in Gandy's racial politics.[19] That this instance occurred, however, does not provide clear evidence that Gandy's racial beliefs and politics changed. It may have been a politically savvy move by a Democratic politician in the state with the highest proportion of Black residents.

Bilbo and the Book[20]

Ultimately, Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk opt to absolve Gandy of her white supremacist politics based on two examples that require Gandy to be taken solely at her word. The first are a few responses from Gandy during an oral history interview in 1972 with Ray Skates about her association with Bilbo and the rumor that she had ghost-written his infamous book *Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization*. Gandy responded to Skates' question suggesting that a professor from Columbia University ghost-wrote it, "I would say that's unfounded. I think those really were the senator's thoughts and ideas in the book, but certainly I did a lot of the research and pulled a lot of material together for him."[21] There are other strikingly incredulous statements by Gandy in the interview, including her remarkable claim that Bilbo was not personally preoccupied with race, but rather that the media had painted him as a racist. She also stated that, "those of us who were on his staff … did not find ourselves that engrossed with the subject."[22]

Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk are quick to accept these responses and do not interrogate their validity.[23] Taken within the context of Bilbo's (and Gandy's) work in *Take Your Choice*, his myriad speeches and public statements riddled with racial slurs, as well as his opposition to anti-lynching laws and the elimination of the poll tax, it is nearly impossible to

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11 News Release - Evelyn Gandy for State Treasurer, 1967, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 6, folder 2.

12 Evelyn Gandy 1971 Campaign Brochure, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 7, folder 1.

13 "Gandy Gets Post in State Prison," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 21 January 1940, https://www.newspapers.com/image/202699916/ (accessed 6 December 2023).

14 Interview - Gandy Family History, transcript, 30 September 1999, tape 3, side A, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 14, Folder 6, 6.

15 Interview - Gandy Family History, 30 September 1999, 4; Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk, "A Mississippi Woman of First," 815; Paul B. Johnson Sr. Campaign Flyers, 25 August - 28 August 1939, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 2, folder 2.

16 Gandy 1947 Campaign Pamphlet; Gandy 1963 Campaign Flyer; Evelyn Gandy, "New Needs and Problems," *Mississippi State Department of Public Welfare – 15th Biennial Report*, 1 July 1963 – 30 June 1965, in the Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 5, folder 18, 133; Press Release: Elect Evelyn Gandy Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi, 31 October 1975; "Miss Gandy Running Hard," *Natchez Democrat*, 17 July 1979, in the Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 22, folder 2; Janet Braswell, "Gandy Stresses Her Years of Experience," *Hattiesburg American*, 21 August 1983, https://www.newspapers.com/image/277460788/ (accessed 14 November 2023).

17 Evelyn Gandy 1975 Campaign Advertisement, 1975, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 8, folder 3; Press Release: Elect Evelyn Gandy Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi; Evelyn Gandy, "Gandy for Governor of Mississippi," advertisement, *The Oxford Eagle*, 11 July 1979, in the Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 22, folder 2.

18 Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk, "A Mississippi Woman of First," 814, 820.

19 Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk, "A Mississippi Woman of First," 825.

20 There is a quote in this section that contains horrifically racist language. I take no joy in writing them in this paper, but it is important to highlight the gravity of Gandy's contributions to this white supremacist propaganda.

21 Evelyn Gandy, Interview by Ray Skates, 6.

22 Evelyn Gandy, Interview by Ray Skates, 5.

23 Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk, "A Mississippi Woman of First," 813-814.

believe that Gandy answered truthfully in her interview with Skates. The preface of the book alone thrusts readers into the chaos that is Bilbo's ranting prose. His unfounded claims are immediate, "For nine years I have read, studied and analyzed practically all the records and everything written throughout the entire world on the subject of race relations, covering a period of close on to thirty thousand years."[24] Bilbo followed this up with an assurance that, "This book is not a condemnation or denunciation of any race … because I entertain no hatred or prejudice against any human being on account of his race."[25] This rhetoric is emblematic of his approach to white supremacy: proclaim no hatred for nonwhite people while simultaneously dehumanizing them. For example, in a 1946 campaign speech (a campaign Gandy worked on) he claimed to be "the Negro's best friend" then followed up with the assertion that the poll tax did not disqualify Black people to vote because they were simply unqualified to vote.[26]

As the researcher for *Take Your Choice*, Gandy compiled several books by like-minded white supremacists from which Bilbo borrowed heavily—via massive footnote quotes and in-text block quotations. Gandy's selections allowed Bilbo to use the voices of other white supremacists to make his prose look tame. While lamenting the failure of the Missouri Compromise, Bilbo cites a blockquote from white supremacist scientist R. W. Shufeldt's book *America's Greatest Problem: The Negro*, in which Shufeldt refers to Black people as, "benighted, ignorant, semi-simian, superstitious and treacherous cannibals."[27] This vile dehumanization does the heavy lifting for Bilbo here. These are not his words, but a scholar's. And, critically, this is one of many examples of the discriminatory white supremacist language that Gandy provided for Bilbo.[28]

While it is challenging to know how deeply Gandy engaged with the research she did for *Take Your Choice*—or whether she was responsible for the inclusion of every source cited—she actively participated in its production. This, of course, does not preclude that Gandy could not evolve her views on race; however, it greatly weakens the mitigating evidence of Gandy's claims that neither she nor Bilbo were personally engrossed or preoccupied with race. Given the opportunity to address her white supremacist past meaningfully, she instead opted to, frankly, lie about the reality of Bilbo's—and her own—racial positioning.

The Scandal of 1983

The second piece of evidence used by Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk—along with journalists who bother to mention Gandy's racial politics at all—to absolve Gandy of her white supremacist past is her guarded response to a scandal during her final political campaign. During the 1983 gubernatorial campaign, one of Gandy's primary opponents (their identity was never explicitly stated, and Gandy chose not to pursue the matter) published a leaflet with an excerpt from a 1963 *The Clarion-Ledger* article in which Gandy espoused her support for segregation. In the article, Gandy said "my record stands as evidence that I believe in our dual system of government, in the rights of the … sovereign states to control their own domestic affairs, including the right to operate the public schools, and in racial segregation."[29] *The Clarion-Ledger* reached out to Gandy's campaign about the leaflet and she responded by saying she was "greatly saddened" by the attempt to "inject racism" into the campaign. She followed up saying, "I believe Mississippians will no longer pay attention and respond to racial politics."[30] Gandy, however, refused to say whether she had made the comment posted in the leaflet, which she indeed had, and claimed she would comment no further on the matter.[31]

Gandy's reticence to address her past led to swift backlash from *The Clarion-Ledger*—a newspaper with its own sordid racist past that it was trying to distinguish itself from.[32] One day after their initial reporting, the paper published a strong rebuke of Gandy's handling of the situation. The piece began with her statement supporting segregation to *The Clarion-Ledger* from 1963 and called her initial response, "a milk toast [*sic*] statement that said nothing."[33] The article also pointed out that many formerly segregationist politicians still in politics—including William Winter, to whom Gandy had lost the 1979 gubernatorial election—had made public statements about their pasts and made clear their views had changed.[34] *The Clarion-Ledger* further criticized Gandy by noting that she had, until then, consistently leveraged her past in public service, yet refused to engage with it once that past did not cast her favorably. The piece ended with the declaration that, "Miss Gandy cannot have it both ways."[35] This coverage was a sharp departure from the press Gandy generally received at that point in her career. Aside from the ever-present misogyny

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24 Theodore G. Bilbo, preface to *Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization*, (Poplarville, MS: Dream House Publishing, 1947), in Theodore G. Bilbo Papers, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M2, box1177, folder 2.

25 Bilbo, *Take Your Choice*, unpaginated preface.

26 "Bilbo Spouts Vilification as Usual at Leland," *The Delta-Democrat Times*, 15 May 1946, https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/33995624/ (accessed 13 November 2023).

27 R. W. Shufeldt, *America's Greatest Problem: The Negro* (Philadelphia, PA: F. A. Davis Company, 1915), 76, quoted in Bilbo, *Take Your Choice*, 27.

28 Other white supremacist texts (likely provided by Gandy) cited in *Take Your Choice* include: Ernest S. Cox, *The South's Role in Mongrelizing the Nation* (Richmond, VA: The White America Society, 1926); Ernest S. Cox, *White America* (Richmond, VA: The White America Society, 1937); Thomas Nelson Page, *The Negro: The Southerner's Problem* (United States: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904); Alfred P. Schultz, *Race or Mongrel* (Boston, MA: L. C. Page and Company, 1908).

29 "Miss Gandy is Candidate for Lt. Gov.," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 28 March 1963, https://www.newspapers.com/image/185714913/ (accessed 13 November 2023).

30 Tom Oppel, "Gandy Dismissed Flyer as Racism Tactic," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 13 July 1983, https://www.newspapers.com/image/181253455/ (accessed 13 November 2023).

31 Oppel, "Gandy Dismissed Flyer as Racism Tactic."

32 "Finally, We're Moving Beyond Our Lost Causes," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 26 September 1982, https://www.newspapers.com/image/183568814/ (accessed 13 November 2023); Jimmie E. Gates, "Clarion Ledger, Other Newspapers Complicit in Efforts to Preserve Segregation in Mississippi," *Clarion Ledger*, https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/local/2020/07/30/clarion-ledgers-role-preserving-segregation-mississippi/5369395002/ (accessed 14 November 2023).

33 "Gandy's Ghost," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 14 July 1983, https://www.newspapers.com/image/181258652/ (accessed 13 November 2023).

34 "Gandy's Ghost."

35 "Gandy's Ghost."

in her press coverage, Gandy was a well-known and well-received candidate.[36]

The shift in coverage was not lost on Gandy. On the same day that "*Gandy's Ghost*" was published, she made her apparently absolving statement: "Defense of segregation 20, 30, or 40 years ago was wrong. I regret these statements and they certainly do not represent my present thinking or philosophy."[37] Gandy's statement—a singular, tepid response—did not hold her accountable, and emphasized decades of time between her and the issue of her segregationist politics to lessen the weight of the topic and her responsibility for supporting white supremacy.[38] However, it was enough for *The Clarion-Ledger*. The paper responded with a palpably relieved article, "*Putting it to Rest*," which called her response a "repudiation of her past" and lauded her statement as "admirable."[39] Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk mention the scandal, but neither interrogate Gandy's reticence to address her past, nor the backlash she received for failing to address it. They merely quote her responses and move on.[40]

Silences in Speeches

In her post-segregation career—and her life after her political career—Gandy had ample opportunity to address race in non-reactive, meaningful ways. She remained silent on her role in maintaining white supremacy instead of taking those opportunities. Throughout her life, Gandy traveled the state and gave hundreds of speeches, many for university commencements. In 1976, Gandy gave perhaps her most interesting commencement speech—a speech for the historically Black Alcorn University Commencement Day. Gandy's speech was astounding. She never once mentioned the name of the school, referring to it only as "this university." She neither mentioned Alcorn's importance as an HBCU in Mississippi, nor did she mention race at all.[41] She congratulated the graduates, all of whom would have had memories of segregation and, likely, Gandy's role in maintaining it, on their "individual freedom" and "unlimited opportunities."[42] Most audaciously, Gandy then lectured the Black graduates on responsibility and accountability, "if we cherish the first—freedom—we must accept the second—responsibility—and we cannot escape the third—accountability."[43] Gandy said this without any mention of her accountability to the Alcorn graduates—Black people she directly harmed through her maintenance of segregation and upon whom she was then relying on for votes.

To be clear, Gandy's commencement speeches largely followed the same format. In her speeches for Blue Mountain College in 1969 and the University of Southern Mississippi in 1988; however, she states the names of the schools in her first line.[44] Gandy also catered her speech at Blue Mountain College to the school's status at the time as a women's college.[45] In both instances, the schools and graduates in question received more respect from Gandy than Alcorn and its graduates did. That she did not bother to change her standard script for Alcorn but did so for Blue Mountain is telling; that she decided not to speak Alcorn's name is even more so.

After her political career ended, Gandy was still an active player in Mississippi Democratic Party politics. In support of Bill Clinton's reelection campaign in the 1990s, Gandy gave a series of speeches titled "I am Proud to be a Democrat!" In that speech, Gandy extolled what she considered to be the virtues of the Democratic Party: "ours is an all-inclusive Party offering to men, women and children in all walks of life: hope and opportunity. I am proud that it was the Democratic Party that provided leadership for progressive, landmark legislation such as the Social Security Act, Medicare and Medicaid."[46] Again, Gandy's silences speak quite loudly. That she would specifically mention "progressive, landmark legislation" and choose to avoid discussing the 1964 Civil Rights Act or 1965 Voting Rights Act is notable. Near the end of her speech, after listing the triumphs of the Clinton administration, Gandy said, "as so well we know, women have a very short political history … from 1776 until 1920—the first 156 years of the history of this nation, women did not have the right to vote."[47] Admittedly, this is historically accurate, and as a woman born the same year of the ratification of the

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36 Bill Minor, "Evelyn Gandy is Coming on Stronger," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 05 January 1979, https://www.newspapers.com/image/262818900/ (accessed 14 November 2023); Norma Fields, "Gandy Batting a Thousand," *The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*, 13 February 1979, in the Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 22, folder 2; Bill Minor, "Will Evelyn Gandy Ever Win the Big One?," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 20 March 1983, https://www.newspapers.com/image/185643948/ (accessed 14 November 2023); Charles Dunagin, "A Look at Candidates for Governor," *The Greenwood Commonwealth*, 13 April, 1983, https://www.newspapers.com/image/260050876/ (accessed 15 November 2023).

37 "Putting it to Rest," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 17 July 1983, https://www.newspapers.com/image/181179357/ (accessed 13 November 2023).

38 As a point of comparison, William Winter's statement regarding his segregationist past was also underwhelming, however, he opposed the massive resistance movement to integration, of which Gandy was a part of, and made racial reconciliation a focal point of his later politics and life, unlike Gandy; for Winter's statement about his segregationist position, see: "Winter Aims at Capping Public Career as Governor," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 14 October 1979, https://www.newspapers.com/image/181164582/ (accessed 15 November 2023); for information about Winter's moderate segregationist politics, see: Charles C. Bolton, "William F. Winter and the Politics of Racial Moderation in Mississippi," *Journal of Mississippi History* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 350-355.

39 "Putting it to Rest."

40 Brown, Fendley, and Funderburk, ""A Mississippi Woman of First," 827.

41 Evelyn Gandy, Alcorn Commencement Day Speech, 1976, transcript, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 10, folder 6, 1.

42 Gandy, Alcorn Commencement Day Speech, 1976, 2.

43 Gandy, "Alcorn Commencement Day Speech," 6.

44 Evelyn Gandy, Blue Mountain College Commencement Speech, 1969, transcript, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 6, folder 11, 1; Evelyn Gandy, "The University of Southern Mississippi Commencement Speech, 1988," transcript, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 13, folder 10, 1.

45 Gandy, "Blue Mountain College Commencement Speech, 1969," 3-5.

46 Evelyn Gandy, "I am Proud to be a Democrat!, 1996-2000," transcript, Edythe Evelyn Gandy Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, M367, box 13, folder 27, 1.

47 Gandy, "I am Proud to be a Democrat!, 1996-2000," 4.

Nineteenth Amendment and who had navigated Mississippi politics for nearly four decades, Gandy had a strong connection to that legacy. Yet, her silence on race, on an even shorter political history—that she personally played an active role in preventing—is difficult to dismiss.

Conclusion

Evelyn Gandy is an important part of Mississippi's history. That she is once again slowly returning to the popular and political spheres of the state after fading from memory is a positive occurrence. Her achievements ought not be understated: she overcame rampant misogyny and carved out a successful and productive political career. She excelled in nearly every post she held, and the government of Mississippi functioned better from her service. However, her legacy is not pristine: like every person, she was imperfect. Gandy's election losses are not her greatest failure. Her reticence to acknowledge, and refusal to make amends for, the active white supremacist violence she supported and maintained for sixteen years is. As Mississippi looks to recenter Gandy in its historical memory, the urge to lionize her must not overcome the need to tell her story comprehensively and objectively.

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Envisioning a Peaceful Anschluss

The League's Rescue Mission in Interwar Austria

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In 1919, the newly founded Austrian Republic faced an identity crisis. The Treaty of Saint Germain splintered the Habsburg Empire into successor states and formed an unstable Austrian nation with weak institutions. The treaty forbade the unification of German and Austrian territories, a blow to many who believed their homeland could not survive without German national unity. A difficult task confronted Austrian leaders: to stabilize a financially and politically vulnerable nation. Nazi Germany's subsequent rise has placed considerable scholarly attention on the Weimar Republic, but primary sources indicate that world leaders were equally concerned with Austria's political and economic survival. Both Austrians and the Allied powers deliberated whether the nascent republic, the remnant of a great empire, could sustain itself. This paper argues that League intervention in Austria was an inventive internationalist project, demonstrating a shared conviction to save a republic in crisis. Austrian republicans hoped for an eventual democratic Anschluss, but the League's continued denial of unification fueled distrust, ultimately weakening collaborative efforts. Although disillusioned Austrians turned their Anschluss aspirations towards Nazi Germany in the 1930s, the League continued to send economic aid, a last effort to honor its commitment to rescue the nation.

Introduction

From its founding, the Republic of Austria was a nation that rejected sovereignty. At the end of the Great War, the Treaty of Saint Germain splintered the Austro-Hungarian Empire into independent successor states, and the once great Habsburg domain shrank into an unstable and weakened rump nation. Having lost vast territories and one-third of its German population, the First Republic of Austria lacked a national identity and suffered a deep sense of victimhood. Throughout the republic's existence, the people rejected independence, convinced that their homeland could not survive without German unification. Although the Allies forbade Anschluss, Austrians never surrendered the longing to unite with their German countrymen.[1]

The newly formed nation could never escape the fear of immediate collapse, and Austria's survival posed a daunting task to national leaders. Political and humanitarian crises plagued the fragile democracy, compounded by hyperinflation, unemployment, and starvation. When Austria joined the League of Nations in December 1920, distressed Austrians turned to the international organization for aid. The similarly nascent League, invested with new and unexperimented authority, intervened hoping the country would one day become a valuable and worthy partner in Europe. From the start, the organization understood the difficulties of Austrian nation-building. Observing the situation on the ground, an early League representative scribbles into a file, "Fear of anarchy."[2] In the history of the republic, League activity would be the constant, not the exception.

The Weimar Republic has received considerable scholarly attention due to Nazi Germany's rise in interwar chronology, but contemporaries in the 1920s were equally, if not more, concerned with Austria's survival. John Maynard Keynes warned that the Treaty of Versailles would have detrimental consequences for Germany. He also gravely remarks in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* that Austria is "already experiencing the actuality of what for the rest of Europe is still in the realm of prediction."[3] Patricia Clavin's work on the Austrian Republic has inspired greater scholarship into interwar Austria, detached from Weimar Germany.[4] Modern scholars, such as Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley, have also challenged long-held criticisms of the League's failures and have contextualized seemingly ill-advised policies. In Austria, the League of Nations represented a critical site of

1 Patricia Clavin, "The Austrian Hunger Crisis and the Genesis of International Organization after the First World War," *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (March 2014): 266–67; Corinna Peniston-Bird, "Austria," in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R. J. B. Bosworth (Oxford University Press, 2009), 434–35.

2 "Registry Index Cards: Austria. Card No. 1 [I-SUBJ-ASS-AUS-Austria]" (League of Nations, 1919), United Nations Library and Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/austria-47.

3 John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1920), 249.

4 Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis."

collaboration where internationalists channeled ambitions and concerns with little idea of their actions' consequences.[5]

League intervention in Austria was an inventive internationalist project, demonstrating a shared conviction to save a republic in crisis. By cooperating with the League, Austrian republicans hoped for an eventual German unification through democratic processes. The League's continued denial of Anschluss, however, fueled Austrian distrust and resentment, gradually weakening collaborative efforts between the organization and the state. Amid a severe depression and democratic decline in the 1930s, disillusioned Austrians turned their Anschluss aspirations towards Nazi Germany and eventually abandoned the prospect of a League-sanctioned, democratic unification. While the internationalist project ultimately backfired, the League continued to send economic aid, a last effort to honor its commitment to rescue a nation troubled from the start.

Democratic Aspirations for Anschluss

In 1919, the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye imposed two crucial requirements on the republic: Austria must be a democracy, and the state could never unite with Germany through Anschluss. To many Austrian contemporaries, liberal democracy was an alien concept for a former empire, and skepticism of democratic principles tinged the political scene. Austrian republicans hoped, however, to safeguard their nation's political and economic future by collaborating with the League of Nations. The broad label of "republicans" encompasses Austrian political figures and leaders willing to work within the new democratic order established by the League. During the 1920s, two major political parties dominated the Austrian Republic: the leftwing Social Democratic Party and the conservative Christian Social Party. A third influential faction incorporated various Pan-German nationalist parties, notably the Greater German People's Party, who resented League efforts to stop unification. Polarization and paramilitary violence also ensured that mainstream politics often bordered on extremist ideologies and movements.[6]

The republicans, who welcomed democratic ideals, hoped to shape Austria into a viable republic. Optimists believed that Austria could establish a healthy democratic tradition and that with time, the nation could achieve Anschluss through legal democratic channels. The republic, however, suffered political instability, experiencing twenty-three governments under twelve leaders. The various political factions, forced to acquiesce to the Entente's terms, found different advantages to international partnerships. Catholics saw the League as a strong ally against Marxist threats in Austria, and Socialists aimed to thwart collaboration between the League and conservatives, which threatened their social programs. The Socialists and Pan-German Austrians mobilized vehemently for Anschluss before the League, while the Christian Social Party represented a key defender of Austrian independence, which made them the League's favored partner.[7]

Not all political parties or party members necessarily desired Anschluss or agreed with liberal democratic principles. Pan-Germanists and Democratic Socialists accused Christian Social leaders of betraying the popular will by refusing to support Anschluss. Yet, Socialists and German nationalists toned down their criticisms and ultimatums when the League left the door open for future aid.[8] On a practical and existential level, the weak Austrian state, constantly on the verge of collapse, needed any assistance it could get. In 1922, *Neue Freie Press*, the Christian Social newspaper, urges Austria to recognize the necessity of the moment and declares, "Wir müssen uns losmachen allen Empfindeleien" (We must get rid of our sentimentalities) even if League aid "sicher viel Demütigung mit sich bringen" (certainly brings with it a lot of humiliation).[9]

The Austrian nation saw unification as a solution to her suffering. Politicians were responding to a widespread outcry for Anschluss, which reemerged with fervor after the war. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Pan-German nationalism had occupied the minds of German-speaking peoples, but the modern German state, unified by Otto Bismarck in 1871, had excluded Austrian territories. Military defeat and the end of the Habsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties renewed questions about nationhood and identity for the new German and Austrian republics. Although it is difficult to discern fully the public sentiments of a nation crippled by economic and social crises, Austrian newspapers and foreign dispatches note that the longing appeared across all sectors in the Austrian and German populations. The journal *Der Anschluss* claimed that 90 percent of the population—a possible exaggeration—supported Anschluss in 1927.[10] In public discourse, the national anthem was a divisive issue, and neither the de facto anthem, "Deutschösterreich, du herrliches Land," nor the official tune, "Sei gesegnet ohne Ende," became a successful rallying cry. Newspapers described instances when the official German anthem, "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles," was sung at Austrian school celebrations and political demonstrations instead.[11]

Although Austrian republicans hoped to achieve Pan-Germanism through international cooperation, the Entente

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5 Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley, eds., *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

6 Peter Berger, "The League of Nations and Interwar Austria: Critical Assessment of a Partnership in Economic Reconstruction," in *The Dollfuss/Schuschnigg Era in Austria*, ed. Anton Pelinka (Routledge, 2003), 74; Peniston-Bird, "Austria," 436–37; Robert Gerwarth, "The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary After the Great War," *Past & Present* 200, no. 1 (2008): 177–78.

7 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 73–75.

8 Erin R. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss* (Cornell University Press, 2016), 203, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1d2dn27; Peniston-Bird, "Austria," 436–37.

9 "Unterzeichnung: Die Drei Protokolle von Genf," *Neue Freie Presse*, October 5, 1922, 1, in Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

10 "Unser Ziel!," *Der Anschluss*, 15 January 1927, 1; Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 203–204.

11 Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 5–6, 49, 85–87; F. L. Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic, 1918–1938: A Study Based on British Austrian Documents* (Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, 1986), 62.

adamantly refused the possibility of Anschluss. The 1919 Treaty of Saint-Germain, which laid out the postwar settlement for the successor states, banned German unification. France, Italy, and hostile successor states feared and refused Anschluss on the grounds of security. French diplomats raised the fiercest objections to unification and rejected the formation of a German state with geopolitical influence. The French publication *Journal de Genève* dramatizes Anschluss as "la guerre, une guerre terrible, dans laquelle sombrera le reste de notre civilization" (war, a terrible war, in which the rest of our civilization will sink).[12] Additionally, Anschluss threatened Italian sovereignty in Tyrol and the territorial settlement which had divided northern Tyrol to Austria and the southern region to Italy. American and British representatives acted more leniently towards Austrian wishes, but once the US backed out from League obligations, only Great Britain seemed willing to grant Anschluss.[13]

The major powers recognized Anschluss as a delicate and explosive issue. The Treaty of Saint-Germain devised an exception to the ban, creating an opportunity for future unification. Article 88 declares Austrian independence "unalienable otherwise than with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations."[14] Choosing their words carefully, the Allies omitted the adjective "German" from any reference to Austria. The League revised the commonly used "German Austria" to strictly "Republic of Austria" to remove any German affiliation in diplomatic documentation. Lord Arthur Balfour noted that the Allies could do little to evoke Austrian patriotism beyond the name alteration. If the people wanted to call themselves citizens of German Austria, foreign leaders could not compel them to do otherwise.[15] Indeed, the persistent colloquial usage of "Deutsch Österreich" in newspapers and daily conversation reflected the national sentiment.

Although disappointed by the Treaty of Saint-Germain, Austrian republicans continued to support unification. Recognizing the opening in Article 88, politicans hoped for League approval and proclaimed a democratic vision of Anschluss. To build credibility, republicans reassured the international community that they did not want to overturn the postwar order. At an Anschluss rally in Vienna, Paul Löbe, President of the Reichstag, envisions a future of "Deutschland, das deutsche Volk, zur Friedensarbeit geeint, als großdeutsche Republik" (Germany, the German people, united in peace building, as a greater German republic).[16] Austrian republicans viewed Anschluss based on the *großdeutsch* ideal, which welcomed Socialists, Jews, and non-Germans as German citizens, a stark difference from the Nazi Anschluss ideal rooted in authoritarian racial hierarchy.[17] Instead, republicans argued that Anschluss was a matter of self-determination and European peace. Guided by international systems, unification was visualized as a method of strengthening the democracies in both Austria and Germany.[18]

In similarly precarious regions, the League allowed plebiscites to vocalize sentiments of self-determination, which informed new postwar borders. In 1921, Allied troops supervised a contentious plebiscite in Upper Silesia, a valuable industrial region sought by Germany and Poland. The League also established a fifteen-year mandate over the Saar until 1935, when a future plebiscite would determine German or French possession.[19] In contrast, the Anschluss ban showed the Allies' hesitancy to grant self-determination to Austrians. Citizens of the republic, however, rallied for a national plebiscite. In January 1921, shortly after Austria joined the League, a massive demonstration of fifteen thousand gathered in Vienna. Crowds congregated before the French, Italian, British, and German legations and demanded international leaders to prepare an Anschluss plebiscite in mid-May.[20]

The conservative Catholic government and the Allies feared that the strength of the Pan-German vote in Parliament could successfully petition a national referendum. If the plebiscite did occur, the results, likely in favor of Anschluss, would throw the government into further chaos. As Austria's economic condition worsened, local plebiscites, held in Salzburg and Tyrol in the spring of 1921, overwhelmingly favored German unification.[21] Caught between the will of the people and the constraints of international law, Austrian republicans turned to the League.

The League to Save the Austrian Republic

In the aftermath of war, ethnolinguistic nationalism was seen as the pathway to peace. The League oversaw the creation of national units from former empires and viewed population transfers as an instrument of humanitarianism. The organization established a minority protection regime to mediate long-existing ethnic tensions, and whether for practical or political reasons, minority status allowed the League to refuse

12 "L'Autriche," *Journal de Genève*, September 9, 1925, Le Temps Archives, https://www.letempsarchives.ch/page/JDG_1925_09_10/1/article/6122339.

13 Carsten, *First Austrian Republic, 1918–1938*, 6–9; Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 34–35.

14 "Treaty of Saint Germain," adopted September 10, 1919, *Jus Mundi*, https://jusmundi.com/en/document/treaty/en-treaty-of-saint-germain-1919-treaty-of-saint-germain-1919-wednesday-10th-september-1919.

15 "No. 33: Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers, Held in M. Pichon's Room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Tuesday, August 12, 1919, at 3.30 p.m.," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, 1919–1939, First Series, vol. 1, ed. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947), 399–404.

16 "Die große Anschluss-Kundgebung: Drohungen der Pariser Presse," *Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung*, August 31, 1925, 1, in Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv.

17 Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 34–35, 38.

18 Hochman, 3–4, 23, 37.

19 Martyn Housden, The League of Nations and the Organisation of Peace, Seminar Studies (Pearson, 2012), 38–39, 47–48.

20 Francis Oswald Lindley, "No. 108: Mr. Lindley (Vienna) to Earl Curzon (Received April 18, 6.30 p.m.) [Vienna April 18, 1921, 3 p.m.]," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, First Series, vol. 22 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, n.d.), 131–32.

21 Carsten, *First Austrian Republic, 1918–1938*, 63–64.

to extend self-determination to all groups, such as Irish, Indian, and Zionist nationalists.[22] The Austrian Republic, however, presented a different challenge. The nation was a uniform ethnolinguistic polity that refused self-determination.

Many internationalists had moral and economic interests in the survival of Austrian democracy, and humanitarian principles imbued League representatives with a sense of responsibility. Vienna remained in popular memory a center for the arts, sciences, and high culture, and the city's splendor was not lost on statesmen who hoped to restore the capital to its former glory.[23] Keynes remarks in *A Revision of the Treaty* in 1922, "The Viennese were not made for tragedy; the world feels that, and there is none so bitter as to wish ill to the city of Mozart."[24] British diplomat Francis Oppenheimer argues that the Austrian people shared Western European traits and were "not unlike the French in some details, gay, cultured and chivalrous."[25] Certainly, the League's attitude of Eurocentrism and racial superiority factored into its motives, while many member states did little to extend democratic principles to their own colonies.[26]

In addition to postwar idealism and Wilsonian values, internationalists perceived serious geopolitical concerns. Internationalist diplomats and politicians involved themselves in the Austrian Republic's survival because they believed that collective security depended on economic stability. The *Journal de Genève* declares that France must help Austria "parce qu'il importe au repos de toute l'Europe. . . . Lorsqu'on veut quelque chose, on le paie" (because it's important for the rest of Europe. . . . When you want something, you pay for it).[27] A stable Austria guaranteed a stable European order. According to Patricia Clavin, the League believed that intergovernmental cooperation safeguarded the liberal capitalist order. With the world war still in living memory, the notion of security involved maintaining stability in various realms. Austria's hunger crisis was one situation that impacted other issues, such as financial security, political stability, social unrest, and international diplomacy. Collective peace involved military strategy as well as mundane collaboration in international politics and bureaucracies.[28]

The Allied powers recognized that the desperate state of Austria impacted collective security. With little hope for the future, the republic's population depended utterly on food imports. While humanitarian aid efforts met Austria's needs in the short term, the nation's sustainability remained precarious.[29] The Allies believed that rescuing Austria required an economic solution, a building block to stabilize other social and political institutions. The League also hoped that the restoration of Vienna as a financial center could reconcile the hostile environment among the Eastern European states. Only a massive internationalist project could bring Austria back to self-sufficiency.[30]

League Intervention in Austria

The collaboration between Austrian republicans and the League demonstrated an experimental response to a nation's dire postwar condition. International intervention in Austria justified the organization's institutional existence and cemented the principle that a supranational organization could be involved actively in the economies of sovereign nations. In February 1919, ministers from Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, and the US formed the Supreme Economic Council to oversee postwar reconstruction. In the first months after the war, Herbert Hoover, who headed the American Relief Administration under President Woodrow Wilson, led much of the relief effort in Austria. Among war-weary European leaders, he was often the sole advocate for intervention and leniency towards Austria. Like Keynes, Hoover feared the imposition of reparations on an Austrian state unable to finance food and fuel.[31]

Although the US eventually withdrew from Europe after defeating the League Covenant, Hoover's operations inspired later intervention programs formed by the League, which replaced America's philanthropist role in Austria. In 1920, the International Financial Conference in Brussels established a provisional economic and financial committee in the League. Inspired by wartime food and shipping committees, the Economic and Financial Organization became the world's first intergovernmental body responsible for economic cooperation.[32]

In the early 1920s, Austria continued to suffer from economic and political instability, prompting Chancellor Ignaz Seipel to appeal for increased international aid. Austria faced the dangers of political instability, hunger, and bankruptcy, and by 1922, the Austrian *kronen* had deteriorated, driving up the cost of living. The Swiss franc, valued at approximately three crowns at the start of 1919, was worth 4,110 crowns by June 12.[33] Rumors of a possible partition of Austria

22 Martyn Housden, The League of Nations and the Organisation of Peace, Seminar Studies (Pearson, 2012), 28–29, 50–52; Li-Ann Thio, *Managing Babel: The International Legal Protection of Minorities in the Twentieth Century* (Brill, 2005), 46, https://brill.com/display/title/11062.

23 Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 269.

24 John Maynard Keynes, *A Revision of the Treaty: Being a Sequel to The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), 191.

25 Francis Oppenheimer, "Enclosure I in No. 25: Memorandum by Sir Francis Oppenheimer Relative to the Situation in Austria [Paris, June 3, 1919]," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, First Series, vol. 6 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), 47.

26 Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 270.

27 "L'Autriche," *Journal de Genève*, September 9, 1925.

28 Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 265–67.

29 Carsten, *Austrian Republic, 1918–1938*, 38–40.

30 Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 271–73.

31 Clavin, 266, 271–73.

32 Clavin, 276–77.

33 Carsten, *First Austrian Republic, 1918–1938*, 49.

or military intervention by the major powers erupted that summer. As the public clamored for Anschluss, the Austrian government faced a choice between unifying with its German ally, the equally struggling Weimar Republic, and turning to the stronger Western powers for help.[34]

In 1922, Seipel appealed to the Supreme Council, which relegated the investigation to the League. On September 6, he delivered a speech before the League, pressing the urgency of the Austrian situation.[35] Seipel argues that if the League helps Austria, the organization would "keineswegs seiner eigentlichen hohen Aufgabe untreu" (by no means be unfaithful to its actual high mission). He reminds the Allies to live up to the ideals which "die Friedensfreunde der Welt so lange geträumt haben" (the world's friends of peace have dreamed of for a long time).[36]

Moved by Seipel's enthusiasm, the League began to mobilize and appointed a special committee to negotiate "The Restoration of Austria," adopted on October 3, 1922. The governments of Britain, France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia guaranteed a loan of 650 million gold *kronen*, roughly equivalent to 26 million pounds. The Geneva Protocol required Austria to establish an independent central bank and restabilize its currency on the international gold standard.[37] In return, Austria promised to balance the budget within two years and used its customs and tobacco monopoly as security. The League appointed the Dutchman Alfred Rudolph Zimmerman as the Commissioner General. The Austrian financial minister was compelled to give him preliminary budgets at the beginning of each month, and only with the commissioner's consent could foreign loan funds be used.[38] Zimmerman authorized the release of financial aid, and every loan proposed by the Austrian government had to be submitted for approval by League economic experts. Zimmerman determined when and where Seipel's government could disburse or cut expenditures, and he guided the introduction of the *schilling*, which became Austria's currency in January 1925. The protocol, however, prohibited Anschluss for twenty years, a point which French statesmen had pressed in the drafting process.[39]

Throughout the 1920s, the League partook in other internationalist activities to combat Austria's pressing crises and to invest in the republic's future. Peter Becker argues that the organization provided critical institutional spaces for international collaboration as delegates and experts worked closely to discuss and form economic policies.[40] In this period, Austria also participated in cooperative activities with other nations. Despite high tensions, representatives of successor states met at the Portorose and Graz Conference in 1921 and 1922, which produced agreements to standardize communication, passport inspections, and border movement.[41] In 1923, Johannes Schober, previously the Austrian Chancellor, helped establish the International Criminal Police Commission, Interpol's forerunner headquartered in Vienna. The aspiration for a European security force revived hopes that Austria and the successor states could engage in regional integration.[42]

In the late 1920s, Austria started to experience some economic recovery. The League began a retreat when an optimistic report, presented in September 1925, described healthy finances, deflation, and a stable currency. Pleased with its efforts, the League Commissioner's office closed in June 1926 and left only an ex-aide to oversee national debt. The League was also alarmed by pro-Anschluss sentiments lingering in popular discourse. Any further economic hardship experienced under international oversight would have intensified Anschluss propaganda and threatened productivity. Before League representatives departed, some 40 percent of the original 650 million *kronen* remained unused, and the committee earmarked the funds for public works, including the electrification of rail and telegraph lines. The League left with confidence that Austria could finally take care of herself.[43]

International Responses to League Intervention

Intervention in Austria represented a foundational moment for the League of Nations. Thanking the organization, Seipel lauded the ability of nations to come together, and hopeful internationalists celebrated Austria's changing fortune.[44] Balfour rejoiced that Austria could once again become a valuable and respected commercial center, representing the best of European civilization. Louis Loucheur of the French delegation commended the League for teaching Austria to walk alone after three years of economic suffering.[45] Anne O'Hare McCormick, an English American writer for *The New York Times*, commented that "the League of Nations has satisfied nobody," but the organization has "[turned] one of the blackest spots into one of the brightest in less than a year."[46]

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34 Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton University Press, 1972), 179, 183–85, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x1d5d.

35 Klemperer, 184, 199–200.

36 Ignaz Seipel, *Seipels Reden in Österreich Und Anderwärts*, ed. Josef Gessl (Heros, 1926), 26–27.

37 "Geneva Protocol 1922 [C-694-M-411-1922_EN]" (League of Nations, October 3, 1922), United Nations Library and Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/austria-55.

38 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 79.

39 Carsten, *First Austrian Republic, 1918–1938*, 50; Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 276–77.

40 Peter Becker, "Remaking Mobility: International Conferences and the Emergence of the Modern System," in *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, ed. Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley (Oxford University Press, 2020), 210.

41 Becker, "Remaking Mobility," 199–200, 203–4.

42 David Petruccelli, "Fighting the Scourge of International Crime: The Internationalization of Policing and Criminal Law in Interwar Europe," in *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, ed. Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley (Oxford University Press, 2020), 243–45.

43 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 81–82; Carsten, *First Austrian Republic, 1918–1938*, 99–100.

44 Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 277; von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 206–7.

45 "League Votes to End Tutelage of Austria," *The New York Times*, September 10, 1925.

46 Anne O'Hare McCormick, "Lesser and Happier Austria," *The New York Times*, August 12, 1923.

Some modern historians agree that League intervention gave Austria a sense of financial stability which the state could not achieve on its own. From 1923 to 1924, the Austrian *kronen* stabilized after years of painful inflation. In 1926, the League withdrew some of its stabilization policies, and the new *schilling* currency weakened against gold, exerting deflationary pressure on Austrian goods.[47] Celebrating economic restoration, Seipel's successor, Rudolf Ramek, praises the League for not only saving Austria but also starting "a general movement for the stabilization of currencies in all countries."[48]

The Anschluss ban, however, inflamed Austrian discourse and exasperated the Allies who oversaw economic recovery.[49] "Austrians are fond of using the Entente's fear of 'Anschluss' as a means of pressure," remarks Aretas Akers-Douglas, British ambassador to Austria.[50] When the League returned to Austria during the global depression, the 1932 Lausanne Protocol produced another impressive loan package, but like the 1922 Geneva Protocol, the Allies reiterated the antiunification stance, establishing another twenty-year Anschluss ban.[51] Austrians bitterly concluded that the League would save their nation only on the condition of sacrificing Anschluss.

Austrians Respond to League Intervention

Clamor for unification in Austria admittedly lessened when the League mobilized to send aid. According to Georg Franckenstein, the Austrian minister in Britain, "the despair of the population" has "undoubtedly weakened" now that the Allies' rescue plan has taken shape. Pan-German Austrians appeared more willing to approach Anschluss through Article 88 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain.[52] International leaders, however, failed to recognize the lingering feelings of resentment and disillusionment prolonged by their experimental project. Shortly after the Geneva Protocol passed, former Chancellor Schober tried to warn against premature celebration in the American journal *Advocate of Peace Through Justice*. He reminds the Western audience that the Treaty "robbed" Austria of her ability to exist independently and has placed the people in an inescapable state of peril.[53]

Although the Geneva Protocol extended a helping hand to a nation in crisis, Austrians regarded the "Geneva Bondage Treaty" as another form of punishment from the Allies. Opponents antagonized the Catholic Social Party for sacrificing Anschluss for financial interests.[54] The Social Democratic newspaper, *Arbeiter Zeitung*, condemns Seipel's affiliation with the League and declares, "um den Preis eines Lirecredit sei Deutschösterreich bereit, eine Kolonie Italiens zu werden" (For the price of a lira credit, German Austria is prepared to become a colony of Italy). By agreeing to the loan, Austria became a pawn of the Allies, "einer gemeinsamen Kolonie der drei europäischen Großmächte und der Czechoslovakei machen" (a shared colony of three European powers and Czechoslovakia).[55]

Breaking down the three components of the Geneva agreement, each Protocol represented a source of humiliation. The first Protocol prohibited Anschluss for twenty years, denying the sole ambition of the Austrian polity, and Democratic Socialists and Pan-Germanists never forgave Seipel for abandoning Anschluss. Protocol No. 2 calculated 650 million gold *kronen*, the total loan supported by the treasuries of Britain, France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. The monetary figure, however, symbolized to Austrians the price of giving up Anschluss. As outlined in the final Protocol, the appointed Commissioner General and the financial committee represented the council of an international dictatorship.[56]

Austrian republicans, however, understood that their nation's survival depended on foreign loans, even those who criticized the League the loudest. Once financial representatives arrived in Vienna, some Austrians showed gratitude. The conservative *Neue Freie Presse* declares, "Wir müssen hinter den Vorschriften des Volksbundes . . . die gute Absicht, uns endlich Hilfe zukommen zu lassen . . . und dem Staate die Grundlage zu bieten, auf der er zu bauen vermag für eine glücklichere Zukunft" (We must see behind the provisions of the League the good intention to finally provide us with help . . . and to lay the foundation on which the state can build a happier future).[57] A British dispatch notes that the belligerent Pan-German Party "usually remarkable for its stupidity, has behaved logically and sensibly of late" because its members recognized that the country's survival came before any political ambition.[58] In comparison to foreign reports, Austrian publications, however, often held a more pessimistic and skeptical attitude towards the republic's future.

Throughout the 1920s, the feeling of optimistic internationalism remained. A *New York Times* reporter erroneously claims that League involvement eliminated the Anschluss

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47 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 79; Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 277–78.

48 "Austria and Hungary Restored," *The Manchester Guardian*, July 2, 1926, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer.

49 Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 162.

50 Aretas Akers-Douglas, "No. 91: Mr. Akers-Douglas (Vienna) to the Earl of Balfour (Received June 26) [Vienna, June 23, 1922]," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, First Series, vol. 24 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983), 239–40.

51 "Austrian Protocol Geneva, July 15th 1932 - Ratification by Austria (Lausanne Protocol 1932) [CRID27/223/9]" (League of Nations, September 22, 1932), United Nations Library and Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/8t7r-dnms-857r.

52 Lindley, "No. 108: Mr. Lindley (Vienna) to Earl Curzon (Received April 18, 6.30 p.m.) [Vienna April 18, 1921, 3 p.m.]," 131.

53 Hans Schober, "The Austrian Problem," *Advocate of Peace Through Justice* 84, no. 11 (1922): 376, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20660126.

54 Carsten, *First Austrian Republic, 1918–1939*, 51.

55 "Parteigenossen und Genossinnen!" *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, October 6, 1922, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

56 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 78; Clavin, "Austrian Hunger Crisis," 277.

57 "Unterzeichnung: Die Drei Protokolle von Genf," *Neue Freie Presse*, October 5, 1922.

58 Edward Keeling, "No. 218: Mr. Keeling (Vienna) to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (Received December 11) [Vienna, December 8, 1922]," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, First Series, vol. 24 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983), 437.

impulse: "Those who had advocated annexation to Germany became inarticulate."[59] Some internationalists, however, privately voiced concerns about the sustained popular discontent in Austria. In 1927, after half a decade of League presence, Alexander Leeper from the British Legation reported to Chamberlain from Vienna that the Anschluss aspiration still remained undefeated. For Austrians, Anschluss still represents "the only hope of existence in the future," and he worried that French representatives could not to sway the Austrian people otherwise.[60]

Yet, republican politicians kept the hope of a legal, democratic Anschluss alive. Throughout the 1920s, republicans distinguished their *großdeutsch* nationalism, which envisioned a greater Germany that included Austria, from the growing rightwing and Nazi ideas of *alldeutsch*, which republicans saw as imperialist and undemocratic. In June 1925, the Austro-German People's League (Deutsch-Österreichischen Volksbund), an organization dedicated to German unification, established a branch in Vienna and advocated for peaceful Anschluss. The Volksbund transgressed political and social differences and united members of the Christian Socialists, Pan-Germans, and Social Democrats. By 1931, the Austrian branch of the organization claimed to have 1.8 million members, almost one-third of the Austrian population, while the number of German members was a mere estimation of 21,600.[61] During a rally in Vienna in 1926, Walter Kolb declares, "[D]as Großdeutschland der Hakenkreuzler wird nie und nimmermehr unser Großdeutschland sein" (The *Großdeutschland* of the Nazis will never ever be our *Großdeutschland*). Distancing themselves from antidemocratic rhetoric, Austrian republicans aimed to "[an]sagen . . . den schärfsten Kampf" (wage the fiercest fight) against those who posed a danger to world peace.[62] Republicans remained at the forefront of the cause, but Hitler's rise in neighboring Germany soon challenged their hold over the Anschluss movement.[63]

End of Austrian Democracy and the Avenue to Anschluss

At the onset of the global depression, the League rejected Anschluss for good reason. Immediately after the war, Weimar Germany and Republican Austria could barely survive independently, let alone together, and were hardly economically viable during the Great Depression. In the 1930s, Austrian republicans began to lose hope of League approval for German unification. An unpopular ruling by the International Court in 1931 prohibited an Austro-German customs union, and membership of the Volksbund began to drop. Outrage reached another height when the Austrian government accepted Western loans through the Lausanne Agreement, which pushed the question of unification back another twenty years to 1952.[64]

The League passed the Lausanne Protocol on July 15, 1932, and authorized 265 million *schilling* for public investment to combat the depression. Once again, the League generated some economic recovery in Austria during 1931 and 1932. Although inflationary pressure continued, the national budget stabilized and cleared its deficit in fifteen months. The difficult passage of the Protocol, however, especially disillusioned Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, who grew impatient with the democratic system and rival political parties. His experience with parliamentary politics informed his later commitment to destroy the Social Democratic Party and restrict democratic freedoms.[65]

The aspiration for democratic Anschluss faded when the Austrian Republic ended in 1933, followed by a five-year era called Austrofascism. In March, threats of a railway strike caused three consecutive resignations of the President of the Parliament, an event regarded as the government's "self-elimination." In the ensuing confusion of constitutional technicalities, Dollfuss seized the opportunity to suspend the constitution and justify a rule by decree through the War Economy Emergency Powers Act of 1917. The Christian Social Party, which had worked with the League the longest, was the party that ultimately undermined democracy, ushering in an authoritarian regime that still defended Austrian independence.[66]

In this second period of intervention, the League financed an authoritarian regime in contradiction to the organization's lofty objectives. Although democracy had ended, the League continued to collaborate with the Austrian government to maintain a semblance of political and economic stability. Dollfuss was considered a valuable partner in Western containment strategies against Hitler's Germany, and the League preferred him over a Socialist or Nazi government managing Austria. International officials stationed in Geneva supervised less harshly and allowed the government to get away with unsound financial decisions. One week after Dollfuss's seizure of the Parliament, the League approved funding for state subsidies in contradiction to liberal economic policies. Not wanting to exacerbate the political instability, League representatives deviated from their deflationary plans and withheld criticisms of Dollfuss's policies.[67]

The Republic's finances were under the supervision of League representative Meinoud Rost van Tonningen, who

59 William A. Du Puy, "On the Job of Remaking Austria," *New York Times Magazine*, May 27, 1923, 9.

60 Alexander Leeper, "No. 69: Mr. Leeper (Vienna) to Sir A. Chamberlain (Received March 28) [Vienna, March 23, 1927]," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, First Series, vol. 3 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), 128.

61 Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 22–24, 205–9.

62 "Eine Anschlußkundegebung der Republikanischen Studentenschaft," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, July 11, 1926, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

63 Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 197.

64 Hochman, 228–29.

65 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 82–85; Peniston-Bird, "Austria," 446–47.

66 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 86–87; Peniston-Bird, "Austria," 445–47.

67 Berger, 87–89.

likely guided Dollfuss to best the League's financial regulations. The Dutchman privately voiced support for the end of the Austrian Republic and applauded the authoritarian takeover in his personal diary. Throughout the early 1930s, the Austrofascist government took advantage of the League's leniency with Rost van Tonningen's support. A member of the Financial Committee raised an alarm due to suspicious expenses listed in the *Extraordinarium*, a budget ledger that concealed state deficits, but his complaint was ignored. The League also hoped to avoid further accusations of operating like a financial "dictatorship."[68]

The year 1933 also witnessed the end of German democracy. The possibility of a democratic Anschluss evaporated once the National Socialist Party gained traction in the bordering Weimar Republic. Adolf Hitler's Austrian heritage and firm leadership convinced many Austrians that Anschluss could not be achieved through a democratic process or the League's broken promises; only an ethnic German could realize Anschluss. As the Nazi-supporting demographic grew in Austria, the Volksbund transformed into an avid supporter of National Socialism and lost its inclusive, democratic character. Many Austrian republicans left the Volksbund with the moral conviction that those who eroded democracy undermined German unification. In reaction to the Nazi overtake in Germany, Austrian Socialists dropped their Anschluss demands from the party program in October 1933, but they continued to hope for unification with a free and peaceful Germany.[69]

In the context of a failing democracy, struggling economics, and growing Nazi influence, the Allies recognized the League was fighting a losing battle: "[W]e are all backing a losing horse in Austria."[70] In 1933, the British Foreign Office noted an alarming distribution of the electorate. Among Austrian voters, 50 percent supported the Nazis and 30 percent supported Socialists, with increasing numbers moving towards the Nazi Party. Assessing the political shift, the Allies recognized that Anschluss could happen in the near future, one which flouted international treaty law. A British Foreign Office memo concludes that the League would find itself in "the deepest of waters" if Hitler achieved Anschluss forcibly. If a member state appealed the annexation to the League, the Foreign Office could not be sure that Germany would observe international law.[71] The remaining Pan-German republicans, many of Jewish heritage, also deeply feared a Nazi takeover and attempted to appeal to the League. They, however, recognized that the anti-League sentiment would only worsen if the Austrian public discovered its own politicians trying to undermine Germany.[72]

League intervention in Austria came to a strange end when League representative Rost van Tonningen shifted his loyalties from Austrian independence to National Socialism, following Dollfuss's assassination in 1934. While a friend and confidant to Dollfuss, he was indifferent to Dollfuss's successor, Kurt Schuschnigg. Despite Rost van Tonningen's duties to the League, his increasing admiration of Hitler convinced him that his host country must unite with Nazi Germany and become free from Western control. As an admirer of Hjalmar Schacht's Autobahn project and Nazi public works, he pushed for League loans to be used similarly for highways and infrastructure. When Schuschnigg attempted to defend Austrian independence by signing the 1936 Austro-German Agreement, Rost van Tonningen resigned in July 1936, ending two decades of close but fraught collaboration between the League and the Austrian Republic.[73]

Conclusion

By 1938, Austria was not democratic nor independent. Unopposed by the Austrian military, the German army marched across the border on March 12. The League's ambitious internationalist project had failed, but arguably, the Austrian people never had any heart in it. By the 1930s, most Austrians had turned their Anschluss aspirations towards Nazi Germany. Behind closed doors, the illegal annexation was not completely unforeseen by the League. In June 1919, Oppenheimer, the British diplomat, warned that "fusion with Germany will inevitably follow" if Austria's instability persisted.[74] Despite the League's best efforts, the continued and reinforced Anschluss prohibition intensified domestic outrage, and the League's concern for pragmatic economics was a poor excuse to the Austrian people.

Through the 1920s, Austrian republicans led an admirable effort to secure a democratic future for a nation with little patriotism. Their hope for a League-sanctioned unification mobilized the international community to save a republic in peril. If only for a decade, Austrians and the supranational organization engaged in a period of novel and creative collaboration, upholding the ideal that nations could build peace together. The next attempt at building an Austrian nation would be in 1955 with the establishment of the Second Austrian Republic. In the aftermath of war, the people invented a national feeling drawing on nostalgia from Austria's imperial splendor and shying away from the Nazi past.

Arguably, the League cornered itself into failure. By policing national affairs as an international authority, the organization's broad purview weakened the organization's very

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68 Berger, 76–77, 87–89.

69 Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 219, 228–31.

70 Robert Vansittart, "No. 371: Memorandum by Sir R. Vansittart on the Present and Future Position in Europe [Foreign Office, August 28, 1933]," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, Second Series, vol. 5, ed. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), 549.

71 Vansittart, "No. 371: Memorandum by Sir R. Vansittart," 547-556.

72 Robert Hadow, "No. 336: Mr. Hadow (Vienna) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received August 21) [Vienna, August 17, 1933]," in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, Second Series, vol. 5, ed. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), 514-17.

73 Berger, "League of Nations and Interwar Austria," 89–91.

74 Oppenheimer, "Enclosure I in No. 25: Memorandum by Sir Francis Oppenheimer Relative to the Situation in Austria [Paris, June 3, 1919]," 40.

capability to solve global issues. Within an international forum, any regional conflict could spark a global war. In 1938, the League was not willing to go to war over Austria, and the Royal Navy, the League's de facto patrol, was not prepared to defend it. By overlooking Germany's violation of international law, Chamberlain's appeasement strategy was a short-term solution that maintained the peace momentarily.[75]

If the League had allowed a democratic Anschluss, the Weimar Republic would have absorbed the Austrian Republic, forming a state with vastly different borders and a more profound national identity. Aided by a shared ethnolinguistic nationality, the former seat of empire would have experienced a smoother democratic transition. The Anschluss would have given one less grievance for Austrians and Germans, and the Austrian people might have accepted a new system of government and League oversight. Whether this version of alternative events could have prevented war, however, must be left to the realm of imagination.

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