Past Tense
Graduate Review of History

Training Tomorrow's Historians.................................................................Erica Toffoli

“Properly Speaking Man Is Imbecile”: Nietzschean Skepticism
in the Political Thought of French Conservative Hippolyte Taine....................Randolph Miller

“Nervous Diseases” and the Politics of Healing: William James, Josiah
Royce, and the Early Dynamic Psychiatry Movement in America........................Matthew D. Bessette

Contested Conservations: Forestry and History in Nova Scotia........................Matthew Leeming

Canada's Story: Canadian Identity and the Journal of Canadian Studies...............William Hamilton

The Shield and Sword of Consumption: The Police-Society Relationship
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Letter from the Associate Chair

It is a pleasure to write these lines of introduction for the inaugural issue of Past Tense, the journal of the Graduate History Society, itself the voice of graduate students in the University of Toronto’s Department of History.

As the Department’s graduate coordinator, I’ve made opening remarks at a number of GHS events. Not infrequently, I start off by saying that I probably have the least to do with that event of anybody in the room. The initiators, the organizers, the drivers behind these, from the History Graduate Orientation for incoming students in September, to February’s Annual Graduate History Symposium, to the inaugural MA 2000 Paper Symposium last May, are the graduate students themselves. What has most impressed me since I began as graduate coordinator is this remarkable degree of self-organization, reflecting both the intellectual vibrancy of and the strong sense of community among our graduate students.

Past Tense falls squarely within this tradition. A graduate student initiative in every sense, it well conveys the intellectual reach and innovation and the thematic and methodological diversity of the Department’s graduate students. In this first issue, you will find work on Nietzschean elements in French political thought, on early psychiatry in the United States, on forestry in Nova Scotia, on the police and consumption in East Germany, on Canadian identity, and on the politics of South African girl scouting. A collective effort that showcases some of the most exciting work produced by individual graduate students, it represents the self-organizing tradition at its finest. And it’s a fascinating read. Enjoy!

Russell A. Kazal
Associate Chair, Graduate
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Training Tomorrow’s Historians

Erica Toffoli
University of Toronto

New scholars crave experience. Opportunities to present and publish are invaluable assets to developing graduate students seeking to hone their professional skills and engage with a broad academic audience. Consideration of these needs lay at the heart of two new initiatives undertaken in the University of Toronto’s History Department over the past year: organization of the M.A. Symposium and the publication of Past Tense: Graduate Review of History.

Held for the first time in May 2012, the symposium allowed Master’s students, their fellow graduate students and faculty members a chance to gather for a day of presentations given by graduate students at the very earliest stage of their academic careers. As a co-organizer and participant in the M.A. Symposium, I had an opportunity to gain experience planning a small conference, practice my own presentation skills, and observe the event’s impact upon myself and my fellow Master’s students. Our goal as organizers was to afford Master’s students an opportunity to present their 2000 Paper, the major research component of the Master’s program. The 2000 Paper is an article length essay, requiring use of original primary source research. We invited participants to share twenty-minute long presentations detailing the main arguments and methodology which informed their 2000 Paper. Ten Master’s students presented at the Symposium.

Roughly twenty PhD students and ten faculty members, some of whom were participants’ supervisors, attended various presentations throughout the day. This was quite a respectable turn-out, particularly given the fact that the symposium was held on a Friday in late-May! The symposium was a sort of hybrid, somewhere between a formal conference and a workshop, where both questions and suggestions from the audience were encouraged. The presentations were diverse in topic and form. Panellists addressed a wide variety of topics including European and American nationality and immigration history, Canadian studies, gender history and historical memory. The symposium’s purpose was twofold. At the most basic level, the meeting represented an opportunity for Master’s students, many of whom had never participated in a formal conference, a chance to practice their speaking skills before an audience larger than a standard graduate seminar. In addition, the symposium allowed students to experiment with and rehearse their ideas and findings while collecting valuable feedback and input from their peers.

We never intended to mimic the structure or tone of a formal conference.
Instead, we attempted to create an atmosphere that was both relaxed and intellectually stimulating, a space where conversation was as important as the presentations themselves. In our initial discussions about the symposium’s format, we debated whether participants would deliver their presentations from a lectern or remain seated. Our “sit or stand” dilemma, while seemingly trivial, actually speaks volumes about the tone that we were attempting to impart to the symposium. We decided to have panellists remain seated, in order to encourage a more relaxed atmosphere, an environment which was more in keeping with the symposium’s goals. Without negating the importance of a formal conference, and the invaluable skills which academics refine while preparing for and taking part in these events, I would suggest that our M.A. Symposium and graduate conferences in general, provide a different, yet equally valuable sort of preparation for developing scholars. As an initiative generated within the graduate community itself, the organization of and participation in the M.A. Symposium and similar graduate conferences attests to graduate students’ commitment to creating opportunities for themselves. Graduate conferences indicate the presence of young scholars who take a pro-active approach to their own development as academics. For emerging scholars, events like the M.A. Symposium function as a stepping-stone to larger conferences. Our key motivation in designing the symposium was to provide Master’s students with an opportunity to practice, to start working out the kinks in our individual presentation styles before we attempt larger, formal conferences. We believed that a less intimidating environment was the ideal space in which to undertake this sort of training. The symposium’s informal character and relatively small size encouraged open, collaborative discussion, conversation which made presenters more comfortable with a conference-like setting and more engaged with their fellow graduate students. Spaces devoted to open conversation and constructive criticism are important for both developing scholars and experienced academics. The M.A. Symposium provided this type of environment.

The process of organizing the symposium led my co-organizers and me to develop a deeper appreciation for the labour that goes into structuring an academic conference, work which was simultaneously anxiety-provoking and gratifying. The formation of panels was a particularly arduous task. The diverse range of topics investigated in our participants’ 2000 Papers presented us with a challenge that morphed into an opportunity. In the absence of a pre-set theme to our symposium, we were required to develop panels consisting of presentations which, at first glance, were seemingly unrelated. We realized that looking for common themes, rather than geographical or temporal consistency between presentations in a given panel, produced groups composed of presentations whose differences were assets. Seemingly unrelated topics often inform each other in unexpected ways.
tendency was most evident in a panel entitled “Myth, Memory and Representation,” which demonstrated the way in which histories of early modern Venice, post-Depression America, and modern Chinese-Canadian migrants inform one another. Though unrelated in geographical or temporal focus, the presentations were united by their meditations upon modes of historical myth and memory, and illuminated the similarities and differences between the manner and function of historical memory in different contexts. Thinking in terms of theme rather than geographic or temporal similarity produced panels which were as entertaining as they were informative.

The symposium itself served as a practice arena, giving participants the chance to refine the content of their major research papers and sharpen their presentation skills. I found my own presentation at the symposium extremely valuable. My peers had similar experiences. Preparation for the symposium inspired many participants to consider more carefully the aims and implications of their research. I have learned that I often do not really know what I wish to communicate until I am forced to articulate my argument within a confined amount of space. The constraints of a twenty-minute presentation forced me to sift carefully through historiographic material and primary source evidence and extract only the most salient pieces of evidence necessary to illustrate my thesis. This exercise allowed me to develop a more concise understanding of my own argument and identify which portions of my research were extraneous. The result was a more concrete conceptualization of my research project. Reactions to the presentations offered many participants new insights into their own research. Colleagues’ generous contributions proved invaluable in producing more nuanced and well-rounded final products. Participants whose supervisors attended the symposium were essentially permitted an opportunity to rehearse a first draft of their 2000 Paper before the faculty member who would judge the final product. This experience undoubtedly allowed presenters to feel more confident about the content of their paper. Most of the presenters completed their projects in advance of the official deadline, and some are now in the process of refining their pieces for submission to academic journals.

Many presenters, including myself, had no experience presenting at a conference. In the most simplistic sense, the symposium was an exercise in managing nerves. I was extremely nervous before presenting, as were most of my peers. I was reassured by the fact that those twinges of anxiety quickly evaporated once I began speaking, a lesson that will make future presentations easier. Most importantly, the symposium gave us practice with defending an argument in a short period of time, a skill valuable for both academic and non-academic jobs where clarity and persuasiveness are key assets. New graduate students, particularly those becoming familiar with the mechanics of grant writing and PhD proposals, quickly learn that
brevity is integral. As I prepare my PhD applications, I am grateful for the training in conveying a complex argument in a limited space that the symposium gave me. Similarly, the symposium provided participants an opportunity to practice developing arguments comprehensible to both specialists and non-specialists. The ability to communicate an idea effectively to a diverse audience is integral to successful grant-writing, like SSHRC proposals, and PhD applications. For those presenters, like myself, intent on pursuing a career in academia, the symposium also offered us early experience in developing skills transferable to teaching. Given the benefits that my peers and I derived from the first M.A. Symposium, I sincerely hope that future Master’s cohorts choose to organize a similar event annually.

In many ways, the editorial team’s intent at Past Tense echoes that of the M.A. Symposium’s organizers. While the symposium provided new graduate students with experience as presenters, the journal seeks to afford new scholars with experience as published authors. The journal is first and foremost a forum for emerging scholars to disseminate their research to a wider audience while gaining experience with the publication process in the early stages of their academic careers. An understanding of the mechanics inherent in writing, submitting and refining an essay or book review for publication is integral in any academic profession. Past Tense affords new scholars practice with this process.

Past Tense offers readers a unique opportunity to visit the sites of inquiry and reflect upon the concerns which animate and inform emerging scholars’ works. The pieces selected for the journal’s first edition represent an eclectic blend of topics which demonstrate the diverse lines of historical inquiry pursued by new scholars. In a sense, the journal provides a snapshot of history’s future, a glimpse into the ways in which old paradigms and new trends are informing developing scholars’ approaches. Historians are by nature preoccupied with continuity and change. Past Tense allows readers insight into the ways in which continuity and change are shaping modern scholarship. The journal offers more experienced scholars a chance to consider the ways in which new academics are approaching old questions and formulating new inquiries, engaging with established arguments and offering novel interpretations. Thus, while creating a space devoted to the early works of tomorrow’s historians, the journal offers readers an opportunity to meet the scholars who will shape the discipline’s future.

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“Properly Speaking Man Is Imbecile”: Nietzschean Skepticism in the Political Thought of French Conservative Hippolyte Taine

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Abstract

This paper argues that a careful examination of Hippolyte Taine’s intellectual development in the area of epistemology reveals a conceptual linkage with Nietzschean skepticism. The author shows that both Nietzsche and Taine drew from the same procession and touchstones of French history when developing their epistemologies. The result was a similar view of reason with a similar application to the political realm. Taking the Revolution as formative for both thinkers, the author shows how and why Taine’s notions of “une forme aveugle de la raison” and “hereditary prejudice” correspond to Nietzsche’s view of tradition and its necessity for healthy social and political structures. Further, with the evidence presented, the short correspondence between Taine and Nietzsche appears in a different light, one that allows the reader to take Nietzsche’s words at face value and that reveals a mutual admiration between Taine and Nietzsche. The result of this work is to clear another path connecting Nietzsche’s thought with the French right of the Third Republic.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate commonalities between Nietzsche’s philosophy and the intellectual content of right-wing thought during the French Third Republic. While scholars have documented the compatibility between Nietzsche’s elitism and authoritarian ideologies of the twentieth century, this work follows a different path and focuses on epistemology. Vigorous skepticism regarding human rationality is almost synonymous with Nietzsche. But this quality of skepticism was not his sole possession. Hippolyte Taine, one of the most influential thinkers of the right during the Third Republic, advocated a similar skepticism, one that informed his particular distrust of democracy and kept him on the right side of
French politics.¹ This paper argues that Taine’s skepticism is similar enough to Nietzsche’s to assert a conceptual linkage between the two. The result is to clear another path connecting Nietzsche’s thought with the French right of the Third Republic.

**Shaping the Debate**

The parameters of debate for nineteenth-century French approaches to reason and rationality were established in the eighteenth century, and one can point to the publication of Voltaire’s *Philosophical Letters* in 1734 as the starting point. Published first in England, the French edition contained an extra chapter entitled *On the Pensées of Pascal*. While the reason for inclusion is not readily apparent, its presence makes sense if one understands what Voltaire was proposing to France. Voltaire was challenging Pascal’s theologically directed view of humanity, one that took a negative view of human ability, action, and motivation.² While Pascal maintained that nothing good could ever come from self-interested behavior, Voltaire asserted that self-interested behavior was actually the basis of all commerce and therefore of all good things. Ultimately behind Voltaire’s praise of individualism was the necessary replacement of a human reason submitted to revelation with a human reason that acted on its own—that is, of Pascal with Locke.³

As the Lockean-inspired part of the French Enlightenment, in all its diversity, was reaching maturity with the likes of Condorcet and d’Holbach, the French Revolution entered its destructive phase, one that would see thousands executed and the appearance of immoral leaders and a murderous and irrational crowd. French anti-Enlightenment conservatives were able to capitalize on this outcome and assert the soundness of their positions. In 1797, Joseph de Maistre, probably the most well known of the French conservatives of this time, published his most famous work, *Considerations on France*, to condemn the Revolution and with a desire to push France back into the arms of throne and altar. In this work, he sought to explain the horrors of the Revolution by demonstrating that the basic assumptions of the Enlightenment

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³ Everything that Voltaire was advocating concerning politics and philosophy required a transvaluation of Pascalian values. Pascal had based his social philosophy on church dogma and revelation. Voltaire discussed human activity done for the sake of personal gain and happiness without regard for tradition. He also justified the morality of his position based on its utility to human development.
had caused it all. In his arguments, he rejected Enlightenment empiricism and asserted an epistemology that championed inner sentiments and the lessons provided by history over pure human observation. For de Maistre, history revealed several things that helped one understand the Revolution. One was that humans are social beings. The importance of this revelation was that there could have been no social contract introduced by pre-social and rational creatures, since outside of society, individuals ceased to be human. In other words, starting from the individual when conceptualizing society, as many Enlightenment thinkers tended to do, was philosophically wrong and a poor conception of humanness. Further, developing a society based on individuals could never hold together. For de Maistre, social orders were already precarious and could not countenance the championing of individual wills. Ultimately, history showed that humans were unable to produce a political system on their own. Therefore, as the Enlightenment and Revolution played out, the use of human reason in this area could only be destructive.

But de Maistre got more specific. For him, the Revolution was punishment from God for the intellectual sins committed by France, and at the root of this sin, coming from a spirit of rebellion against God, were Bacon and Locke, whose immoral thinking produced empiricism, individualism, and ultimately social-contract theory. De Maistre’s picture of a proper political organization was a centralized authority holding society together and protecting it from the enemy of individualism. For de Maistre, this centralized authority could only exist in the Church, and deviations from it were clearly in defiance of history and revelation. In de Maistre’s narrative, the Reformation was the first significant rebellion against proper authority, but the most disastrous step was Locke, whose sensationalism encouraged the tearing down of traditional authority and the atomization of society. In short, de Maistre believed that divergence from true, centralized authority, which Lockean epistemology unleashed, explained the Revolution and its horrors.


5 Maistre, Works, 279.

6 “This is why the world’s greatest scourge has always been, in every age, what is called philosophy, for philosophy is nothing but the human reason acting alone, and the human reason reduced to its own resource is nothing but a brute whose power is restricted to destroying…” Ibid., 39.

7 Ibid., 236.


9 Maistre, Works, 105.
For de Maistre, Lockean sensationalism, which materialized the origin of ideas, was absurd, detestable, and “deadly for the human spirit.” More importantly, sensationalism destroyed the moral sciences. De Maistre placed these words in the mouth of one of his characters in his St. Petersburg Dialogues:

The day will come, and perhaps is not far off, when Locke will be unanimously placed among those writers who have done the most harm to men.... This philosophy is the death of all religion, of all delicate feelings, of all sublime enthusiasm; every father of a family especially must be clearly warned that in receiving it under his roof, he is really doing all that he could do to chase out life.

After lambasting Locke and his philosophy, de Maistre had nothing better to say about Voltaire, whom he considered part of the general movement and popularization of Lockean sensationalism. For de Maistre, Voltaire’s works “are not dead. They are alive, and they are killing us. It seems to me that my hate is sufficiently justified.” He further derided Voltaire for asserting that “Locke is the English Pascal.” The admiration for Pascal by de Maistre went deep, and the fact that Voltaire had referred to his Philosophical Letters as “Anti-Pascal” made the work a clear oeuvre de combat. De Maistre’s response to Voltaire’s work and his dichotomy between Locke and Pascal, helped rehabilitate Pascal, making him a hero to the Romantic movement and a permanent fixture in French social thinking. The dichotomies that Voltaire’s seminal work and life helped create clearly left their mark on French social thinking.

This narrative provides insight into the French discourse on reason and its formative relationship to the Revolution, a discourse that Taine would enter in his political and philosophical work. It also seeks to situate Nietzsche. Although German, Nietzsche was preoccupied with French culture, history, and intellectual achievement. For Nietzsche, the French were present-day Greeks, a culture and intellectual tradition he saw as presenting formative qualities of thought. Most importantly, the French moralists informed Nietzsche’s mature thought, especially...

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11 Ibid., 191, 193.
12 Ibid., 109.
Properly Speaking Man Is Imbecile

Pascal, who argued for the subjectivity of perception and the need to transcend it.\textsuperscript{15} According to Brendan Donnellan, Pascal’s influence on Nietzsche came through Schopenhauer, for whom Pascal played a large role. The influence was great enough that Nietzsche considered Schopenhauer and Pascal two sides of one pessimistic coin, that is, a negation of the world from an atheistic point of view and a religious one.\textsuperscript{16} Donnellan states:

Nietzsche must have felt especial affinity to the caustic skepticism with which the Frenchman [Pascal] demolished the pretention of reason as the sole arbiter of truth. Despite the inevitable differences [Christian vs. atheist; two-hundred years apart] there is an underlying similarity in their awareness of the reservation which must be made about the intellect as an agent in its own right…. Pascal was convinced that the conclusions of logic and science were only useful on one plane.\textsuperscript{17}

Like de Maistre, Nietzsche relied on Pascal’s skepticism and idealized the French seventeenth century. He also believed like de Maistre that the eighteenth century was the countermand to the seventeenth, and that the mistake of the eighteenth century was its, “unshakable belief that reason can penetrate the deepest abysses of existence and not only apprehend the nature of existence but also correct it.”\textsuperscript{18} While Nietzsche’s condemnation of the Revolution was more complicated than de Maistre’s, Nietzsche ascribed to the same narrative regarding the role of the Enlightenment in bringing about the Revolution and its destruction.\textsuperscript{19}

The upshot here is to suggest Nietzsche’s familiarity with the intricacies of French thinking; that Nietzsche’s discussions on epistemology contain a French imprint born from an awareness of its character, dichotomies, and history. This

\textsuperscript{15} “For both Nietzsche and for Pascal...subjectivity of perception is a fact to be accepted, and if knowledge is to be conceived as possible, some principle of cognition has been found which is protected against the deception of the senses.” See Williams, Nietzsche, 82.

\textsuperscript{16} For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer’s Will was Pascal’s amour-propre in the explanation of human motivation and the rejection of reason’s ability to apprehend the thing-in-itself. See Brendan Donnellan, “Nietzsche and Pascal,” Germanic Review 54 (1979): 89.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 92.

\textsuperscript{18} Nicholas Martin, “‘Aufklärung und Kein Ende’: The Place of Enlightenment in Frederick Nietzsche’s Thought,” German Life and Letters 61 (2008): 87.

\textsuperscript{19} Nietzsche’s relationship to the Enlightenment is far more complex than de Maistre’s. But Nicholas Martin’s scholarship seems persuasive when he writes: “Underlying all of Nietzsche’s discussion of the benefits and dangers of ‘Aufklärung’ is his rejection of three defining characteristics of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. First, he rejects the notion that critical, moral or political principles can be universalized. Second, he dismisses the concept of the ‘rational subject.’...Finally, and perhaps fatally, Nietzsche rejects Enlightenment’s faith in truth.” This was an attitude toward truth no different from a Christian attitude toward God. See the above in Martin, “Aufklärung,” 95-96. See also Graeme Garrard, “Nietzsche For and Against the Enlightenment,” The Review of Politics 70 (2008): 596-608.
background helps bridge the inevitable conceptual gap that would exist between two thinkers immersed in their respective cultures and the intellectual traditions that define them. The formative influence of Nietzsche’s and Taine’s thought belongs to the same procession and touchstones of French history, which stretches from the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Third Republic and the French Right

The Revolution helped determine the contours of French politics for the rest of the nineteenth century. The Revolution dominated discourse so thoroughly that political blocs formed out of the various meanings and interpretations given to it. Like de Maistre, many saw the Revolution as a violent mistake and desired a return to a renewed ancien régime. Royalism coalesced from this interpretation and the Legitimist party, fully in support of a Bourbon restoration, formed out of it. Others viewed the first part of the Revolution as genuine reform and favored continuing its political and economic prescriptions, which included checks on king and church and the flourishing of a meritorious elite. This position was associated with Louis-Philip from the Orléans branch of the Bourbons, and its adherents became the Orleanists. A third position came from the example of Napoleon, who, according his followers, had superseded the Bourbon line. Bonapartists wanted some revolutionary reforms, including a smaller role for the church, mixed with elements of absolutism, empire, and hereditary rule.

By the 1830s, a developing economy and an increasingly self-aware working class forced the French political purview beyond issues of restoration and stability. In this milieu, Republicanism returned and added complexity to the mainline discourse. Republicans defined themselves in relation to the Revolution as well. For them the radical stage was the true and only proper revolution, and they sought to bring it to perfection. As republicans brought with them the spirit of radical change and of 1793, they took their place on the left side of French politics. While the other three shared a mutual rejection of Republicanism along with monarchical convictions, their traditionalism placed them in various places on the right. Legitimism, Orleanism, and Bonapartism all made their way into the Third Republic as enemies of Republicanism.

In the dark shadow of the Commune, the Third Republic was born weak, and Republicanism struggled for the hearts of Frenchmen. A rightist coalition emerged to

20 The result was a fairly rational or enlightened monarchy that served the interest of the notables in society—the managerial classes and the aristocracies of birth, wealth, and intelligence. See Rémont, The Right Wing in France, 117, 123.
oppose the republican direction of France, and the negative connotations of the Commune were hard to overcome for the left. In this situation, republicans attempted to co-opt the conservative label by claiming themselves the true conservatives. They argued that since the Revolution was the origin of modern France, those who wanted to continue or complete the Revolution were therefore the real conservatives. While the meaning of the Revolution was always somewhere in the politics of nineteenth-century France, this republican claim elevated the Revolution and its interpretation in Third Republic discourse.

Taine and his work on the Revolution belong to this context. Seeing Bonapartism and Republicanism as the enemy, and distrusting Legitimism, Taine worked from a center-right perspective, having the most sympathy for Orleanism. While favoring some parliamentary and economic liberalism, he believed that “the wealthy and enlightened classes should lead the ignorant and those who live from hand to mouth.” Unlike his Orleanist predecessors, he rejected the Revolution completely and the liberal rationalism that guided it. He saw 1789 and 1793 as a product the same forces, of which the Commune was essentially a replay. In his polemical treatment of the Revolution, he joined the generations-old debate on the Revolution and its causes, the one initiated by de Maistre in 1797.

Taine, Revolution, and Reason

Like de Maistre, Taine’s treatment of the ancien régime and the causes of the Revolution described the fomenting of an improper philosophical outlook, one that centered on epistemological concerns. In his treatment, Taine discussed three types of reason. The first of the three was that which produces scientific discovery and fact. He included here the logic of pure mathematics and the accumulation of facts through observation and experimentation over time, which in turn established the various sciences developing in his day—e.g., physiology, zoology, biology. For Taine, this reasoning was sound and was to be encouraged for its utility. The problem occurred when this reasoning planted itself on French soil. France had, according to Taine, a “classical spirit,” which for him was the understanding in the France of the seventeenth century that an “honest man,” without the need of specialists, had an “inner light” that could lead to sound conclusions in the search for truth. The pretenses of science coupled with this intellectual populism left the moral

and political world open to non-experts. All one now needed was a salon to legitimately pontificate on the loftiest of topics, including and especially politics. Condorcet, who declared that the moral sciences were no different from the natural sciences, was the highest expression of this poisonous combination of attitude and reason.

Taine referred to this synthesis as *la raison raisonante*, which was the second type of reason he articulated in his work. It was a common reason, which ignored complexity and lacked vigorousness. As a result, it was “powerless to fully portray or to record the infinite and varied details of experience.”\(^{24}\) Yet the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century gave it a totalizing quality and application. When commenting on the Ideologues, who tried to renew and perfect this approach, Taine said that while believing themselves descendants of Bacon, they were actually “always in the air, in the empty space of pure generalities.”\(^{25}\) Taine likened the rigidity and intolerance of the Enlightenment to seventeenth-century Puritanism. After all, it simply replaced the authority of God and the influence to compel with reason. And once this reason applied itself to traditional moral and social authorities, it would usurp them to never have them return. With this notion, France marched into the Revolution with the incoherent doctrines of social contract and natural rights, catalyzed by the notion of radical Jacobin equality. Uprooted, the French were now people without history, and everything built on tradition was set aside by the dictates of reason.

Taine wrote most about *la raison raisonante*. In his work on the *ancien régime*, he explained in detail why this common reason was unable to accomplish what the eighteenth-century *philosophes* wanted it to. For one, it is not able to establish legitimate universal concepts that correspond to reality. Taine believed that the process of cognition is so complex and involves so many mechanisms that it is a miracle it even functions at all, and concluded that even in the best brains, the possibility that ideas correspond to “outward things,” is small.\(^{26}\) By extension, then, generalizations from different bits of information have no validity. Secondly, the average person is unable to assent and coordinate with others around a notion of natural rights. For Taine, “Man is imbecile.... The health of [his] mind... is simply a happy accident.”\(^{27}\) Also, reason is neither natural nor universal in human beings, and with regard to conduct, the influence is certainly quite small,\(^{28}\) especially in comparison to the brutish and animal nature of humans with their “irresistible

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 201-202.
\(^{26}\) Ibid., 239.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 239.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 240.
impulses, anger, appetites, agreed; all [of which are] blind.” For Leo Weinstein, Taine’s view of human reason placed men precariously near insanity, which helped Taine explain the rioting and mob behavior that occurred during the later stages of the Revolution.

These were not always Taine’s convictions in epistemology. In fact, he began his intellectual life with a very high view of reason. The change occurred when he decided to take on Kantian skepticism in a comprehensive manner, a philosophical labor that ended up as the book, *On Intelligence*, a work he considered his most important. Starting from a relatively optimistic position, instead of shoring up reason in the face of the Kantian critique, he finished the work having retreated into a skepticism that, when spurred on by the Paris Commune, caused him to walk away from previous work and pay more attention to concrete political solutions. With the increasingly problematic correspondence between subject and object shown by two generations of scientific investigation, and rejecting all *a priori* categories necessary for cognition and perception, Taine made his move toward skepticism.

### A Reasonable Nietzsche

It is possible to partition Nietzsche’s epistemology along the lines Taine laid down in his commentary on the Revolution. As stated, Taine’s first type of reason is essentially empiricism: the ability through observation to collect useful data and build up knowledge about the material world. Nietzsche clearly had no problem with this kind of reason. In fact, this ability to get useful knowledge from the world was central to Nietzsche’s fuller philosophy. As Victor Grimm points out: if everything is a will to power, and life is the accumulation of power, there has to be some way of ordering and interpreting the world that allows for this process. But Nietzsche’s understanding of how this came about put severe restrictions on what could be known and what the potentials were for this faculty. Nietzsche’s attitude concerning an ability to produce the universal principles that the eighteenth century believed it could is where his famous and devastating scorn enters, a scorn similar to

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31 Like de Maistre and Nietzsche, Pascal influenced Taine in limiting the ability of reason to grasp all of reality. Victor Giraud, biographer of both Pascal and Taine, suggests that Pascal’s esprit de finesse (intuitive mind) helped shaped Taine’s thinking. See Nias, *Artificial*, 196.

what Taine had for *la raison raisonnante*.

Like Taine, Nietzsche formulated his epistemology through a Kantian paradigm, attacking Kant’s essential distinction between appearance and reality. According to Nietzsche, if one perceives objects according to the mind’s given categories, there is a problematic and ultimately skeptical barrier between subject and object. Nietzsche’s solution was to put subject and object together on the same plane and make the understanding of an object part of the subject’s participation in reality. In this formula, there is potential for actual knowledge of the material world. However, the reality is not so neat. Replacing Kant’s “knowledge apparatus” with a “lived experience” has big implications for the potentials of knowledge. Most important is that universality is impossible. If individuals “work out” their truth rather than perceive it, this “truth” is restricted to that individual and his or her particular experience. This can only produce a perspective which also takes away the possibility of objectivity. It further eliminates the possibility of dogmatism. Richardson explains the process both inward and out:

This new knower’s truth is... hypothetical, not certain. It lacks the... sureness often claimed by metaphysicians.... Because he has reached it empirically, it must lack the apodicticity associated with the a priori.... Its truth lies in its synthesis of viewpoints; this truth is incomplete insofar as there are always viewpoints it fails to take in.

For science to function requires the constant collection of perspectives. So, for example, science can build up useful knowledge about the world, and as Nietzsche championed the scientist in helping to overthrow superstition and religion, one can by this method amass evidence and proof against old prejudices. In this common sense alternative to Kant, Nietzsche allowed for knowledge without transcendent assumptions. And like Taine, moral or universal knowledge, anything with a metaphysical property, was unknowable.

Another factor exists in joining Taine and Nietzsche along these epistemological lines. As the debate around reason had progressed during the nineteenth century, so did science. Most important was the revolution in understanding that occurred with Darwin, and both Taine and Nietzsche took into account the mechanism of natural selection in their epistemologies. This not only helped shape the process of knowledge acquisition for them, it helped define and explain its restrictions.

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34 Ibid., 6.
Biology and Darwin demanded a new relationship to the material world. As for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, theology could shape an epistemology, in which the idea of a fallen nature, or the need for knowledge of God could define and present the limits and potentials of human reason. While the seventeenth-century French moralists could present a healthy skepticism propped up by the possibility that individuals had the capacity to know God and be sure of the transcendent, Darwin would eliminate this safety net. What Darwinism suggested, and what Taine and Nietzsche embraced, was that reason and the ability for humans to understand the world was limited to the practical needs of survival. As Nietzsche stated: “It is improbable that our ‘knowledge’ should extend further than is strictly necessary for the preservation of life.” As humans evolved along with their environments, there would be no mechanism or need for human reason to go beyond its needs for survival, or at another level, the acquisition of power.

Further, according to the Darwinian model, as organisms adapt and evolve, those most suited to their environment survive. In like manner, epistemology for both Taine and Nietzsche was a sort of trial and error of understanding, a selection of sensory input that continued until something that worked was accepted. It was a pragmatic process, in which those ideas closest to what is real will eventually win out.

To put it in Tainian language, the mind creates “illusions” from its sensory input. However, new information constantly challenges these illusions. The subject, therefore, continually modifies the original illusions until something that works is finally accepted. Further, like natural selection, “serendipity” guides this process. Hilary Nias characterizes Taine’s epistemology in this light: “It… is of a knowledge gained accidentally, limited to the most mundane sphere and generated at some unconscious and uncontrolled level, [which] scarcely qualifies as the step on the path to a comprehensive vision of the universe.”

Nietzsche’s take is similar. As he states in The Joyful Wisdom:

Throughout immense stretches of time the intellect produced nothing but errors; some of them proved to be useful and preservative of the species: he who fell in with them, or inherited them, waged the battle for himself and his offspring with better success.

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37 Ibid., 272 (Aph. 494).
38 Ibid., 275 (Aph. 505), 313 (Aph. 583).
39 Nias, Artificial, 167-168.
40 Ibid., 177.
Although this synthesis over time of perspectives, and the modification of illusions, may provide the subject with useful knowledge for survival, and on a larger scale be combined to provide the world with science, the content of knowledge is still ultimately a book open to many interpretations.42

Tradition in Taine and Nietzsche

With these assertions concerning Nietzsche’s and Taine’s compatibility, it is possible to present something persuasive regarding Taine’s third type of reason. As Taine’s concern was with establishing and stabilizing French politics and society, his response to the irrational world was to posit a type of reason that would replace the epistemological legacy of the eighteenth century and bring some kind of rational foundation to politics. As Nietzsche’s concern was with personal culture, his response to an irrational world came in the form of a new personal morality. Will to power, of course, has implications for politics, and historians have duly catalogued its anti-collective and anti-democratic properties. But while the characteristics of Nietzsche’s politics flow directly from his moral system, there is a sense in which some of his politics may come, like Taine, more directly from his epistemology. In which case, a stronger argument for the thesis may be presented.

Taine referred to his third type of reasoning as “une sorte de raison qui s’ignore” (a sort of reason operating unconsciously).43 Elsewhere he labeled it “l’instinct” and “une forme aveugle de la raison” (a blind form of reason).44 It is blind and unconscious because it does not come from formal or transparent logic, nor is there a process that is rigorous and falsifiable. But for Taine, it is no less reason and works the same way psychologically as formal reason. As he argues, for ideas to make a difference, they must begin in the mind and work their way down into practice, eventually becoming part of society. Such is the same process in which experience through trial and error forms human character and thus practice, which then deposits itself in a society perfectly coherent to those living in it, but not amenable necessarily to formal reason or reasonable to those in another society. This process is simply the collective application of Taine’s understanding of individual human reason. As humans collectively combine their experiences with the natural environment, they build up the best possible world for themselves. The result of this natural selection of useful knowledge and practice manifests itself as a particular collective psychology, which then goes on to create a particular national character

42 Nias, Artificial, 181.
43 Taine, Ancient, 207.
44 Ibid., 211.
and consciousness. This kind of reason forms what he called hereditary prejudice, that is, an awareness of the validity of the present form of things—in other words, the regard for tradition.\(^{45}\)

While Nietzsche’s attitudes toward tradition are understood mostly to be negative, he does say a few favorable things about tradition that seem to fit with his larger system of thought and that complement Taine. As one thrust of Nietzsche is overcoming the restrictions of the past, he also viewed tradition as a more ancient and superior form of morality in comparison to the dichotomy of ego and non-ego, which, for him, was the product of ressentiment and the certainty of truth. For Nietzsche, there was a time in which “good” meant obeying established law and custom, a morality much closer to a will to power.\(^{46}\) In a section that articulates European nihilism and the disintegration of European society, and with language similar to Taine, he writes:

> What is attacked deep down today is the instinct and will of tradition: all institutions that owe their origins to this instinct violate the taste of the modern spirit. —At bottom, nothing is thought and done without the purpose of eradication this sense for tradition. One considers tradition a fatality; one studies it, recognizes it (“as heredity”), but one does not want it.\(^{47}\)

Understanding that Nietzsche saw the process of acquiring knowledge as a natural selection over a long period of time of information that maximized will and preservation, the attachment of instinct and will to tradition makes sense. As he continues in this section:

> The tensing of a will over long temporal distances, the selection of the states and valuations that allows one to dispose of future centuries—precisely this is antimodern in the highest degree. Which goes to show that it is the disorganizing principles that give our age its character.\(^{48}\)

For Nietzsche, then, there is a sense in which tradition is a product of will “over long temporal distances,” giving tradition a legitimate status requiring deference. To its condemnation, the modern period wanted, with the force of human reason as shown in the Enlightenment and Revolution, to dehistoricize societies and states, which was another impulse away from will and toward nihilism.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 210-211.  
\(^{47}\) Nietzsche, *Will*, 43 (Aph. 65).  
\(^{48}\) Ibid.
This application to epistemology of a natural selection mechanism gives Nietzsche and Taine similar solutions to social and political organization in the face of irrationality. Both Taine and Nietzsche, here, borrow from the same source to make up for the political and social chaos brought about by a misuse of reason in the eighteenth century, a source justified by their similar epistemologies.

The Possibility of Cross Pollination

In 1887, Nietzsche wrote a letter to Taine to thank him for two things. One was Taine’s praise for Nietzsche’s fellow Schopenhauerian, Jacob Burckhardt; the other was for his article on Napoleon.49 A week later, Taine wrote back to thank and assure him that this understanding of Napoleon matched the words Nietzsche used to describe him in his latest work, that is, Unmensch and Übermensch.50 While Napoleon meant very different things to each, Taine and Nietzsche seem to describe him in similar ways. For both, Napoleon was an exceptional type of individual.51 He was an artist, one “sheathed in the political scabbard,” a posthumous brother of Dante and Michelangelo who belonged to the Italian Renaissance, and whose medium was humanity.52 They both compare the intellect of Napoleon with Caesar, and marvel at his energy.53 Finally, in Taine’s description, Napoleon was an ego that produced a dominating passion and will, an “egoism served by genius”—descriptions not foreign to Nietzsche’s own terminology and emphasis.54

Taine and Nietzsche corresponded a few more times, and it is clear that Taine was an admirer of Nietzsche’s work. For example, Taine was trying to set Nietzsche up with a French translator and publisher, and spoke of recommending pieces of Beyond Good and Evil to fellow philosophers.55 While the exchange did not last long, the letters tell the historian a few things. One is that Taine had read and respected Beyond Good and Evil, On the Genealogy of Morals, and The Twilight of the Idols, books that contain mature and detailed treatments of Nietzsche’s epistemology. Further, the letters have Taine telling Nietzsche that he will recommend certain sections of

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53 Taine, Modern, 30 and Glenn, “Napoleon,” 140.
54 Taine, Modern, 47-48, 90.
Beyond Good and Evil to his fellow philosophers and historians, which are noteworthy in revealing what ideas possibly appealed to both and spoke to their intellectual milieu. For example, in one section, Nietzsche mocks Kant and his categories, something that Taine’s position would welcome. Nietzsche writes:

“How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?” Kant asks himself—and what is really his answer? “By means of a means (faculty)”—but unfortunately not in five words…. It is high time to replace the Kantian question, “How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?” by another question, “Why is belief in such judgments necessary?”

In another, Nietzsche defines his take on Darwinian teleology, clarifying the relationship between self-preservation and will to power as primary. A third is an assertion about the inability to find “immediate certainty,” with a reference to the problem of language, something Taine would also articulate on his own. Taine also mentions things he thinks will give historians “a rich reward of new ideas.” Taine even points out an essay he considers “extremely suggestive,” which he promises to read again. This last essay articulates the idea of national character, something, as seen above, that Taine relied heavily on in his third type of reason.

Just as interesting is Nietzsche’s defense of France’s part in the eighteenth century. He maintains, in sentiments that would sit well with de Maistre’s defense of Pascal against Locke, that “modern ideas” are of English origin, of which the French fell victim. In the next aphorism, Nietzsche cites Taine as the “first of living historians.” And in a letter to friend, he calls Taine the “most substantial thinker in the present-day France.” Since the majority of Taine’s works had been published by the time Nietzsche and Taine began exchanging letters, it is reasonable to consider

57 Ibid., 14-15 (Aph. 13).
58 Ibid., 17 (Aph. 16) see also Nias, Artificial, 205.
59 Taine, Ancient, 210-211.
60 “What is called ‘modern ideas,’ or ‘the ideas of the eighteenth century,’ or ‘French ideas’—that, consequently, against which the German mind rose up with profound disgust—is of English origin, there is no doubt about it. The French were only the apes and actors of these ideas, their best soldiers, and likewise, alas! their first and profoundest VICTIMS; for owing to the diabolical Anglomania of ‘modern ideas,’ the âme français has in the end become so thin and emaciated, that at present one recalls its sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, its profound, passionate strength, its inventive excellency, almost with disbelief. One must, however, maintain this verdict of historical justice in a determined manner, and defend it against present prejudices and appearances: the European Noblesse—of sentiment, taste, and manners, taking the word in every high sense—is the work and invention of France; the European ignobleness, the plebeianism of modern ideas—is England’s work and invention.” In Nietzsche, Beyond, 188-189 (Aph. 253).
61 Ibid., 190 (Aph. 254).
that Nietzsche was familiar with his work and thought. The value here is that Nietzsche also calls Taine a “brave pessimist” and considers him, along with himself and Jacob Burckhardt, “fundamental nihilists.” Investigating these terms and their application to Taine is important for the thesis of this work.

Of course the origin and point of reference for Nietzsche’s pessimism is Schopenhauer. Paul Gottfried’s scholarship indicates that while the Second Empire did not acknowledge Schopenhauer in any significant way, Taine had planned a book on him after he recognized the similarities between himself and Schopenhauer in 1870 during the production of his work, On Intelligence. This indicates a familiarity with Schopenhauer early enough to show up in the first publication of Taine’s Ancient Regime. However, it might be reasonable to push Taine’s familiarity with Schopenhauer back further. According to Gottfried, in the 1850s, Le Journal des Débats and La Revue des Deux Mondes had published critical work on German pessimisms. Considering that Taine knew the editor, and himself had published in these journals, it is reasonable that Taine had known of Schopenhauerian pessimism earlier than 1870. In either case, it is possible that Nietzsche called him a brave pessimist because of the presence of Schopenhauerian language or concepts in his work.

The other possibility is that Nietzsche simply saw the quality of Taine’s work and life as sufficiently pessimist to include him in the club. In contrast to Schopenhauer, whose pessimism ended in a depressing denial of the world, Nietzsche demanded a forceful embrace of that world. The problem with Schopenhauer, according to Nietzsche, was his retreat into morality. For Nietzsche, pessimism must be strong in that it accepts the reality of the world. As Dienstag summarizes it, “All pessimisms conclude that the universe has no order and human history no progress; the Dionysian [brave] variety is the only one that can find something to like about this situation.” While Taine was not happy about his skepticism, and probably would not have embraced Nietzsche’s championing of the ego, he seems to have accepted the reality of it. Therefore, what Nietzsche perceived in Taine was the experience he expressed while writing On Intelligence, and Nietzsche most likely based his label of brave pessimism on the quality and acceptance of Taine’s conclusions about human knowledge.

Regarding Nietzsche’s second description of Taine, one should understand

63 Ibid., 201, 202.
66 Nias detects Schopenhauerian language in Taine’s 1870 work. See Nias, Artificial, 221.
“fundamental nihilist” along the lines of Nietzsche’s definition of pessimism. In character with Nietzsche’s style, Nietzsche refers to himself as both nihilist and anti-nihilist. Unlike other doctrines, this seeming contradiction is easy to understand. In the light of his own philosophy, he was anti-nihilist. For Nietzsche, Europe was descending toward nihilism, and his project was to save it by providing a new morality. In the light of how non-adherents of his philosophy viewed it, he was certainly a nihilist, in that he was trying to undermine the basis of morality and the mechanisms that produced it. In this latter sense, Taine fits well, and Nietzsche is clearly claiming that Taine agrees with him about the nature of reality and of humankind’s relation to it. The upshot of this correspondence is that Taine and Nietzsche knew each other’s work, and that Nietzsche believed Taine a fellow skeptic. Given Nietzsche’s tendency to overstate and overestimate his importance, these correspondences would be weak on their own. However, by making certain philosophical and historical comparisons, they seem to support both lines of evidence for the thesis.

Taine and Nietzsche Together in History

Hippolyte Taine’s influence on the Third Republic and the French right began almost immediately after the crushing of the Commune. The summer following the violence, Taine began raising funds for a new school dreamed up during the *semaine sanglante* by journalist and historian, Émile Boutmy. The École Libre des Sciences Politiques was to be private, and, consistent with Boutmy and Taine’s shared political convictions, was to train up a new generation of elites to run France. In line with the implications of Taine’s epistemological convictions, the school consciously moved away from politics as a contemplation of abstractions. Instead, they set out to supply students with a practical, concrete, and scientific education.

Getting support from Orleanists, aristocrats, and Protestant bankers, the student body was restricted to elites of the upper bourgeoisie, a core value that remained intact until the First World War. Its curriculum promoted doctrines in line with center-right ideology. Robert Smith’s careful analysis of student examinations reveals a social conservatism and a paternalistic economic liberalism that often portrayed workers as children unable to function economically without the guidance of superiors. The type of history given to its students emphasized continuity with

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the past. There was also an emphasis on the English model, which deferred to precedent and tradition rather than codification and abstraction in its legal system. By the end of the decade, the École dominated the training of France’s elites.

While the school fit fairly well with Taine’s politics, it was by no means a pure product of his philosophical outlook. Taine’s condemnation of the Revolution in toto was too extreme for the ideology of the school. Tocqueville and Guizot’s historical works dominated the school, which presented a rational liberal view of the Revolution. This view placed the Revolution in the natural flow of French history and supported the motivations and activities of the revolutionaryaries of 1789. Although Taine’s politics were center-right, the implications of his epistemology in the flow of French history were more radical, and Taine was philosophically out of place amongst his political peers.

While Taine’s legacy in the Third Republic certainly includes the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, his epistemology produced a more distinctly Tainian one. The implication of his work for the interpretation of the Revolution profoundly affected the development of the right. McClelland writes:

The right in France attacked rationality, universality and democracy and in so doing worked out an opposing position of great coherence and force. It was Taine’s attack on the Revolution and the revolutionary tradition which turned the flank of the pro-revolutionary positions of Michelet and Lamartine, the high priest of Republican orthodoxy. Taine supplied the hard basis of fact and scholarship for anti-revolutionary opinion.

Although Alan Pitt suggests that “Taine’s profound irrationalism” could have been the basis for the Third Republic’s ultimately cynical take on democracy, the greater and more lasting accomplishment would be in supplying the scholarship that inspired new trajectories for the French right. The defenders of anti-democratic and authoritarian ideologies discovered new formulas in Taine’s work, allowing them to find legitimacy in a France much different from that of de Maistre’s. Charles Maurras, one of the leading apologists of the right-wing political movement, Action

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71 Osborne, “Social Science,” 57.
72 Ibid., 54.
Française, credited Taine with revitalizing royalism and developing nationalism. According to Gasparini, both Maurice Barres and Charles Maurras “se posent en héritiers de l'historien des ‘Origines.’” Another leading light of the Action Française, Louis Dimier, believed that the Action Française was a product of Taine’s work. Founded after his death in 1893, Taine was never part of this movement, but his anti-Enlightenment and counter-Revolutionary writings had helped shape it.

By 1893, both Taine and Nietzsche were gone—Nietzsche suffered a breakdown and Taine died. During the first several years of the 1890s, Nietzsche’s writings became influential among the French literary avant-garde. Drawing political implications from literary theory, Nietzsche’s work came to inform several left-wing groups in Paris. By the turn of the century, however, the right had discovered the usefulness of Nietzsche and had given him a conservative makeover. In particular, Nietzsche became associated with the Action Française through several of their members. As Nietzsche’s writings had always been controversial, it soon became problematic to have him associated with the political movement, especially when trying to win over Catholic support in the light of Nietzsche’s views on Christianity.

As the place of Nietzsche in French nationalist thought became a difficult issue for the Action Française, more treatments of Nietzsche’s philosophy came out. In this reflective period, some on the right acknowledged and exploited similarities between Taine and Nietzsche. According to Reino Vertanen’s scholarship, there was a tendency among some of the apologists of the Action Française to downplay Nietzsche by either suggesting he was derivative of Taine or similar enough not to need him. Vertanes cites Francis de Miomandre’s assertion that Nietzsche caught on in France only because the French had neglected Taine. Charles Maurras wrote that the use of Nietzsche by the Action Française had been extremely selective and included only those things found in “the French moralists and Taine that was in him.” Maurras’ position was simple: “Nous devrions brûler une moitié de Nietzsche...”

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78 Ibid., 356.
79 Muret, French Royalist Doctrines, 246.
82 Jules de Gaultier, Nietzsche et La Réforme Philosophique (Société du Mercure de France, 1904), 253. He writes: “M. de Miomandre voit en Taine et en Friedrich Nietzsche des représentants d’une même doctrine, le déterminisme.” Gaultier was responding to an article written in the Revue Bleue (Oct. 10, 1903), 507-512.
83 Reino Vertanen, “Nietzsche and the Action Française,” 206.
comme inutile et son autre moitié comme dangereuse." Only a decade or so since their exit from intellectual life some were already taking seriously the notion that Taine and Nietzsche were compatible. In line with the implications of the thesis, Taine’s and Nietzsche’s legacies had almost immediately crossed paths.

Conclusions

In general, Nietzsche hated Socrates. He hated him because Socrates tried to subject all of reality, including morality, to a certain kind of rationality. The immediate effect of this subjection was the destruction of what Nietzsche believed was the true high point of the Greek world, that is, the period before the Golden Age when the Dionysian spirit reigned and art flourished. Socrates was also, according to Nietzsche, responsible for putting the Western world on this same course. Twenty-two centuries later, thinkers saw a similar trend within French history beginning with the seventeenth century and leading into the nineteenth. To explain the destruction of France’s Golden Age, where discoveries of science were interspersed between the works of Racine, Molière, and Corneille, and the ultimate and violent ending of France’s ancien régime, conservative Joseph de Maistre would cite an impious use of reason as well, one that also aimed to put all of reality under a particular kind of reason.

Nietzsche and Taine, writing two generations after de Maistre, agreed in essence with most of his diagnosis. However, many changes had occurred in the time between them. While all three thinkers read this portion of French history in a similar way, and were in some way informed in their epistemological skepticism by Pascal, the critiques of Kant and the world-shifting insights of Darwin sequestered Taine and Nietzsche from de Maistre. As Kant’s critique put epistemology on a course toward radical skepticism, the safety net of religious revelation that would make up for any epistemological weakness was also no longer available. Shaped by, and struggling with, the same narrative of French history as de Maistre, the realities of the later nineteenth century advanced the debate, requiring Taine and Nietzsche to reformulate epistemology and produce responses coherent and persuasive to their similar situations. Although slightly different in their concerns, the intellectual

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85 Pierre Lasserre, La Morale de Nietzsche (Société du Mercure de France, 1902), 131. Lasserre cites Taine as one of the first French admirers of Nietzsche.
86 According to Nietzsche, while Socrates was awaiting his execution, he was visited by an apparition, which told him to play music. In deference to the deity, Socrates played. For Nietzsche, this was proof that Socrates finally understood that life needed more than logic. See Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins, What Nietzsche Really Said (New York: Schocken Books, 2000), 153.
substructure of natural selection gave their ideas a similar quality. As Taine was concerned with political systems, he reconstituted the right. While Nietzsche was concerned with personal culture, he reconstructed morality. Holding them together was their irrationality, their belief that the humanistic and optimistic part of the Enlightenment was incorrect, along with every society built on its assumptions.
“Nervous Diseases” and the Politics of Healing: William James, Josiah Royce, and the Early Dynamic Psychiatry Movement in America

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Abstract

A prominent feature of the postbellum, industrialized landscape in America was a preoccupation with a protean illness that sapped the vitality of otherwise healthily-constituted people. Termed neurasthenia, and otherwise known as the disease of civilization, the sociomedical discourse that formed around it became the cultural idiom through which a variety of elites, nonspecialists, and medical professionals negotiated their way through a changing social order. Yet social and cultural conflict was also ingrained in this discourse and the optimistic healing narrative that accompanied it. This becomes evident by analyzing the critical writings of William James and Josiah Royce, two Harvard philosophers, public intellectuals, and well-respected psychologists within the “Boston School” of psychology, against the influential articles and treatises that the incipient dynamic psychiatry movement within American medicine generated from 1909 through the Great War. Thus beyond exploring the ways in which the desire for cultural and personal renewal was held in common, the task left to historical inquiry is to analyze the reasons why it diverged between those who saw a fresh need to resuscitate the traditional republican virtues of discipline, self-reliance, and civic responsibility by allowing strenuous, ethical ideals to flourish in everyday life, and those who envisioned the enlightened direction and intervention of scientific physicians ushering in a new age of psychosomatic health and societal progress.

A prominent feature of the postbellum, industrialized landscape in America was a preoccupation with a protean illness that sapped the vitality of otherwise healthily-constituted people. Articulated as “neurasthenia” by the popular New York electrotherapist, neurologist, and Spencerian evolutionist George M. Beard, and treated through “cure” regimens developed by renown Philadelphian nerve

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specialist S. Weir Mitchell, nervous diseases loomed large in the lives and minds of the feverishly-active middle and upwardly-mobile classes. As the complement to Beard’s sociomedical treatises, which included healthy doses of reassurances to his fellow “brain-workers” on how their ailments were really so many growing pains in their ascendance up the social evolutionary ladder, Mitchell’s gendered regimens stabilized the weakening cultural framework of late Victorian society by reinforcing the roles men and women assumed within it.\(^1\) At the same time, a host of mental and faith healers, or “mind curists,” as William James dubbed them, blazed a different trail. From Mary Baker Eddy’s Christian Science up to Henry Wood and the New Thought movement, the promise of personal strength, balance, and control, through an inward retreat to “Divine Mind” or to “the higher realm of being,” greatly appealed to those who felt themselves languishing in a sea of impersonal economic forces.\(^2\) By the early twentieth century, a medical-pastoral alliance coalesced as the Rev. Dr. Elwood Worcester’s Boston-based Emmanuel Movement utilized the latest in subliminal psychology and medical psychotherapy to extend “feelings of pleasure and energy in all the acts and reactions of every-day life” to a wider stratum of the populace.\(^3\)

Arising alongside this crusade-like movement to quell the diseases of civilization, Rough Rider and political powerhouse Theodore Roosevelt’s “loud roar for the Strenuous Life” embodied the kind of politically-charged, vitalist sentiments that more and more cultural elites espoused.\(^4\) To their minds, overcoming the deleterious effects of over-civilization, and “restoring,” in cultural historian Jackson Lears’ words, “energy to a leadership class grown nerveless and flaccid,” demanded strenuous, imperialist expansion abroad and vigorous, efficient productivity at home.\(^5\) At this juncture, then, “the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife,” as TR proposed, vied with psychotherapeutic practice and its promise of “an increase of moral and nervous energy to meet life’s demands.”\(^6\)

Given these various responses to the hydra-headed illness of neurasthenia, many historians have agreed with Tom Lutz’s *American Nervousness*, 1903 that a wide

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array of prominent intellectual and political elites actively and successfully appropriated the neurasthenic discourse in negotiating their way through a changing social order. In doing so, Lutz argues, “they transformed and recreated hegemonic agreements about personal, social, and cultural value.”7 Thus while this historicism posits neurasthenic discourse as the cultural idiom through which both a variety of elites discovered a “wide range of possibilities” for adapting to a new order, and a gun-shy medical profession finally adopted mental healing, thereby creating “viable cultural space for a new type of psychotherapy,” it may be fair to ask: was there another range of possibilities that this discourse, and the healing modalities it engendered, simultaneously foreclosed?8 For to refocus the historical lens on the discourse of “nervous diseases” that various mental healers perpetuated into the early twentieth century is to see how the very desire to heal and be healed intersected with, and was reinforced by, the power structures of the emerging


A study that diverges from both the “Freudian” and “pre-Freudian” historiography in charting American psychiatry’s early-twentieth-century expansion out of the asylum and into the cultural mainstream is Elizabeth Lunbeck’s The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). In Lunbeck’s Foucauldian analysis of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital, psychiatry’s impetus of bringing its specialty to bear on the dimensions of normality led directly to its “larger disciplinary transition,” one that reconfigured “the social to encompass the morals and management of everyone”(22-23). Her analysis proceeds by uncoupling psychiatry’s expansionism from the neurasthenic discourse established by Beard, and sustained by the mind-cure and psychotherapeutic movements, respectively. In contrast, the fact that what propelled psychiatry to this transition owed less to its formulation of a “disciplinary agenda around everyday concerns” (20) and more to the way “practical” or dynamic psychiatry problematized neurasthenic discourse around the axis of maximizing the biological resources (“bio-power”) of the general populace is revealed in H.L. Dreyfus, P. Rabinow, and M. Foucault, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 140-142.
managerial capitalist system. In other words, by interrogating the therapeutic healing narrative at the heart of this discourse, we seek to know how the exercise of power, in philosopher and historian Michel Foucault’s words, “structure[d] the field of other possible actions” within the social order. Here the following purposes to revisit this discourse and the cultural conflicts bound up with it by analyzing the critical writings of William James and Josiah Royce, two Harvard philosophers, public intellectuals, and well-respected psychologists within the “Boston School” of psychology, against the influential articles and treatises that the incipient dynamic psychiatry movement within American medicine generated from 1909 through the Great War. What it seeks to recover, then, is not so much how the desire for cultural—vitalistic—renewal was held in common, but rather why it diverged between those who saw a fresh need to resuscitate the traditional republican virtues of discipline, self-reliance, and civic responsibility by allowing strenuous, ethical ideals to flourish in everyday life, and those who envisioned the enlightened direction and intervention of scientific physicians ushering in a new age of psychosomatic health and societal progress.

Beyond Sickness and Health: William James and Josiah Royce

In terms of observing nervous disorders, William James did not have to look far, as insomnia, inertia, vision problems, and writing blocks were a more or less constant throughout his life. As a young man in the late 1860s and early 1870s in the grip of indecision and a deep depression, symptoms suggestive of intense struggles over sexuality, James came to admire the kind of “health,” “brightness,” and “freshness” that the Homeric Greeks in the Odyssey possessed. In their acceptance of the universe, “their indifference to evil in the abstract,” the “bloody old heathens,” he found, stood in marked contrast to the modern class of “over-cultivated and vaguely sick complainers” in which he fell. Yet after battling through his debility, James not only credited his understanding of morbid mentality and religious mysticism to it; it also led him to the determination that “vigor of will” sprang from

9 In the following I distinguish “nervous diseases” from “organic” illnesses such as tuberculosis and typhoid fever, on the one hand, and mental psychoses such as dementia praecox (schizophrenia), paranoia, and post-traumatic stress disorders, on the other.


believing in free will, setting the tone of his whole philosophical outlook.\textsuperscript{12} As he held fast to the notion that the “fruits” of a given idea proved its worth, its “cash value,” as he formulated it, it is not surprising that mind cure, according to a recent biographer, became his preferred method of treatment for his neurasthenia.\textsuperscript{13} Yet in this regard, what attracted James to it was his desire to overcome the limits placed upon him by his various illnesses, to acquire a “new zest” for life, rather than attain the “achieved,” tensionless balance with the world that mind curists sought.\textsuperscript{14}

In part, this affinity James had for mind cure reflected the change of mind he had concerning Americans and the energy they exuded. As a volunteer in the 1865 Brazilian expedition of Louis Agassiz, the renowned paleontologist and natural history professor at Harvard, James “hoped to find,” as the historian Louis Menand noted, “adventures that might call out qualities of fortitude and boldness in himself.”\textsuperscript{15} Yet as he found himself trapped in a monotonous, mosquito-ridden milieu instead, James grew impatient with the “sleepiness,” “laziness,” and “stolidity” of the Brazilian Indians, realizing for the first time “the real greatness of American energy”: “the extraordinary variety of character that results from it all.”\textsuperscript{16} A couple of decades later, though, this healthy industriousness looked more and more like the opposite. In their intense drive for efficiency and productivity, Americans demonstrated to him only an overly-tense, mechanical activeness, which in turn rendered them feeble and inefficient.\textsuperscript{17} As a result, James became an advocate of “the gospel of relaxation,” espousing and recommending the kind of psychic “abundance therapy” that New Thought authors such as Annie Payson Call


\textsuperscript{17} W. James, \textit{Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on some of Life’s Ideals} (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1906), 216.
preached in her popular *Power through Repose* (1891).  
While James endorsed and partook in this therapy, the longings for personal and national revitalization that suffused imperialist cant in the late 1890s resonated with the anti-imperialist James, leading him to a deeper exploration of illness and vitality. Unlike Worcester, James did not equate all the calls to embrace a more strenuous life with an intensification of the stresses and strains of civilization. Instead, he saw in this charged atmosphere the opportunity to recast courage by reintroducing the kind of “sufferings and hardships” capable of annulling these afflictions. For James, the sickly health of “suggestiveness, decay and over-refinement” in both Europe and America, where “anesthesia, [the] mere escape from suffering” became “our rule of life,” bred only neurasthenic morbidity and melancholy. This vicious circle also militated against “the particular mood called seriousness,” he wrote, “which means the willingness to live with energy, though energy bring pain.” As he witnessed in his summer visit to Chautauqua Lake in 1896, an example of a landscape that had been purged of anything conjuring up “strength and strenuousness, intensity and danger,” James saw more vividly how nervous illnesses grew out of material progress and the “irremediable flatness coming over the world.” In contrast, he averred that the “great fields of heroism” surfeiting “the daily lives of the laboring classes” still fostered such healthy qualities. Yet reflecting on the discrepancy between this idealized picture and reality, James remarked how the “laborer’s life [was] moved by no such ideal inner springs.” Thus it was not a matter of learning to embrace work as a therapeutic end-in-itself as the psychotherapeutic movement did; instead, it required a change in the ends work served by marrying some “unhabitual ideal” such as fidelity, courage, or endurance “with some man’s or woman’s pains.”

Developing these insights further, the strenuous ideals James elaborated pointed to an inadequacy of the positive-minded healing doctrines of both mind cure and the psychotherapeutic movement. In his Gifford Lectures investigating the psychological dimensions of belief, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1901-02), James distinguished between the “sentimental optimism,” the “gospel of healthy-mindedness” of the “once-born,” from the “tough-minded,” “high-hearted

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19 Lears, *Rebirth*, 220.
indifference to life” of the “sick souls,” the “twice-born.”25 As he articulated, it was precisely this indifference of the latter, rooted in the feeling that life is a “tragic mystery,” that “the real wrongness of the world,” “must be fairly met and overcome in higher excitement” in order to break its “sting,” which made it possible to “live with energy.”26 While identifying this quality with the twice-born philosophy, James emphasized how it simply stemmed from “mankind’s common instinct for reality, which in point of fact has always held the world to be essentially a theatre for heroism.”27 Although imperial adventure may satisfy this “ascetic impulse” by casting life “upon a higher plane of power,” the appropriate social alternative, the “moral equivalent to war,” lay in appropriating the “ancient idealization of poverty” of the saints.28 Cognizant of Nietzsche’s criticism of how “saintly impulses” are really the morbid impulses of the “sophisticated invalid… the man of insufficient vitality,” James nonetheless found in such qualities a means of achieving the kind of indifference to life that dissolved “inhibitions,” inertia, and all the nervously-destructive emotions bound up with material attachments so prevalent among the educated elite.29 Thus James’s psychological investigations of belief not only underscored how the strategies of inward retreat and readaptation to reality were based upon delusive ideals of health; they also revealed how these ideals themselves repressed the very spiritual impulses they purportedly abided by.

Yet as James’s “desire for regeneration,” as Jackson Lears argues, “led him beyond morality to a fascination with energy itself,” his verdicts on health and illness became more conciliatory towards both the mind-curist worldview and the emerging managerial-capitalist ethos.30 In this regard, the thought of French vitalist philosopher Henri Bergson exercised a decisive influence upon James. Hailing the former’s *Matière et mémoire* (1896), in a letter from 1902 to the author, as philosophy’s “Copernican revolution,” James found in Bergson the “philosophy of pure experience” he himself was working towards.31 Here Bergson’s insight that acting freely—recovering ourselves from a reified, “external world” (*l’espace homogène*) in which we spend most of our time complying with to live in pure or real duration (*la durée réelle*)—signaled to James that process, becoming, and intuition were truer and more vital modes of experience than those derived from fixity and the intellect.32 This not

26 James, *Varieties*, 330.
27 James, *Varieties*, 331.
30 Lears, *Rebirth*, 221.
only led him to his epistemological renunciation of the “intellectualistic method” of the natural sciences and “the current notion that logic is an adequate measure of what can or cannot be”; it also placed the distinction he drew between the healthy-minded and the tough-minded in a different light.\(^\text{33}\) As he now saw it, the latter’s need for emotional assurance in the absolute made them “tender-minded” and “afraid of life,” while the former’s indefatigably optimistic faith rendered them capable of “annulling all pain and weakness,” of living “a cheerful active life”—capable, that is, of embracing life as a “real adventure, with real danger.”\(^\text{34}\) Ignoring his own evidence (in Varieties) suggesting otherwise, James concluded that the healthy-minded—or more precisely, those who responded, in James Conant’s words, to “the task of shaping and educating [their] temperaments”—had “allied themselves best with the whole body and drift of all truths in sight” and, as a result, possessed “the more strenuous type of emotion,” while the “quietistic religion” of the sick souls kept them from living in this flux, in the “active thickness of the real.”\(^\text{35}\) At this point, the cross-disciplinary project that he encouraged philosophers to join in centered upon a “practical problem of national economy” and “individual ethics”: “how can men be trained up to their most useful pitch of energy?”\(^\text{36}\) Thus for James, and not unlike Worcester and other psychotherapeutic healers, the moral concerns surrounding nervous illness and health resolved themselves in utilitarian fashion. As he followed Bergson’s lead in paradoxically absolutizing the “dynamic element” of experience in order to overcome the rigidities of intellectualism and neurasthenic stagnation, he also reified it into a “privileged mode” of managerial cognition—into “a line of business.”\(^\text{37}\)

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\(^{37}\) T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973), 333-334. Conversely, as the Marxist philosopher Georg Lukács recognized, the privileging of intuition did not bring workers into direct and organic contact with their work since the underlying structures of bourgeois production remain untouched, while the flow of the work process became “mediated to an increasing extent exclusively by the abstract laws of the mechanism which imprison[ed] them.” G.
But while James’s “energetic utilitarianism” and “economistic thinking” may have put him alongside Frederick Taylor and Theodore Roosevelt in the neurasthenic discourse, as Lutz argued, his return to the topic of a moral equivalence to war in 1910 altered the dimensions of it. On the one hand, a major spur to James’s endorsement of a richer, more temperamentally-attuned self arose from his meditations on American imperialistic ambitions in the Philippines. Specifically, he saw the imperialist’s drive to impose abstract ideals upon another people as an all-too-natural outgrowth of the rational absolutist’s tendency to monstrously abridge life—to shrink from “the fulness [sic] of living itself.” Yet on the other hand, James’s discussion of why the martial virtues should be fostered in the social realm conceded, in essence, that to simply calibrate and therapeutically adjust nervously-diverse individuals to their optimal levels of energy and receptivity, à la the temperamentally well-attuned, was untenable. For with the change from a producer society to a consumer society (a “pain-economy” to a “pleasure-economy”) immanent according to the sociologist Simon Nelson Patten, James presaged how this “pacific cosmopolitan industrialism” would lack the kind of “duties, penalties, and sanctions” required by those “who still keep a sense for life’s more bitter flavors.”

Besides safeguarding a commonwealth from a more “military-minded” nation bent on its destruction, martial virtues such as self-sacrifice, “contempt of softness,” and pride in “service to the collectivity” awakened “the higher ranges of men’s spiritual energy.”

From James’s perspective, the competing political ideologies either ignored these needs altogether, as the undemanding, painless utopian collectivities envisioned by pacifists and socialist authors such as Edward Bellamy and Lowes Dickinson did; or they restricted them to the baleful “war-function” alone, as imperialists proceeded to do. Thus to do justice to the “ascetic impulse,” to cast life upon that “higher plane of power” at which nervous illnesses lost their hold, James called for the creation of a civic army, “a conscription of the whole youthful population… for a certain number of years… enlisted against Nature.” In this fashion, the “military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the

38 Lutz, American Nervousness, 77, 97.
41 James, “Moral Equivalent,” 1290, 1293.
42 James, “Moral Equivalent,” 1288-1290.
43 James, “Moral Equivalent,” 1291.
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growing fibre of the people,” while “our gilded youths [would] get the childishness knocked out of them, and… come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas.”

That James’s moral equivalent had a compulsory sound to it only underscored how, in lieu of a “revival of small-scale production,” as Christopher Lasch argued, “some other form of demanding discipline, some other means of instilling a sense of unswerving devotion to an honorable calling, would have to be found.”

Put in this light, James’s emphasis on living within the “active thickness of the real” took on a much different import, as it pointed to a vital need to check the total domestication and rationalization of everyday life that corporate ideologues, efficiency experts, and psychotherapeutic healers gravitated towards.

Just as James’s sustained engagement with the subject of spiritual regeneration challenged the governing assumptions of the neurasthenic discourse, Josiah Royce’s meditations on nervous illness and suffering did likewise. Much like his fellow colleague in philosophy, Royce’s own travails with nervous debility proved to be pivotal moments in his intellectual development. Not long after journeying with his young family from his native California to Cambridge in 1882 as a temporary replacement for James and sedulously earning a position within Harvard’s illustrious philosophy department, exhaustion caught up with Royce and precipitated his nervous breakdown.

A “sick soul” by James’s taxonomy, Royce’s illness plunged him into a severe depression, as he vacillated between being “afraid of life” and still hoping to get “something from it.”

Royce then submitted to a rest cure of sorts, a long, solitary voyage to the South Seas in 1888, and convalesced not by suspending thought and peacefully communing with nature, but by learning about his condition while straightening out the “big metaphysical tangle” in his mind.

Coming away from the trip with, as James later remarked, a “freer simple touch with deepest relations,” Royce also took steps to safeguard his health from that point on by

44 James, “Moral Equivalent,” 1291, 1293.
46 J.J. McDermott, “Introduction to the New Edition,” in Josiah Royce, The Philosophy of Loyalty (Nashville: University of Vanderbilt Press, 1995), xi. As Royce’s biographer John Clendenning points out, Royce’s “enormous success” at this time in his life “had been achieved at great cost.” Despite the academic security his numerous works brought him, they were not received well, while the need to support his growing family on a small salary was a “constant source of irritation.” Additionally, he speculates that the sudden deaths of Royce’s mentors, George Buchanan Coale and Edward Rowland Sille, left “a deeper psychological wound than he suspected. Something inside, he felt, was dying.” J. Clendenning, The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 168-169.
47 Royce quoted in Clendenning, Royce, 169.
periodically dropping work to go on a solitary excursion or brief holiday.\footnote{49}

But if Royce’s voyage did not convert him to the regimen of his Victorian contemporaries who, as Henry James wrote, dashed around the world in “a wild hunt for rest,” it did draw him to reflect more deeply upon the purpose of suffering.\footnote{50} In an early essay grappling with Schopenhauer’s pessimistic doctrine of life, Royce had agreed with the great German philosopher that the inseparability of pain, restlessness, and dissatisfaction from desire and, hence, life itself, meant that happiness could only be achieved in the act of striving for an ideal beyond the self.\footnote{51} Returning to this discussion, Royce took aim at the kind of mystical balance with the world that mind cure sought to achieve, arguing that the only harmony or unity possible comes not by way of carefully circumscribing life, but by a “triumphantly wealthy acquaintance” with the manifold tensions in it.\footnote{52} As he illustrated these arguments in his psychological sketch of the seventeenth-century Puritan preacher John Bunyan—the “strong type” of nervous sufferer—Royce at the same time revealed the weaknesses of mental healing and therapeutic suggestion.\footnote{53} Finding that Bunyan prevailed over his maladies by essentially substituting a “pretty steady assurance of damnation” for “restless anxiety,” Royce concluded that it was through a long process of endurance that finally enabled him to subordinate “his greatest enemy—the systematized insistent impulses.”\footnote{54} In this regard, and contra “the voice of wholesome consciousness,” the “evil about desires and primary instincts,” he argued, “is that they are out of harmony with one another.”\footnote{55} As reflective experience brought Bunyan to that “decidedly healthy self-contempt for his own weakness,” and “served to make him more objective in his whole attitude towards life,” the primary evil, in Royce’s view, resided in whatever inhibited this kind of reflection and self-possession.\footnote{56} Thus to the extent that healthy-minded therapeutics bypassed the disharmony of inner conflict and substituted another’s will for the self’s own to achieve a harmonious balance with the world, it not only functioned as another form of inhibition; it healed by inhibiting what everyone’s instincts blindly groped for: “intense life, broad life, deep life”—the “fullness of life” itself.\footnote{57}

While Royce sought to retrieve this strenuous conception of life from the

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\footnote{49} James quoted in Oppenheim, Royce’s Voyage, 79.
\footnote{50} H. James, The Ambassadors (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1903), 21.
\footnote{53} Royce, Good and Evil, 30.
\footnote{54} Royce, Good and Evil, 67, 72-75.
\footnote{55} Royce, Good and Evil, 115, 357.
\footnote{56} Royce, Good and Evil, 73, 354-355.
\footnote{57} Royce, Good and Evil, 372-373.
therapeutic version that was emerging in the 1890s, he also evinced a prescient awareness of the modern self’s vulnerabilities. Drawing on the latest studies in abnormal psychology, he pointed out how precarious the “sense of inner self-possession” was when confronted by the jarring stimulations of the external world, or by “the play of our own impulses.”\(^{58}\) While the neurasthenic’s fluctuations between psychological suffering and physical suffering may not evince any connections to social situations, the “nascent associations” present in them, especially in “sexually tinged emotions,” suggested to Royce that the majority of them have “very complex social associations.”\(^{59}\) Consequently,” as he told a group of Boston psychiatrists in 1894, “we may expect to find self-consciousness deranged in disorders involving the sexual functions.”\(^{60}\) As such anomalies underscored a breakdown in the normal development of the ego, they suggested to Royce a lack of “sound intelligent guidance” at an early age; guidance, that is, which enabled the self to organize its inherited instincts, acquire “weapons” for self-expression through social imitation, and internalize its own ideal “life-plan.”\(^{61}\) A “real will of our own” not only went a way towards insuring emotional and mental stability, in his theory, it prompted the self to “discover this will to be in sharp conflict with the will of society.”\(^{62}\) Yet Royce recognized how problematic sound social customs had become when modern tendencies toward standardization, assimilation, and centralization threatened to “crush the individual” and strip him of “all sense of his unique moral destiny as an individual.”\(^{63}\) Thus in the absence of proper development, the “whole world of the sexual emotions” became susceptible to distorted feelings which, in turn, accounted for why hysteria and neurasthenia were often such “chaotic” and “generally incurable” disorders.\(^{64}\)

But as the growing body of psychotherapists latched onto subliminal psychology and therapeutic suggestion as the cure, Royce saw how such methods healed by denying the spiritual ideals of life that they claimed to be fulfilling. To him, what vitiated the whole psychotherapeutic enterprise was the false premise it operated under, viz. that it healed by correcting the existing imbalance between the material realm and the spiritual realm. As they conflated the social world with the physical world, mental healers lost sight of the fact that the self’s best virtues and highest ideals have a “social character.” Thus for the unseen or divine world to have

\(^{58}\) Royce, **Good and Evil**, 173.

\(^{59}\) Royce, **Good and Evil**, 189.

\(^{60}\) Royce, **Good and Evil**, 190.


\(^{62}\) Royce, **Loyalty**, 18, 134-135.

\(^{63}\) J. Royce, **Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems** (New York: MacMillan, 1908), 75-76.

\(^{64}\) Royce, **Outlines**, 377, 379.
any transformative, “health-giving value,” it had to be realized in concrete daily life, in a socially-unified cause. For Royce, this meant provincialism, loyalty to a “small group,” since service to some “absorbing social cause” provided the self “with clear insight that his cause is the will of God.” Here as in James’s moral equivalent, suffering took on a positive valence, became “spiritual health,” as loyalty united self-sacrifice and the desire for self-assertion in “a higher social unity of experience.”

In contrast, the mentally-healed person who understood “his private cure and his personal health” as a “signally convincing revelation of the presence of God” was, to Royce’s mind, “still a patient, still not wholly cured… a convalescent.” Religion in the “new gospel… of the subconscious” thus lacked a truly transformative power since it remained at the level of the self, and prey to its “endless psychological caprices.” In this regard, Royce revealed how the guiding ideal in the “work cure” was not self-transcendence, but integration, where devotion to a cause served as simply another therapeutic device in the self’s endless convalescence. As he held that only “strenuous, active loyalty” could resolve the dilemmas posed by nervous illnesses, Royce articulated, like James, an ideal that was not reducible to the performance ethic and the streamlined social order that the emerging psychotherapeutic movement rallied around.

Taken together, the common element of strenuous activity in James and Royce’s ideals reflected a shared recognition that an order constructed around collective peace and prosperity, far from being consonant with individual health and vitality, were in many ways antithetical to them. The narrowly individualistic solutions advanced in the neurasthenic discourse, from Beard up to the psychotherapeutic movement, confirmed this, as they pursued a false sense of harmony, abundance, and renewal either outside of, or divorced from, the larger

realities of social life. Here the emphasis James and Royce placed upon strenuous engagement was intended to combat this delusive pursuit while confronting the dilemmas the neurasthenic discourse deferred. Royce made this more explicit in his psychological study concerning the moral burden of the individual where he speculated that the more skilled individuals became in externally complying with their culture’s demands, the more they would “revolt inwardly.” As this revolt will only “tend to increase as culture advances,” he said, “the vaster and deeper… these inward and outward conflicts” would become.70

By this time, then, the circulation of psychoanalytic ideas in America, especially following Freud’s conference lectures at Clark University in 1909, might have lent added credence, if not urgency, to such insights. For at base, Freudian theories emphasized how nervous illnesses were not so much the product of the strains and complexities of modern society, as much as they were the expression of an antagonism between individual constitutions and the “demands of civilization.”71

And yet while James and Royce’s respective efforts expanded, in this vein, the dimensions of the discourse on nervous diseases—illuminating the deeper, “transcendent” motives, tensions, and sociocultural influences that shaped the mind and affected the body—whether or not they, or the new Viennese import, tempered the emerging therapeutic tendency to instrumentalize affective life was another matter. For as the majority of psychotherapists, psychopathologists, psychoanalysts, and therapeutic-minded journalists began to coalesce and embrace, in Royce’s wry phrase, the “glad tidings of the subconscious,” individual renewal and civilization’s progress appeared to go in hand-in-hand.72

Colonizing the Mind: American Medicine and Psychoanalysis

Decades after George M. Beard promised a harmonious future for the elite brain-workers of the nation with the imminent progress of medical science, the middle and upper middle classes were at last afforded a private, individualized method of alleviating their distress with psychoanalysis.73 Additionally, Freud’s theories cemented the “democratization of American nervousness” by allowing other segments of society to claim the badge of cultural superiority as nervous sufferers—

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70 Royce, Problem, 127, 143-144.
72 Royce, William James, 21.
by making “the neurasthenicization of the petite bourgeoisie” and their integration into “therapeutic culture” possible.\(^{74}\) What this narrative neglects, however, is not so much the degree to which American medicine facilitated this transition, but rather the new modes of authority that it acquired as a result. Fueled by the vistas of optimal health, industrial efficiency, and societal harmony, leading medical figures by 1909 began to systematically deploy psychoanalytic theories in substantially diluted form, while melding them with the methods utilized by psychotherapeutic healers. In this regard, the “elements of Progressivism,” which the historian John Burnham identified, viz. “optimism, environmentalism, moral fervor and leadership by an enlightened elite,” were also the elements of this nascent psychiatric movement.\(^{75}\)

Here the discourse of nervous diseases during this period reveals how new technologies of power proliferated as the proponents of mental healing applied “therapeutic pressure” to a nervously-diseased social body.\(^{76}\) With the cessation of the Emmanuel Movement’s public practice in 1910 following medical, psychological, and clerical opposition, psychiatric leaders took steps toward solidifying their hegemony by steadily divorcing themselves from their association with the popular movement and its unsavory roots in mind cure, while retaining its moralistic emphasis on moral uplift and renewal.\(^{77}\) Whether conceptualizing, classifying, and mapping out the dynamics of nervous diseases to render psychotherapeutics more “scientific”; cleansing suggestion of its demagogic undertones; or formulating and implementing social measures to help usher in an era of industrial efficiency and societal harmony, psychiatry made adaptation its overriding objective.\(^{78}\)

American exposure to Henri Bergson’s \textit{Creative Evolution} in 1907, followed by James’s enthusiastic endorsement of his philosophy in 1909, only solidified their optimism in


\(^{75}\) J.C. Burnham, “Psychiatry, Psychology, and the Progressive Movement,” \textit{American Quarterly} 12, no. 4 (1960), 459.


\(^{77}\) Gifford, \textit{The Emmanuel Movement}, 73-98; Caplan, \textit{Mind Games}, 131-149. As Caplan astutely observes, the American medical profession’s much more secure standing in the first decade of the twentieth century, as opposed to what it was in the 1880s, played no small role in its decision to enter the “mental healing market” (149).

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the healing powers of the subliminal self. Alongside a broad cross-section of progressives and feminists, psychiatry and its champions vaunted the evolutionary cosmology of the “philosopher-scientist” for reinterpreting the evolutionary process as the expression of *élan vital*, a Life Force, and giving priority not to reason, but to instinct, feeling, and intuition.⁷⁹ In this way, a munificent subconscious in the hands of this enlightened elite lit the path to social progress.⁸⁰

In this atmosphere of “ebullient irrationalism,” as historian Nathan Hale characterized it, Freud’s emphasis on the resistance the unconscious posed to progressive or unlimited human development, along with his realism concerning the body and its demands, contrasted sharply with such optimism.⁸¹ At one point, Freud threw his support behind an essentially “prophylactic” measure when he called for a lessening of restrictions governing sexual activity to reduce the incidence of nervous and mental illnesses.⁸² “Our civilized standards make life too difficult for the majority of human organizations,” Freud lectured.⁸³ “We ought not to seek to alienate the whole amount of energy of the sexual instinct from its proper ends.”⁸⁴ Yet at the same time, Freud’s theory of the human instincts at this juncture confirmed a deeper layer of conflict. Nervous and mental illnesses not only stemmed from an antagonism between pleasure and reality; they were also expressions of the individual’s own conflicting instinctual impulses which became manifest in the first years of childhood.⁸⁵ Thus while Freud found that “lifelong” neuroses often formed early in childhood, he argued that such injuries were not preventable, but unavoidable, due to the fact that participation in life occurs well before human beings can possibly learn the rules governing it.⁸⁶ “Strict protection of the young loses value,” he pointed out, “because it is powerless against the constitutional factor.”⁸⁷

Placed in historical context, Freud’s genetic reasoning confirmed, as sociologist Philip Rieff wrote, a “radical discontinuity”: the illnesses of

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psychoanalytic patients underscored not only the failure of the repressions, but “the more general failure of the moral demand system to compensate men satisfactorily for the necessary deprivations imposed upon their impulse lives.”

Turning to therapy, methods such as hypnosis and suggestion did not remove inhibitions or lead to greater self-reliance, according to orthodox psychoanalysts, but merely added some attitude or belief system to the patient’s mind. Besides rendering the patient more dependent on the physician, such methods only temporarily suppressed the “underlying pathogenetic idea,” as Ernest Jones clarified, so that it was only a matter of time before it manifested in the same guise or some fresh one. In contrast, the psychoanalytic method of transference via free association held out to the sufferer the possibility of both rationally reclaiming control over the suppressed energies, and gaining more independence from the repressive cultural constraints of the social personality (super-ego). Yet far from the promises of healthy renewal and psychical abundance that mind cure, psychotherapy, or Bergson’s élan vital held out, psychoanalytic therapy, as Freud maintained, could only substitute “common unhappiness” for debilitating illness.

While the reality of inherent instinctual conflict chastened the wider social prospects of orthodox psychoanalysts, the means to rationally reordering mind and body that American psychiatry believed it possessed reinforced its vision of civilization’s unbroken progress. For the latter, progress in the field of psychology had kindled their positivistic dream of laying hold of the mechanisms of the mind, while explaining mental life and all its experiences with complete certainty. As James and Royce’s fellow Harvard colleague, psychologist Hugo Münsterberg explained, the first psychological researchers aimed to “no longer speculate about the soul, but to find the psychical elements and the constant laws which control their connections.” Armed with a means of grasping all individual abnormalities from the “point of view of the psychological laboratory” made it possible for

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psychopathologists to systematically “apply the experimental results of psychology to the needs of society.”

Now the sight of neurasthenics on “every street, at every corner” was no longer a cause for alarm thanks to the efforts of these “Masters of the Mind,” as journalist H. Addington Bruce dubbed them. Having tapped and directed the latent power within the human consciousness and enabled the “human organism” to meet the “exigencies of civilization,” this elite circle, from Pierre Janet and Boris Sidis to Freud and his “increasing band of disciples,” found a “way to make the wheels of progress run more smoothly.” Thus by gliding over the depth of conflict that psychoanalytic research revealed, the discourse on nervous diseases and its premise of evolutionary adaptation remained intact; discontinuity became continuity, and psychotherapy, the latest specialized implement sustaining civilization’s steady, crusade-like advancement.

Yet while this reductionism effectively drained psychoanalysis of its humanistic and subversive implications, many psychiatrists went further by interpreting psychology’s development as a sanction to colonize the mind in order to ensure “harmonious growth.” In their view, psychoanalysis (“modern science”) liberated them from the “coercion of pleasure,” while bestowing upon mankind the means for increasing control over the environment. It also confirmed them in their immanently positivistic outlook that the principle social difficulties required not political or economic changes, only moral ones. The “moral phase” of social evolution, as Wilfred Lay observed, obliged the cultural elite to sacrifice “the infanility... standing in the way of our best development in the direction of social human adult activity.” In this manner, the “scientific” physicians who healed the nervously ill, they argued, had a duty to become “engineers” as well—“frontiersmen” of the mind—since the “psychotherapeutic energies which work for real health outside of the medical profession form a stream of vast power but without

94 Münsterberg, Industrial Efficiency, 5, 10; H. Münsterberg, Business Psychology (Chicago: LaSalle Extension University, 1915), 18-26, 183-184. On Münsterberg’s hardline separation of psychology’s “scientific” commitments from philosophy’s “values” and teleological considerations, particularly his indictment of James for “violating” this tenet, see Bordogna’s William James, 129-131, 179, 251-252, and ch. 7.


96 Bruce, “Insanity,” 74, 76-77; Bruce, “Masters,” 81.


101 Lay, Man’s Unconscious, 250.
solid bed and without dam." 102 By carrying out this reclamation project, right-minded specialists would simultaneously keep the populace’s essentially infantile “desires and impulses in control.” 103 Properly aligned with the aims of the social order and the natural laws it operates under, the nervously disordered, as William Alanson White reasoned, would in turn recognize that no discrepancy existed between useful activity and happiness; happiness and “socially efficient conduct.” 104 By dismissing the experiential realities of pleasure and nervous illnesses as nothing more than archaic “resistances to progress,” psychiatry thereby asserted that the aims of the sovereign whole perfectly encompassed all the desires of the “whole” individual. 105

Based upon this sterilized agreement, leading medical and psychiatric figures envisioned the systematic adaptation and reeducation of the nervously ill to the demands of the established order. Mindful of the integrated system of production that capitalists and their representatives controlled, such leaders honed in on the laborer’s psychical health and the “moral atmosphere” of the work environment as important variables in productivity. 106 “Good employers of... commercial enterprises of all kinds,” internist Richard Cabot observed, needed to now look after “their subordinates... in order to be sure that the psychical part of the great machine runs smoothly.” 107 At the same time, experimental psychology’s progress towards this “adjustment of work and psyche” promised to replace all the dissatisfaction stemming from nervous affliction with “overflowing joy and perfect inner harmony.” 108 With the new cadre of psychological engineers, the most efficient and productive labor divisions, machine arrangements, and selling processes will yield, as Münsterberg estimated, the “greatest personal satisfaction.” 109 Here all the barriers to productivity stood to be resolved, in White’s opinion, by dealing “with the human being as if he were a machine”; finding out “what the conditions are which lower his efficiency... and then endeavoring to discover what the conditions are which will prevent this temporary or permanent impairment, and so increase the efficiency.” 110

In turn, the calls by James and Royce to submit social activity to an overarching,

103 E.R. Groves, Moral Sanitation (New York: International Committee of the YMCA, 1916), 41-42; Münsterberg, Psychotherapy, 392-393; Lay, Man’s Unconscious, 246-247; Dana, Textbook, 490.
105 White, Mechanisms, 318, 334.
109 Münsterberg, Business, 179-180, 288; Münsterberg, Industrial Psychology, 309.
110 White, Principles, 225-226.
ethical purpose was comprehended in decidedly functionalistic terms by the psychiatric mind, as spiritually-demanding causes could be successfully sublimated by simply keeping the modern laborer “in touch with the distant sources of interest” (Cabot), or constantly reminding him of the “moral greatness of necessary work, faithfully and gladly done” (Groves).111

Complementing these efforts, and under the auspices of eliminating the obstacles in the way of renewed health and optimal efficiency, psychiatry took greater strides toward neutralizing nervous illness at its “root.”112 To the psychiatrically-trained social worker, such illness betrayed “a sign of disease rather than of sin,” and each case warranted an investigation into the “psychical influences” causing it, along with a lengthy course in reeducation to effect a “radical cure.”113 By dissecting the “chain of the patient’s relationships to family and friends,” as well as the “chain of mental and moral causes” up to the present, the “moral worker” arrived at a scientific diagnosis and prescribed “fundamental treatment.”114 Based upon their knowledge of how the inner life and the social order operated, such experts proceeded to enlighten the patient by revealing that all afflictions were “mental deficiencies,” products of “groundless fears” and “maladjustment.”115 As the psychiatric investigation brought the latter to light, the sufferer purportedly experienced a “cure” by being reconnected with her “deepest interests.”116 With the latter invariably corresponding to the exigencies of the prevailing order, the social worker impressed upon the nervous sufferer the value of self-control, a “hygienic education,” and the wisdom of how to live in “balance” by adapting to the new rhythms of work and leisure.117

In this healing process, social control and the aggrandizement of medical authority followed psychiatry’s deployment of its democratically-tinged therapeutic sensibility. Here the elevation of the subconscious and the authority of the prevailing

111 Lay, Man’s Unconscious, 245; R. Cabot, What Men Live By (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), 5-6; Groves, Moral Sanitation, 107-108, 111. In like fashion, E.E. Southard, director of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital, professor of neuropathology at Harvard Medical School, and one time student of both Royce and James, considered James (rather than F.W. Taylor or Jane Addams) to be the mental hygiene movement’s intellectual trailblazer thanks to his having brought together “a stream of independent developments in our knowledge of personality.” See E.E. Southard, “The Movement for a Mental Hygiene of Industry,” Mental Hygiene IV, no. 1 (1920), 62. Lunbeck notes, however, that Southard recoiled from his own vision of “a society of selfless automatons who would happily submit to the general will as interpreted by experts…nearly as soon as he had outlined it.” Lunbeck, Psychiatric Persuasion, 243.
112 Cabot, Social Work, 69.
114 Cabot, Social Work, 155-156; Groves, Moral Sanitation, 89.
115 Cabot, Social Work, 81, 89, 98.
116 Cabot, Social Work, 82-83.
order intersected as the psychiatric movement reestablished compliancy at the level of individual behavior. Rejecting the authority of traditional restraints for an “ethic ‘from below,’” in E.B. Holt’s phrase, psychiatry sought to effect in the ill a spontaneous union of mind and body in undivided service to society. 

 Undergoing expert reeducation to change the “ego-centric meaning of ideas, viewpoint and attitude of mind,” the nervous sufferer learned to cultivate a therapeutic sense of well-being in play, love, worship, and work. In turn, they learned to realize the peace of mind that “a healthy and unworried, untroubled fatigue” brings. Within this orientation, the life process itself became the ideal in as much as the behavioral imperative to engage in constant activity and eschew reflection attempted to obliterate the tension between inner and outer life. Leveled and reshaped to conform to the efficiency and energy demands of the social body, practical psychiatry envisioned the “unbroken integration” of action, behavior, and conduct—the hallmarks of the “unified soul.”

 While this drive to adjust could scarcely be separated from the psychiatric movement’s impetus to heal in these years, Harvard professor of neurology and practicing psychoanalyst James Putnam managed to resist this trend. From 1909 until his death in 1918, he eloquently defended psychoanalysis before a hostile medical establishment, and remained loyal to Freud when the defections of Alfred Adler, Wilhelm Stekel, and Carl Jung threatened the movement. Yet during these years, Putnam also wrestled with the underlying principle of adjustment in psychoanalytic therapy. Repudiating the Emmanuel Movement shortly after endorsing it, and departing from the psychotherapeutic techniques that social workers utilized in his neurological clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital, Putnam adopted the analytic method to help nervous sufferers overcome their instinctual conflicts. With his


embrace of Freud and depth psychology stemming from “a desperate effort to save the American transcendental nineteenth-century religious past,” he criticized the positivism of psychoanalysts for siding with that “terrible form of individualism and indifference of the so-called scientific age from whose all too-confining embrace we have just now freed ourselves.”

In his view, they had an obligation to take the “will, the ethical insight” of the patient into account and to assist him in fulfilling “his higher destiny.” Influenced by James, Bergson, and Royce, as well as his Fröbelian patient Susan Blow, he argued that the therapeutic goal of adaptation to reality and the mere achievement of health slighted the desire “to live a fuller life,” the “real source” of which resided not in tangible nature, but in the transcendent realm.

That a patient learned “to live in the midst of [the] unpicturesque energies” which comprised humankind’s highest ideals was, in Putnam’s view, precisely the goal of analytic therapy.

While his idealist critique of society set Putnam apart from the majority of his psychiatric colleagues, his commitment to the notion of progress led him to minimize the conflict between instincts and civilization. Writing to Freud about the lack of “any strong purpose in life” that many of his patients evinced upon completing therapy, his correspondent informed him that these were their “therapeutic limitations.” Speaking to his American counterpart’s desire for social amelioration, Freud argued that the recognition of their limits only “reinforces our determination to change other social factors so that men and women shall no longer be forced into hopeless situations.” As he also underscored how strong drives and weak constitutions precluded the kind of sublimated activity Putnam hoped for, the latter held fast to his belief that everyone possessed a “sort of endowment of the mind” that made such activity possible. Judging there to be “no difference except in degree between the nervous invalid and the so-called normal person,” he held that each strove to be free of those “passionate longings” they felt were “incompatible

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125 Prochnik, Putnam Camp, 122; Putnam quoted in Hale, Putnam, 55-56.
with [their] best social tendency.” In his view, this “certain power” for sublimated activity accrued to someone once he realized the innate sense of his “social bonds,” “his belonging to the community,” and the “deeper and deeper relationships between the outside world and the inner life.” But here Putnam failed to recognize the incompatibility of analytic therapy with the idealism he hoped it would facilitate, as the successful compromise with reality that transference achieved did so often at the cost of dislocating the moral ardor and “spontaneous life” that he hoped it would release.

Besides leading him to aggrandize the role of therapy, Putnam’s metaphysically vague formulation failed to outline how such “deeper relationships” could be secured, much less sustained. More precisely, in an increasingly impersonal and hierarchical order, it did not elucidate how exactly a “sense of power and freedom,” along with a Kantian insight into one’s “duties and obligations towards individuals and the community,” could be fostered. Appropriating Bergson’s élan vital and Royce’s psychosocial ego theory of development, Putnam saw the formation of such ideal goals and desires in childhood as an ontogenetic process whereby a person evolved through life’s tensions and conflicts to achieve them. Yet in his aversion to materialism and determinism of any sort, he did not adequately factor in the degree to which large-scale group formations, the “levelling tendencies” in capitalist society that Royce spoke to, militated against this process. Here the definite limits placed upon an individual’s capacity for autonomous growth dissolved before Putnam’s evolutionary optimism, as he steadfastly believed that the patient’s “best self” was simply waiting to be recovered and restored to its symbiotic relationship with the world—with “a self-creating universe of which it is a representative member.” In this way, he overlooked precisely what gave Royce’s pragmatic ideal of loyalty its “health-giving value” and made it a dynamic agent of

change: the opportunity to live connected to the “manifold wealth of life.” By doing so, Putnam expected from analytic therapy and cosmological evolution what only qualitative changes in social organization could bring.

As Putnam’s anti-materialistic thought and abiding faith in sublimation vitiated his attempts to alter the discourse on nervous diseases, his medical contemporaries became more confident over the prospects of comprehensive social adjustment. Viewing the environment as the primary culprit in the pathology of nervous illnesses, psychiatric leaders looked to institute preventive measures in schools. Understanding the task of modern education to be less about Jefferson’s maxim of diffusing “knowledge more generally through the mass of the people,” and more about developing efficiency in interpersonal relations and “promoting the highest interest of the group,” they underscored the need for psychiatric techniques in securing these ends. The nervously constituted student, unable, indifferent, or unwilling to do school work, betrayed signs not of heredity, but of a disposition broken by early familial influences. In turn, the psychiatrically-trained educator needed to, according to Lay, “pay sole attention to the reshaping of their badly deformed mental physique” by suppressing their habits of “undirected” thinking, inward attention (“mental masturbation”) while steering them toward “socially approved objects.” Here the revisionist theories of Alfred Adler, who held that neuroses stemmed not from repression, libido, and infantile sexuality, but from feelings of “uncertainty and inferiority” that demanded “insistently a guiding, assuring and tranquilizing positing of a goal to render life bearable,” held sway among psychiatric theorists. With a proper “education of the feelings,” the “surplus energy” of the student could be harnessed, and the pupil taught to sublimate “his mental activity from the world of phantasy... to the world of reality.” In this light, psychiatry’s healing ideal proceeded from the same rationale that scientific management did, as the “inefficient” use of resources became the grounds for expropriating them on behalf of the larger will, and in the name of harmonious growth.

142 Lay, Child’s Unconscious, 244-245, 260. 
143 W.A. White, Mental Mechanisms, 144; Lay, Child’s Unconscious, 315-316. 
146 White, Character Formation, 308-309.
Yet as psychiatry and public hygienists viewed the environment as the primary culprit in the pathology of nervous illnesses, they insisted that a “desirable continuity” needed to be obtained between the school and the home in order to eliminate such afflictions. 147 Reflecting the consensus among the “helping professions,” as Christopher Lasch argued, that the family was no longer capable of providing for its own needs in the modern industrial order, psychiatry emphasized the “harmful environmental suggestions” parents unwittingly transmitted to their children; thus the need to bring the “home life of the child” under the same “systematic principles” that governed the “social life of the man.” 148 Here the litany of unsuspected parental abuses included a failure to direct children’s thoughts into “worth while channels”; keeping them in a state of “nervous tension,” “overexcitement,” and “over-anxiety”; neglecting to properly develop both their “sense of moral responsibility” and their will-power against “hysteria-producing suggestions”; and, also, failing to provide them with an example of “industrious activity.” 149 “All this goes to create in the child,” Addington Bruce argued, “habits inimical to real work.” 150 Thus with the inherent conflict between pleasure and reality paved over, the most prominent obstacle in the way of developing “mental and moral vigour in the mass of mankind,” according to the psychiatric interpretation, was the morally “unhealthy” atmosphere of the home. 151

In one respect, the tensions that this interpretation struck at, namely, the “emotional overloading of the parent-child connection,” as Lasch noted, were the product of the middle class’s attempts to shield children from a harsh, corrupting capitalist world and an increasingly intrusive marketplace. 152 Yet at the same time, the therapeutic solutions psychiatry put forth reinforced this arrangement as it criticized it. Just as managerial capitalists, efficiency experts, and an encroaching marketplace eroded the functions of the family and weakened its authority, psychiatry demanded that the home meet the highest standards of mental hygiene:

149 Münsterberg, Psychotherapy, 395; Bruce, Psychology and Parenthood, 231-234, 243-245.
150 Bruce, Psychology and Parenthood, 186-187.
“a wholesome mental spiritual environment... to create the mind of the child.”

Thus as representatives of a “new reality principle,” as philosopher Herbert Marcuse recognized, which demanded cooperative behavior and acquiescence to the group over autonomy and self-reliance, the symptoms of nervous diseases furnished psychiatry with the license to appropriate the role of socialization from unenlightened parents.

From this new basis, the liberation of “mental and moral vigour” that psychiatry promised revolved around neutralizing the tension between individual and society that analysts like Putnam hoped to preserve. Here the signs of nervous illness in the “sensitive child” became the grounds for modifying the parental relationship itself, as the psychiatrically-versed social worker impressed on the “healthy members of the family” the need to assume a “more helpful, forgiving, or disciplinary tone.”

In larger terms, psychiatric theorists sought to implement a “really constructive program,” in White’s words, which grew “out of love... rather than... out of hate.” Here it was the parent-child conflict that needed to be annulled, in their interpretation, as the meddling, dominating mother and the severe attitude of the father stood out as the primary detriments to the child’s ability to adapt later in life. Along these lines, an atmosphere reflecting “the bitterness of failure” became grounds for transplanting the nervously ill to a new family group that afforded them, in Cabot’s eyes, “the consciousness of success”—“one of the most healing and strengthening experiences a human being can go through.” In turn, psychiatry looked to socially engineer the development of “the family as a social unit” by dismantling the “idea of the ownership of children,” and fostering a “new ideal of parenthood” on the model of a “trusteeship for coming generations.”

Thus by replacing these hindrances with psychiatrically-approved “original directions” and “affective orientation,” they foresaw the solution to the socioevolutionary quandary: the development of “greater efficiency” in the individual to meet the


156 Adler, Neurotic Constitution, xii; W.A. White, The Mental Hygiene of Childhood (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1919), 175-176.


158 White, Mental Hygiene, 89, 151, 177-178; Cabot, “Analysis and Modification,” 9-10.

159 White, Mental Hygiene, 188-189.
growing demands of civilization. But with the process of conflict, of individualization, skipped over, the ego prematurely socialized, and the “repressive organization of the instincts” maintained upon a new collective, depersonalized basis, psychiatry’s program to heal the child consummated, in Marcuse’s phrase, the “technological abolition of the individual.”

Conclusion

In one sense, the very therapeutic optimism these new psychical experts accrued owed to this democratic leveling process, for by smoothing over the various frictions in everyday life, the exercise of authority and the dynamics of power relations appeared to be less problematic. Paradoxically, just as they drew upon the language of vitalistic renewal and autonomous growth, their strategic settlements in public and private life solidified new forms of heteronomy. That in the 1920s a widespread embrace of libidinal liberation, together with a “leisure world of intense private experience” oriented around consumption, coincided with the intensification of industrial efficiency, managerial control, and psychical adjustment, attests to the triumph of the discourse’s healing narrative and the defeat of cultural renewal along more democratic lines. The specter of nervous diseases, meanwhile, continued to provide mental hygienists and psychiatry with its hegemonic raison d’être, as the helping professions deployed systemic preventative measures in work, school, and home to eliminate “handicaps” and ensure optimal functioning. In complementary fashion, psychoanalysis and its derivatives became hardly different from “pastoral care,” as philosopher Ernest Gellner charged, while the persistent “search for a flawless healer” and “a miraculous cure” within the dominant value system veiled the fact that society’s very development was predicated upon the self’s alienation and fragmentation. In other words, the quest for personal renewal, “the search for psychic health under conditions of psychic disease,” as historian Norman O. Brown observed, could be no more than that: a restless quest for a quality of experience

160 White, Mental Hygiene, 65, 70.
161 Marcuse, Eros, 96-98.
denied under conditions of repression. From this point, then, we can see how the successful “passage from disturbance into harmony... intensest life”—the aesthetic moment of experience—that John Dewey defended, and James and Royce each in his own way sought to revive, became a steadily diminishing possibility before the expanding domain of therapeutic expertise.

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Contested Conservations: Forestry and History in Nova Scotia

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Abstract

Forest conservation in Nova Scotia found its institutional expression in the 1920s, long after the establishment of many other Canadian and leading global centres of conservation science. With several differing and competing conservation ideologies from which to choose, the provincial government loaned its support to British, European, American, and Canadian versions at various times. Three successive leaders of the province’s main forestry agency—J.A. Knight, Otto Schierbeck, and Wilfrid Creighton—demonstrated quite different ideals of conservation, and equally different strategies for negotiating the politics of forestry, ranging from prickly independence to eager cooperation with rival power centres in the federal government, international agencies, and in industry. Each distinct approach dictated a set of policies that helped shape the forest and the forest industries of Nova Scotia. Contrary to the assumption that conservationists past and present approach more or less closely a single, ahistorical scientific norm, the account of policy vacillation in this essay illustrates the ideological content and historical contingency of forestry science.

During the golden age of forest conservation at the beginning of the twentieth century, while the science and practice of forestry flourished in America, central Canada, and all over the British Empire, and despite warnings about a declining timber industry at home, the Canadian province of Nova Scotia hesitated to establish a conservation agency. When it finally did, in the 1920s, no single intellectual regime remained dominant in the global field; conservationist impulses were felt from multiple directions, and conflict in the province over the meaning of the term

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“conservation” was sharp. The record of that conflict is not one of greater and lesser adherence to singular scientific truth, as it is often portrayed, but rather an unusually clear record of scientific conservation as contested ideology.

The contest was certainly long in coming, in contrast to some other jurisdictions. Major forestry bureaus such as the British Indian Forest Service (1864), the US Division of Forestry (1881), and the Dominion Forestry Branch (1899) in Ottawa were well established by the time Nova Scotia created its Department of Lands and Forests (DLF) in 1926. Nova Scotia did run ahead of much of the pack in North America with rules around the prevention of forest fires, but that was on account of the early date of settlement and the importation of English laws for the protection of private property, and not due to any pioneering concern with conservation of a common resource. The first real major advance in fire prevention practice, a state-organized fire-ranging service, came to Nova Scotia later than it did to most of the rest of Canada or to the national agencies listed above, and for two decades it remained the total of the provincial government’s conservation effort.

Nova Scotia’s late conformity to the institutional trend has led to its being overlooked in national histories and in the national claims of other regional histories. The field of forest history in Canada has long been committed to an analytical definition of conservation, a set of conditions that constitute “real” conservation against which historical reality can be tested. Such assumptions limit historians’ ability to incorporate the bio-geographical and political variety of the country into one account of Canada’s conservation history. A beginning researcher, for example, must ask if a province without a technocratic forestry bureau belongs in the narrative of Canadian conservation. Those who put a definition ahead of historical reality will tend to answer “no” and to neglect eras and regions where, for example, fire protection was the only institutional expression of the conservationist ideal. This refusal to recognize the ideological content of technology runs strongly through the

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2 Sources on the earlier agencies are numerous. See especially, for India and the USA: Richard Grove, Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins Of Environmentalism, 1600-1860 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Samuel Hays, Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: the Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920 (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 1959). The Dominion Forestry Branch (DFB), as well as Quebec’s Forest Protection Service (1905) and Ontario’s various forest administrations of the same era, are discussed in: Peter Gillis and Thomas Roach, Lost Initiatives: Canada’s Forest Industries, Forest Policy, and Forest Conservation (New York: Greenwood, 1986). British Columbia’s Forest Branch (1912) also preceded Nova Scotia’s, and the creation of Alberta’s Forest Service (1930), though later, was essentially a wholesale transfer of parts of the DFB to provincial jurisdiction, as was the case with Manitoba’s Forest Service (1930) and Saskatchewan’s Department of Natural Resources (1931). All four shared the DFB’s brand of forestry and strong connections to the American forestry establishment, and all are discussed in: Stephen Pyne, Awful Splendour: A Fire History of Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 279-328. New Brunswick’s very early forest administration (from 1817) on British imperial lines is discussed in: Graeme Wynn, Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).
history of Nova Scotian forest conservation. Arthur Lower’s 1938 work on Canadian forests seems to have set the mold by insisting that Nova Scotia “lost control” of forest policy through the alienation of Crown land. Later authors have shown minimal concern for the Maritime region generally, sometimes citing along with Vivian Nelles the “depleted” Maritime forests as a factor in a supposed westward shift of the Canadian lumber industry and its associated policy debates. Looking at Nova Scotia, with its atypical preponderance of private rather than state land ownership (87 percent to 13 percent, by the 1930s) and its long failure to appoint an effective technocratic forestry bureau, historians have seen little of conservation in the early twentieth century.

But take a contingent definition instead of an analytical one and it is possible to appreciate various historical conservation ideologies as their proponents viewed them, and not in contrast to an imposed ideal. Local events and circumstances—political expediency, personality clashes, patronage appointments, influence peddling, budgetary parsimony, and simple legislative happenstance—have always determined not only the conservation policies but also the dominant conservation ideologies of all jurisdictions. To the historian who recognizes this historical contingency, Nova Scotia’s lack of alacrity in institutionalizing the various conservationist orthodoxies of the 1880s, 1890s, or early 1900s provides a good illustration of the case of the “late adopter” in an increasingly global market of ideas. Foresters associated with the British Empire (to which Nova Scotia and its forest industries maintained a relatively stronger economic connection than did central or western Canada) were active in trying to strengthen the bonds of professional and imperial solidarity within the network of an imperial federation of forestry bureaus; continental European foresters meanwhile enjoyed the prestige of representing the oldest and most intensive scientific forestry systems around; the strongly centralized American conservation establishment had become accustomed to offering advice and opportunities for collaboration to Canadian foresters; and the Canadian establishment, while smaller than the American and still envious of its political power and prestige, had developed its own independent educational and scientific forestry institutions (as well as political machinery) and was avidly expanding its influence within the Dominion. Each potential source of conservationist ideas displayed its own characteristic emphasis within the basic set of conservation ideals,


and the contest among them sheds much needed light on a key phase of the development of a Canadian conservation orthodoxy over the early twentieth century.\(^5\)

**Early Conservation**

At its earliest, after 1728, Nova Scotia shared with the New England colonies the attention of the British sovereign’s Surveyors General in North America. These officials sent their agents into the colonial forest to mark suitable trees with the Broad Arrow, reserving them for the exclusive use of the Royal Navy. The Surveyors General were not conservationists in any but the broadest sense of the word; they acted to protect a single scarce resource—mainly mast trees, and some other hard-to-find ship timbers—for a single user, and not the general resource for the public or national good. Nor were they in any sense a recognized professional body. They did however set a precedent for the involvement of the state in the management of what were to become known as public resources. According to N.A.M. Rodger, the procurement measures of the Royal Navy were a driving force in the development of the entire administrative apparatus of government in the British Empire in the eighteenth century, and a secure timber supply was always one of its major concerns.\(^6\) Small wonder then, that public administration of forest resources should have developed from such a beginning.

Second to His Majesty’s Broad Arrow, fire was the earliest matter for regulation. In 1761, “an Act for preventing damages by unseasonable burning or firing of the woods” was voted into law by the Nova Scotia Assembly. Only the first in a long series of anti-fire measures passed by that body, the new law actually aimed at the prevention of harm to buildings, crops, and livestock, rather than to forests, but the legislation that followed did take on more and more of a conservationist cast. Acts to prevent theft of timber from Crown land, to define the magnitude of timber that would be deemed merchantable, and to prevent wastage of timber trees on ungranted land all passed in the 1760s and 1770s. The most significant step from

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mere property protection toward an efficiency-minded technocratic forestry came after France began to threaten Britain’s Baltic timber supply. As the Royal Navy looked to the empire for its needs and the pace of commercial lumbering picked up in British North America, Governor John Wentworth hired Titus Smith Jr. to perform the colonies’ first forest inventory in Nova Scotia in 1801-02. Traversing the interior of the mainland with an eye out for good pine, Smith classed the lands he saw by the value of their timber or as “burn” and “barren,” both of which he estimated at over a million acres. His report, emphasizing the large acreage of potential forest wealth lost to fire, is the first clear documentary link between the state’s involvement in the scientific measurement of available resources, the regulation and promotion of their use, and the prevention of wastage through fire.\(^7\)

This early combination of ideas about land use, waste, and the powers of the state was a first step into a new way of thinking not unique to Wentworth’s corner of the empire. The Great Trigonometrical Survey expedition in India in 1817, along with others around the same time, was one of the turning points in the transformation of British rule into a more direct, rationalist, efficiency-obsessed form of government, a development that made possible the rise of a group of forest conservationists within the British Indian regime.\(^8\) An analogous development may be foreshadowed by Smith’s forest survey of Nova Scotia. The reservation of particularly valuable tracts to the Crown, prevention of “waste” through fire prevention and lumber regulation, and finally the scientific measurement and classification of the resource: these together comprise an early nineteenth century form of conservation. Consistency was lacking and enforcement practically nil, but as an indication of a dawning imperial conservationist mentality—one that accomplished the complete conceptual commodification of land and forests—the Acts of the Nova Scotia Assembly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are significant.

The balance of the nineteenth century confirmed the trend of Nova Scotian conservation. In 1851 the burning of any forest became a prosecutable offence, and the Crown Land Department acquired the legal power to lease rather than grant land to lumberers. These alone were modest measures; a large proportion of the colony’s land base was already in private hands by mid-century, and an ability to lease land did not necessarily equate to a commitment to do so. The granting of large tracts continued until the end of the century. Still, there is an evident early drift towards the kind of state control that would become so well-developed in later conservation and another intellectual link to the British model, which had developed in India a


tendency to maintain ownership of land in state hands while contracting out its exploitation. Further forest fire regulations followed, and in 1899 the province authorized the repurchase of granted lands by government, mandated leases of Crown land instead of grants, and imposed a ten-inch diameter limit for trees felled on leased land. It was the first attempt by the provincial government to control the practices of the lumber industry at the point of production rather than sale. Like earlier attempts to stop trespass on Crown land, diameter limits were honoured more in the breach than the observance, but the principles of early conservation are written in the law and not in the practice.

The control of fire continued as an obsession in the golden age of forest conservation at the end of the nineteenth century. It “drove the agenda of forest conservation” in fire-prone North America and played a key role almost everywhere else. Nova Scotia was no exception. In 1904 an Act for The Protection of Woods Against Fires levied a ¼ cent per acre tax on owners of 1000 acres or more (dropped the following year to 500 acres or more) to pay for a new system of Chief Fire Rangers throughout the province. Chief Rangers were empowered to direct fire-fighting operations, call out volunteers, and collect the fire tax. While hardly “technocratic” themselves—appointment to the position was a political favour and newly elected governments regularly replaced the entire corps—the notion of a service made up of public employees dedicated to the direction of human resources in preserving both public and private forests from wastage was a conservationist ideal. In fire-ranging, though, Nova Scotia fell twenty years behind the pace set by Ontario and Quebec and even further behind the British Empire, giving the first indication that institutionalizing the conservationist impulse rather than simply writing it into law would be the greatest challenge for those who championed the cause.

If it is difficult to see beyond British imperial conservationist influence in Nova Scotia’s nineteenth century, the same cannot be said of its twentieth. The events of 1909-10 demonstrated new sources of conservationist thinking. The province was far from untouched by the surging popularity of scientific forestry that underlay the rise of the US Forest Service and the Dominion Forestry Branch in the same decade. The University of New Brunswick’s Forestry School, opened in 1909, was a bastion of the new North American orthodoxy right next door. But there were

10 Quoted from Pyne, Awful Splendour, 145. For the Indian case see: Mahesh Rangarajan, Fencing the Forest: Conservation and Ecological Change in India’s Central Provinces 1860-1914 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 88-89.
11 Central Canadian fire ranging owed much to American influence through the American Forestry Congress of 1882. See: Gillis and Roach, Lost Initiatives, 41-43. For more on Quebec and on New Brunswick, which also had such a service beginning in 1897, see: Pyne, Awful Splendour, 232, 242.
distinctions too. Conservationists in the province shared with the US Forest Service a problem that did not much trouble their counterparts in the central Canadian provinces or much of the British Empire: how to practice conservation when the state had already alienated so much of its forested land. At the same time, they also shared a uniquely Canadian sentiment with the men in Ottawa—economic nationalism.

Another milestone Act in 1910 allowed the province to expropriate “exhausted” forest land, encouraged replanting, and allowed for the sale of Crown land leases at auction rather than directly. In the same year, Dr. Bernhard Fernow, pioneering US forester and the first dean of the Toronto School of Forestry, was finishing up his survey of the province’s forests, which work underlined their “poor condition” and the large proportion (c. 20 percent) that lay in a barren state due to past fire damage and lack of remedial attention. Both events seem on the surface to belong to the golden age of both American and Canadian technocratic forestry; having retained, or re-acquired, control of the land and with science at his command, a trained forester would be able to produce a timber “crop” in perpetuity. It was with just such an understanding of their role in mind that the men of the US Forest Service had only recently put together under their own control a huge network of National Forests, and those at the Dominion Forestry Branch in Ottawa had managed to gain a degree of influence over the forest reserves they had helped to create in western Canada. Yet much that seems common to the two countries can be traced to the USA, and the interventionist advocacy of Fernow’s report, like most of his forestry work, probably reflected his American experience more than his new Canadian career.12

The province’s threat to expropriate clear-cut land, however, was really more distinctly Canadian, an encouragement to landowners to practice a style of selective cutting that might keep the province’s lumber industry alive and the American pulp and paper industry from dominating the woods. Clear-cutting by pulpwood exporters for the US market was beginning to trouble Nova Scotians in the early twentieth century (witness the rule allowing a ban on pulpwood exports from leased Crown land, also in 1910), and lumber producers feared for their economic futures.13

The legislation ended up neither enhancing the power of foresters much nor preventing the slow shift of markets and production from British Empire timber to United States pulp and paper, but again the most important aspect of the legislation

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12 Bernhard Fernow, C.D. Howe, and J.H. White, Forest Conditions of Nova Scotia (Ottawa: Commission of Conservation, 1912). One might even point out a European influence in Fernow’s advocacy of “Prussian” methods of reforestation and the appearance of the same concept in the 1910 Act.

13 Rightly so, as they were being eclipsed already by the pulp industry in export value and consequently in political influence. They also enjoyed a curiously Janus-faced support from the government, which like other provincial governments courted pulp and paper producers while also fearing their economic power. See: L. Anders Sandberg, “Forest Policy in Nova Scotia: The Big Lease, Cape Breton Island, 1899–1960,” Acadiensis 20, no. 2 (1991): 113, note 30.
lies not in its effectiveness on the ground, rather in the indication it can give us of conservation ideals and influences. US-style scientific forestry was a desirable pursuit in 1910, worth supporting Fernow’s efforts, but the country’s ability to control its own resources was plainly of greater concern.

The value of pointing out the influence of imperial and other conservations in Nova Scotia before the First World War is to recognize that historical change was gradual and that institutional expression, be it the Department of Forests and Game in 1921 or the Department of Lands and Forests in 1926, is not the essence and *sine qua non* of conservation. The conservations of the long nineteenth century were different in degree, and only occasionally in kind, from those of the twentieth century—less technocratic for example, but not antitechnocratic. They were no less types of conservation. Institutional expression did increase somewhat the continuity of policy from the era when an Act promoting Crown land leasing in 1851 could be followed twenty-four years later by one newly authorizing large grants of 2000 acres or more, and then again by another mandating leases after twenty-four more years. There remained however, prior to the dawn of the Civil Service era (c. 1935), discontinuities of personnel within government that made policy change an abrupt and sometimes acrimonious event.

**Institutions**

In 1921 a new Department of Forests and Game (DFG) replaced the Nova Scotia Game Commission. The DFG gained jurisdiction over the corps of fire rangers created in 1904 but still shared the administration of the province’s woods with the Department of Crown Lands. Thus those government officials most present in the forest, game wardens and fire rangers, began to share some of their duties, but the investigation of Crown land trespassing, the monitoring of lease terms, and the regulation of logging practices were not among the duties of either. This division of powers stood out as contrary to the global trend toward centralized control of the land. Among British, European, American, and central Canadian foresters, the ability to dictate terms of land use was viewed as vital to the work of conservation; foresters believed that they alone could determine, free of political considerations, a piece of land’s true and scientifically-derived “highest” manner of use, as well as a forest’s annual rate of growth and allowable cut. In this, Nova Scotia was still clearly a late convert to the modern style of conservation pioneered in British India and imported to North America around the turn of the century. The province’s policy makers had kept pace with the rationalist, efficiency-oriented, fire-fearing conservationism of the previous century, but hesitated for decades to emulate the increasingly technocratic
and professional forestry services so fiercely fighting for political power elsewhere.

The head of the new DFG was wholly suited to the political reality of a forestry service that existed very nearly in name only. J.A. Knight served as Commissioner of Forests and Game from 1921 to 1926, when his department was finally thrown together with Crown Lands to form the Department of Lands and Forests. During Knight’s half-decade of leadership, his federal counterpart at the Dominion Forestry Branch, E.H. Finlayson, was in the full swing of his own campaign to turn the Forestry Branch into Canada’s version of the US Forest Service, a powerful and semi-autonomous central conservation agency. Knight, as the Forest Branch was quick to learn, would be of little help.

Beginning just after the first British Empire Forestry Conference in London in 1920, Knight’s official correspondence and annual reports display an unapologetic reluctance to engage with any of the “forestry powers” of the decade. The Forestry Branch looked to the imperial connection in the 1920s as a tool to secure US-style power inside Canada; it took the opportunity of the London conference to bring home its theme of state responsibility for matters of forestry and its proposal to establish an Imperial Forestry Bureau, paid for in equal parts by the UK government, the government of British India, the crown colonies, and the dominions. Both matched Finlayson’s designs perfectly. Knight’s reaction, revealed in a letter to Nova Scotia’s Deputy Provincial Secretary was to tersely emphasize the costs and pointedly inquire what possible benefits there could be for the province in any imperial federation of foresters.

Knight’s attitude toward the Forestry Branch’s integrationist plans remained one of friendly obstructionism throughout the early 1920s. He attended the second British Empire Forestry Conference in Ottawa in 1923, itself only the first of two gatherings at which Finlayson and the Forestry Branch hoped to manoeuvre the provinces and competing federal agencies into the Branch’s shadow, but Nova Scotia was not considered an important participant—despite its well-established timber and growing pulp and paper industries—and Knight’s participation was minimal. His annual report for the year gave no indication that the conference was at all useful or relevant to his position in Nova Scotia. At Finlayson’s encore, a 1924 National Forestry Conference carefully restricted to fire protection as the topic most likely to bring out a cooperative spirit among provincial delegates, Knight spoke long enough

14 Gillis and Roach, Lost Initiatives, 202-205.
16 J.A. Knight, letter to Arthur Barnstead, 9 September 1921, Department of Lands and Forests fonds, Record Group 20 [hereafter RG20], 820:19, Public Archives of Nova Scotia [hereafter PANS].
17 Second British Empire Forestry Conference, Proceedings and Resolution (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1927), 203. He did speak, however, and in the course of addressing the Branch’s calls for greater centralization pointed to his fire-ranging service and said, “in Nova Scotia we have unity of control.” He did not deign to consider federal unity.
to argue that a moist climate and a well-scattered rural population made Nova Scotia less vulnerable to forest fire than the other provinces. "No province," he later wrote, "in proportion to forest area, has suffered so little." He could hardly have designed a more heretical act than to downplay the threat of forest fire at a forester’s conference in the 1920s, or one more clearly contemptuous of Finlayson’s national ambitions.

J.A. Knight was not negligent in his duty as he saw it; his conception of forest conservation was simply consistent with the pre-war tradition and well in line with his department’s circumscribed role: fire prevention and little else. It was he who saw that the fire tax surplus could be used by municipalities to purchase fire-fighting equipment, he who advocated raising the same tax so that surpluses could be so used more often, and his department that supported the Canadian Forestry Association’s lecture tours on fire safety (albeit with a very modest financial contribution). But when federal money was on offer in exchange for cooperation within the Dominion, or when the Forestry Branch pressed him to conform to a national standard for forest fire reporting, Knight balked. He also temporized when asked to support the expansion of Forest Week propaganda from fire prevention to all aspects of forestry.

Yet for all that he represented the nominal conservation agency of the province, Mr. Knight was not the only attendee travelling to the national conference in 1924 with a Nova Scotian connection. Otto Schierbeck also attended, and his notion of conservation was decidedly more comprehensive than Knight’s, and far more European as well. Unlike Knight, Schierbeck was a willing federalist and internationalist, but his intellectual affinities were also less broad than Knight’s aversions. Schierbeck was a product of the European forestry tradition, a Danish forester brought to Canada initially to work for Price Brothers in Quebec but on the verge of moving to Nova Scotia to work for pulp producer F.J.D. Barnjum. In Ottawa in 1923, he had argued that forest fire prevention was “the most important question” in conservation, regardless of any differences in local climate. His work in Nova Scotia with Barnjum highlighted the fact that some large private landowners in the province were much faster to adopt the modern technocratic forestry orthodoxy—when it was in their interest, at least—than the provincial authorities, and his elevation to the head of the new DLF in 1926 tells us that not everyone in

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20 J.A. Knight, letters to and from the Department of the Interior Forestry Branch, August and September 1925, 12 and 21 September 1915, RG20, 836:72, PANS.
21 Second British Empire Forestry Conference, Proceedings and Resolution, 209.
government shared Knight’s traditionalist views.\textsuperscript{22}

Otto Schierbeck was a classical European forester through and through, and under the Lands and Forests Act of 1926 the department he led would be responsible for setting the terms on all Crown land leases, carrying out all provincial land and forest surveys, seeing to “the conservation and protection of all forests and timber lands, whether the same are Crown Lands or privately owned,” and managing and policing the hunting of wild animals.\textsuperscript{23} It was a full mandate for a modern technocratic forester, or it would have been if Schierbeck had enjoyed the support of a suitable minister or Premier, a Roosevelt to his Pinchot.\textsuperscript{24} Schierbeck’s patron in Nova Scotian politics, however, was F.J.D. Barnjum, the same businessman who had employed him as a “public forester” to look after private woodlots in the province since the first years of the decade. Barnjum was (and remained) a man of influence with the Conservative party under Premier Rhodes, but his own political career fell apart almost immediately after winning a seat in the 1925 provincial election. Unable to use his new position to secure a deal to take over the Macleod Pulp and Paper Company, Barnjum resigned from the Legislative Assembly in 1927.\textsuperscript{25} Having convinced the government to hire Schierbeck, he was unable to ensure that the Chief Forester would be allowed to move beyond managing the Forest Ranger Service and writing contracts for new leases.

Schierbeck was far more willing than Knight had been to engage with the Dominion Forestry Branch or Department of Agriculture (DOA). In his first year as Chief Forester he wrote to the federal Minister of Agriculture in order to draw attention to the latter’s lack of support for entomological science on the east coast. Such letters became a staple of Schierbeck’s correspondence with the DOA and Forestry Branch over the following years; whether it was the Beach Bark Louse or Spruce Budworm, he would regularly complain that federal agencies were not acting fast enough or aggressively enough to control insect threats to the Acadian forest.\textsuperscript{26} He also encouraged the Attorney General of Nova Scotia, John C. Douglas (acting Minister of Lands and Forests for several years after the creation of the department) to apply for available federal funds to devote to forestry research, and to be more

\textsuperscript{22} Thomas McMullen, the “Lumber King of Nova Scotia,” was another of the early private conservation leaders in the province, setting a 12 inch diameter limit on trees cut from his lands. See: Lotz, \textit{Green Horizons}, 21.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Lands and Forests Act}, 1926 (NS), c.4.

\textsuperscript{24} Gifford Pinchot was the first Chief of the US Forest Service and enjoyed the enthusiastic support of President Theodore Roosevelt.

\textsuperscript{25} Thomas Roach and Richard Judd, “A Man For All Seasons: Frank John Dixie Barnjum, Conservationist, Pulpwood Embargoist and Speculator!” \textit{Acadiensis} 20, no (Spring, 1991): 141.

\textsuperscript{26} Otto Schierbeck, letter to federal Minister of Agriculture, 11 February 1926, RG20, 718:1, PANS. Otto Schierbeck, letters to J.M. Swaine, Associate Dominion Entomologist, late 1925 and early 1926, RG20, 718:11, PANS.
generous toward the Canadian Forestry Association. Schierbeck may have hoped, rather like E.H. Finlayson in Ottawa, to use the federal-provincial connection to enhance his own political influence at home, but it was a vain hope.

The renewal of leases on Crown Land was one of the few areas in which Schierbeck’s powers as Chief Forester allowed him to exercise his own will. Though denied the opportunity to rewrite the terms of the “Big Lease” on Cape Breton Island, 600,000 acres with scarcely more conditions on its use than freehold, he did get to put export prohibitions on several others. European forester though he was, economic nationalism was one area in which Schierbeck fell into the Canadian style of conservationism. After the final years of the nineteenth century most Canadian provinces had become interested in resource-based economic development, and they used manufacturing conditions on export logs to draw processing industries north of the border, something Schierbeck encouraged the Minister of Lands and Forests to do in Nova Scotia. Much like central Canadian conservationists, his argument cited the over-exploitation of Canadian forests for American profit as both “an economical crime” and bad forestry practice. Most likely it was his patron’s influence that inspired the Chief Forester to take up the nationalist cause; Frank Barnjum was in a position to profit immensely from a restriction of Canadian timber exports, and much of his conservation propaganda was directed at encouraging it. But whatever his reasons for advocating sweeping export restrictions and for writing no-export clauses into his leases, Otto Schierbeck’s commitment to what he saw as correct forestry principles trumped all. He frequently encouraged the Auditor General to temporarily allow export of raw logs from Crown land as a salvage measure, since the domestic market was not large enough to absorb them. His priority remained the full use of the resource.

Schierbeck’s other main conservation priority was to replenish what had been used. In this he followed the European model loyally. His letters and annual reports are thick with lectures on the science of silviculture and the urgent necessity of artificial reforestation. He put government funds and constant personal effort into promoting tree-planting by youth groups (especially the Boy Scouts, whose continuing interest in silviculture today is traceable to Otto Schierbeck’s proselytizing) and started a provincial nursery to supply seedlings free of charge to anyone in the province willing to undertake the job of planting them. Not a year of Schierbeck’s term passed without reference to the work of another European-trained

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27 Otto Schierbeck, letters to Attorney General, 18 December 1925, and 13 February 1926, RG20, 718:4, PANS.
28 Otto Schierbeck, letters to Attorney General, RG20, 718:4, PANS. Quoted from letter of 29 September 1925. Schierbeck also encouraged new industries in the province’s forest sector, such as plywood manufacture, see: Otto Schierbeck, letter to Atlas Plywood Corporation, 4 May 1926, RG20, 718:14, PANS.
forester, Bernhard Fernow, whose 1909-1910 survey of the woods of Nova Scotia had found some 20 percent of them burned, barren, and otherwise in desperate need of remedial attention. For Schierbeck, avowedly eager to grow a German forest in Nova Scotia, plantation was the essence of good forestry.29

Otto Schierbeck’s term as Chief Forester marked a sea change in forestry policy in Nova Scotia. It did not, however, mark a significant change in forestry practice. The man himself never failed to remind his correspondents that good forestry meant taking care in the removal of trees as much as in their replacement, to point out that work in the woods was still carried on in an anarchic, unsupervised manner “undefendable from a conservation standpoint,” or to urge the provincial government to adopt a “definite” forest policy.30 In any event, he was ignored. Schierbeck had an instinct for political error, and his constant attempts to impose proper European forestry principles on a developing province trying to use its forest resources to attract foreign capital earned him few friends in government. When in 1933, soon after the death of Frank Barnjum, Schierbeck allowed his name to appear on a magazine article that seemed to embarrass the province, the new and anti-regulation Minister of Lands and Forests, John Doull, took the opportunity to fire him.31 F.A. Harrison, the Chief Clerk who replaced Schierbeck at the head of the reorganized department, summed up the failures of his predecessor’s term: of the new rules on tree-cutting practices that the 1926 Lands and Forests Act empowered the Minister to create, “no such regulations were ever prescribed”; the timber industry continued to operate with no rules at all regarding the disposal of woody debris left behind after logging; and the province had no approved literature on “forestry or reforestation” to offer to interested landowners.32

The seven years of Otto Schierbeck’s DLF occupy a curious place in conservation history. Arguably the fiercest conservationist in the province in the early twentieth century, and yet a man who achieved relatively few of his objectives in office, Schierbeck appears in history alternately as the grandfather and the grand failure of Nova Scotian conservation. The most useful conclusion that can be drawn from his lack of practical success and ignominious removal is not that Otto Schierbeck had a political tin ear or that his role was to plant seeds destined to

mature in a future that he himself would not see, it is simply that he represented a small faction in the province’s population of conservationists. His strictly European conservationism was an uncompromising ideology not shared by many others in a province where large corporate landowners and pulpwood shippers, and the desire to attract American capital with Crown land concessions, dominated both sides of the regulatory relationship in the timber industry. His commitment to scientific forestry—growth rate surveys, yield tables, selective thinning, and massive replanting—was immutable, and also faintly ridiculous to people who still thought of conservation as little more than fire prevention. In the contest of conservationisms, his was too rigid to prevail in a place and time where others could look just as rational and attractive, or even more so.

F.A. Harrison and his new Provincial Forester, Wilfrid Creighton, articulated one of those more attractive conservationisms for Nova Scotians in the early 1930s. Theirs looked more to the American and Canadian models than the European. Gone was Schierbeck’s ultra-scientific approach of survey, categorization, and calculation. Creighton encouraged the federal agencies to continue their entomological work in the province, but the widespread maintenance of sample plots of thinned forest for the education of small owners was quickly scaled back and redirected toward large operators like the Mersey Paper Company. The same large operators continued to clearcut their land despite such gentle reminders of the department’s disapproval, prompting warnings about overcutting and future shortage in the 1936 and 1937 DLF annual reports. Yet the department continued to issue new licenses to cut on Crown lands, arguing that “improved logging practice would increase annual growth sufficiently to make up the difference between annual cut and annual increment.” Improved practice proved difficult to achieve.

The Creighton era in the DLF (and it was his era, thirty-five years long, including a lengthy term as Deputy Minister) was marked by the search for a less antagonistic relationship with industry than prevailed under Schierbeck’s administration. Corporate foresters often found work with government and vice versa, and the policy positions of the department began to conform more closely to the needs of the large pulp and paper concerns. For example, the sharpest contrast between Schierbeck’s European conservationism and Creighton’s more corporatist, American-influenced variety existed on the issue of artificial reforestation. In 1933 the department ceased supporting the tree-planting activities of the Boy Scouts,

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33 W. Creighton, letters to J.A. MacQuarrie, 3 December 1935, and 6 January 1936, RG20, 683:4, PANS.
35 Creighton, Forestkeeping, ix-x, xv.
citing the “general opinion that this line of endeavour had achieved its purpose.” The following year, Harrison and Creighton advanced a more theoretical justification for the change, explaining that natural reforestation was perfectly effective on all but the barest rocky barren. If one would only wait for the natural succession of species, they argued, in terms familiar to spokesmen for pulp and paper corporations all over the continent, a merchantable forest would reappear on its own. Finally, in 1935, lingering ill-will for the ex-Chief Forester broke through political tact when the department’s annual report attacked “well meaning but misinformed propagandists [who] have befogged the whole issue... by recommending and in some instances carrying on extensive programmes of planting.” Selective cutting and replacement was an ideal practice for small landowners, as Otto Schierbeck had frequently pointed out, but it held few attractions for the big pulp companies. Similarly, when the Big Lease was renewed in the year after Schierbeck’s departure, his insistence on non-export conditions was conspicuously absent. In these ways, Creighton’s DLF (not alone in Canada) adhered to an American model that sought to cooperate with large corporate landowners for the same reason that their ideal remained state land ownership: a combination of the rights of ownership with enough capital to underwrite conservation and a presumed interest in steady, long-term returns.

The mid-1930s began another era in Nova Scotian government as well: the civil service era. The Civil Service Act of 1935 placed curbs on the patronage power of governments. With some security from capricious political interference, some better idea of what his rather vague role as Provincial Forester entailed, and more than a little skill in the politics of bureaucracy, Creighton was able to slowly build support for greater intervention in the practices of the forest sector. Future Acts would extend regulation and supervision over logging practices, albeit with dubious efficacy. That, however, is beyond the scope of this essay.

Conclusion

Nova Scotian forest conservation fell into several roughly distinct schools of thought between 1921 and 1935. According to Michael Freeden, it is in the nature of a contested ideology that certain core concepts be accepted by nearly all sides and others invested with a significance that seems undue to anyone outside the

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Here, the legacy of nineteenth-century European rationalism constitutes the core: none of the conservationists in this story came near to questioning notions of efficiency, waste, best use and full use, science as a way of knowing, and land and forest as commodity. Upon this foundation British imperial foresters built a model of conservation only modestly technocratic; the economic and logistical demands of empire simply precluded having enough well-trained Europeans on hand to police the land use of 200 million Indians. That pragmatism became a peripheral feature of the ideology exported to the rest of the world. In Nova Scotia, it became J.A. Knight’s brand of conservation. Otto Schierbeck’s traditional European conservation was far more intensely interventionist, statist, and more than a little chauvinist. Centuries of resource use on the continent had produced forests managed as closely as farmers’ fields, with multiple thinning cuts and regular replanting efforts producing wood fibre at the fastest rate possible. Economically, European tree-farming made sense where labour was cheap and land dear, but that was not the case everywhere on Earth. Schierbeck, who eschewed Knight’s pragmatism entirely, suffered the consequences of too strict adherence to the single outside model. Finally, American and central Canadian conservations bore greater similarities to each other than to the older imperial or European models. They were conservations born of North America’s ecological affluence and history of European settlement, where land was as often free as cheap and labour was hard to keep at hand. Here was a more pragmatic relationship with the corporate landowner, echoing some aspects of the British imperial experience again, but with an uncomfortably novel balance of power in favour of the private freeholder, where so much forest land had been alienated from state ownership, as it had been in America. Perhaps to counter the same shift, North American conservationisms were technocratic in the extreme, and political skill and the ability to muster science to his side of a policy debate was the first attribute of a truly successful forester. The greatest distinction between the two lay in the economic nationalism of the Canadian conservationist, used in much the same manner that science was used to rally support and gain an upper hand in the contradictory, both intimate and antagonistic, relationship between bureaucratic and corporate political power. Wilfrid Creighton’s conservationism was Nova Scotia’s strongest move toward the North American continent, but he still fell between the classes, Canadian in his connections but faced with a US-style relationship with large landowners.

None of these should be read as descriptions of phases or periods in Nova Scotia’s conservation history, because all overlapped in time to some extent. Different schools of thought found favour with different policy-makers and land owners. The international intellectual currents of conservation converged on Nova Scotia in the

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1920s, and none of them could gain there the kind of hegemony that it enjoyed elsewhere at its peak. As a result, the contest among conservations left a particularly clear documentary record, where in other jurisdictions it disappears behind the dominance of an orthodoxy. For historians who desire to believe in a future (or present) in which forest conservation is real and effective, its failures in the past must be accounted as deviations from a single effective norm, and the kind of variety visible in the record of Nova Scotia’s early conservation era is merely a symptom of severe deviation from the true path. But for those willing to accept the historical contingency of ideologies, that record is a valuable account of the ideological contests going on in Canada’s forest industries and forest sciences in the early twentieth century.

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Canada’s Story: Canadian Identity and the Journal of Canadian Studies

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Abstract

National identity was receiving an unprecedented level of scholarly attention during the 1960s and 1970s. Although several new Canada-focused journals went into publication during this time, the Journal of Canadian Studies emerged as the academic focal point for this discussion. The journal therefore offers an ideal lens through which to view evolving scholarly attitudes towards Canadian nationalism. This is particularly true for the debate between nation building and limited identities, which dates back to the journal’s origins. The most well-known monograph on this subject was published in 1998. This article follows up on the debate by examining how the topic of identity has been studied in the Journal of Canadian Studies from 1999 to 2009.

The majority of the Journal of Canadian Studies’ contributors adopted limited identities. This provides an opportunity to consider whether scholars who write in this vein have lost sight of national issues or ceased to have a social role, as the nation builders feared. The journal’s contributors have remained in tune with leading scholarly developments, and their works thus lend themselves to a reflection upon how recent trends such as activist scholarship, new biography, and oral history are shaping identity studies. The scholars under consideration have continued to study Canada as whole. Writing from novel perspectives, their critically minded works help us set goals for the future. If this journal can be taken to reflect wider scholarly trends, it would suggest that issues of social justice and diversity are not necessarily opposed to pan-Canadianism.

Introduction

The 1967 Centennial celebrations provided the Canadian government with an opportunity to promote unity at a time when national identity could have been the
poster child for liminality.\(^1\) Many nationalist historians lent their talents to the cause by publishing works that detailed Canada’s rise from colonial holding to fully fledged nationhood. However, there was no clear consensus within the academic community at the time regarding how Canada should be studied. The federalist model employed by nationalist historians was opposed by those who argued that scholars should take a more limited approach and study the way different regional, class and cultural groups understand Canada. For all their differences, nationalism and limited identities are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, the dynamic between these two perspectives that are often pitted against each other continues to be one of the most important forces in Canadian historiography, even after forty years of intense discussion, reflection and contemplation.

The debate between nation builders and the proponents of limited identities emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, a time when nationhood and national identity were receiving an unprecedented level of scholarly attention.\(^2\) Indeed, experts from a range of disciplines including history, political science, and lexicography were applying themselves to explaining and defining Canada.\(^3\) This topic had became so important by 1972 that the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada launched the Commission on Canadian Studies to investigate the state of Canadian studies. It was chaired by T. H. B. Symons, who had been instrumental in creating the first scholarly journal on the topic, the Journal of Canadian Studies, in 1966.\(^4\) Several new Canada-focused journals went into publication during the 1960s and 1970s. However, since the Journal of Canadian Studies emerged from this dynamic period as the academic focal point for this discussion, it offers an ideal lens through which to view evolving scholarly attitudes towards Canadian nationalism.\(^5\) This is particularly

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true for the debate between nation building and limited identities which dates back to the journal’s origins. Considering identity pieces from this publication in more recent years may provide a small glimpse into the nature of the relationship between pan-Canadian identity and issues of social justice and diversity.

The interest in Canadian identity that spurred the creation of the Journal of Canadian Studies can be seen as a response to the fact that the nation’s longstanding sense of self was imploding in spectacular fashion. Historian Bryan Palmer explains that the idea that Canada was a singular entity unified by its historic connection to Britain, an identity that had always been contested, finally collapsed during the 1960s. He suggests that the irony of this decade is that it dismantled the country’s longstanding sense of itself without offering a replacement. Scholars of the post war period agree that Canada underwent tremendous political, social and economic change that brought previous assumptions about a unified Anglo-Saxon nation into question. They explain that the relaxation of racial barriers to immigration and labour demand created by the postwar economic boom made it possible for over half a million people to arrive in Canada, largely from Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East. This massive and sudden influx of people from outside of the Commonwealth presented a very visible challenge to the idea of a white, Nordic nation.

Even faith in the moral good of national progress in the British model, which framed colonial Native-Newcomer relations under the guise of “improvement” and spreading “civilization,” was being brought into question by the rise of the Red Power movement. Inspired by Black Power in the United States and the anti-colonial movements of the Third World, Native peoples in Canada began to organize on a national level and assert more control over their land, resources and education. These groups were so successful at drawing attention to the previously ignored issue of Native Rights that one historian has suggested that the 1960s was a time when

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6 I would like to thank Dr. Barbara Lorenzkowski, Tom Hamilton and the anonymous reviewers from Past Tense for their valuable feedback and contributions to this paper. Bryan Palmer, Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 1-26.


mainstream Canadians “discovered” Aboriginals.\textsuperscript{10}

The Aboriginal push for self determination is often overshadowed by the Quiet Revolution and the growth of separatism in Quebec. Canadian historian Alvin Finkel explains that liberal ideology replaced conservative thinking as the province become increasingly secular and modern.\textsuperscript{11} As Quebec began to take more control over its social and economic situation, some people, including a large number of French-Canadian scholars, began to push for national sovereignty under the leadership of the Parti Québécois.\textsuperscript{12}

The shift towards liberal ideology in Quebec was part of a much broader intellectual trend. During the postwar era, liberalism made serious inroads in Europe and North America to become the most influential mode of thought among the scholars of those two continents.\textsuperscript{13} Political economist Stephen Clarkson and law professor Stepan Wood have explained that this shift helped to move Canadian foreign policy away from its traditional protectionism and to weaken the tariffs and other trade barriers that separated the economies of Canada and the United States.\textsuperscript{14} However, the same increase in foreign investment that helped usher in an age of post-war prosperity also raised fears that Canada was losing itself to the growing economic and cultural influence of its southern neighbour. Canada was also seeking to establish itself as a country that was fully independent from Britain at this time and to this end adopted a new flag to replace the Red Ensign in 1965.

Within this context of unprecedented change, Canada celebrated its Centennial in 1967, and the first issue of the Journal of Canadian Studies rolled off the press a year later. Although the government took the lead in attempting to unify the country by celebrating its heritage, some historians also played important roles by producing works that reaffirmed the familiar “colony to nation” storyline.\textsuperscript{15} These

\textsuperscript{10} Alvin Finkel, Our Lives: Canada After 1945 (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1997), 243; Palmer 378.
\textsuperscript{13} Finkel, 187-190; Craig A. Lockard, Societies, Networks, and Transitions: A Global History, Volume 3 (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 842.
monographs, intended to promote unity, ignited what remains one of the most important debates in Canadian historiography. On one side were historians who supported the traditional nation building approach. Although these scholars came from across the political spectrum and studied different geographic areas of Canada, they were united by their top-down perspective, which focused on constitutional history and the political and economic structures of nation building. A landmark summary of their beliefs was published by historian Michael Bliss in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. They were opposed by the proponents of limited identities who endorsed more of a bottom-up philosophy. Led by historians Ramsay Cook and J. M. S. Careless, these academics argued that Canadianism could be found by examining the country’s many regional, cultural, and class identities.16 Perhaps the most well-known monograph on this issue was published by historian Jack Granatstein in 1998.

This paper follows up on the debate between nation building and limited identities by examining how identity has been studied in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* from 1999-2009. This study focuses on the work that has been done in this journal rather than its editorial policies and does not claim to cover all of Canada’s identity literature. However, it does examine the scholarship that has been printed in the most important journal for Canadian studies over a ten-year period, and this exercise provides two important opportunities. The first is prepositioned by the fact that most of the academics under consideration embraced limited identities. As a result, this case study offers the chance to consider whether, at least within the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, scholars who have adopted this approach have lost sight of national issues or ceased to have a social role, as the supporters of the nation building agenda feared. Secondly, since the journal’s contributors have remained in tune with leading scholarly developments, a careful reading of their work lends itself to a reflection upon how recent scholarly stances, theories, approaches, and methodologies are shaping identity studies. Particular attention will be paid to activist scholarship, new biography, and oral history.

As a whole, the academics who published in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* during the decade under review not only adopted limited identities but also added new themes such as ethnicity, feminism and gender. This expansion was largely carried out by activist scholars. Inspired by the socially engaged scholarship of the 1960s and informed by more recent theoretical developments, these academics speak

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on behalf of those they study and use their research to advocate for change. Their works shed light on how a variety of Canadians construct their identity and examine national belonging from novel perspectives. This also helps them to illuminate the dynamics behind historic and contemporary formulations of nationalism.

Articles written in the vein of new biography began to appear in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* during the early 2000s. Instead of detailing the life of an exceptional individual, they probe how culture informs constructions of identity. In this innovative fashion new biography has become a tool that allows identity and history to be explored in motion: as it happened, as it was lived, and as it was built. Examining how celebrity biographies have been constructed by the mass media in this fashion allows scholars to reveal how popular culture icons became symbols of national identity.

Instead of examining identity as a distant historical phenomenon, the 2009 special issue on sharing authority explores it in an immediate, personal manner through oral history interviews. In these works the researcher and narrator share interpretative power and become partners in the research process. This has allowed scholars to contribute to nationally important issues by establishing disadvantaged groups’ identity for Canada’s policy makers.

**Part I: Narrating the Nation**

The celebration of Canada’s Centennial in 1967 gave birth to many large heritage and cultural projects. For example, the National Film Board launched the Challenge for Change program, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation commissioned Canadian musician Gordon Lightfoot to write the Canadian Railroad Trilogy and Montreal hosted the 1967 International and Universal Exposition (Expo 67). Historian Gail Brandt and education professor Larry Glassford remind us that Expo 67 did more than just unleashing a wave of heritage production:

[Expo 67] did much to focus attention on the role of history in creating and sustaining national identity. In the face of a more aggressive Quebec nationalism and the attendant rise of separatist sentiment, a primary concern was once again the writing of a common history that might accurately reflect the experiences of both linguistic communities. And indeed, there were some impressive collaborative efforts in this regard, including *The Canadian Centenary Series*, the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, and a number of new textbooks.¹⁷

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¹⁷ Brandt, 139-140.
Nationalist historians W. L. Morton and D. G. Creighton oversaw *The Canadian Centenary Series*. Their call to create unifying history was answered by like-minded scholars such as historians Jack Granatstein, William Stewart MacNutt, and Morris Zaslow.

Consequently, the *Series* presents Canadian history as a grand nation building project to be celebrated. However, it is important to note that Careless and Cook also authored books in the *Centenary Series*, since this reminds us that the barrier between nationalist historians and those who supported limited identities has never been absolute.

Only two years after the Centennial, when works from the *Canadian Centenary Series* were still being published, historian J. M. S. Careless wrote a paper titled “Limited Identities in Canada.” Historian David Frank has suggested that this article “is perhaps one of the most influential pieces of historical writing in the last half-century.” In this piece Careless draws upon historian Ramsay Cook who suggests that instead of constantly deploving our lack of identity we should attempt to understand and explain the regional, ethnic and class identities that we do have. It may just be that it is in these limited identities that “Canadianism” is found, and that except for our over-heated nationalist intellectuals Canadians find this situation quite satisfactory.

From here Careless advocates for the study of the “limited identities of region, culture and class.” He argues that these factors “represent entities of experience for Canadians no less than the transcontinental federal union; indeed it is largely through them that Canadians interpret their nation-state as a whole.”

From this vantage point Careless makes the case for moving away from the traditional political-national histories written by scholars such as Creighton and

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19 The fact that Cook and Careless’ contributions highlight the overlap between the nationalist and limited identities camps was pointed out by one of *Past Tense*’s reviewers. J. M. S. Careless, *The Union of the Canadas: The Growth of Canadian Institutions, 1841-1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967); Robert Craig Brown, Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967).


21 Here Careless is quoting Cook’s analysis of the literature that was supported by the “golden coffers of the Centennial Council.” See Careless, 1; Cook, 661.

22 Careless, 3.

23 Ibid.
Morton. Careless suggests that these works are too “hung up on the plot of nation-building” which centers upon the teleological development of Canada from colony to nation.\textsuperscript{24} Alternatively, Carless suggests that by examining the “articulation of regional patterns in one transcontinental state” we might find that they “exhibit something common, to be called Canadianism, as they viewed the whole country from their own regional, ethnic, or class position.”\textsuperscript{25}

The approach advanced by Careless was appealing to many historians because it mirrored the central tenets of new social history. This movement was beginning to have a huge impact in Canada and even displaced political-national histories from their position of dominance.\textsuperscript{26} Historian Joan Sangster recalls that “by the late 1980s and certainly the 1990s, the historical profession had changed, with gender, women’s, regional, local histories, and Aboriginal histories taking a central place.”\textsuperscript{27}

Although new social history was gaining ground overall not all historians were keen to abandon the more traditional historical practices. For example, in 1992 historian Michael Bliss argued in the Journal of Canadian Studies that Canadian history had become “sundered” and “privatized” by its recent turn. He asserted that new social history had caused a massive shift in historians’ substantive interest, away from political and constitutional history and towards the exploration of the experiences of people in relationships following from such non-national connections as region, ethnicity, class, family, and gender. The situations of interest to historians now tend often toward the private and personal—states of mind, standards of living, conditions of health, family values, local hierarchies. This is so true it’s become a cliché: political history has been out, social and personal history have been in.\textsuperscript{28}

Bliss goes on to argue that “the abdication by historians of their role as interpreter of the evolution of our public community” has grave political consequences.\textsuperscript{29} He elaborates by suggesting that

[there is a] parallel relationship between the disintegration of Canadian history as a unified identity, on the one hand, and, on the other, the withering of a sense of community in Canada which I believe in part underlies our current constitutional and political malaise.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Bliss, 6.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, 11.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, 5.
As a cure for this condition Bliss calls on historians to remember that “their subject, after all, is Canada.”

Bliss’ call for studying the “public community” of Canada, which he framed in political and constitutional terms, was contested even within the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. The very issue that carried Bliss' indictment of the “sundering of Canadian history” also featured a different view on national identity. It was presented by Canadian Studies professor Michèle Lacombe who reflected upon her experiences at the 1992 constitutional conference Renewal of Canada: Identity, Rights and Values. She recalled that after “listening to civilized and constructive suggestions from all quarters, this observer at least found herself genuinely moved on more than one occasion by the deep affection of Canadians for their country.” In fact, Lacombe concludes her paper by suggesting that “courageous or credible political leaders, both federal and provincial, should be able to make us swallow a multiple history lesson, assuming they are themselves capable of understanding it.”

Bliss and Lacombe’s articles were part of a much larger debate on how to think and write about Canada that extended far beyond the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. Perhaps the most well known work on this subject is historian Jack Granatstein’s *Who Killed Canadian History*. This monograph, which the *Financial Post* likened to “a literary hand grenade,” was published in 1998. Granatstein identifies with Bliss and draws heavily upon his work. However, Granatstein’s criticisms run deeper, and he states that

limited identities were almost openly anti-nationalist: it was not the nation that mattered, but “smaller, differentiated provincial or regional societies”; not Canadians as a whole, but the components of the ethnic mosaic; not Canadians as a society, but Canadians in their social classes.

The study of identity was clearly a very contested topic in Canadian historiography during the late 1990s. The question now is how the *Journal of Canadian Studies*’ contributors responded to this debate during a time period that begins only a single year after *Who Killed Canadian History* was published.

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31 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 For more detail please refer to the chapter entitled “Professing Trivia: The Academic Historians” in *Who Killed Canadian History*?
35 Granatstein, 74.
Part II: Taking a Stand

Bliss did publish one of the first and most influential rebuttals of limited identities in *Journal of Canadian Studies*. However, most of the scholars who wrote in this journal during the decade under consideration embraced limited identities as a program of historical inquiry. A typical example is communications studies professors Robert M. Seiler and Tamara P. Seiler’s examination of “Calgary’s practice of awarding visiting dignitaries a white cowboy hat.”36 They argue that

the city’s civic and business elite have drawn on the western heritage of southern Alberta—its ranching and agricultural history—to construct a highly charged civic identity, which during this period of rapid social change downplays social cleavages and promotes corporate interests.37

Seiler and Seiler come to this conclusion through six case studies that speak to the symbolic mechanics behind the bestowing of this symbol of local identity. For example, presenting Prince Charles of England with a white cowboy hat in the 1970s was a way to assert a post-colonial Canadian identity independent of Britain. It was also a way to establish a unique local identity for Calgary within Canada. Thus, in the very way that Careless prophesizes, Seiler and Seiler find assertions of pan-Canadianism in local articulations of identity.

In addition to studying limited identities as Careless envisioned, activist scholars added ethnicity, feminism and gender to the repertoire of limited identities. The addition of these themes is not surprising given the ideological roots of activist scholarship. Although no exact and universally accepted definition exists, law professor Radha D’Souza and sociologist Richard Lempert note that it represents “socially engaged studies aimed at increasing justice.”38 The general consensus is that its modern form grew from the collaborative scholarship that was produced during the 1960s by academic and non-academic intellectuals who had joined forces as participants in civil rights, women’s, and anti-war movements.39

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37 Ibid.
The wall separating the ivory tower from the rest of society may have begun to crumble during the 1960s. However, it was at least partially rebuilt by the structural trends that social movements adopted in the 1970s that favoured material organization over theory.⁴⁰ Conversely, the increased emphasis on research and teaching served to keep scholars chained to their desks and off the streets during the 1980s and 1990s.⁴¹

Socially engaged scholarship experienced a revival during the 1990s and 2000s.⁴² These academics generally operated independently from lobby groups and drew authority from education instead of collaboration.⁴³ They were also influenced by theoretical developments that had been made since the 1960s, especially the concept of the “subject position.” As its creators, American education professor Bronwyn Davies and New Zealand sociologist Rom Harre, explain:

A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one’s own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned.⁴⁴

Writing in a conceptual environment that still reverberated with the socially engaged scholarship of the 1960s, activist scholars in the 1990s and 2000s began to reflect on their own subject positions and discuss how their experiences informed their research and activist goals.⁴⁵

This practice of reflecting upon the relationship between one’s subject position

⁴⁰ Healey and Hinson, 60-61.
⁴³ Hale, xix-xx.
and commitment to producing socially engaged scholarship can be seen in the work of Indo-Canadian sociologist and anti-racism activist Vanaja Dhruvarajan. As Dhruvarajan explains:

My entry into North America as a graduate student in the ‘60s made me acutely aware of the impact of the colonization of India on the devaluation of us as a people and on the devaluation of our culture. Such devaluation had become part of a legitimate academic common-sense. My struggles against such a state of affairs as a student was feeble at best since questioning the judgment of learned professors would have sounded a death knell to my career as a student. Experiences of marginalization and devaluation of my culture and race, because of my colonial background, were particularly difficult burdens to have to carry after having had to endure devaluation as a woman. I was surprised to see that patriarchy in addition to ideologies of colonization and imperialism, were alive and well in a land that boosts of inalienable rights of the individual, democracy and freedom for all. Joining the faculty of a Canadian university did not improve that situation much and my life as an academic has been one of relentless struggle to belong, to be accepted and respected. This struggle in a significant sense has led me to choose research topics in sites where race, class, and gender intersect.46

Dhruvarajan and Chinese-Canadian criminology professor and anti-racist activist Michael Ma were drawn by their subject positions to study ethnic identities in Canada and publish their work in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*.47 Dhruvarajan compares how different generations of Indo-Canadians have experienced racism and explains that most first-generation immigrants were convinced that they were not welcome in this society, and they interacted mostly with members of their own ethnic group. Their reaction to racism was that, since they chose to come here, they must try to make the best of it. Most of them worried about their children going through similar experiences. The second-generation immigrants, on the other hand, were struggling to gain acceptance from the mainstream. Many of them reported experiencing racism, particularly in junior high school. Once they got into university, they found circles in which they were accepted. Many of them felt they were caught between two cultures, because approval from parents and acceptance by peers were

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equally important. Informed by her own subject position, Dhruvarajan has offered a nuanced examination of how experiences of ethnic identity can change over even a single generation.

Other scholars who have published in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* have added feminism and gender to Careless’s original triad of limited identities. This includes political scientist Micheline de Seve who studies feminism and separatism in Quebec. Seve becomes the spokesperson for Quebec feminists in her work. For example, she opens her contribution to *Challenging Times*, a collection of essays comparing the Canadian and American women’s movements, by criticizing American feminist Naomi Black for not adequately recognizing the differences between French-Quebec feminists and those (both French and English) from the rest of Canada. After establishing French-Quebec feminists as a unique group and herself as a member of it, Seve states that her objective is “to tell you how it feels to live feminism in Quebec now and still be a Canadian, at least administratively speaking.”

Seve speaks from the same position in her *Journal of Canadian Studies* article, which addresses the difficulties of integrating diversity into Canadian women’s movements during the 1990s. Seve identifies herself as “coming from Quebec and being a Francophone.” Speaking on behalf of Quebec feminists she explains that “my point is to show how even feminists in Canada make discordant representations in the political space we share in our respective French-Quebecker, English-Canadian or First Nations fragmented national identities.”

During the 1990s English Canadian feminists employed a rhetoric of national sisterhood. However, Seve explains that their Quebec based French-Canadian counterparts attempted to use feminist politics as “a space in which to express freely their cultural and political identity as full-right citizens living in a distinct French society.” Seve uses the 1995 Quebec Referendum to illustrate her point. She suggests that while “English-Canadian feminist politics was grounded on an unquestioned pan-Canadian stand,” Quebec feminists were much more ambivalent. In fact, Quebec feminists exploited political tensions and made temporary alliances

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid, 64, 76-77.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid, 69.
54 Ibid, 71.
with both sides in the pursuit of their own agenda. Seve thus demonstrates not only the existence of a gender-based limited identity in the context of Quebec nationalism, but also illuminates fractures within the identity category of Canadian feminists.55

Although embracing limited identities has taken the literature into sub-national levels of community, the issue of national identity has not been forgotten in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. For example, historians C. P. Champion and Stuart Henderson, political scientist Shauna Wilton, and geographer Patricia Wood employ the concept of limited identities to provide deeper insight into past constructions of nationalism.56 Feminist activist and political scientist Sylvia Bashevkin, among others, explores in her words "the dynamics of contemporary nationalism with particular reference to organized feminism and other movements in English Canada."57 Bashevkin defines English Canadian nationalism as “the organized pursuit of greater cultural and economic independence from the United States.”58 She suggests that during the 1960s organized feminism “offered a useful source of activists, public profile and legitimacy for the anti-free trade campaign.”59 From here she argues that the alliance between feminism and the anti-free trade campaign during the 1960s served to bolster a sense of pan-Canadian identity. However, this mutually reinforcing union proved to be temporary and “once organized feminism and other progressive movements were pressed towards the margins of political influence in the 1990s, the status of English-Canadian nationalism was threatened.”60 Bashevkin’s concern for the relationship between a marginalized identity group and national unity shows that, far from jettisoning any interest in the nation, the ways in which Canada is socially constituted continues to be an important question.

Moreover, instead of being anti-nationalist, activist scholars such as political scientists Chantal Maille and Alexandra Dobrowolsky have set themselves to

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58 Bashevkin, “In the Shadow of Free Trade,” 110.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
imagining different possibilities for federal participation. Concerned with the representation of women as a group, Dobrowolsky presents “a case for more and different kinds of democracy.” She argues that “conventional reforms” which are aimed at changing the existing political structure “are deficient because they tend to limit their sights on formal politics, thus bolstering liberal democratic premises and practices.” Therefore, she suggests that “we need to expand the political by including informal political and radical democratic options.” The radical options Dobrowolsky refers to are to provide established women’s groups with a role in national decision making. Thus she envisions a different Canada from the perspective of a limited identity group.

As we can see, instead of dissolving into a quagmire of difference, the study of limited identities has actually led to new discussions concerning pan-Canadianism. The production of discourses that examine the mechanics behind national identities suggests that Bliss and Granatstein’s fears that “the nation” will no longer be an object of study have turned out to be unfounded. However, it is perhaps not surprising that activist scholarship, which is aimed at social justice, would address national issues. The question now is whether the same can be said of those who wrote in the vein of new biography and published their works in the Journal of Canadian Studies. Can an approach that focuses on a single individual contribute to our understanding of national identity?

**Part III: The Biographical Turn**

Biography appears to be a genre that was marginalized in academic circles throughout the mid 1900s. Historian Lois Banner explains that it was passed over by the “‘new’ social historians of the 1960s who focused on demography, statistics, and groups as well as the deconstructionists of the 1970s who wrote about ‘the death of identities’.”

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61 Dobrowolsky is very politically involved, having been the head of the Canadian Political Science Association’s “Committee for the Law, Public Policy and Public Administration”, and “Women, Gender and Politics Section.” Canadian Political Science Association, Programme Canadian Political Science Association 78th Annual Conference, 2006. Available online at: http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/pdfs/2006_programme.pdf


63 Ibid, 244.

64 Ibid.
the author’ and saw text as independent entities.” However, biography began to make a comeback in the 1990s. Sociologist Prue Chamberlayne, oral historian Joanna Bornat, and behavioural scientist Tom Wengraf suggest that its re-emergence was tied to the fact that the 1980s witnessed a “wide recognition that social science, in its longues durées of positivism, determinism and social constructionism, had become detached from lived realities.” For researchers who identified with the 1980s poststructuralist movement and sought to achieve “a more political and populist turn within history and sociology,” biography was a way to strive for the “interweaving of human and socio-political development.”

Practitioners of new biography almost always present their work in opposition to “old biography” and evoke historian E.H. Carr’s “bad King John theory of history” to describe their antithesis. According to Carr, works written in the older style present history as “the biography of great men [and] their evil counterparts.” Since these works hold “the view that what matters in history is the character and behaviour of individuals” they tend to ignore the larger historical context. Instead of focusing on an individual’s character, practitioners of new biography stress the historical context and “emphasize the power of culture in shaping the self.” New biography also understands life histories as social constructions produced by prevailing cultural forces. For this reason biographies and autobiographies can be interrogated as sources that help to expose the underlying processes through which culture is “‘filtered’ through networks of relationships and shared assumptions and meanings” to produce what initially appears to be a simple or stable identity.

During the 2000s scholars who published in the Journal of Canadian Studies began to use life stories in the vein of new biography to explore how the “social order is not just transmitted, in the way cultural studies might emphasize, but experienced and explored.” One invigorating example is the paper submitted by physical education and recreation professor Karen Fox and historian Pearl Ann Lois Banner, “AHR Roundtable: Biography as History,” American Historical Review 114, no. 3 (2009): 580.


Chamberlayne et al, 1.

Ibid, 1-3, 6.


Ibid.


Chamberlayne, 2.

Ibid, 9.
Reichwein. They examine how Margaret Fleming negotiated her identity as a cosmopolitan, middle class woman as she partook in the male dominated sport of mountain climbing. Fox and Reichwein explain that Fleming balanced her passion for a “manly” outdoor sport with her urban womanness by acting as the editor of the Alpine Club of Canada’s journal, a traditionally feminine position. Her class background was reconciled with her strenuous hobby through an interest in botany. She also created supportive social networks with “like minded” mountaineers.

While Fox and Reichwein consider how an individual constructed her own identity, historian Graham Carr and music professor Robin Elliott examine how Canadian music icons have been packaged for popular consumption. Carr’s exploration of the role photography and film played in creating Canadian musician Glenn Gould’s identity is a study of culture in motion. He explains that

while Gould’s exceptional musical talents were obviously crucial to his success, his stardom was equally a function of aggressive marking strategies that successfully transformed him from a subject of critical adulation to an object of popular consumption.

Carr elaborates by suggesting that Gould’s image was consumed so widely because it “strove not only to represent his uniqueness as a person apart, but also to situate him in the culture of which he was a part.” This was done by skillfully and subtly employing rapidly changing social expectations concerning music, gender, fame and technology. For example, drawing upon gendered assumptions about musical genius as a male quality, the mass media used images of Gould “getting massage therapy on his arms and hands” to emphasize that he played “substantial music” instead of feminine lyrical ballades. Critics even “likened him to a musical broncobuster approaching his instrument ‘as he might an unbroken horse.’”

A careful consideration of how celebrity identities have been instilled with meaning allows the development of national identity symbols that arose from the realm of popular culture to be studied, as sociologists Howard Ramos and Kevin

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78 Ibid, 5.
79 Carr also explains that new technology allowed Gould to be presented in accordance with the new “ethos of ‘spontaneous witness’ and the desire to convey ‘a sense of real-world action’” (Carr, 10).
80 Ibid, 28.
81 Ibid.
Gosine demonstrate. They explore how Canadian newspapers interpreted the life of French-Canadian National Hockey League super-star Maurice “the Rocket” Richard after his death in 2000. They do this in part to consider whether “hockey transcends the cultural and political division of Canada’s traditional two solitudes” and thereby answer media professor Aniko Bodroghkozy’s call to better theorize Canadian popular culture.82

Ramos and Gosine explain that Richard’s death is an instructive case study because he was an iconic figure in French-Canadian popular culture throughout this life. After a careful reading of 290 articles that were published across Canada they argue that “while Quebec mourned the loss of Richard, the RoC’s [Rest of Canada’s] media were content to portray the death as Quebec’s loss.” 83 As a result, the “English media surrender[ed] the Rocket as a cultural icon or symbol to French Quebec.”84 For this reason, Ramos and Gosine argue, Richard’s death came to reflect the emergence of a “new, more militant [Quebec] nationalism [that] demanded greater economic opportunity for French Quebecers and insisted that the provincial government take an active role in making the Quebecois ‘masters in our own home.’”85 Thus Ramos and Gosine not only shed light upon the genealogy of Richard’s legacy but also on the nationalist limitations of the “Canadian Game.” In doing so they add to a growing academic literature that considers the relationship between hockey and national identity in popular culture.86

As can be seen, in the Journal of Canadian Studies, new biography has provided a way for identity to be studied in motion. Through their examination of the way that Fleming understood herself and her hobby, Fox and Reichwein bring us history as it was lived. We see how an array of cultural beliefs and personal choices informed her identity. Similarly, Carr shows us how cultural and technological change guided the development and consumption of Gould’s immensely popular image. The “processes and experiences of social change” also come to light in Ramos and Gosine’s

83 Ramos and Gosine, 15-16.
84 Ibid, 18.
85 Ibid, 12.
examination of how Richard came to embody a particular form of nationalism.\textsuperscript{87} These works help shift the discussion on national identity from the official policies of the national sanctioned bodies, such as the National Film Board, or the impact of the Massey Commission towards the discourses that circulated within popular culture.\textsuperscript{88} Next, we shall see if another vein of research that also deals with an individual’s identity can fulfill a social role by dealing with issues of national importance.

**Part IV: From the Inside Out**

The academics who contributed to the *Journal of Canadian Studies*’ 2009 special issue on “Sharing Authority” have taken a different approach to the study of identity. In these works identity construction becomes a collaborative process in which both the academic researcher and non-academic subject partake in the history making process. As oral historian Steven High explains in the introduction to this special issue:

> We would agree with psychologist Henry Greenspan, one of the world’s foremost interviewers of Holocaust survivors, when he says that “A good interview is a process in which two people work hard to understand the views and experience of one person: the interviewee.”… We also believe that collaboration need not end when the audio or video recorder is turned off, but that it is an ongoing process of dialogue and sharing. At its best, sharing authority is about much more than speaking to new audiences; it requires the cultivation of trust, the development of collaborative relationships, and shared decision-making.\textsuperscript{89}

The fact that even interpretive authority is being shared with non-academics represents a departure from the activist scholarship of the past two decades. Instead of understanding the right to “say how it was” as something that comes from formal education, these scholars would argue that the interviewee’s life experiences afford them the authority to interpret their experiences and history.\textsuperscript{90}

Adopting this approach can produce engaged scholarship in which academics

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{87} Chamberlayne, 2.
\textsuperscript{88} Bodroghkozy; Maria Tippett, *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts Before the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Emily E. West, “Selling Canada to Canadians: Collective Memory, National Identity, and Popular Culture” (Conference Presentation, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 2002).
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, 13-14.
\end{flushleft}
directly advocate for social change. This can be seen in the work of sociologist Robert Storey who interviewed injured workers regarding their struggles for compensation in Ontario from 1970-2008. Storey argues that injured workers must

persuade a regular array of decision-makers that their injuries resulted from accidents that occurred “in and or out of the course of employment,” that they feel the way they say they are feeling, that they can and cannot do what they say they can and cannot do, and that they are capable of learning what they say they are capable of learning.91

Clearly, the establishment of identity is central to the life experiences of the workers Storey interviews.

Storey recognizes the role that his work can play in establishing a “truthful” identity for his narrators that is amenable to their struggle for compensation. In fact, he explains that “the author’s written words about their stories and their struggles were to be used to help the decision-makers, the researchers, and the wider public understanding that faithful workers were truthful workers.”92 In a manifestation of sharing authority Storey attempts to collaborate with a marginalized group in order to speak truth to power. By studying workers’ compensation, an issue of national significance, he engages with an issue that is important to Canadian society. Therefore, Storey’s article is an example of how works written in the vein of sharing authority can lead to a style of socially engaged scholarship in which academics take on a more direct role in social change.

Part V: Conclusion

At least within the purview of the Journal of Canadian Studies, Bliss and Granatstein’s fears that limited identities will prevent scholars from addressing the nation or serving a social function have not been realized. Activist scholars have contributed to society at large by shedding light upon how marginalized groups negotiate their identity as Canadians. Their works not only provide a deeper understanding of present and past nationalisms but also demonstrate faith in the ideal of pan-Canadianism by imagining new national formulations. Similarly, scholars writing in the vein of new biography have uncovered how and why the life stories of some celebrities became important symbols of national identity in popular

92 Ibid.
culture. Works that combine oral history with sharing authority also represent a form
of socially engaged scholarship. Here scholars directly participate in social change by
speaking with small groups to large audiences about issues of national concern.

The scholars under consideration here are concerned with Canada and have
not lost sight of the nation. The thrust of their social contributions seems to rest in
their critical stance and how their works reflect the diversity and realities of
Canadian society. Consequently, instead of presenting national identity as the sum of
our past achievements, they can challenge us by drawing attention to the work that
remains to be done. For example, by uncovering exclusions, experiences or policy
structures that sit uncomfortably beside the liberal, democratic values that seem to
define our national sensibilities. Perhaps drawing attention to these contradictions
can shift the discourses surrounding our national self away from listing the
achievements of the past and towards setting new goals for our future.

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The Shield and Sword of Consumption:
The Police-Society Relationship in the Former East Germany

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Abstract

The East German secret police or Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, commonly known as the Stasi) upheld its motto of shield and sword by permeating all aspects of the East German economy and the country’s consumer culture. Because consumerism intersected with culture, economics, and socio-political factors, consumption became a crucial link between the Stasi and society. Moreover, consumption was always a complex negotiation between the party leadership, various governmental and economic apparatuses, and the population. Every aspect of consumption in East Germany (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR) was inherently political, right down to the basic provision of (or failure to provide) meat, toys, and toilet paper. In the DDR, consumption became a politicized test of the regime’s claim to be a successful socialist state. For this reason, the Stasi not only monitored, but also defended the interests of the consumers subscribing to the socialist consumer aesthetic. This paper argues that the Stasi was intervening in economic affairs and conflating consumer satisfaction with national security. This thesis is substantiated with references to numerous archival sources and interviews with East Germans associated with the Stasi and the Konsum.

The East German secret police or Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, MfS, commonly known as the Stasi) upheld its motto of shield and sword by permeating all aspects of the East German economy and the country’s consumer culture. Because consumerism intersected with culture, economics, and socio-political factors, consumption became a crucial link between the Stasi and society. Moreover, consumption was always a complex negotiation between the party leadership, various governmental and economic apparatuses, and the

Past Tense: Graduate Review of History 1: 67-83.
University of Toronto Department of History, 2012.
population. However, according to historians Burghard Ciesla and Patrice G. Poutrus, consumption needs were always secondary and only received attention when it became necessary to deal with supply shortages, or in crisis situations that were no longer “manageable.” When such a crisis situation occurred, the Stasi would have to intervene and put out the flames. To illustrate this point, I primarily examine the relationship between the Stasi and the Union of Consumer Cooperatives of East Germany (Konsum). Every aspect of consumption in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany or the Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR) was inherently political, right down to the provision of (or failure to provide) meat, toys, and toilet paper. In the DDR, consumption tended to become politicized as a test of the regime’s claim to be a successful socialist state. For this reason, the Stasi not only monitored, but also defended the interests of the consumers subscribing to the socialist consumer aesthetic. This paper argues that the Stasi was intervening in economic affairs and gauging consumer satisfaction as a matter of national security. This thesis alludes to an important question: could it be said that the Stasi was “running” the East German economy?

The Stasi Observation of the Konsum

Consumption shortages undermined support for the East German state. Konsum propagandists said, “Shortages can be criticized and they had to be overcome as quickly as possible. What we promised had to be real and fulfilled.” It

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3. The evidence for this paper is drawn from the Stasi archive and the files of the Union of the Consumer Co-operatives of the DDR (Konsum). Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes (BStU) or Stasi archive contains files regarding the infiltration of the Stasi into the Konsum workforce and Stasi observations of consumption.
4. The Konsum was a massive organization, which served multiple societal and ideological functions in the Soviet Occupation Zone from 1945 to 1949 (Sowjetische Besatzungszone, – 1945 to 1949) and the German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR – 1949 to 1990). Its omnipresence consisted of an outlet in nearly every town and village totalling 21,000 retail outlets, 544 department stores, 399 stores that sold agricultural goods, as well as production factories and restaurants. By 1988, these Konsum locations served a membership of around 4.6 million and employed a combined 287,000 workers. Andreas Herbst, Winfried Ranke, and Jürgen Winkler, "Verband Der Konsumgenossenschaften der DDR (VDK)," in So funktionierte die DDR, Bd. 2: Lexikon der Organisationen und Institutionen (Hamburg: Reinbek, 1994), 1113.
5. Sächsisches Wirtschaftsarchiv (SWA) is a regional archive in Leipzig which houses the files of the Konsumgenossenschaft-Leipzig from 1884 to 1990 and the files of the Konsumgenossenschaft-Zwickau from 1873 to 1990. "SWA: U2/1/58, Richtlinien für die Agitationsarbeit in den..."
was through the provision of commodities that the ruling party of East Germany (Socialist Unity Party of Germany, Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) tried to convince East Germans that their state was worth having and keeping. Because the Stasi linked consumption with national security, it was compelled to intervene whenever the population grew too dismayed over shortages because it understood (correctly) that its power to shape compliance rested just as much on the small things of everyday consumption in the Konsum retail outlets as on the major political initiatives. This section examines the correlation between consumerism and national security. On a micro-level, it also shows that the Stasi had considerable influence on the Konsum and almost unfettered access to spy on its employees and members.

The Stasi operated a division for the “protection of the economy” known as Department XVIII. The Stasi’s Department XVIII was perhaps the singular body that was most able to intervene in the East German economy. It provided the muscle to ensure that the party’s economic decrees were enforced. During the initial years of the fledgling East German state, this included the removal of small private businesses, forcing the farmers onto collective farms, and staging show trials in rural villages. According to historian John C. Schmeidel, economic industries “viewed the Stasi as the godfather, the well connected fixer that could overcome by its clout the shortages, the ‘plan mentality’ that punished good results by imposing higher norms after a good year, the favouritism, and the misallocation of resources that have distinguished command economies since the Russian Revolution.” The Konsum, therefore, may have welcomed the infiltration of Department XVIII due to its ability to provide leverage over competing industries and allocate resources in the shortage economy of the DDR.

It was common for Department XVIII to imbed informants (Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter, IMs) into sensitive industrial and economic areas. While Stasi officers were usually open about their profession and status, IMs worked secretly within the Konsum and only the Stasi recruiters knew their identities. The informants often held a few primary roles in the Konsum: spying on colleagues and reporting on the morale of the workforce. From the information gathered by these informants, the Stasi made weekly reports written from their vantage points within Konsum stores. Whether the Stasi was perceived as a nuisance or something worse, Stasi informants certainly made deep inroads into the Konsum and monitored its employees and customers for

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7 Kristie Macrakis, Seduced by Secrets: Inside the Stasi’s Spy-Tech World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008), 16.
9 Ibid., 19.
any signs of potential resistance and to gauge the mood of the population in relation to consumption. The Konsum was not a sensitive military site. Therefore, the cases explored in this paper demonstrate the considerable efforts the IMs undertook to gather information about the everyday consuming practices of East German citizens.\(^{10}\)

The Stasi and its IMs monitored and measured the ideological influence of Konsum workers on consumers. In 1960, the Stasi asserted that propaganda and ideology was weakly developed and inadequate at the consumer co-operative in Berlin-Mitte (the central district of Berlin). The Stasi was alarmed that this ideological work was considered less important than the concerns of daily work within this co-operative. More worrisome from the Stasi perspective, as the report also indicated, a politically weak female Comrade (Genossin) was elected who was incapable of disseminating the ideology of the party. As a result, the Stasi believed this retail outlet was failing to influence its workers and customers ideologically, and so the Stasi recommend increased ideological training for the Konsum workforce.\(^{11}\)

For instance, in order to have a current view on contemporary political events, sales personnel had to arrive at work fifteen minutes early to discuss newspaper articles and questions about life in the socialist collective. The primary reason for these meetings was to enable the sales-personnel to act as a junction between the party and the consumers.\(^{12}\)

Even well-trained sales personnel, however, could not overcome the negative impact of shortages on the stability of the regime, especially in the countryside throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In the rural areas of the DDR, shopping was often an unpleasant, unrewarding, and disillusioning experience. (At least in the cities, especially Berlin, consumers had other retail options and access to better supplied stores.) The Konsum outlet in Saalfeld was a case in point. Because it could not satisfy demand, many consumers turned to private merchants to meet their daily needs. As party personnel at the Konsum admitted, private dealers sold a greater variety of higher-quality goods at lower prices, while they, in contrast, had very little to offer local residents. Many Saalfelders complained about people with personal connections to Konsum saleswomen, since some gained unfair access to goods at the expense of others.\(^{13}\)

This was sarcastically referred to as Vitamin B, for the German word Beziehungen (personal connections). Informal networks or Vitamin B were a


\(^{12}\) SWA: U2/SWA 1594, Verkaufsstelle der ausgezeichneten Verkaufskultur (Date not given - probably the 1950s or early 1960s), 9.

\(^{13}\) Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 249-52.
common technique in acquiring desired goods, which resulted in frustration and resentment for those who lacked such connections or Beziehungen. The following humorous poem is one such example:

In the Konsum store no aunt
In the H.O. store no relatives
From the West no package
And you still ask me how
I’m doing.

Beim Konsum keine Tante
Beim H.O. keine Verwandte
Aus dem Westen kein Paket
Und da fragen Sie mir noch
wie es mir geht.  

Customers were repeatedly frustrated by supply shortages and uneven distribution practices in Saalfeld, while the authorities and workers who managed the Konsum and other state-run stores also grew annoyed. For example, the SED District Secretariat in Saalfeld berated the Konsum for neglecting the rural areas, where it was the main supplier. Historian Andrew Port writes “this was especially disconcerting at a time when many farmers were complaining about the failure of the Konsum to offer its customers more indispensable items like blankets.”

Like in Saalfeld, customers grew very angry in 1970 in Zittau (a small community near the German-Czechoslovak border) because of the deteriorating supply situation due to the closure of Konsum retail outlets 1120 and 1122. According to a Stasi report, customers were so dismayed with these closures and, more broadly, socialist consumer culture that they expressed their anger by protesting in the forms of meetings with the National Front. In spite of their protests, these two Konsum shops remained closed. In response, the Konsum received anonymous calls threatening to sabotage the store if it were not reopened the following Monday. In one call, the culprit stated, “I warn you that something is going to happen.” Indeed, something did happen. At the Konsum retail outlets 1120 and 1122, the shop windows became targets of anger and were destroyed. The culprits then entered the shops through the broken windows and started fires. The report concludes with the notation that the Stasi had not yet caught the criminals.

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15 Port, Conflict and Stability, 247.
16 The East German Parliament (Volkskammer or People’s Chamber) was the single legislative chamber of the DDR. Its members (from its founding in 1949 until the first free elections on 18 March 1990) were elected on a slate called the National Front.
18 Ibid., 1-4.
In the Saalfeld and Zittau cases, the Stasi understood the correlation between the consumer goods shortages and diminishing support for the state. *Konsum* propaganda compounded the problem of shortages by drawing attention to the contrasts between the actual shopping experience in these stores and propagandized images of plenty. While ideological conversations with customers and members took place within retail outlets, attempts to engage in these conversations were not warmly received by customers at the consumer co-operative at Berlin-Köpenick (a wealthy district in the outskirts of Berlin). Instead, customers complained about the shortages of milk, butter, and vegetables. Customers often replied to sales staff’s attempts at ideological conversation with the following answer: “first and foremost worry about providing us with a better selection of goods. Only then will you be able to engage us in political and ideological conversations.”

In a 2011 interview, Herr Ulrich Fitzkow, a former civil engineer in the DDR, described the *Konsum*’s propaganda as ineffective and his general interaction with this organization as negative. For him, the primary message the *Konsum* portrayed to customers was actually counterproductive because, as he stated, “The experience of shopping in the *Konsum* could best be described as shortages or continual bottlenecks in the delivery of goods (*Mängel oder standigen Engpässe bei den Waren*). From the beginning to the end, the distribution in these stores was full of gaps (*lückenhaft*), which only became worse in the 1980s.”

Combined, these examples illustrate that frustrations with the regime often stemmed out of material shortages and the SED’s inadequate material culture.

By the late 1980s, consumption and the supply situation were rapidly deteriorating in the countryside as the DDR’s command economy began to flounder to the point that the Stasi was becoming alarmed by what it perceived as growing resentment and instability. For instance, consumers in Ebersbach (a town of around 8,000 inhabitants near the German-Czech border) had to deal with severe discrepancies in the availability of goods. Similarly, in district Löbau, there was a limited availability of fruits and vegetables. As a result, the Stasi came to the conclusion that it had to collect more information about how the population was reacting to the supply problems. This being so, the Stasi, a highly effective and repressive secret police agency and intelligence service, subsequently intensified its surveillance in the sleepy town of Ebersbach and district Löbau.

The forms of complaint illustrated in this section demonstrate the population’s

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20 Author’s interview with Ulrich Fitzkow, Brunkau, Germany, 18 April 2011.

The Shield and Sword of Consumption

growing dissatisfaction with the East German socialist consumer culture. Seeing the growing unrest amongst the population, the Stasi intervened in the Konsum, conflating consumer culture with national security. In so doing, the Stasi used the Konsum as a means to monitor the population. In fact, the Konsum stores, as historian Katherine Pence argues, brought its customers into a readily observable space in which they could be controlled and surveyed. While labelling the Konsum as a disciplinary institution may be an overstatement, it was, nevertheless, a site in which there was a continual presence of surveillance. Stasi files support this contention and indicate that there was a great deal of observation taking place in these stores in order to monitor deviance or dissatisfaction amongst the population. In this way, the Konsum brought the consuming population into the view of the state, especially in the form of citizen petitions or Eingaben.

The Stasi Monitors Protest Letters and the Correct Forms of Consumption

In February 1953, the regime enacted laws that governed how the various state authorities would respond to the treatment of both oral and written petitions. Customers, consumers, and workers had the opportunity to direct petitions to the various administrative levels of the Konsum. For instance, the executive of the Consumer Co-operative Leipzig ensured that every member could send petitions to its various administrative levels, including individual members of the executive. In fact, the Konsum executive guaranteed that letter-writers would receive a written response from them within ten days, and they guaranteed a two-day response for letters written to the lower branches of this organization. Historian Judd Stitziel describes protest letters:

Often with much humour, sarcasm, and wit, consumers used petitions as a vent for anger and frustration, and more importantly as yet another technique of obtaining needed goods. As sources that offer insights into both consumers’ quotidian practices of consumption and discourses about the respective responsibilities and rights of consumers and the regime, petitions reveal much about the relations between state and society in the DDR.

25 Stitziel, Fashioning Socialism, 153.
The Stasi checked petitions for what it perceived as “enemy activity” (Feindarbeit). If there was clear collective protest against the regime, then the local state organs were notified. When East Germans attempted to communicate with the party and state there were, as historian Jan Palmowski suggests, “rules of engagement.” The first rule was to confront the state and the party on the basis of its own rules and arguments; the political language of the SED had to be appropriated and turned against the local authorities (never the party itself). For those who were subordinated, it was in their interest to grumble to a superior, for any move beyond grumbling ran the risk of open retaliation by the Stasi. Because party officials were fully aware of their advantageous position in such a situation, they would encourage the grumbler to openly state his or her complaint. In the words of anthropologist James C. Scott, “Over time a pattern of muttering may develop that has much of the communicative force of a quite refined language as the timing, tune, and nuances of the complaints become quite definitely understood. This language exists alongside the language of deference without necessarily violating its prescriptions.”

Though not speaking directly about East Germany, the methods of complaint Scott describes certainly seemed to exist in the DDR. And more specifically, by adopting the regime’s language in order to ask the state to fulfill official promises and to respect worker-consumers’ “rights,” East Germans reproduced official discourses while practicing a form of self-regulation. This conclusion is evidenced in the following letter. A frustrated Konsum customer knowingly used language that would get a reaction from state authorities by comparing socialist retail with capitalism. The letter-writer stated:

I bought a TV for 2170 East German marks at the Konsum retail outlet 430 on 13 December 1962. However, my personal satisfaction did not last long. A few days later, the original picture tube became defective. This was then replaced on 18 January 1963. In August of this year, this component again needed to be replaced.... This type of service has nothing to do with socialism and socialist retail trade. On the contrary, such fraudulent methods remind me of capitalism.
Of course, a TV was not an everyday item in the DDR in 1963. Nevertheless, this *Eingabe* demonstrates the ways in which East Germans expressed their individual desires for commodities through the language of SED socialism.

Nevertheless, there are examples in which these demands and complaints exceeded the accepted limits—that is, when they became coordinated and group-orientated the state perceived them as a challenge to its authority and subsequently intervened. On 17 June 1988, for instance, the administration of *Konsum* retail outlet 306 Ebersbach (a small city in Saxony just north of the Czechoslovak border) submitted a complaint letter titled “Petition to the council of the district of Löbau and the department of Trade and Provision.” This protest letter drew the direct attention of the Stasi functionaries in Dresden. Given the urgency of the supply situation, Hans Modrow, the high-ranking First Secretary of the SED of the regional administration in Dresden, was also notified. The letter stated, “For months the supply of fruit and vegetables in the co-operative retail outlet in Ebersbach was miserable. There is never any cauliflower, tomatoes, and cucumbers for sale, and the selection of fruit is also meagre. Since this co-operative retail outlet is the only available option for shopping in the area, we request a quick change to these conditions.”

Since forty-eight citizens signed this petition, the Stasi was alarmed, resulting in the identification of the signatures and the examination of the facts and circumstances surrounding the writing of this letter. In the end, the examination did not produce what the Stasi might have perceived as evidence of “enemy activity,” but the secret police force was distressed by the general and growing frustration with the supply problems in Ebersbach. Historian Paul Betts suggests that by the early 1980s collectively written petitions, such as the preceding example, reflected an emerging public sphere and the growing confidence of the citizenry to demand justice. To use his words, “A revealing marker of change was that signatories were less apprehensive about preserving their anonymity in more politically oriented, collectively written *Eingaben.*”

In a further example, Frau H. described her negative experience at the *Konsum* butchery in Zwickau on 23 February 1989. She complained that only one saleswoman serviced this outlet even though the store was often full of customers. She said, “I fear that this kind of service was not an isolated case. It really should be considered if

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32 Ibid., 65.
it is wise to anger the population right before the election.”

The directness of the language in petitions signalled that the letter writer recognized that East Germany’s final days were numbered. With some certainty, it can be concluded that she had been harbouring this negative sentiment towards the Konsum and its employees for a long time and only felt confident to openly express her dismay by 1989.

Historian Eli Rubin notes that the Stasi was alarmed by the growing confidence of consumers and identified those who were not shopping in mainstream shops (i.e., Konsum type stores). The Stasi considered these people to be “outsiders” and thus worth putting under surveillance. To make this argument, Rubin uses the case of Angela, who, after 1989, discovered that the Stasi kept a file on her. The informer (one of her neighbours) noted her selection of wood and antique furniture instead of the ubiquitous East German plastics. For the Stasi, this was unequivocal evidence that Angela was not the “average” consumer; therefore, she was described as “different, suspicious, and worth watching carefully.” The example Rubin presents can be more broadly contextualized within the framework of this paper. For instance, the Stasi defended the consumers that used products that were in accordance with the socialist aesthetic, but was suspicious of those who did not conform.

To make a few conclusions from this section, it seems as though the letter writer of the Ebersbach petition and those who signed it overstepped the limits of acceptable protest by coordinating a group protest letter. This suggests that atomized complaint was allowed, but coordinated group protests were not tolerated. To make a further point, the Stasi, and by extension the state, took the provision of the population very seriously and grew alarmed whenever significant supply problems arose. For this reason, the Stasi acted on behalf of consumers in an attempt to quell potential opposition to the state. Then again, inefficiencies of the planned economy could not ultimately meet the increasing demands of East Germans. Nevertheless, the state did try.

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36 East German authorities were also suspicious of youth in jeans. While youth saw jeans as a symbol of rebellion and freedom, the Stasi perceived this consumer product as derisory Western influence. According to Rebecca Menzel, “jeans in the DDR were not just pants—they were an attitude!” Rebecca Menzel, Jeans in der DDR: vom tieferen Sinn einer Freizeithose, 1. Aufl. ed. (Berlin: Links, 2004), 8.
The Stasi and Konsum Monitor and Try to Improve Consumption

The Stasi recognized the frustration of consumers and undertook measures to improve consumption. To do so, it maintained and received files and weekly reports from the Konsum dealing with its provision of the population. For example, the supply report from Potsdam’s Konsum outlet for the week of 7 March to 13 March 1986 indicated that the quality of goods failed to satisfy consumers. In turn, the Konsum’s management reported that they were only able to make a limited amount of meat and poultry products available to consumers. Once again, officials were alarmed by the provisional report from the week of 6 June 1986 to 12 June 1986. It indicated that there were considerable quality control problems. More troublingly, the delivery of bread to the Konsum retail outlets 309, 315, and 316 did not take place on schedule. Consequently, the customers were burdened with having to make two or three trips to their respective retail outlet in order to pick up the most basic of foodstuffs; not surprisingly, they blamed the sales staff for the unavailable products which led to unpleasant exchanges and arguments.

The Stasi was able to wield a big stick to make an organization as large as the Konsum work better for consumers: it took the president of the Konsum to task over the provision problems. The Stasi was monitoring citizens’ frustrations with and criticisms of the range of goods in Konsum stores and became acutely aware of the inadequate quality of meat and sausages. Customers particularly complained about the high salt content, freshness, the insufficient shelf-life, and the rapid discoloration of these meat products. As a result, the president of the Konsum had to inform the Council of Ministers of the DDR about the shortages, as well as the plans and designs for the modernisation and reconstruction of the consumer co-operative meat processing industries to quell consumer demand and frustration.

Above all, what the Stasi wanted from the Konsum was a “yardstick” by which to measure how the supply situation was impacting the mood of the population and the stability of the East German state. In this context, the Stasi—the world-renowned infamous secret police and intelligence service—became something of a consumer advocate and played the role of liaison between consumers and the Konsum.

39 BStU - Archiv der Außenstelle Potsdam: BVfS Potsdam, KD OR 766 Bd.4, Versorgungsbericht für die Woche vom 6.6 - 12.6.1986, 104-05.
40 BStU - Archiv der Zentralstelle: MfS-ZAIG 21122, Bericht über Kontrollergebnisse zur Sicherung der Qualität Struktur von Fleisch- und Wurstwaren im Grundsortiment (date not given - probably late 1980s), 138.
41 Ibid., 145.
Defending Consumers: The Stasi Observation of the Konsum Workforce

Since Konsum employees controlled access to goods, this placed them in a relatively privileged position in a shortage-economy, a position that they often used as compensation for being underpaid and for enduring difficult working conditions. And because commodities were often bought, sold, and traded on the level of mutual favours, those without anything to barter experienced hardships within the DDR’s favour-economy. Not surprisingly, during an interview a former Konsum saleswoman defended the customer service in the Konsum, but admitted that there were, of course, unfriendly saleswomen. She also noted, “Relations with Konsum staff were extremely important in order to get in-demand articles.”43 Yet, civil engineer Fitzkow also described his relations with Konsum staff as positive: “The sales-women made great efforts to serve their customers, even though the goods were simply often not there to deliver. Yet, with such shortages, there was corruption.”44

Stasi forces, for their roles, were used to defend the rights of consumers by combating corruption in the Konsum. To ensure the service of the Konsum clientele, the Stasi infiltrated the Konsum and kept records on the mundane activities of its employees. In 1954 in Wittenberg, an employee at the local Konsum store in the electronics department was evaluated as a positive promoter of socialist consumer culture amongst his co-workers and customers and was described as quiet, polite, and courteous. Through his work in promoting Konsum fashion shows, he had “demonstrated a positive interest in his consumer co-operative.” His file contains biographical information such as his being a member of the Nazi Party from 1938 to 1945 and being in an English POW camp from May to August 1945. Since his behaviour was apparently calm and disciplined, his biographical background did not, as the document states, “pose any disadvantage for him.”45 In another report from the Wittenberg co-operative in 1954, an employee was given a positive evaluation for leading a musical group. This man apparently had “an open character and good relations with customers, and it was unknown if he had connections to the West and West Berlin.”46 It was this subtle avenue of coercion, or to use Stephen Kotkin’s turn of phrase, “the ability to define who people were,” which made the Stasi a truly totalitarian and coercive instrument of state control.47

43 Author’s interview with former Konsum Saleswoman who requested anonymity, Essingen Germany, 2011.
44 Author’s interview with Ullrich Fitzkow.
45 BStU - BV Schwerin, AIM 817/55 P, Beurteilung, Wittenberge Datum: 13.10.54.
Notably, these reports and biographies were often tainted with personal views and preferences, which led to a highly subjective dissemination of information about the workforce, the state of consumption, and the general mood of the population. For instance, a Stasi-informant code-named “Barbara,” who was born in 1944 in Bad Elster, became an apprentice at the Consumer Co-operative Adorf from 1960 to 1963. She trained to be an economist at the Konsum College for Domestic Trade from 1964 to 1967. Then Barbara was recruited to spy for the Stasi on 6 January 1977. In 1982, Barbara was imbedded in the Konsum to report on the mood, loyalty, and opinions voiced by the administration and her co-workers. She concluded that the current conflict in Lebanon was having a negative impact on the mood of the Konsum workforce, since her co-workers believed it could lead to a wider confrontation between the super powers and a worsening of the entire global situation during the early 1980s. The legitimacy of Barbara’s report is difficult to decipher. To speculate, perhaps Barbara’s colleagues were genuinely concerned about the crisis in Lebanon; however, she may have simply been feeding her superiors what they wanted to hear. Whatever the case, biases expressed within the reports of Stasi informants had the potential to endanger workers and colleagues, and render the Stasi a less effective communications instrument between populace and state, since it flooded the secret police service with endless amounts of useless information. For a further example, a Stasi informant code-named Stähr reported to a Major Mühlberg about an employee at the Konsum restaurant in Oranienburg. On 20 August 1979, Stähr reported to Mühlberg that he was successful in infiltrating this organization and establishing contact with an employee over the course of several visits to the restaurant. Stähr’s report concluded, “This employee served various customers from the surrounding areas such as farmers, tradesmen, and youth, although without close relations with them. The employee was a passionate windsurfer and did not receive further holidays for the month of August. He or she was very angry about this!” The story of the windsurfing Konsum employee illustrates the wastefulness, ineffectiveness, and general uselessness of the vast majority of such reports to improve consumption.

In spite of the arbitrary reporting of some of these IMs, the Stasi’s Department XVIII had a direct understanding of the economic problems that plagued the East German economy. For instance, already by 1980, the Stasi accurately concluded that East Germany’s dependence on West German loans and by extension its hard currency deficits were spiralling out of control and would lead to economic collapse.

48 BStU - BV-Karl-Marx-Stadt Oelsnitz XIV 1416/76 I/1, Auskunftsbericht Datum: 20.4.1978, 84-85.
49 BStU - BV-Karl-Marx-Stadt Oelsnitz XIV 1416/76 I/II, Stimmungen und Meinungen, 28.7.82, 433.
However, the Stasi Chief Erich Mielke fatefuly dismissed the warning and reprimanded Department XVIII.51

In 1982, the Stasi determined that it was necessary to recruit more IMs to further infiltrate the Konsum.52 That year, the Stasi recruited a man codenamed “Theo Bergner,” who reported on his colleagues at the consumer co-operative outlet in Stahnsdorf (a small community just east of Potsdam). His report dealt with a woman who was born in Stahnsdorf in 1943 and conducted technical work at the Consumer Co-operative Stahnsdorf. Bergner characterised her as modest, honest, and politically loyal; however, she had strong religious beliefs. During a visit to her house, Bergner reported that she was in possession of religious relics. She also had possible western contacts, but this was not certain. She was in a long-term relationship with a man who Bergner described as a member of the working-class (Arbeitertyp). Her daughter and her three “illegitimate” children also lived with them.53 The fact that this report highlights that the daughter had “illegitimate” children signifies the arbitrary and intrusive nature of such surveillance, the lack of a private sphere, and the totalitarian nature of the regime. Moreover, the drafting of such calculated reports would have almost certainly left its mark on the daily lives of colleagues, neighbours, and classmates.54

Bergner then reported on a second saleswoman, a twenty-year-old living in Potsdam. She was trained and studied at the State Co-operative in Potsdam (Genossenschaft KG Potsdam-Land). According to Bergner’s assessment, she was a so-called “late developer”, (Spätentwickler), and he characterised her as friendly and honest. The assessment states:

There were clear inconsistencies not to be overlooked because she did not inform on a former colleague’s alcohol problems. In September 1982, she will receive her qualification certificate to begin work as an administrator of a co-operative retail outlet. She is married and her husband is considered to be a member of the working-class, who has made a positive impression at a party gathering. For her services, she had been honoured with a trip abroad. She is not affiliated with any party and it is believed that she had not conducted any negative political discussions.55

Bergner determined that there was a positive partnership between the two
saleswomen. He concluded his report by noting that the women were neither
garrulous nor did they engage in interests directly related to their workplace. The
saleswomen, for their part, may have suspected Bergner of having Stasi affiliations
and purposefully remained silent in his company.

In the late 1980s, the Stasi was monitoring relations between Konsum
employees and customers at a Konsum outlet in Karl-Marx-Stadt (present-day
Chemnitz). This retail outlet was located on Sonnenstraße and was apparently as
well stocked as other retail outlets, yet there were constant customer complaints
about access to goods and customer treatment at the hands of the sales staff. The
Stasi reported that sales personnel were not working in accordance with socialist
principles; rather they were apparently involved in secretive, “underhanded”
dealings with customers. Consequently, the goods available to customers without
contacts or close relations with sales personnel were severely limited, and they were
forced to spend a lot of time in search of desired goods in other stores. The Stasi was
notified and the leading employees of this retail outlet were brought under further
investigation. In 1981, the Stasi further reported thefts being committed by a group
of employees at the Konsum bakery in Grimmen. Apparently, these workers were
stealing various products amounting to 10,000 East German marks per month. The
Stasi determined that part of the cause of this thievery and corruption was the high
level of alcohol consumed during working hours. It also profiled some of the workers
at the Grimmen Konsum bakery. Worker A was a member of the Democratic Peasants
Party of Germany (Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands, DBD) and apparently
overburdened. Worker B had no party affiliation, but was deemed as loyal. The
administrator, a member of the SED, failed to carry out his or her duties and was
unable to comprehend the severity of the problems in this bakery.

The aforementioned cases explored demonstrate the lengths that the Stasi
undertook in order to “protect the economy,” including the gathering of information
about mundane aspects in the lives of East German citizens. As this section has
shown, historian Gary Bruce is correct when he suggests, “What is remarkable about
the Stasi is its penetration of the most ordinary, ostensibly nonthreatening, areas of
East Germany….. It is difficult to imagine that a dictatorship with the range of
instruments that the DDR had could not colour, in very real terms, the ordinary lives

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56 BStU - Karl-Marx-Stadt AKG Nr. 9341, Information über Hinweise aus der Bevölkerung zu Mängeln in der Arbeit der Konsum-Möbelverkaufsstelle Karl-Marx-Stadt, Sonnenstraße (Date not given—likely the late 1980s), 405-06.
57 BStU - MfS BV Rostock AKG Nr. 558, Kreisdienstelle den Konsumbackwarenbetrieb Grimmen, 3.4.1981, 14-17.
of East Germans.” Ultimately, it is difficult to determine if the IMs and Stasi intervention as a whole produced any positive outcomes for consumers. However, it can be concluded with certainty that the Stasi fused consumerism with national security and understood (correctly) consumption’s relationship with state legitimacy.

Conclusions

To return to the questions raised in the introduction: could it be said that the Stasi was “running” the economy by a certain point? It is exceedingly difficult to answer these questions given that the history of the DDR was not static and had geographical variations. The Stasi, founded in February 1950, was initially used to guard industrial areas. This basic role as the protector of the economy remained intact until 1989. Yet, Bruce notes that the central focus of Stasi operations varied from district to district (kreisspezifisch). Specifically, he gives the example of district Gransee where protection of military installations was the primary concern for the Stasi. On the other hand, in district Perleberg the Stasi’s central focus was the protection of the economy. And so, to give a relatively slippery answer, at certain periods and in certain locations the Stasi held a dominant position in the economy.

There are a number of further conclusions that need to be illustrated. First of all, the Stasi was willing to spend time and resources to micromanage the economy. As indicated throughout this paper, the Stasi reports allude to the state’s attempts to infiltrate into the most humdrum and anodyne aspects of the economy in an attempt to have it work better for its citizens. This direct intervention into the workers’ lives of a supposedly apolitical and economic organization such as the Konsum supports my general perception of the DDR as a totalitarian state. In this sense, totalitarian does not mean the complete control of the state over the private lives of individuals; rather, just the state’s complete claim on the private lives of individuals. Yet, Stasi documentation clearly demonstrates that the party was reporting on and reacting to individual demands for improved consumption. In this sense, the Stasi was acting as a liaison between state and consumers. In other words, the SED wanted the Konsum to foster an enjoyable consumer culture to promote and legitimize its rule, whereas the Stasi wanted to use the Konsum as a means to monitor the mood of the population.

58 Bruce, The Firm, 11-12.
while simultaneously creating an enjoyable consumer culture to quell and remove any possible motivation for dissension. In order to increase the population’s commitment to the East German state, the Stasi, acting on behalf of consumers, ordered the Konsum to produce goods that would please its customers.61 However, as the shield and sword of the entire East German economy, the Stasi was overburdened with safeguarding literally all facets of political and economical life. The Stasi and its Department XVIII was never able to adequately make East Germany’s command economy run smoothly for consumers and was only able to intervene and put out the fire when a given situation became particularly dire.

61 BStU - Archiv der Zentralstelle: MfS SED-KL 551, Direktive über die Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Wahlen leitenden Organe der Konsumgenossenschaften, 3-5.

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Abstract

This paper focuses on three South African girls’ scouting movements that began during the segregationist regime of the early Union of South Africa (1910-1948) and survived the apartheid era (1948-1994): Girl Guides, Wayfarers, and Voortrekkers. All sought to teach girls Scouting, a citizenship-training program that Robert Baden-Powell had invented for British boys and girls during the first decade of the twentieth century. Though these three girls’ scouting movements originally offered very similar programs, during the thirties and forties, Girl Guides, Wayfarers, and Voortrekkers developed unique programs that conceptualized citizenship differently; each promoted a different imagined community that their members would belong to as future citizens. The scouting experiences of Afrikaner and African girls between the 1920s and 1990s in South Africa show how youth movements reflect larger social and political processes and events.

“We all learned to shoot guns at about ten years of age, and we used to go to camp where we would participate in staged battles…. We were being prepared to deal with the ‘black onslaught’ [the expectation of being attacked by black people], and we used .22 guns with real bullets.”

—Hettie V.1

Hettie V. belonged to the Voortrekkers, an Afrikaner scouting movement modeled on Robert Baden-Powell’s Girl Guides. Her memories force historians, who have often neglected youth movements such as scouting as benign, impotent expressions of greater historical forces, to reconsider youth movements as invaluable historical lenses into popular social conceptions of belonging to different kinds of

imagined communities—imperial states, independent nation states, or “invented” tribal communities. The controversies surrounding scouting for South African girls demonstrate the contested views of citizenship that emerged in the early twentieth century and persisted until the end of apartheid.

This paper focuses on three girls’ scouting movements active in South Africa that began during the segregationist regime of the early Union of South Africa (1910-1948) and survived the apartheid era (1948-1994): Girl Guides, Wayfarers, and Voortrekkers. All sought to teach girls Scouting, whose founder Robert Baden-Powell described as “a system of training citizenship, through games, for boys or girls.” However, each movement conceptualized citizenship differently; each promoted a different imagined community that their members would belong to as future citizens.

Girl Guides, the first scouting movement for girls in South Africa, emerged in 1910 to train white South African girls in their duties as the daughters and future mothers of the British Empire. White liberal segregationists and white Afrikaner nationalists both contested the Guides’ concept of exclusively white imperial citizenship. American and British liberal segregationists wanted the movement to train all South African girls as obedient Christian citizens. Because the Girl Guides Association of South Africa [GGASA] and Olave Baden-Powell, the leader of the international Guiding movement, resisted their petitions, a group of white women under the leadership of Edith Rheinallt Jones created the Wayfarers, a scouting

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organization for black and Coloured Christian girls, and continued to seek the repeal of the GGASA white-only policy. Afrikaner nationalists rejected the Guides’ concept of white imperial citizenship and in the early thirties founded the Voortrekkers, a scouting organization that promoted a more exclusive citizenship that included only Christian Afrikaners.\textsuperscript{4}

Until the late thirties, these movements offered very similar programs to their members based on community service, badgework, camping, leadership experience, and domestic arts and embraced a similar idea of citizenship that emphasized responsibilities over rights. The growing power of the Afrikaner Broederbond, an exclusively male Afrikaner organization that sought to make South Africa into a white Afrikaner nation, and GGASA’s decision to allow all South African girls to participate led the movements to diverge radically. These developments particularly changed scouting for Afrikaner and African girls. When the Girl Guides decided to permit Indian, Coloured, and African members in 1936, only the white officer corps of the Wayfarers in the Transvaal province rejected the offer. Instead, they created the Transvaal Wayfarers and promoted Wayfarers as a version of scouting that especially addressed the African mindset.\textsuperscript{5} After the 1938 Great Trek Centenary Celebrations, Voortrekkers stressed Afrikaner nationalism and white supremacy and forgot the sections in its handbooks that encouraged members to help all people regardless of race or nationality.

With the rise of the Nationalist government and apartheid, the differences between the movements became more glaring. The Voortrekker youth movement became a vehicle for the Broederbond to recruit members and indoctrinate children with the ideals of white nationalism. Faced with the increasingly rigid apartheid laws that forbade interracial collaboration and forced Africans out of their homes to live in Bantustans, rural regions that the Nationalist government claimed were African controlled nations, the Transvaal Wayfarer Association transformed itself from an organization run under the auspices of white missionaries to an African-run organization that met the government’s approval. Lastly, Girl Guides stressed its dedication to the Fourth Law, “A Guide is a friend to all and a sister to every other Guide,” though it continued to enforce segregated companies and camps. This examination tracks the leaders, policies, and programs of these three distinct South


\textsuperscript{5} In this paper, I use “white” to refer to people that South African society of the early twentieth century identified as European. If significant and known, I identify their national affiliation—American, Afrikaner, or British. In the context of South Africa, “Coloured” refers to people of mixed-race, who initially qualified for the right to vote until apartheid. I use both “black” and “African” to refer to people of African heritage that South African society frequently referred to as Bantu until the end of apartheid. “Non-Western” is used as a general term for Indians, Cape Malays, Coloureds, and Africans.
African scouting organizations and how they shaped the lives of Africans and Afrikaners.

**Imperial Origins of Scouting**

After Robert Baden-Powell, the hero of the Siege of Mafeking, returned to Britain from his victorious military tour in South Africa, he quickly fell under the imperial malaise that gripped the metropole. He believed that the rising generation of British boys had become passive, effeminate, and unprepared to defend the Empire. When Baden-Powell published *Scouting for Boys* in 1908, he had no intention to start a new boys’ youth organization much less one for girls. He had hoped existing youth movements would adopt his proposed methods.

Nonetheless, as boys and girls across Britain organized troops he decided to build an international boys’ movement called Boy Scouts. Despite clear prohibitions on female membership, girls joined Boy Scouts with male aliases and procured equipment and badges through male middlemen. Because Baden-Powell feared that girl Scouts would emasculate the movement, he announced the creation of a girls’ Scouting organization called Girl Guides in 1909 and placed his older sister, Agnes Baden-Powell in charge. Under Agnes, Girl Guides developed into an insular, imperial organization with strong ties to bastions of feminine youth imperialism like the Primrose League, Junior Associates of the Victoria League, and the Girls’ Patriotic League.

**Scouting Comes to White South Africa**

The first companies of Girl Guides began to appear in South Africa in 1910. Baden-Powell convinced the Governor General and his wife to take interest in his Scouting movement. With little success he also attempted to woo the support of prominent Afrikaners. Intent that Scouting would bring together the white races of South Africa, Baden-Powell sanctioned the exclusion of Cape Coloreds, Indians, and

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Africans when they began to apply in 1911.8

Despite Baden-Powell’s efforts, Afrikaner membership remained low as British membership increased rapidly. Afrikaner intellectuals and politicians perceived Scouting as a form of anglicization and desired a youth movement based on Afrikaner culture. Baden-Powell, convinced that he eventually would gain the support of the Afrikaners and doubtful of the abilities of all non-Western children, stood by his decision to exclude nonwhites from the South African Scouting movement.9

By 1920, South Africa stood out as one of the only parts of the British Empire that refused to include non-Western children in Girl Guides and Boy Scouts.10 After World War I, Baden-Powell had developed a new Girl Guide program that lessened the importance of motherhood and domesticity, encouraged the frontier life of camping and outdoor adventure, and emphasized girls’ responsibilities as world citizens rather than empire builders. He publicly embraced the inclusion of non-Western children. With the new program and his wife, Olave Baden-Powell, in charge, Guiding experienced tremendous international growth especially among non-Western girls across the British Empire.11

White missionaries and educationalists, many who had already started unofficial scouting programs for girls, forcefully campaigned for the inclusion of non-Western girls in South Africa. Guide leaders in Britain and South Africa sent letters to the Girl Guide Headquarters in London that pointed out the hypocrisy between the Fourth Law of Girl Guides and the white-only policy of the GGASA.


9 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 72-95; Proctor, “A Separate Path,” 612-613. See also The Girl Guide Magazine: Organ of the Girl Guides South Africa Association, 1924-1931. Within each issue of the magazine, various articles, photographs, and news blurbs emphasize that the Girl Guide Association of South Africa was an exclusively white only organization. The text and pictures depict Africans as too uncivilized and child-like to participate in scouting activities. For example, the June issue of 1929 featured a photograph of three white Guides in a rickshaw pulled by a black man. The caption, “A Brownie ‘Pack!’ Some Brownies Arriving At the Transvaal Toon Moot” refers to an all-Transvaal Girl Guide gathering named after the Afrikaans word for demonstration (toot) and the Saxon word for rally (moot). Additionally, the magazine contained features to specifically appeal to Afrikaner girls and Guide leaders: articles in Afrikaans, reports on the Robert Baden-Powell’s fundraising and promotional efforts to increase Afrikner membership, and advertisements Girl Guide literature in Afrikaans.


Tammy Proctor shows in her case-study of South African Guiding between 1910 and 1936 that hopes of Afrikaner-British unity and fears of miscegenation led Olave to resist their requests and remain firmly against the inclusion of non-Western South African members. She affirmed, “our policy is one of complete sisterhood,” but claimed, “it would not be possible to lay down defining laws within the Movement which would secure the complete safety of white girls and the peace of mind of their parents.” Instead, the GGASA continued to cater to Afrikaners. It created badges such as the Voortrekker [Pioneer] and Haisvrou [Housewife], used Afrikaans for the titles of region-wide Guide rallies, mandated that all flag ceremonies include the Union Jack and National Flag, and translated official literature into Afrikaans.

Scouting for Black South Africans

In response to the exclusionary policies of the GGASA, missionaries, predominately white, started unofficial scouting groups across South Africa for non-Western girls and continued to press for official recognition throughout the 1920s. C. T. Loram, a member of the Native Affairs Commission, whom whites considered as one of South Africa’s most distinguished educationalist and black activists dismissed as a “government lackey,” proposed that these many unofficial scouting organizations for girls, which ranged from the Lightfinders of the Transvaal to the Girl Pathfinders at the Marion Institute for Coloured Girls in Cape Town, merge into one central organization. In 1925, a council of missionary leaders met and established the Girl Wayfarers Association.

The GGASA welcomed the Wayfarers Association as a means to quiet the controversy that had brewed over the hypocrisy between the Fourth Law of Guiding and its white-only policy. They promised to help create a handbook and develop a training program for Wayfarer leaders. They even attempted to export Wayfaring to neighboring colonies in order to avoid additional controversy over the segregated...
nature of South African scouting. However, until the creation of Voortrekkers in 1931, the GGASA refused to publicly associate with the Wayfarers. Not wanting to offend potential Afrikaner members, the Association prohibited Girl Guides from helping Wayfarers while in uniform. When Lady Baden Powell visited in 1927, officials of the GGASA enforced this rule and requested that she not wear her Guide uniform when inspecting detachments of Wayfarers.\(^16\) Fueled with hope of attracting Afrikaners, GGASA drew firm boundaries between itself and the Wayfarers in public, closing off the possibility of a truly collaborative relationship.

Most contemporary white observers and proponents of Wayfarers claimed that the differences between the Girl Guide and Wayfarer programs were merely superficial. The movements shared an ardent loyalty to King and Empire demonstrated through their elaborate performances for imperial officers, members of the royal family, and the Baden-Powells. Both looked to the wife of the Governor-General as their patron. The white leadership of both organizations saw Africans as less civilized than Westerners and believed that African and white girls had different needs and abilities.\(^17\)

In her provocative study that focuses on the formative decades of the Wayfarer movement, historian Deborah Gaitskell documents that in practice the Wayfarer program differed considerably. It required members to be Christian and “simplified” the laws and badge program.\(^18\) Importantly, it did not require that members befriend girls despite class or race as the Fourth Law of Guiding did. Moreover, the handbook neglected the importance of religious tolerance, camping, or international outreach, topics that the Guide movement stressed in its literature. Gaitskell demonstrates that the program reflected the educational philosophy of adaptation that had become popular among prominent liberal segregationists since the Phelps-Stokes educational committees of the early 1920s. C. T. Loram, the first to call for a nationwide scouting movements for non-European girls, firmly believed that education should speak to students’ experiences and social positions. For black South African girls, this meant a focus on the skills they might need for domestic


work, nursing, or missionary work and the values that would make them successful second-class citizens in a segregated imperial society.19

The leaders of Wayfaring, Dora Phillips and Edith Rheinallt Jones, advertised the program as tailored to the particular needs of African girls. They hoped that badgerwork in home life, health, handicrafts, the environment, and the Bible combined with hymn singing and games would teach young African girls moral leisure activities and prepare them to serve the Empire as bearers of Christian civilization. Jones specifically hoped “to replace the old initiation schools which, whatever their defects, did adjust the adolescents to Bantu life.”20 At the 1933 General Missionary Conference of South Africa, L.M. Forest, a Wayfarer, summarized Jones’s hopes for the movement: “The fun of the fair” to our Christian girls whom we have cut off from all the fun and excitement of heathen life. We don’t want them to dance and yell and sing as the heathen girls do, and if we put nothing in the place of that, we have the danger of the empty house into which the seven devils enter.”21 The white leadership of the organization enthusiastically supported Jones and Phillips. In addition to their work with African girls, they led trainings, garnered financial and political support, and continued to lobby against the Girl Guides’ white-only policy.22

By the late 1920s, the white officers of the Association had gained support of many prominent South African Christian intellectuals, who had begun to suggest at conferences and in their publications that Wayfaring and Pathfinding, its male equivalent, might provide a solution to the “native problem.” Supporters saw scouting as a means to thwart pre-marital pregnancy, convert young girls and then their parents to Christianity, create more industrious workers, and limit antagonism towards whites. At a conference in 1928, F. B. Bridgman, the head of the American Board of Missionaries claimed, “Unquestionably these organizations [Pathfinders and Wayfarers] are responsible for the marked improvement to our schools in discipline and moral tone.”23 In their 1930 The Bantu Are Coming, two well-known


educationalists, Ray Edmund Phillips, the husband of Dora Ray Phillips, and C. T. Loram asserted that Wayfarer leaders were among the first reformers to translate the benefits of heathen dance into more appropriate demonstrations of rhythmic expression, folk-dances, and musical games. The financial support that such publicity garnered was key to the success and expansion of Wayfarers outside of the urban townships where most white missionaries lived and worked.

However, African women, mostly teachers or nurses who had attended missionary school, carried out the expansion of the movement and led most of the companies of girls. Though faced with a color bar, African Wayfarer leaders were not passive participants who carried out the wishes of the white officers who trained them and loosely monitored their activities. Timothy Parsons, a historian who has examined scouting in Anglophone Africa, asserts that the African leaders, who organized detachments of Wayfarers at village schools, had virtually complete autonomy to alter the Wayfarer program to reflect their own beliefs and goals. Memories that African women have of their experiences as Wayfarers confirm Parson’s thesis. Because African leaders usually had limited access to handbooks and other materials, they often had to invent much of the program. Moreover, evidence available suggests that African Wayfarer leaders rarely sought out the help of white officers, often distrusted it, and occasionally raised complaints to the Wayfarer Council if they believed a white officer was abusing her power.

Not all Africans wanted a scouting movement, especially not one for girls. Chiefs often opposed Wayfaring because of its overt Christian, imperial purpose. Some parents preferred to send their daughters to traditional circumcision schools.

27 Minutes of a Meeting of the Wayfarer Council Held in the Rooms of the Methodist Church, Pretoria, May 26, 1945; Tilly Malan to Mrs. Jones, October 16, 1931, Historical Papers, William Cullen Library University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Consequentially, white leaders saw the circumcision school as the antithesis of the Wayfaring movement: unclean and immoral. One white missionary warned that if “an enrolled Wayfarer attends a circumcision school I don’t see how she can be allowed to remain a member as the two things hardly go together.” To overcome community opposition and define membership requirements, Wayfarer leaders and officers usually worked with the local chief, magistrate, and health authorities. When they were successful, they built lasting relationships and gained the respect of the communities they worked in.

Even when Wayfarer leaders and officers overcame opposition within a community, they still faced many practical limitations: language, transportation, malnutrition, and poverty. Many Wayfarers did not speak English, which meant inspections, rallies, and performances required interpreters. To participate in such scouting activities, both Wayfarers and their leaders traveled great distances. Furthermore, Wayfarer leaders and outside observers feared that poverty limited the extent that African girls could participate. According to Ray Phillips, Wayfarers living in the townships surrounding Johannesburg often passed out during drill from exhaustion brought on by malnutrition. Families frequently spent money that they did not have on fabric for their daughters’ uniforms. Alan Paton, who became a prominent South African author and anti-apartheid political activist in the fifties, observed in the early forties, “It had no doubt strained the family resources to make the uniforms they [Wayfarers] wore.” Unlike white South African Girl Guides, Wayfarers wore no shoes or stockings, and few ever attended rallies or camps because of the costs involved.

Despite the opposition and limitations that the Wayfarer movement faced, it became extremely popular among the minority of African girls who had the opportunity to attend school. It gave girls who abandoned the traditions of their

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29 Tilly Malan to Mrs. Jones, October 16, 1931.
communities a new sense of belonging. In 1935 twice as many African girls participated in Wayfaring than in the Pathfinder movement, its male counterpart. More teachers took part as well; in the Transvaal during the interwar period, 63% of female teachers served as Wayfarer leaders as opposed to 42% of male teachers who served as Pathfinder leaders. Wayfarer detachments performed plays, attended regional rallies, and organized community events. The focus on first aid and sanitation led many Wayfarers to join the nursing profession. Some detachments participated in activities that subversively challenged segregation. For example, a detachment of Wayfarers under the guidance of Dorothy Maud, a white missionary, performed “their own African stories” at Roedean, an exclusive private white girls’ school.

Moreover, the program encouraged black girls and women to take on leadership roles and gave them access to a missionary philanthropic network. The Wayfarer Council offered a few paid positions for African leaders and provided all leaders and members with material resources. The program taught participants leadership skills through the patrol system. Each adult Wayfarer leader guided a detachment of about thirty girls that was divided into small groups known as patrols. Two girls led each patrol. Maud described the benefits of the patrol system: “Native leadership can be developed here by training various girls to shoulder responsibility and teach the younger ones as they come into the movement.” The Association paid for Wayfarers’ badges and helped them pursue jobs in domestic work, teaching, and nursing. Though Wayfarers promised members citizenship in the Empire laden with responsibilities yet free of any concrete rights, it enabled women and girls who participated to imagine belonging to a community that valued and rewarded their service.

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40 Mrs. M. E. Whyte, Girl Wayfarer Association of South Africa; “Wayfarers in the Cape Province,” 114; Girl Wayfarers’ Association, 10; “Wayfarers in the Cape Province,” 113.
The Girl Guides Abandon the White-Only Ideal of Citizenship

In the late 1930s, the South African Girl Guide Association became more receptive to public appearances with Wayfarers. Their white-only policy had come under increasing international scrutiny and their campaign to recruit Afrikaners had failed. In 1930, A. Exley, a Provincial Wayfarer Superintendent, campaigned in England for the incorporation of Wayfarers into the international Guide movement and Edith Rheinallt Jones petitioned the World Guide Headquarters for recognition. Though headquarters directed Jones to file her petition directly to the GGASA, the international attention the incident generated embarrassed the South African Girl Guide officialdom. When in 1931 Afrikaners officially founded their own scouting movement, the Voortrekkers, the Guide Association began to host joint rallies with Wayfarers and opened negotiations for a possible merger between the two organizations.43

In January 1936, the two Associations reached an agreement that permitted non-Western girls to enter the international Guide movement and gradually become equal members. The agreement incorporated the President of Wayfarers as the Vice President of the Guide Association and reserved seven seats of the South African Girl Guides Headquarters Council for Wayfarer officers. African members initially would become Wayfarer Guides, retain their uniform, and follow the Wayfarer program. In nine years, African girls would become Girl Guides with the same uniform, badges, and name as their white counterparts.44

Edith Rheinallt Jones had fought for over a decade for the inclusion of Africans in the Girl Guide movement. During negotiations, she served as head spokesperson for the Wayfarers. Yet she refused to accept the final merger. Jones believed the final agreement benefited white Girl Guides far more than African Wayfarers. She resented that the merger required Wayfarers eventually to follow the secular Guiding program that Baden-Powell had developed. Jones wanted Wayfarers to remain a segregated Christian branch of the Girl Guide Association and insisted that the governance of the Girl Guide Association include African leaders.45 To prove her point, she nominated an African Wayfarer representative to the Girl Guide Council. When her colleagues rejected her nomination, she began to encourage the Wayfarer Council to vote against the merger. Nonetheless, the Girl Guide and Wayfarer Councils agreed to the merger.

Before the merger had been finalized, the negotiations were leaked to the

43 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 99; Proctor, “‘A Separate Path,’” 617.
44 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 100; Tatham, “Guiding with Africans in the Transvaal,” 10.
45 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 100; Proctor, “‘A Separate Path,’” 622-623.
press. In response, many Dutch Reform churches threatened to disband Wayfarer companies and the Boy Scout Association complained to Baden-Powell that the agreement was far too liberal. At this point, Jones decided that rather than join the Girl Guides like the other provincial Wayfaring organizations, she would maintain a separate organization: the Girl Wayfarers Association of Transvaal [GWAT]. The rest of the provincial representatives of the Wayfarers Council, who had all favored incorporation, resented Jones’s decision. One article pointed out, “It is cutting at the root of democratic rule if any minority, finding its views unacceptable to other parts of the country, carries on as if no decision were taken.”

Consequentially, most Anglican missionaries in the Transvaal, the province under Jones’s authority, decided to defect from the GWAT and join the Girl Guides. Many, especially those from Britain, had always believed Wayfarers to be an inferior program to Girl Guides. Clare Lawrence, one of the missionary Wayfarer leaders who defected to the Girl Guides, accounted in an oral interview that she had always believed the Wayfarers to be a sort of training program for domestic work rather leadership. Thus, Wayfarers and Girl Guides competed for membership and coexisted among African girls in the Transvaal from 1936 onwards. Not only did the merger split the leadership of the Wayfarers and the cohesion of scouting in the Transvaal, it also provoked an outcry from the white community and many officers in GGASA. Most of the Afrikaners who remained in Girl Guides defected. By 1957, Afrikaner girls represented only 2% of the Guide movement. Many Transvaal officers resigned. Parents complained, and journalists published incendiary editorials. One letter from an “Interested Father” demonstrates the scare tactics that critics of the merger employed: “And I wonder if sisterhood in training camps will extend to joint use of tents, beds, cooking, utensils and bathing pools.” Another “Father of Guides” threatened that if the amalgamation occurred, “we shall watch the inevitable dissolution of the Guide movement with regret.” Critics feared that the merger would incite native unrest and might lead to miscegenation. One journalist warned, “If the social barrier is removed by the Guide organization, how has that mother the right to say at home, ‘You may not play with the little black boy in the yard.’”

46 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 100.
49 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 100, 225; Hannah Stanton, Go Well, Stay Well, 50; Phillips, The Bantu in the City, 301.
50 “Natives Can Be Girl Guides,” Rand Daily Mail 6 (February 6, 1936), 14.
Olave Baden-Powell refused to give in to the critics. She asserted, “Though not completely supported by some sections in the Transvaal and elsewhere, the Girl Guide Headquarters cannot break faith with its members and treat as ‘a scrap of paper’ the agreement which was ratified last month.” With impending war in Europe and active anti-colonial nationalisms emerging across the Empire, Olave believed that if she did not stand up to the criticism, the growing number of non-Western Guide leaders and Guides in Asia, Africa, New Zealand, and the Atlantic would lose faith in the international promises of the movement. She asked officers who condemned the amalgamation to resign and insisted that the opposition to the decision was confined to South Africa, “But quite definitely I wish to refute the catch phrase, that the Guide Association is ‘split from top to bottom.’” Robert Baden-Powell, who had just reached a far more conservative agreement with Pathfinders, supported his wife’s position and reassured the press, “This comradeship of the Scout and Guide movement will contribute to an improved mutual relationship between the different elements in the population.”

### Competition and Cooperation: Girl Guides and the Transvaal Wayfarers

After Jones held out against the officer corps of the Guides and the majority of the Wayfarer Council, she stressed the adaptation approach that taught African girls that their role in the Empire was as obedient missionaries of Western culture and Christian religion. Annual conferences, literature, and public performances featured Christian themes, exhibited British patriotism, and demonstrated African traditions that met the Association’s Christian standards. A 1941 report claimed the purpose of Wayfarers was “to meet the special needs of those who, with an ancestral heritage from tribal Africa, seek to blend the best from the ancestral heritage with the new life which the coming of Christianity has opened to them.” Moreover, Jones redoubled her efforts to popularize the movement in rural areas. She encouraged Wayfarer leaders to conduct “experiments in the replacement of heathen initiations for girls by modern health and social training.” In response to Jones’s wishes, a few white Wayfarer leaders in the Northern Transvaal in the early forties set up Wayfarer camps to replace the “degrading teaching” of the traditional initiation schools and

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55 Quoted in Gaitskell, “Upward Play,” 252.  
56 Ibid.
“native” handicrafts and dances altered to comply with Christian principles became popular activities at meetings.57

Under Jones’s influence and after her death in 1944, the all white governing council of the GWAT continued to adhere to an adaptationist, evangelical program that celebrated Christianity, allowed for local interpretations, and did not demand that participants meet the exact badge requirements. In the first conference held after Jones’s death on May 26, 1945, an officer of the Council remarked, “It has been touching to hear that many heathen children have learnt their first prayer—the Wayfarer prayer—listening on the outskirts of Detachments—and the parents are beginning to link up Wayfaring with Church life.”58 The Council encouraged the use of vernaculars and accepted detachments under men or detachments that mixed Pathfinders and Wayfarers. As each white Wayfarer officer ran numerous detachments over a large geographical expanse simultaneously, African women ran the everyday administration of detachments with little oversight.59 Jones’s efforts to create a program specifically tailored to the needs of the African girl had a lasting legacy over Wayfarers and initially ensured that it would attract far more members than Girl Guides.60

Because of the leadership of Jones and its rhetoric of conversion and adaptation, Wayfaring gained the support of educationalists and missionaries.61 Jones worked tirelessly to ensure the expansion of the Wayfarers and its presence in African girlhood. Girl Guiding lacked a similar advocate and thus had a very small presence among Africans in the Transvaal.62 Throughout the early forties, Guide officers attempted to encourage more white women to become involved.63 Their efforts achieved little. Guides never found a leader able to compete with Jones or her legacy, whom Alan Paton described as “the best-known white woman in the whole of South Africa, and one of the best loved too.”64 Jones commanded a loyal corps of white officers, many of whom had worked for Wayfarers since 1925, African leaders,

58 Minutes of a Meeting of the Wayfarer Council Held in the Rooms of the Methodist Church, Pretoria, May 26, 1945.
60 Cobley, The Rules of the Game, 83. By 1956 there were 36,000 girls enrolled in the Wayfarer Association.
White Girl Guide leaders in the Transvaal also failed to attract African volunteers and participants. Unlike the GWAT, Girl Guide leaders boasted that they strictly adhered to the program outlined in the handbook. This meant, to become a Guide, a girl had to demonstrate understanding of the Promise, Laws, and the British and South African flags. To the frustration of white leaders, only knot tying and camping seemingly came easily to African girls. In 1940, a white Guide leader complained that after testing over 100 African girls she could only enroll twenty as official Guides as “the standard cannot be lowered and the Tenderfoot test must be known.” The strict standards of Girl Guides discouraged many girls and women from joining. Thus, Wayfarers, though it adhered to the adaptation approach, functioned to attract more black women and girls than the Guides would in the Transvaal, especially in the rural regions that soon would become the Bantustans or designated African homelands of apartheid South Africa.

Despite their different approaches and competitive attitudes towards recruitment, Guide companies and Wayfarer detachments also cooperated together, especially within urban areas. Rallies, inspections, and camps generally incorporated both Guides and Wayfarers. Memoirs of participants living in townships portray Wayfarers and Girl Guides as united on a mission to distract African girls from nefarious influences of urban living. For example, in the 1930s, three mission stations located in African townships outside of Pretoria and Johannesburg, Ekutuleni, “House of Peacemaking” in Sophiatown; Lesedling, “House of Light” in Orlando; and Tumelong, “Place of Faith” in the Lady Selborne Township, became centers of scouting, both Wayfaring and Girl Guiding. Before the merger between these organizations, Wayfarers had been very strong at Ekutuleni. In 1933, Dorothy Maud described, “Ekutuleni possesses nine detachments of Wayfarers and Sunbeams, in which the children are led through team games, team drilling and various instructions towards the ideal of serving and helping other people in their own homes and outside.” After the merger of Girl Guides and Wayfarers in 1936, companies of Guides began to appear in the townships, and white Guides took a more active interest in African scouting. Wayfarer detachments started to work with Guide companies to arrange performances. For example, every Sunday at the Tumelong Mission, Girl Guides and Wayfarers staged a procession that marched up

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69 Phillips, The Bantu in the City, 354.
and down the streets. This cooperation also influenced the recruitment and training of African leaders. Because these missions were one of the few places that whites and blacks could work and live together legally during the early twentieth century, white Wayfarer and Guide leaders, mostly missionaries, worked together to develop trainings that enabled hundreds of African women to gain the skills and resources they needed to take scouting into new areas.

Diverging Ideas of Citizenship: Girl Guides and Wayfarers Under Apartheid

Girl Guides and the Transvaal Wayfarers adopted very different tactics to survive under the Nationalist regime of apartheid. Guides encouraged Africans to understand themselves as citizens of an international community rather than of South Africa or one of the ten Bantustans. With the all-white referendum of 1960 and the resulting withdrawal of South Africa from the British Commonwealth in 1961, the GGASA publicly demonstrated its opposition to the government’s conception of citizenship in which whites were the only true citizens and black South Africans belonged to one of the ten Bantustan Homelands even if they lived inside of South Africa proper. While the GGASA became increasingly vocal in the disapproval of the racial regime during the late sixties and seventies, the GWAT embraced the Nationalist program to place black South Africans under tribal authority in the government-invented homelands.

The GGASA began its policy of opposition at the inception of the Nationalist government. It first came under the suspicion of the government in 1948 when it hosted an interracial All-African Conference in Johannesburg. In order to continue to host interracial gatherings and encourage interracial cooperation, it refused state and provincial funding. Olave Baden-Powell, the World Chief Guide until her death in 1977, pushed GGASA to continue to resist the mandates of apartheid and stress the importance of the Fourth Guide law no matter the consequences. In 1969, Olave provoked the censure of right-wing Afrikaners when she inspected an interracial rally. Even after the incident, she continued to encourage the Association to develop

70 Stanton, Go Well, Stay Well, 51.
71 Audrey, Peace-Making in South Africa, 32-35, 56, 92, 103, 106; Stanton, Go Well, Stay Well, 35, 58, 104-105; Maud, 384. This was unusual as after the Nationalist victory in 1948, most missionaries no longer could live at the missions in the townships but had to commute daily.
cross-cultural programs that encouraged interracial relationships. Finally, in the 1970s, Olave’s persistence paid off. The GGASA appointed a black delegate to represent South Africa at the 21st triennial World Conference in Toronto and developed the Guide Friendship Badge that required a girl to get to know a person of another race, learn twenty five words in the language of that person’s community, and be able to describe the traditional customs and foods of that person’s culture.  

Moreover, many leaders and Guides followed Olave’s lead and resisted at the local level. For example, after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the police arrested the white Guide leader Hannah Stanton because of her involvement in interracial training for Girl Guide and Wayfarer leaders. In the late sixties and seventies despite government oppression, an African Guider, Daphne Duduzile Tshabalala, organized Zulu classes for interested white leaders even though such informal interracial gatherings were illegal. In 1979, when the GGASA elected her as the South African Headquarters Advisor, the most powerful position in the GGASA, Tshabalala began to work with Guides of all races.

While the Guides did not go as far as to support integrated companies, when compared to the Boy Scouts their resistance to apartheid appears striking. Because the Boy Scouts had opted for a segregated federation of various scouting organizations that discouraged interracial cooperation, the government continued to fund Pathfinders and Boy Scouts throughout apartheid. Moreover, the Boy Scouts developed a working relationship with the Voortrekkers during the thirties and continued to encourage white solidarity. These efforts were largely unsuccessful and damaged their relations with African, Indian, and Coloured scouting organizations in South Africa and other national Boy Scout Associations in Africa. While Boy Scouts saw African Pathfinders as a thorn in its side that made it susceptible to charges of hypocrisy and discrimination, after 1936 Girl Guides publicly embraced African Guides as evidence of its liberal segregationist values. Parsons notes, “Where the SABSA used the government’s refusal to issue permits for interracial functions as an excuse to duck the Fourth Scout law, the Guides simply held their rallies without official permission.”

The Wayfarers of Transvaal confronted apartheid in a radically different manner than the Girl Guides. Until the late 1950s, the Transvaal Wayfarers largely escaped the Nationalist government’s radar even though it had expanded rapidly to

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75 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 219.
78 Proctor, “A Separate Path,” 624; Walton, 479. Patterson, The Last Trek, 265.
79 Parsons, Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement, 219. The government mandated that all organization that received state funding had to strictly adhere to apartheid laws.
over 600 schools or community centers by 1955. However, during this expansion, the movement had lost many of its founding white officers to retirement and with them went many of its financial backers. After the Group Areas Acts of the fifties that forced non-Westerners into underdeveloped regions designated for their race, the government pressured the remaining white officers to leave the Association and for African leaders to take their place. It seems that the government promised funding to the GWAT if they complied. Since the Transvaal Wayfarers had refused to merge with the Girl Guides in 1936, it had not received government funding, and without the network of its white officer corps and their financial connections it needed government funding to fuel its rapidly expanding organization. Thus, the GWAT complied with the government’s demands. African Wayfarer leaders, most of whom had been involved in the movements since girlhood, replaced the white officer corps. White women could only participate as part of the advisory committee. They could no longer lead trainings, solicit funding, or organize detachments. The new African officers stressed self-help and attempted to encourage girls to work to develop their designated homelands. In retrospect, the actions of the Transvaal Wayfarer Association appear as willing collaboration with the apartheid regime. Gaitskell, however, offers an alternative viewpoint: “For many African girls the only game they were playing that mattered was the literal, energetic, team one.”

Both the Wayfarers and Guides, despite their differing visions of citizenship, successfully attracted more African participants than their counterpart Pathfinders, which after 1936 was the African branch of the South African Boy Scout Association [SABSA]. More women, predominantly African teachers and principals, volunteered to lead companies and detachments, and thus more girls had the opportunity to participate. Some Wayfarer and Guide leaders and Guides, both white and black, became anti-apartheid activists. The popularity of scouting among African girls also may be attributed to the well-educated African women that encouraged African girls to embrace voluntary service and master necessary life skills such as first aid, nutrition, and hygiene.

Available records show that both Girl Guides and Wayfarers empowered

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80 Gaitskell, “Upward Play,” 257.
African girls with a sense of belonging to a community of likeminded citizens before and during the apartheid era. The uniform, especially the Guide uniform adopted after 1945 that white and black South African members wore, gave African participants a sense of equality, authority, and legitimacy. Eva Tatham, a white Guide leader, described the effect of the shared uniform: “Guiding has meant more than ever before to the African Guides, and has shown them that the Fourth Guide Law is a very real part of South African Guiding.” Though the Wayfarers in Transvaal continued to wear a different uniform, it still gave girls a sense of status especially because Bantustan schools rarely had uniforms and the Association paid for badges so that even poor Wayfarers could show achievements.

Former Wayfarers and Guides often testified that the sense of community the movements provided and the skills they learned helped them overcome the obstacles of adolescence and prepared them for the responsibilities of adulthood. A former Guide explained that Sunbeams, Wayfarers, and Girl Guides kept African girls who lived in townships from becoming involved with gangs and street violence. Clare Lawrence, the founder of Tumelong, recalled at the mission’s 1959 Anniversary celebration, “One girl came to see me the other day and told me how much she had learnt in Sunday School and Guides had trained her for life. Now she is a social worker among her own people.” An Annual Wayfarer’s Report of 1964 asserted that many of its African leaders went on to hold positions of responsibility within their communities. One former Wayfarer officer credited the movement with her professional success working as an activist at the YWCA, South African Institute of Race Relations, and Legal Resources Centre.

The Free State premier from 1999 to 2004 who had been involved in the Guiding movement since 1942 and became the first African Chief Commissioner in 1992, Isabella “Winkie” Direko, explained, “Without a doubt, I owe my success to the education, training and support I received from the Girl Guides, particularly the courageous Guiding women who, while the black people were being controlled and repressed, encouraged and helped me to be strong and assertive, who inspired me to help others as I had been helped, and who gave me the courage to overcome all obstacles to triumph in the end.”

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86 Quoted in Gaitskell, “Upward Play,” 239; Girl Wayfarers’ Association, 10.
87 Glaser, Bo-Tsotsi, 107.
88 Audrey, Peace-Making in South Africa, 92, 97.
Often both Associations affected its members in ways that their designers never could have anticipated. In a short biography of Dolly Rathebe, a popular jazz singer who performed in film and at all-white clubs, Can Themba, one of the most prominent writers of the Sophiatown Renaissance of the fifties, recalled that she had been an “ardent girl guide and entered all the activities of the Girl Guide movement. She loved going on parade, going camping, or just going about the streets of Sophiatown in her smart, always neat, Girl Guide uniform.”91 Alan Cobley, a historian of South Africa, concludes that the Wayfarer program led to similar unanticipated results. He explains, “Those women and girls who participated in the Wayfarers Association did much to subvert and transform its intended objectives.”92 Though the programs of the Girl Guides and the Transvaal Wayfarers reflected the racial biases of their white liberal segregationist founders, some African girls and women used them to achieve greater prestige and respect in their communities.93

Voortrekkers

At the time of the merger between Girl Guides and Wayfarers in 1936, most Afrikaner Guides had already left the Girl Guides to join Voortrekkers. Most of those who had not previously left did so after the merger. While the founders and first adult leaders wanted an all-white apolitical scouting program that embraced the Afrikaner identity and culture as the basis of South African citizenship, the movement by the late 1930s became politicized. It gradually abandoned its call of community service that it shared with the Wayfarers and Girl Guides for the increasingly violent rhetoric of the Broederbond and government.94 Afrikaners never felt comfortable with the imperial aspects of Baden-Powell’s Scouting program. From its arrival in South Africa, Afrikaner women had developed local alternatives, yet none of these scouting initiatives grew into a national movement.95 In the 1920s, Dr. C. F. Visser, a member of the Broederbond in the Orange Free State and Dr. J. V. Hesse in the Cape Province developed a scouting program for Afrikaner boys. Martha Mabel Jansen, an Afrikaner nationalist, author, and suffragette, adapted the program for girls. In 1931, the movement became

official, made its headquarters in Bloemfontein, and chose its name in honor of the Boer pioneers of the Great Trek. Martha Jansen became the deputy leader of the girls’ branch. Because of the network of women activists Jansen brought with her and the movement’s connection with the Broederbond and Afrikaner politicians and government officials, Voortrekkers grew quickly.96

In many ways the Voortrekker program resembled that of the Girl Guides and Wayfarers. Members wore similar uniforms, recited a promise that encouraged participants to serve their God, nation, and neighbor, learned songs and dances, earned badges, attended camps and rallies, and organized community projects. Like the Wayfarer movement, the Voortrekker hoped members would grow up to be ambassadors of Western civilization and Christian values to what one Voortrekker called “barbarous southern Africa.”97 Unlike Girl Guides and Wayfarers, Voortrekkers taught participants that only white Christians who spoke the Afrikaner language could become true citizens of South Africa. Its handbook, only published in Afrikaans, encouraged members to help all people, but also stressed, “Our nation is the Afrikaner nation. It color is white, its language and culture Afrikaans, its land South Africa.... My fellow-man is the person near me. He is in the first place the person within my nation who shares my beliefs, my history, my language and culture. He is Afrikaner like me.”98

Despite the wishes of its founders, the Voortrekkers grew into an overtly politicized youth movement bent on building the defensive capacity of future South African citizens.99 The Voortrekkers’ participation in the 1938 centenary of the Great Trek cemented its ties to the National Party. South African photographer, David Goldblatt and the prominent South African art critic, Neville Dubow, explain, “The ardour and unity generated by the 1938 trek swept the National Party to power in 1948 and helped keep it there for forty years.”100 By the 1940s, Voortrekkers had become a prominent feature of volkfeeste or Afrikaner folk festivals. After the Nationalists rose to power in 1948, the government heavily subsidized the Voortrekkers, and many members of the government and their wives became leaders

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in the movement.\textsuperscript{101}

By the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, the Voortrekker girls’ scouting program reflected the militarization of Afrikaner society. It had become a training ground not only for the dutiful wives of future Broederbond members, but also for future warriors equipped with the military skills to defend their family and society.\textsuperscript{102} Hettie V., a Voortrekker during the sixties and seventies, recalls, “We learned about politics, basic survival, how to operate a two-way radio, how to do first aid. It was designed to fit us into a civil defense system.” During the Soweto Uprising of 1976, when her school armed student patrols to guard the school and surrounding community, Hettie felt Voortrekkers, with their experiences with guns and mock wars, would have an advantage on their classmates if they were forced to defend the school.\textsuperscript{103}

Hettie’s experiences were typical. The average Voortrekker camp included not only outdoor living skills but also political sessions.\textsuperscript{104} After the Soweto Uprising, girls who attended camp had contact with soldiers of the South African Defense Force (SADF) and learned “how to detonate a landmine, fire the Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifle, the LMG machine gun, the R-1 rifle, and the RPG rocket.”\textsuperscript{105} At a political session of the Voortrekker Easter Competition Camp that journalist David Harrison filmed, a group of campers defended minority rule in South Africa: “From one innocent young Afrikaner after another came the same answers. Our system is different. It is wrong that the outside world should see us as one country because here there are different volk with different identities.”\textsuperscript{106} Even the badgework became politicized. To attain the highest level, \textit{Staatmakers}, girls had to demonstrate “a sound understanding for the political situation of South Africa” to a member of the Nationalist Party.\textsuperscript{107}

Critics of the Voortrekkers compared it to the Hitler Youth. By the early 1980s, journalists and former members who had become involved in anti-apartheid politics claimed Voortrekkers had direct ties to the Broederbond. The \textit{Federatie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereenigings} (FAK), the public cultural wing of the Broederbond, oversaw and funded the organization. Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom, reporters who exposed the

\begin{enumerate}
\item Brewer, \textit{After Soweto}, 5.
\item Harrison, \textit{The White Tribe of Africa}, 201.
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extent of the Broederbond’s control, suggest that the Broederbond may have used Voortrekker gatherings as fronts to hide their secret meetings. Others inside and outside the Movement believed that the Broederbond chose its members from among the best performing male Voortrekkers. ¹⁰⁸

Unlike male Voortrekkers who could hope “to join the ranks of the Super-Afrikaners” and use their military skills in combat missions against anti-colonial activists in Namibia and South Africa, female Voortrekker only exercised their leadership skills as troop leaders, lower officers with the organization, and behind the scenes labor in the SADF. ¹⁰⁹ This may account for why Afrikaner boys joined Voortrekkers in higher numbers than girls. ¹¹⁰ Even in the 1970s, when the government opened the Army Women’s College and allowed women to participate in the commandos of the SADF, many leadership roles remained closed to them because they were not allowed to participate in combat. ¹¹¹ Because Voortrekkers continues today, its history remains contested and closely guarded making it difficult to determine how its politicization under apartheid affected the girls who joined. The former Voortrekkers who have published their experiences did so as part of anti-apartheid compilations in the late eighties and early nineties. ¹¹² Clearly, more research is needed. Nonetheless, the evidence available suggests that female Voortrekkers rarely gained the empowerment and encouragement to succeed from scouting that African Wayfarers and Guides did.

Conclusion

After apartheid ended and the Commonwealth readmitted South Africa, the differences between the three scouting organizations for girls became less overt. Wayfarers gradually subsumed into Girl Guides, which has continued its message of international citizenship. GGASA began to emphasize South Africa’s African roots,

The histories of these three scouting movements before and during apartheid in South Africa demonstrate the complex issues that citizenship youth training programs unearth. The movements shared a common purpose—to prepare girls for the responsibilities and obstacles that society would foist upon them during adolescence and adulthood. In the early thirties, their programs taught many of the same skills, encouraged members to engage in similar activities, and portrayed citizenship as a list of communal obligations. Despite their similar programs and purpose, each movement differently conceptualized the imagined community which members would take responsibility for in the future.

For Girl Guides, they initially wanted to promote a white imperial citizenship that would unite Afrikaner and British girls and women in friendship and cooperation. The Wayfarer movement mixed the Girl Guides’ ideals of imperial citizenship with Christianity and the adaptationist education theories popular among liberal segregationists. Voortrekkers envisioned members as future citizens of a white Afrikaner nation.

From the late thirties to the late fifties, the movements’ ideals of citizenship diverged more sharply. Edith Rheinallt Jones molded the Transvaal Wayfarer program to reflect what she and other white liberal segregationists believed to be the unique needs of African girls in order to justify her refusal to accept the merger between Girl Guides and the Wayfarers after her years of petitions. Until apartheid and the legalization of the Afrikaner idea of a white South Africa, Girl Guides and Wayfarers embraced a similar ideal of citizenship to an imperial community. During the late fifties and early sixties, Wayfarers abandoned this model and became an organization run by African women primarily living in the homelands. They encouraged girls to see themselves as members of their parents’ communities with the responsibility to improve conditions through Christian service. The imperial
legacies of Girl Guides diminished with the convergence of the rise of apartheid and the decolonization of the Empire. Through its rhetoric, interracial rallies, and policy to accept the election of African leaders to positions of power, the GGASA began to stress global citizenship.

The observations and recollections of former leaders and members of Wayfarers and Girl Guides, despite their different models of citizenship, stress the empowerment their scouting experiences gave them in their adult lives. That a greater percentage of African girls and women were involved in these two movements as compared to Pathfinders (the only scouting program that was available to non-Western South African Boys) confirms these interviews and reports. Moreover, both movements offered paid positions to African women at the officer level. The Voortrekker movement, with its exclusive Afrikaner definition of citizenship, was a predominately male scouting organization that marginalized girls and women from leadership roles. With apartheid and the growing militarization of South Africa, Voortrekkers stressed citizens as defenders of white power. Though girls like Hettie V. of the epigraph felt a sense of physical power through the weaponry skills they learned at camp from a young age, the movement’s connections to the all male Broederbond and the prohibitions placed on women in it, the government, and the SADF provided girls with few opportunities to see women accomplish the responsibilities that they understood Afrikaner citizenship to demand from men and women. Still, further research is needed to clarify the extent that the Voortrekkers, Girl Guides, and Wayfarers’ conceptions of citizenship diverged during the apartheid era and, since the demise of apartheid, intersected.

In his 2009 *Freedom’s Orator*, Robert Cohen accomplishes two important tasks: first, he provides a detailed biography of Mario Savio, the 1960s firebrand who is best remembered for his stirring speeches on behalf of UC Berkeley’s Free Speech Movement. Second, Cohen uses Savio as a lens through which to re-examine traditional narratives on the New Left. Ultimately Cohen expands our understanding of who exactly participated in the movement and which experiences spurred them to radical action.

By focusing on Savio, Cohen underscores the important (if oft-neglected) role non-elites and white ethnics played in the 1960s student movement. Savio’s story is full of revelations that compel us to rethink the stereotypical image of the campus radical. Instead of growing up in a sprawling suburb—the supposed wellspring for his generation’s ennui—Savio came from a cramped, conservative Italian household in Queens, New York. Probing deeply into his intellectual development, Cohen finds that Savio’s radicalism drew less on Marx and Marcuse than on the moral imperatives and implicit anti-capitalism of Catholicism. Interestingly, Savio later characterized these personal politics as “secularized liberation theology,” implicitly linking his strand of New Left ideology to Third World radicalism (6).

Above all, Cohen argues that the experience of fighting for civil rights in the South was the most important pedagogy for young radicals like Savio. Working alongside SNCC during the Freedom Summer taught him the value of mass protest and radical democratic organizational methods. Inspired by these experiences in the South, Savio and his fellow campus activists came to believe that “movements from below could bring democratic change, even in face of resistance by powerful... elites” (7).

When Savio returned to Berkeley in autumn 1964, he was eager to continue this campaign of social justice. Yet the university’s administrators did not share his zeal. They soon barred Savio and other student radicals from distributing leaflets on school property; violators were faced with arrest. This seemingly minor crackdown quickly became a site to contest deeper generational divergences, particularly the students’ and administrators’ incompatible conceptions of higher education. Administrators believed that the university’s chief duty was to provide a utilitarian, career-oriented curriculum. On the other hand, Cohen demonstrates that students wanted to pursue a “search for meaning” that could only be fulfilled by a “critical education which might involve questioning the social order” (90).

Tracing the ensuing conflict between students and administration, Cohen
shows how Savio and his fellow activists “brought to campus the civil rights movement’s political style.” The Free Speech Movement (FSM)—the organization Savio and his allies created to organize anti-administration protest—governed itself with the same “hyperdemocratic” ethos Savio learned from SNCC (227-8, 238). Accordingly, Savio and the FSM trumpeted conscience over practice, “ethics rather than efficiency” (185). Cohen does not fail to point out the pitfalls of this leaderless, consensus-driven approach: while morally consistent, it proved supremely unwieldy when confronting a regimented adversary like the Berkeley administration. Even so, their emphasis on means over ends proved influential. The FSM’s hyperdemocratic, deeply principled style would become the model for subsequent New Left campus activism.

Cohen reconstructs the pivotal clash between the students and administration in exacting detail. Careful renderings of each episode—from Savio’s iconic speech given atop a police car, to the protracted negotiations with University of California president Clark Kerr, to the massive sit-ins and protests that followed—form the bulk of the book’s central chapters. Indeed, Cohen merits praise for interweaving a wealth of participant interviews, personal papers and journalistic accounts into a cogent narrative. Yet the weight of all of this evidence ultimately encumbers Freedom’s Orator. Cohen’s careful prose captures little of the rhetorical flair and righteous passion that made Savio justifiably famous. Readers would do well to supplement Freedom’s Orator with recordings of those fiery 1964 speeches—the better to provide the emotion absent from this interesting (if sterile) work.

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Frank Dikötter’s Mao’s Great Famine is an intriguing study of Mao Zedong’s collectivization policies and their catastrophic effects on China during the Great Leap Forward. Dikötter indicts Communist Party leaders Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, and Zhou Enlai, as well as the provincial and local cadres, for murdering millions of innocent people. Challenging the previous historiographical record, Dikötter argues that the Communist regime caused the deaths of at least forty five million people during the period of 1958 to 1962. For Dikötter, the famine took place in part because of insane quotas set by the administration, and the immense lying about grain
Dikötter explains, “Obfuscation was the communist way of life. People lied to survive, and as a consequence information was distorted all the way up to the Chairman” (xiv). Thus, the goal of the book is to explain how China’s obstinate, corrupt, and inefficient policies led to massive death and destruction.

Mao’s “Pursuit of Utopia” began in 1957 with the Great Leap Forward, a movement characterized by the mass mobilization of millions of people to achieve rapidly communism, industrialism, and self-sufficiency. Mao’s radical socialist agricultural policies and immense quotas had utopian ideals, but were marred by socio-economic and structural flaws. By the end of 1958 alone, the countryside of five hundred million people was collectivized into 26,000 cumbersome and inefficient communes. The state focused its attention on increased steel production by bringing industry to the villages, creating “backyard furnaces” operated by unskilled peasants. While the demand for absurd quota numbers increased, people suffered from overwork, dangerous conditions, violence, and a major reduction of grain production.

Dikötter details the transformation of the countryside into the “Valley of Death.” Mao and the party leadership saw warning signs of famine existed as early as 1958, but these issues were ignored and the movement pressed on. While people starved, the Communist government exported grain and purchased mechanization to create a modern industry. The Great Leap Forward ruined China’s agriculture, with millions of farm animals dying from neglect, and essential farming equipment destroyed to make useless steel (141-4). State determined prices ruined trade and economics, in a system plagued by mismanagement, corruption, and failed policies which caused high inflation and loss of trade partners (156-61).

Housing in China took a devastating blow due to the massive construction and irrigation projects conducted by the regime. In the countryside alone, between thirty to forty percent of all homes were destroyed (163, 169). Dikötter also estimates perhaps as much as eighty percent of all Chinese forestry was destroyed during this period (176-8). Dikötter posits that “Survival” during the Great Leap was determined by social and political circumstances. Communist party members had a better chance of survival because of their access to quality goods and services (192-3). Survival for everyone else depended on “wheeling and dealing,” including inflating the ration roster, trading on the black market, and even some people’s selling of their children (198-204). Dikötter describes collectivization as a “war of attrition” against the people of the countryside, a battle people fought through theft and hoarding (209-212). Others attempted to flee, with nearly fifteen million peasants escaping to the cities in 1958. However, overpopulation, lack of food, and rampant unemployment prompted the government to force people back to the countryside (230-40).

Dikötter details the many “Ways of Dying” in this period, including accidents,
disease, labor camps, violence, and hunger. Government repression resulted in the creation of reeducation camps which were flooded with nine million people in any given year, and probably three million people died in these camps during the famine (288-91). Violence became a tool of control, as Dikötter estimates two and a half million people were either tortured or beaten to death from 1958-1962 (298). Using unpublished archival data from the Public Security Bureau and Statistical Bureau, Dikötter estimates at least forty five million people died throughout the famine period. While the author does not call this tragedy a “genocide,” he reveals how deliberate government policies led to the deaths of helpless men, women, and children.

_Mao’s Great Famine_ is a well-researched study on the effects of Mao’s Great Leap Forward. The levels of destruction and violence which swept across China in the name of Communist utopia caused one of the worst catastrophes in human history. Mao Zedong and the party issued the orders which led to these atrocities, and knew plenty of details about the effects of their commands on all levels. While much more research needs to be done on this subject, it may be many years before anyone ever knows the full extent of the damage caused by the Great Leap Forward.

**Justin Pfeifer**
University of Toledo

**Andrew Pettegree.** _The Book in the Renaissance. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010._

In _The Book in the Renaissance, _Andrew Pettegree tells the story of the transformation from the scholarly, medieval book world to the development of the sixteenth-century reading public. Pettegree argues that books had a paradoxical quality in the Renaissance, because as they became more readily available, they blossomed into myriad topics, making ideas impossible to control. To argue this, he divides his study into four thematic parts: beginnings, consolidation, conflict, and new worlds. The bulk of his detailed analysis focuses on the sixteenth century, yet spans Europe in scope. Disappointingly, he offers no conclusion, but a paragraph considering how book collectors of the beginning of the sixteenth century would not recognize the book market that had developed by the end of the sixteenth century.

While much of Pettegree’s study is novel in scope, his first two parts, in which he examines the beginnings of book culture all the way to the new recreational reading market of the end of the sixteenth century, are his real contribution to the
literature on the history of books. In them, he traces the existence of books before print, to the invention of printing, to the crisis of the first era of print, in which it was realized that the material and ideas within printed books could not be controlled. Scarce, expensive, and hand-written books and manuscripts attracted an educated and wealthy audience, while cheap books were thought to attract the wrong sort of reader. Although print had a profound effect on the book industry, fifty years after Gutenberg’s invention, the book world still primarily revolved around a restricted readership with a conservative range of texts. Yet the book market broke open as an independent infrastructure from manuscripts; books came into their own as they now had title pages, dedications, and indices. By mid-sixteenth century, readership grew, and along with it, subject matter expanded. As such, the book market consolidated into major cities across Europe, such as Paris, Antwerp, and Basel. For smaller cities, such as Wittenburg, print spurred their growth. Pettegree points out that Luther’s work transformed the book, but carefully couples his statement with another noting that many parts of Europe had a pluralistic, alternative Catholic book market, so as to show that evangelical texts did not totally dominate the new book trade.

Along with the book trade came complex relationships between authors, editors, printers, and patrons. One way in which this relationship is exposed is through book dedications. Dedications could be short poems or notes, but more often took the form of extended essays or philosophies with specific purposes. They acknowledged relationships, asked for rewards, and associated works with illustrious figures in the hopes of gaining recognition, along with many other minor purposes. Tellingly, dedications were often addressed to noblewomen, showing the growing influence of women in literary patronage, which was a clear shift from the medieval book market.

Pettegree’s research for this study came out of his thorough research of libraries across Europe for the Universal Short Title Catalogue. Though this study is less analytical than many of his previous studies, he captures the history and the impact of the printed book in the sixteenth century, from technical production to limited edition pamphlets to the impact of the scientific revolution. As such, he remains one of the foremost scholars on the history of the book.

Valerie Schutte
University of Akron

In *God’s Arbiters*, Susan K. Harris explores the intersection of religion, race, and imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century by examining responses to the Philippine-American War. Harris concentrates on this war in particular because “it has not filtered into public consciousness” and because, as the moment in which the United States became a world power, “the rhetoric of American identity employed to debate the costs of annexing the Philippines echo eerily in current debates over America’s global responsibilities” (6). With America’s current geo-political circumstances in mind, Harris offers a cautionary tale of intermingling religion, race, public education, literature, and international affairs.

Organized thematically, Harris’ work is composed of three sections. The first section, “American Narratives,” contains two chapters that consider “Citizenship and the Philippines Debates,” from the perspective of religion and race, respectively. In these chapters she convincingly demonstrates that “the religious elements in the debates are neither confined to specifically religious interests nor tangential to discussions of race and economics” (29). Rather, evangelicals, legislators, and critics alike “drew from the same discursive pot” (32). The second section, “Creating Citizens,” examines the ways in which debates about imperialism contributed to the development of a national identity. The final section, “The Eyes of the World,” steps outside of the United States to explore the ways in which intellectuals in England, Europe, Latin America, and the Philippines reacted to America’s imperial interests. In the final chapter, Harris considers the interests that drove Spain and the Philippines in particular.

Though his name is not in the title, Mark Twain looms large in this monograph. With a background as a Twain scholar and an expert in nineteenth-century literature, Harris is at her best when elucidating the intricacies of Twain’s thought and his relationship to the larger trends toward the end of the nineteenth century. As Harris explains, Twain serves “as a measure of nineteenth-century Americans’ understanding of who they were and how the government that represented them should be conducting itself on the global level” (5). Twain deserves this sort of attention, she asserts, because he “is the man who embodies the conflicting assumptions held by most white Americans” (7). Deeply troubled by the United States’ imperial interests, Twain opposed the Philippine-American war. More importantly, he did so by engaging the same Christian-inspired language of his ideological foes. Despite disagreeing with American advancement abroad, Harris argues, Twain was compelled by the same national myth that endowed the United States with an exceptionalism that required it be an example to the rest of the world.
Although Harris provides an important contribution, especially with her emphasis on the interconnectedness of religion, race, and imperialism, this work is not without its weaknesses. For instance, many of Harris’ primary sources for the way American and non-American intellectuals reacted to American intervention abroad rely on recollections written decades later rather than being composed at the end of the nineteenth-century. This narrative would have been strengthened if Harris had considered the role that memory played in constructing, and indeed sustaining, a collective understanding of American identity. In particular, greater attention to the way in which Filipinos’ and Americans’ sentiments changed as they aged would have added depth to the final chapter. While Harris remains attuned to the ways in which Twain’s thoughts on American identity, national mission, and Christianity changed over time, the same is not afforded to other historical actors. Moreover, by emphasizing the way in which debates about the Philippine-American war “echo” and, therefore, linger in the American consciousness, Harris resists positing Twain’s change of heart as a reflection of changes to American identities. Twain—the ostensible embodiment of nineteenth-century white Protestantism—grows older, wiser, and more reflexive; America does not. Harris leaves unexplained why that may be.

In so doing, Harris’s work is framed by a clear sense of frustration that religion, race, and international politics converged in this way. Harris would like for readers to better understand the past in order to prevent future follies of this sort. Accordingly, Harris methodically attempts to unravel the logic behind this long lasting myth of American exceptionalism. In particular she notes when religious concepts are conflated with racial, political, or economic ones. By untangling religious—and therefore allegedly subjective, abstract, and emotional—interpretations from political or racial interests, Harris attempts to illustrate “the contradiction inherent in using Christianity as a cover for imperial designs” (60).

Harris’ presumption that Christianity is misused when applied to imperialism, however, is the second and more important weakness in this work. God’s Arbiters would have benefitted from greater engagement with scholars of American Religious History and Religious Studies. There is a growing body of work that not only acknowledges the connection between religion and imperialism but also asserts the centrality of religion to imperial agendas. For instance, Regina Schwartz’s The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) contends that violence, especially to a perceived inferior “other,” is inherent to monotheisms. Narrowing his scope to a particular location, David Chidester in his Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996) provides an apt example of colonialism and religion being not two separate and ostensibly contradictory “influences” that parallel one another but rather two sides of the same
Reviews

Cara Burnidge
Florida State University


With The Gods of Prophetstown: The Battle of Tippecanoe and the Holy War for the American Frontier, historian Adam Jortner presents a remarkable dual biography of the Shawnee prophet Tenskwatawa and the then Indiana territorial governor William Harrison and their interactions in the first decade of the 19th century. The focus of the monograph is noteworthy, as Jortner commits considerable effort into describing the religious influences/undertones and sects of the era. Jortner’s groundbreaking analysis of the religious constructs of the evolving American frontier places Tenskwatawa and Harrison on a collision course over who would control the Northwest Territory and “religious truth—over whose god should rule” (107).

The book has a multi-layered approach to the conflict between Harrison and Tenskwatawa that concerns itself with both the religious and political impact of the two leaders. Jortner writes in an easy to follow and sharp prose that does not assume knowledge, making the monograph enjoyable and informative for the layman and experienced historian alike. In writing about a continuously revisited subject, Jortner imaginatively grounds his monograph in religion as a cultural construct. This is seen with many other biographies concerning Tenskwatawa, such as R. David Edmunds’ The Shawnee Prophet. But Jortner explores the profound political and religious consequences concerning Tenskwatawa’s beliefs and how his “cause made him the greatest political threat to American power in the calamitous and lawless world of the early American frontier” (1). Jortner explores how his “religious message did provide a working alternative to the accomodationist policies of the Indian leadership” surrounding him and that he was “not only a religious teacher but also an opposition political leader” (102, 103). Jortner’s work is similar to Joel Martin’s Sacred Revolt concerning the nativist Red Stick movement with the Creeks, placing
religious movements at the forefront and as the “agents and not the outcomes of historical change” (10).

Jortner notes that historians now “face east’ instead of west” to consider the Native American experience with Europeans, as well as to “face west’ once again, to explore the cultural world of frontier Americans” (13). In this dual biography, Jortner does both to consider the religious aspects of both Tenskwatawa and Harrison. Jortner is lengthy in his explanation of deist Christianity in the evolution of the young United States. This deist identity also explains how Harrison conducts his relations with Tenskwatawa and his letters containing condemnation of Tenskwatawa’s use of miracles, claiming them to be magic or tricks. In his discussion of Harrison’s religious beliefs and his thoughts on providence, Jortner is able to expand the perceived realities of the time period from both the eyes of Harrison and the rest of frontier America.

In The Gods of Prophetstown, Jortner presents a refreshing perspective on the history of the American frontier. He does not attempt to prove or disprove theories concerning whether certain miracles, religions or events where true or false but rather focuses on the effect that these events and beliefs had on the psyche and actions of the affected parties. Jortner notes that “in explaining human society, the salient fact is not whether what [was]… claimed was true but whether people believed” (9). With this premise intact, Jortner has created a fantastic work that not only discusses the events leading up to the final confrontations of Tenskwatawa and Harrison, but also the religious and political implications of their beliefs. The Gods of Prophetstown is a welcome addition to the growing field of Native American and American religious studies and is highly recommended.

Jeff Washburn
University of Idaho


Kevin M. Schultz’s Tri-Faith America tells the story of America’s twentieth-century transformation from a Mosaic nation to a mosaic one. Following in the intellectual footsteps of David Hollinger, who supervised the dissertation that this book is based upon, Schultz documents the demise of “Protestant America” and its replacement by a pluralistic, largely secular regime by mid-century. Throughout the text, the return
of a conservative Protestantism with remarkable political clout looms over the horizon.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first, Schultz traces the emergence and spread of the idea of “tri-faith” America, composed of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, and committed to religious toleration and national unity. The tri-faith idea arose in response to 1920s nativism. In an attempt to understand the popularity of the resurgent Ku Klux Klan, leaders from the three faiths joined together to better educate American citizens about religious diversity and goodwill. Eventually, the organization at the forefront of this effort became known as the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ). Through a variety of educational programs, including a cross-country speaking tour undertaken by three clergymen known as the “Tolerance Trio,” the NCCJ sought to promote greater awareness, understanding, and acceptance of minority faiths.

The events of WWII only helped the NCCJ’s effort, as the war brought many young Americans into contact with non-Protestants for the first time. Chaplains of the three faiths played a large role in promoting the ideals of the NCCJ, and by 1945, the organization had distributed more than eight million pieces of religious literature to chaplains and servicemen. After the war, the tri-faith idea took firm hold in American culture. Analyzing books, speeches, films, and guidebooks from the postwar period, Schultz demonstrates the prevalence and power of the tri-faith discourse; at a time when the nation found itself in an ideological war against “godless Communism,” the tri-faith idea served as America’s moral compass.

In part two, which is organized as a series of case studies, Schultz demonstrates how the tri-faith idea encouraged not religious amalgamation, as might have been expected, but rather “communalism,” the persistence of religious distinctiveness. A chapter on postwar suburbia shows that Catholic and Jewish newcomers to the suburbs tended to live among their co-religionists, even as they preached the value of tolerance; for them, pluralism demanded “multiple melting pots.” In the next chapter, Schultz analyzes several court cases involving religion in public schools, arguing that, for a variety of reasons, Catholics and Jews espoused a strong separation between church and state. In two subsequent chapters, on college fraternities and the US census, Schultz demonstrates how minority religions like Catholics and Jews worked together to promote a vision of religious group rights in which fraternities could self-segregate. Schultz illustrates how those two groups sharply disagreed over putting religion on the census, as Catholics saw it as a welcome opportunity to announce their national power, while Jews vehemently opposed it based on religious privacy. In the final chapter, Schultz notes how the civil rights movement, which stressed ethno-racial identity, both found fertile ground thanks to the liberal work of religious groups like the NCCJ and pushed religious
toleration to the background.

In the book’s conclusion, Schultz attempts to explain the rise of the New Right, which since the 1970s has been buoyed by a powerful conservative Protestant base. In one of the story’s many ironies, Schultz argues that tri-faith America actually contributed to this situation. First, one of the unintended consequences of a pluralist nation has been an increasingly secular one. The “backlash” against this secularism is, according to Schultz, a driving force behind conservative Christianity’s politics. At times, in fact, Schultz lays the blame squarely on religious liberals (like the NCCJ) that did not marshal the theistic valences of the discourse of “Judeo-Christian tradition,” letting it instead become a “civic religion,” and eventually, a rhetorical tool of the religious right. Second, the triangulation of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews on matters of religion and state has been, to say the least, messy. Catholics and Jews tended to unite against Protestant hegemony, but just as quickly Catholics united with Protestants against secularism, which Jews overwhelmingly supported. As a result, conservative Protestants and Catholics (and some Jews) soon found themselves, as James Davison Hunter has shown, united in a battle for the nation’s soul. But despite this blowback, Schultz believes the national progress achieved through the tri-faith ideal was irrevocable.

Overall, there is much to recommend in this book. Except for a lack of attention to matters of gender, in both religion and politics, its jargon-free prose will serve well for undergraduate courses and for graduate students looking for a model for their dissertations.

Jason Schulman
Emory University


Donald Raleigh’s oral history project takes as its subject the Soviet generation that “experienced the best that the Soviet system had to offer yet came to reject it” (363). Interviewing 60 individuals from the 1967 graduating classes of two elite English-language schools in Moscow and Saratov, Raleigh follows this cohort from childhood to retirement, threading together individual stories into a collective biography. In doing so, their life experiences shed light on the various transformations of the Soviet system after Stalin. Unlike their parents, Raleigh’s “Baby Boomers” came of age in a comparatively stable environment lacking omnipresent fear and spared the violent
cataclysms of war—and it shows. When reflecting on their lives, those interviewed commonly cited the ability to travel both inside and outside the boundaries of the Second World, foreign (particularly American) cultural products and their personal (rather than collective) experiences as central to their lives. While many of the themes discussed in Raleigh’s volume are familiar to historians (such as the retreat from public life and the ubiquity of blat) the stories related by the interviewees provide a remarkable clarity and three-dimensional perspective that breathe new life into studies of post-Stalinism and the lived experience of Soviet socialism.

The chapters are organized chronologically, beginning with family life, moving on to school experiences, and then proceed roughly according to standard scholarly periodization. The interviewees considered their families to be vital spaces for their development, providing “alternative histories” to official narratives and directly shaping their own political attitudes and worldviews. While 80% of those interviewed had at least one parent in the party, few interviewees were raised in orthodox Communist families. This fact points to party membership as an essential criterion for success and marker of social position rather than an indicator of unflagging political loyalty. For some, home life exposed them to pre-revolutionary religious traditions. For others, families shared samizdat and listened to foreign radio broadcasts. At school, they received instruction from both party ideologues and shestdesiatniki (literally, “sixties-ers”) inspired by the liberalizing reforms of the Thaw even after its time had passed. These elite magnet schools groomed the Baby Boomers for success, boasting universal Komsomol membership and near-total college placement.

As the Baby Boomers reached adulthood, their happy, stable childhoods paradoxically had planted seeds of discontent with the Soviet system—stemming in large part from their increasing contact with global youth culture and the outside world. The delayed gratification promised by the Soviet state wore thin for this generation, serving only to further disillusionment as the Baby Boomers traveled to the “near abroad” of the Eastern Bloc and beyond. Yet their embrace of Western culture did not equate to political protest. Even while tuning into foreign radio broadcasts or passing along samizdat, none of those interviewed considered themselves to be dissidents. At the same time, no one professed to being true believers in party ideology—or to knowing any among their generation! Instead, most “lived in search of the Soviet dream—or the next sliver of sausage—steering clear of the KGB the best that they could” (244). With “confidence in tomorrow” fading away over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, Raleigh argues that the Baby Boomer generation was ready for Gorbachev’s reforms even if they did not know it. Unlike a similar line advanced by anthropologist Alexei Yurchak, the unmaking of the Soviet system did not come from Gorbachev’s reforms, but rather from the Baby
Boomers’ own growing cynicism and practices of gaming the system during the Brezhnev years.¹

However, while they may have been ready for perestroika and believed in its inevitability, their initial enthusiasm quickly dwindled as economic turmoil set in and the Soviet Union split apart. One-sixth of interviewees emigrated during the Soviet twilight, though the ones that stayed continued to use the skills acquired under socialism to navigate the tumultuous 1990s. Many baby boomers changed careers during this time as marketization resulted in a reversal of values. Like perestroika, enthusiasm for American-style capitalism soon waned as the crushing realities of shock therapy took hold—and for some, ending the love affair with America had since their youth.

By placing the experiences of Muscovites and Saratovites in comparison, this study also probes regional differences and center-periphery relations in the Soviet Union. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Saratovites generally believed Moscow to be a site of comparative privilege. As a site of vital military production during the Cold War, Saratov remained off-limits to foreign visitors until 1991. On the other hand, “open” Moscow facilitated greater access to the West. Increasing travel to the Soviet Union meant that Muscovites had greater opportunities not only to converse with native English speakers and improve their language skills, but also the connections to acquire more readily Western clothes, books, and rock ‘n’ roll. Moreover, during times of shortage, store shelves went bare in Saratov and the countryside, while Muscovites continued to reap the bounty afforded to their central position in the Soviet social hierarchy.

While the space of this review only allows for the most cursory of thematic coverage, casual readers and scholars alike will certainly delight in the wealth of intriguing material contained in this volume.

Brandon Gray Miller
Michigan State University


¹ Alexei Yurchak, Everything was Forever, Until it was No More: The Last Soviet Generation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
What drives women to smoke? This question animates Sharon Anne Cook’s analysis of the social context of female smoking in Canada; a context, she argues, that has been greatly neglected by anti-tobacco initiatives. While English Canada is the main focus, the work both draws from and contributes to a growing literature on tobacco use and visual culture throughout the North Atlantic world. Based on an impressive array of sources, including movies, diaries, posters, interviews, and magazines, Cook complicates traditional explanations of female smoking that rely on concepts focusing on media manipulation, peer pressure, or body image. Of course, these are all factors, but *Sex, Lies, and Cigarettes* also considers factors that often escape notice, including a sense of empowerment and identity construction. The central question takes on dual meaning as both a historical and contemporary concern; Cook is strongly critical of many of the anti-tobacco initiatives, provocatively calling the twentieth century campaign “almost laughably inept” (4). The figures she presents from Health Canada buttress her claim, for after years of steady decline, tobacco use amongst young women in Canada has recently stabilized around seventeen percent (7).

Befitting a work that draws heavily from visual sources, Cook draws on influential theories for ‘reading’ the visual. Particularly prominent is Michael Foucault’s ‘technologies of the self,’ a concept which draws attention to the various ways in which people use visual cues, forms of conduct, and modes of operation to attain status, influence, or self-worth. Judith Butler’s work on performativity’s social magic is also effectively employed; in particular, chapter eleven provides a fascinating range of case studies of women at the margins who replicate and subvert tropes of cigarette use. The juxtaposition of a young woman living on Vancouver’s notorious East Hastings and the publicity shot of actress Rosalind Russell provides a striking example of the performance of cigarette use (338). Finally, Cook assists the reader with assessing the many photos that grace the book by considering the denoted, connoted, and mythical meanings of images, employing the work of Janne Seppanen and others (16-7). Her introductory chapter provides a clear and useful guide for how Cook evaluates the many images in the work.

According to Health Canada, smoking attracts women by offering status, sexuality, slenderness, sophistication, and sociability; these ‘Five S’s’ broadly shape Cook’s analysis (6). She traces how women both adopted and fought tobacco use as a means to acquire one or more of these social goods. For instance, chapter two considers how Bertha Wright, member of the Women Christian Temperance Union’s youth wing, gained both status and influence from her work as an anti-tobacco crusader in the late nineteenth century. Wright’s story exemplifies how Cook effectively uses biography to illustrate the broad themes considered in her work.
of stories like those of Wright, political scientist Pauline Jewett, and Alberta frontier doctor Mary Percy Jackson abundantly illustrate one of Cook’s central points—the reasons for smoking (or not smoking) are complex and are bound to class, location, social status, media, and self-image. The multiple rationales behind tobacco use illustrate how women both shape views of smoking and are in turn influenced by how smoking is marketed. Her many case studies help scholars with moving beyond the often unsatisfying binary of corporate manipulation versus consumer agency.

While Cook’s case for the need to better understand female motivations for smoking for effective anti-tobacco messaging is most convincing, the evaluation of some past campaigns might have been a bit more generous. She is not especially persuaded that more recent efforts to illustrate graphically the ramifications of smoking on the lungs and other organs, or other ‘shock’ medically orientated campaigns, are effective. She contends that like other anti-tobacco movements, they fail to fully grasp female reasons for smoking; especially the social benefits accrued from tobacco use (128, 141-2). While undoubtedly true for some women, it seems plausible that some young women have and do respond to medically-orientated messaging as much as young men; casting them as entirely ineffective seems to flatten female responses as much as contending that only medical based warnings are effective.

What this book does contribute is both an ambitious and fascinating exploration of the Canadian woman’s historical relation to tobacco and a compelling case and suggestions for more effective anti-tobacco messaging. Many of the individual chapters, or indeed the entire book, would be well employed in courses on gender, consumption, or advertising in Canada or North America. With any luck, the work will also end up on the shelves of some policy makers at Health Canada.

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About the Contributors

Matthew Bessette recently graduated from SUNY-Brockport with an MA in history. He received a BA in philosophy from Rhode Island College. Since graduating, Bessette has begun research that builds off of his MA thesis, “‘Nervous Diseases’ and the Politics of Healing in America, 1869-1919,” by examining the hegemony of therapeutic ideology within the social sciences from the late twentieth century up to the present.

William Hamilton is a PhD candidate who studies public and oral history at Concordia University (Montreal, Quebec). His dissertation examines how communities in Northern Ontario are commemorating their past now that many of the mines and mills that drove Euro-Canadian expansion northwards are closing. It is hoped that providing a fuller account of economic change will help move the discussion away from the determinist metaphors (ex. boom then bust) that structure popular and academic understandings of hinterland regions and deindustrializing places.

Mark Leeming is interested in the development of environmental ethics in Canada and the world and will soon defend a dissertation on the history of environmental activism in Nova Scotia.

Mark McCulloch’s paper is part of his larger dissertation project titled “Consumption Junction, What’s Its Function? Consumer Co-Operatives, State-Citizen Relations, and Consumer Culture in the German Democratic Republic.” The project was successfully defended in July 2012.

Randolph Miller is an advanced PhD student in Modern European History at UW-Milwaukee. He is doing work on masculinity and French radicalism in the 19th century.

Sally Stanhope is a PhD candidate at Georgia State University. She recently completed her thesis, “‘White, Black, and Dusky’: Girl Guiding in Malaya, Nigeria, India, and Australia from 1909-1960.” Currently, she works as an Academic Coach at DeKalb PATH Academy, a public middle school that strives to provide students from low-income backgrounds a college-preparatory education.