

Durham University History in Politics Society Journal

Transitions

Issue no. 6

Summer 2023



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noun • plural

1 a (1) : the process or periods of changing from one state or condition to another

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Senior Editor's letter

Transitions, meaning changes, are a pertinent topic of discussion. The world is undergoing constant change: American hegemony to multipolarity, poor to developed, disunited to globalised. This journal reflects on past changes throughout history. It adopts a more specific scope than the global, reflecting how global transitions are the product of smaller-scale, localised transitions that happen across all temporal and spatial scopes. My letter in the last journal, *Mentalities*, highlighted the record number of submissions received. The submissions for this journal have set a new record. The work chosen here represents a high-quality, broad survey of the different topics covered by Durham students, reflective of the best and most relevant submissions received.

Transitions adopts a chronological structure, covering ancient to modern times. This structure has been chosen to show the depth of change throughout history, leading up to the recent changes of the last hundred years, which gains more attention than any other temporal period. The journal commences with Harry Alexander Eaton's study of ancient burial graves, and their value as sources to students of ancient social history. Eaton argues that the graves are key sources for understanding the ancient past: from its burial practices, life expectancy, attitudes towards wealth, and social dynamics. Graves become progressively more important the further back in time one goes, acting as key sources in ages of limited literature and other alternate materials.

Following Eaton's article, our President, Ethan Sanitt, studies the influences of the Mongols. Sanitt's work builds upon a growing field of study into the Mongols and their important role as cultural transfusers, as part of a 'global middle ages'. He shows how Mongol legacies were inconsistent, and differed from place to place. Sanitt adopts a new approach to such, treating the legacy of Mongol rule as determined by how Mongol customs were received, not how they were given. He thus examines transitions from a new perspective that centres the clients of the Mongols, not the Mongols themselves. Correspondingly, our Vice President, Tallulah De Tomaso, sticks with the Mongols in East Asia, but addresses instead the transition in China from Mongol to Manchu rule, and how the Manchu's 'conquered the Mongols'. The two articles on the Mongols demonstrate how the same spaces at the same times can witness multiple differing transitions.

Afterwards, Tiffany Chan looks at the Qing frontier with Joseon Korea in the early 18th century. Chan pulls upon Korean sources and highlights Korean autonomy and agency, differing from the previously used Sino-Centric model of East Asian history. Her approach fits within the study of frontiers as porous places of exchange stemming from Frederick Jackson Turner's 'Frontier Thesis', showing how the frontier between Qing and Joseon led to extensive transitions in both countries. Indeed, she shows a transition in the historiography of scholarship on Qing China, towards a subalternist approach that challenges the supposed 'Sino-Sphere'.

The journal then turns to a period of dramatic change in Europe: the Romantic Revolution. Alessandro Bianchi focuses on the changing perceptions of the form of God throughout the Revolution. Alessandro argues that over the revolution Man as a unit replaced God in the minds of Europeans, and examines the different ideas of biblical themes throughout many of the key works of the period, from Voltaire to the Shelleys.

Having established the long-term and varied nature of transitions - from Mongol art in China to Percy Shelley - the journal then addresses modern themes of the last 100 years. It starts by examining transitions in identity along the Hungarian-Slovak border. Here, Tully Hyams focuses on the town of Komárno, a Slovak border town with Hungary. It is a micro-historical study, focusing on the subalterns of the town, showing how over the twentieth century the town's political status transitioned, and how history was used to create differing ideas of the town and its people. The study holds immense value for showing transitions are often localised, based on local characteristics, and have a calculable impact. They are not, simply, abstract shifts on a broad scale, and should not be exclusively studied as such.

Following this micro-history, Evie Nicholson broadens the study to examine a national space: Afghanistan. She examines the changing importance of radio to Afghanistan, a vital medium to study despite its general rejection by cultural historians. Nicholson argues that the emergence of radio in Afghanistan was a major transition in the twentieth century, serving to maintain patriarchal structures across society. The article thus reveals how transitions do not have to challenge the status quo, but can often be harnessed to maintain order.

Transitions concludes by examining transitions in historiography, through Megan Yocum's study on the differing historiographical views on propaganda in Weimar Germany. Megan's piece reveals how historiography itself is in a constant state of transition, with study of a topic rarely fixed, and adapting and changing with the times to reflect different academic - as well as sociopolitical - trends.

The eight articles here are the product of eight different students from Durham's community, spanning all undergraduate years. I, and the wider History in Politics exec, thank them for their submissions, as we do the authors of the submissions that were not chosen to feature. I also thank, as ever, the tireless work of the editorial team, as well as Ethan, for running the society, Tallulah, for assisting Ethan, and Jack, for publicising the journal and helping us receive a record number of submissions.

Julius Balchin

Senior Editor



Burials and ancient history

Harry Alexander Eaton



How useful are burials and grave monuments for our understanding of ancient social history?

Funerary sites are an extremely valuable source that shed light on the social conditions and values of ancient societies, particularly during periods of literary paucity such as the Greek Dark Ages (C11th-C8th BCE). Whilst different types of archaeological material found at burial locations each bear their own limitations, a wide range of insights into ancient culture can be posited, including burial practices, life expectancy, attitudes towards wealth, and social dynamics. Of course, extrapolating from a set of samples, which may be biased towards a certain class or gender, especially in cases of small sample sizes, can prove problematic, but this essay argues that burials, in both physicality and process, and grave monuments were vital resources for understanding the milieu of ancient civilisations, particularly Greece and Rome.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the availability, and thus significance, of funerary material as a source for social reconstruction varies depending on a given location and even period; societies undergo continual change, and so too can their burial practices. Classical Athens, for instance, has comparatively few items preserved in graves due to a prominent philosophical sentiment of humility.¹ Excessive wealth displayed in funerary practices was seen as superfluous, and Plutarch recalls that Solon installed laws restricting mourning and funeral expenditure, which may have directly caused this relative scarcity.² On the one hand, this shows the potential problem of a lack of material, but it likewise reveals to historians the unimportance of wealth in a funerary context compared to, for instance, Republican and Imperial Rome. Burial practices differed across Greece, with both inhumation and cremation common. Much like the predominance of Athenian literature, this can lead to an uneven distribution of material.

However, with the methodological problems outlined, it is important to evaluate the value of the extant examples that we do have access to. Morris outlines burials as an extension of funerary rituals, and “in rituals people use symbols to make explicit social structure”, representing the ‘daily life’ (as they understand it) of their society.³ Thus, extant mortuary material should in theory allow for reconstruction of individualistic conceptualisations of society if not a degree of social history itself. Recently, a wide range of evidence from burials has come into scholarly focus as having “enormous value in studies of collective and individual identities, social structure and organization... [and] social and cultural practices.”⁴

Skeletal remains, grave goods, reliefs and epitaphs, and even the form of burial plots – whether that be a simple headstone or a mausoleum – all prove useful in positing the social constructs of a particular context and that of the individual involved. The Tomb of the Baker, an extravagant mausoleum built in the late first-century BCE to honour a freedman called Eurysaces, reveals a societal shift in the role of freedman during the late Republican and early Imperial period, as he was clearly able to amass a fortune. Its inscription identifies the individual’s name and class, and its shape as a flour storage silo, with surrounding friezes depicting baking scenes rather than the mythological scenes one might expect on the tomb of a Roman elite, recalled Eurysaces’ occupation, demonstrating that burials became a Roman method of self-expression.⁵ This, compared to the somewhat utilitarian nature of Athenian funerals envisioned by Solon, is a stark difference reflective of their mutual cultures. Athenian funerals (*kēdeia*) were typically characterised by laying out the body (*prothesis*), carrying to its burial place (*ekphora*), and interment or disposal. Roman funerals, on the other hand, became a spectacle and

1 I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992), p.106, Table 5; Hdt. VII.101-2; IX.121-2; Thuc. I.95.

2 Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 21.4-5; Cicero, *Laws* II.26.

3 I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992), p.1.

4 Dimakis, N. & Dijkstra, T.M., *Mortuary Variability and Social Diversity in Ancient Greece: Studies on Ancient Greek Death and Burial* (Archaeopress, 2020), p.1.

5 CIL I2.1204.

an opportunity to display wealth.⁶ Once the body was transferred to its final site, an animal would typically be sacrificed, and a funeral feast would often be held at the grave and/or nine days later.⁷ Mourners made regular returns to tombs for feasting.⁸ Naturally, this meant more focus was placed upon the form graves took and how much wealth (provided one could afford it) could be dedicated to both the gravesites (which attests to itself in the archaeological record) and the funerary process.⁹ Tombs built on the Roman acropolis reflect this, demonstrating different views of Greek and Roman wealth; stone couches were placed at the entrance of graves for people to sit alongside the dead. Smaller plots were accompanied by libation holes in which mourners could pour drinks to 'share' with the deceased, further indication of a materialism which Greek funerary sites do not typically exemplify. Thus, burial sites became a communal place of commemoration rather than merely for interment, and thereby became a more prominent and visible aspect of daily life.

Modern scholars have utilised burials and grave markers to estimate the populations of certain communities. For instance, the sharp increase of archaeological evidence for inhumation in Classical Attica has been a source of contention to whether it is representative of rapid population growth, as posed by Sallares, or a shift in burial practices, as per Morris.¹⁰ I tend towards the latter, as extant burials would have to suggest a tenfold increase in population between 600 and 500 BCE.¹¹ In either case, the arguments are predicated upon burial sources (remains, accompanying inscriptions, etc.), concrete evidence for which the closest literary approximations are censuses and life tables, which could be sporadic and incomplete.

Between remains and funerary inscriptions, population trends can certainly be represented. However, there are once again caveats to using them as sources in isolation: skeletons are often partial or preserved as a mass, and thus prove difficult to definitively age or gender, though the former tends to be easier to distinguish in child skeletons due to clearer markers of growth.¹² Additionally, Liston in their comprehensive analysis of the second-century BCE Athenian 'Agora Bone Well' applies a new identification paradigm which appears to be significantly more reliable, correctly identifying "up to 100%" in some forensic data sets.¹³ Historically, anthropologists have achieved accuracy rates up to 95% by analysis of the pelvis, when preserved.¹⁴ Allison also formulated a model for characterising Roman artefacts to provide a priori conclusions in instances where bodies cannot be gendered, and a particular trend of animal paraphernalia has been discovered in Romano-British infant burials.¹⁵ In itself this is not a new idea, but the manifestation of it is more nuanced and less binary than, for example, the classification of graves in pre-Roman Samnium as male or female depending on whether they contained weapons or jewellery.¹⁶ Developing technology and techniques seem poised to make remains in anthropological research continually more significant. As classical linguists can date epigraphic sources based upon small orthographic and typographic shifts, so too can archaeologists relate skeletal remains and accompanying grave goods to a particular period. Class, age, and gender affect how well the skeletons were buried and thus how well they are often preserved, particularly in a Roman context where it was, as the aforementioned evidence shows, not unusual for extravagant structures to be built for

6 MET 54.11.5; Polybius IV.53-4. Distinguished individuals might receive a funeral funded by the state (*funus publicum*): Tacitus, *Annals* VI.11; Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi* IX.11.10-1; Cicero, *Laws* II.22.62.

7 Cf. Cicero, *Laws* II.22.55-7; for feasts on the *novendiale* see: Tacitus, *Annals* VI.5, Petronius, *Satyricon* 65-6.

8 *Parentalia* in Ovid's *Fasti* II.533 ff.; CIL V.2072.

9 Tomb of the Baker, Augustus' Mausoleum; Cf. Polybius VI.53-4; Pliny *Natural History* XXIII.153 recounts 1.1 million sesterces spent on a funeral.

10 R. Sallares, *The Ecology of the Ancient Greek World* (London, 1991), pp.50-192; I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.70-102.

11 *Ibid.*, fig.17.

12 M.A. Liston, et al, *The Agora Bone Well* (The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2018), pp.26, 42.

13 *Ibid.*, pp.42-43.

14 I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992), p.82.

15 P.M. Allison, "Characterizing Roman Artifacts to Investigate Gendered Practices in Contexts Without Sexed Bodies", *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol.119 (2015), pp.103-123; N. Crummy, "Bears and Coins: The Iconography of Protection in Late Roman Infant Burials," in *Britannia*, Vol. 41 (2010), pp.37-93; Going, C.J. et al., "A Roman Child Burial with Animal Figurines and Pottery, from Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire," in *Britannia*, Vol. 28 (1997), pp.386-393.

16 R. Scopacasa, "Gender and Ritual in Ancient Italy: A Quantitative Approach to Grave Goods and Skeletal Data in Pre-Roman Samnium" *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol.118, No.2 (2014), p.241.

the purpose. Intramural inhumation, particularly for rulers, were also prevalent at varying times and places in Egyptian, Greek, and Persian contexts.¹⁷ Wealthier male individuals are more likely to be preserved than poorer individuals, slaves, women, and small children. Even within this there was naturally variety, as Seneca is recorded as completely rejecting all “of the usual funeral rites” and the non-standard design of the aforementioned Tomb of the Baker.¹⁸

For this reason, it is difficult to extrapolate society-wide *nomoi* from not only a small sample size but an inevitable overrepresentation of a particular subset of the population, typically wealthy men. Such, however, is also an issue with the literary corpus of antiquity, and it would be considered sacrilegious and foolhardy to discount the merits of written sources based on this limitation. Instead, the bias is acknowledged, and the truth of the contemporary history is garnered around it; this holds true also for epitaphs and grave goods. Even in cases where tombstones amount to little more than identifiers – Roman epitaphs at their base form might comprise only the deceased’s name, age, and the dedicator, with the barest Athenian epitaphs comprising only name, father’s name, and deme – the combined nature of the context, grave goods, and imagery can still be important, particularly in the paradigm of large datasets outlined therein.¹⁹ Tomb excavations can be useful primary sources for political history, owing to the prominence of royal burials, but social history, as noted, is more complex. That said, the preservation of underrepresented perspectives, of the common experience, is likely to be much higher than in literary sources considering the lower levels of literacy of the general population and which forms of writing were deliberately preserved. Furthermore, with a modern, data-driven approach,

many places prove rich enough in material to posit at least a general idea of a society’s consciousness.²⁰ This overlap, Morris agrees, is often significant enough “distil an abstraction” of a polis’ social structure in a given period.²¹ On an individual level, differentiation of class, age, and gender in remains can prove difficult yet, firstly, epitaphs often give valuable context, and, importantly, compiling instances of a burial type, of close geographical and chronological relations, does allow for distinctions between these groups in social generalisations.²² Indeed, paucity of evidence aside, the telos of investigations into ancient society is, at the best, to reconstruct the predominant view and experience in a given sector, which cross-referencing of material often allows to a significant degree. Aristotle’s *koinos logos* is simply an ideal, not a reality, of ancient society. One need only look for patterns.²³ Quantification, in many ways, addresses the long-standing issues associated with making inferences from burial material, and these statistical tests have disproved pre-existing archaeological trends. As archaeological discoveries are continually made, grave deposits should, in theory, grow increasingly more useful in establishing coherent conception of ancient social dynamics.²⁴ Ulpian remarked that funerary monuments existed to preserve memory.²⁵

Religious values, expressed through their treatment of the afterlife, are typically very well represented in funerary contexts. Mythological imagery on grave goods (such as *lekythoi*) and friezes is persistent in tombs throughout antiquity, often illuminating a society’s relationship with death. Sourvinou-Inwood argues that the reduction of Greek intramural burial reflects a fear of death, yet notes that the practice’s endurance in Sparta was simultaneously, per Plutarch, from an opposite reasoning: it was a means of familiarising

17 Valley of Kings, Tomb of Alexander; Macedonian Aigai; Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, Tomb of Darius.

18 Tacitus, *Annals* 15.64.5; cf Thuc. II.52.3-4 on Athenian neglecting burial customs during the plague circa 430; cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1.1451b5-11 on history being individual-focused.

19 I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992) p.157.

20 J. Pearce, “Introduction: Death as a process in Roman funerary archaeology,” in J. Pearce. & J. Weekes, *Death as a process in Roman funerary archaeology* (Oxbow Books, 2017), pp.1-26.

21 I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992), p.4.

22 See J.Ober, “Models and Paradigms in Ancient History”, in *The Athenian Revolution* (Princeton, 1989), pp.13-17 for models of generalisation.

23 Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.1368b7-9; I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992) pp.4, 23.

24 J. Pearce, “Introduction: Death as a process in Roman funerary archaeology,” in J. Pearce. & J. Weekes, *Death as a process in Roman funerary archaeology* (Oxbow Books, 2017), pp.1-26.

25 Digest 11.7.2.6.

Spartan youths with death.²⁶ Graeco-Roman burial material, particularly, is useful as a tool for social extrapolation as it can both substantiate and be given context by a vast array of literary material.²⁷ There are also other regions where they are the only available source, and burials in Predynastic Egypt have facilitated investigations into social relationships of over five millennia ago.²⁸ Moreover, high infant mortality throughout antiquity and a relative underrepresentation of children has led to a traditional scholarly view that ancient families were not attached to their children in any degree comparable to modern society, but funerary evidence makes this is easy to challenge.²⁹ In the early Archaic Period, particularly, Greek poleis show evidence of increased attention given to children in funerary contexts: in Corinth, as of 750 BCE and beyond, children tend towards higher quality grave goods; in Argos, adult graves moved away from the physical polis and generally are buried without items circa 700, but graves of children remain on-site and continue to be buried alongside grave goods; in Athens after 700, children are typically given their own burial plots.³⁰ However, as a general rule, burials of children under a year do appear to have been dealt with less ceremony. For the gravestones of children, age is commonly given to the day, given a more accurate knowledge of birth dates, yet gravestones of children in the burial record across antiquity are often patchy, with few for children under five.³¹ From this, one can interpret five as the age after which society expected a child to reach maturity, and thus the loss was received differently.³² Relief depictions

and epitaphs support this theory, as children after this point are commonly represented as miniature adults.³³ Likewise, in Athens, young girls who died before marriageable age or young women who died just after marriage or in childbirth are commonly represented.³⁴

At the other end of the spectrum, Roman columellae give an interesting insight into societal conventions of divorce and life expectancy. The former note's conclusion is drawn from an epitaph praising 'Turia' and a trend of erasure on Roman gravestones, which were often crafted beforehand and inscribed with the name of those one expected to be buried with. In the case of Gaius Livianus Actus, a passage was clearly erased and "Cornelia Maxuma, daughter of Sextus, his wife" was written over the top.³⁵ The most likely explanation is the one I have alluded to, that he divorced his first wife and erased her name in favour of his new wife. Another instance demonstrates the erasure of a name with no replacement, leaving only the word 'wife'.³⁶ Lastly, there are some instances of ages recorded on gravestones which are clearly erroneous, such as a first century CE gravestone from Roman Germania where the individuals claim to be one-hundred-and-twenty, thirty, and eighty respectively.³⁷ Evidently, one-hundred-and-twenty is a falsehood but, much as Pliny the Elder notes during the same period, there is nobody older within the community to challenge his age.³⁸ Additionally, other than small children, as previously mentioned, ages are often given in rounded numbers, as can be seen here. Generally, a trend can be drawn from the ages recorded (accounting, admittedly, for human

26 C. Sourvinou-Inwood, "Reading" Greek Death: To the End of the Classical Period (London, 1995); Cf. Plutarch Lycurgus 27.

27 I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992), p.29.

28 V.A. Alekshin, "Burial Customs as an Archaeological Source", *Current Anthropology*, Vol.24, No.2, (1983), p.137; A. Stevenson, "Social Relationships in Predynastic Burials," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol.95 (2009), pp.175-192.

29 Suetonius, Gaius 7; M. Carroll, "Infant Death and Burial in Roman Italy," *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, Vol.24 (2011), pp.101-4 proposes various percentages; M.I. Finley, "The Elderly in Classical Antiquity" *Greece and Rome*, Vol.28, No.2 (1981), p.159; Seneca *Epistulae* 99.1-2, Plutarch, *Consolation to His Wife* 6, and Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* I.39 clearly demonstrate a trend of 'excessive' grief. This extended even to the emperor Nero (Tacitus, *Annals* XV.23).

30 I. Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.26-27.

31 CIL I.1223; CIL VI.17313, VI.28044.

32 V. Lungu, "Les tombes d'enfants dans les colonies grecques de l'Oest du Pont-Euxin", in A. Guimier-Sorbets & Y. Morizot (eds.), *L'Enfant et La Mort Dans l'Antiquité I: Nouvelles Recherches dans des Nécropoles Grecques. Le Signalement des Tombes d'Enfants* (Editions de Boccard, 2010), pp.265-286.

33 J. Huskinson, *Roman Children's Sarcophagi: Their Decoration and Social Significance* (Oxford, 1996), pp.80-1; M. Harlow, & R. Laurence, *Growing Up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome* (Routledge, 2002), pp.45-51.

34 NAMA 4489; Greek Anthology 7.712; MET 04.171.

35 ILS 8393; CIL XII.3564.

36 CIL XII.4795. The dative, 'CONIVIGI,' is given rather than the nominative 'CONIVNX.'

37 CIL XIII.7101.

38 Pliny, *Natural History* VII.49.

error in the calculation due to poor birth records), but such outliers prove, on the surface, problematic. Again, we are presented with an issue of veracity, but the axiomatically anomalous nature means that, like one would analyse any historical source, relevant information can be extracted and clear falsehoods discarded where appropriate.

In conclusion, there are many issues that affect the availability of ancient burial material for examination, and even from that evidence must be regarded with caution, but this does not invalidate how useful it can be and often is. Indeed, it can sometimes substantiate claims made in contemporary literature, as with Herodotus' recounting of the Plataean burial mound, or can recontextualise scholarly understanding of said passages.³⁹ Funerary evidence should not generally be used in isola-

tion to posit widescale values of a society, at least not without significant acknowledgement of the fact, but as supplementary evidence for prior hypotheses is undoubtedly an invaluable resource. The further back in history one goes, the more that mortuary evidence becomes the primary, sometimes only, available resource, and on that basis it would be absurd to consider it anything but useful in understanding the social history of a culture. Despite the many methodological issues outlined above, burials and grave monuments remain not only a vital resource in extrapolating the contemporary state of ancient societies, but one which is becoming progressively more reliable and insightful with the advent of new technologies and paradigms of statistical analysis.

39 Herodotus IX.85; N.G.L. Hammond, "The Campaign and Battle of Marathon", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol.88 (1968), p.18, asserted, based upon Herodotus VI.113.1, that the burial mound at Marathon "marks the spot where the Greek centre was broken." Van der Veer 1982, 290-321 uses Herodotus and Pindar, *Pythian Odes* VIII.79 (μυχ τ ἰ ν Μαραθ νος) in aid of further topological reconstruction.

Abbreviations:

CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum

ILS = Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae

Ancient Literary Sources:

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CIL I2.1223. Epitaph of a Child, Optatus.

CIL V.2072. Columella of Lucius Veturius Nepos.

CIL VI.28044. Grave Epitaph of Eucopio.

CIL VI.17313. Grave Epitaph of Lucius Valerius.

CIL XII.3564.

CIL XII.4795.

CIL XIII.7101.

Greek Anthology VII.712. Erinna's epitaph for Baucis.

ILS 8393. Laudatio Turiae.

MET 04.171. Metropolitan Museum. Painted limestone funerary stele with a woman in childbirth.

MET 54.11.5. Metropolitan Museum. Terracotta funerary plaque, ca 520-510 BCE.

NAMA 4489. National Archaeological Museum of Athens. Phrasikleia Kore, ca 550-540 BCE. Bibliography

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Legacies of the Mongol Empire

Ethan Sanitt



How and why did the legacies of the Mongol Empire differ across Eurasia?

Fifteenth Century Ming painter Xie Huan's *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* can be viewed as a fusion of different artistic styles (Figure 1).¹ Though the painting depicts a predictably traditional Ming scene, complete with court officials and scholarly objects, so too does Huan's artwork contain allusions to Mongol legacies.² Both the blue and white porcelain resting on the table and the 'Mandarin square' badges worn by the men, for instance, were products of the Yuan dynasty, cultural remnants of the Mongol Empire.³ Examination of Huan's painting provides insight into how these fragments of Mongol culture were preserved; it provides a lens through which certain Mongol legacies can be closely examined.

Two main branches of historiographical scholarship have examined these sorts of cultural legacies left by the Mongol Empire. Firstly, the traditional historiographical approach has resisted – and has often simply rejected – the idea that the Mongols left legacies that shaped Eurasian artwork, architecture, and language.⁴ Revisionist historians have since re-evaluated this outdated interpretation; leading scholars like Thomas Allsen and Peter Jackson have focused more on how Mongol legacies contributed towards iconography and styles in Eurasian artwork.⁵ In line with this more recent analysis of fourteenth and fifteenth century culture, revisionists have explained the variations in Mongol legacies across Eurasia as a consequence of differences in Mongol rule.⁶

This essay will propose a new way of evaluating the legacies left by the Mongol Empire. Building on Eiren L. Shea's recent study of Ming and Timurid cultures, it will suggest that Mongol legacies varied across Eurasia primarily because they were shaped, weaponised and manipulated by the courts that received them.⁷ As different courts had different bureaucratic structures and were rooted in different cultures, decisions at court-level about Mongol artwork, dress, and cultural customs meant that the Empire's legacies varied drastically across Eurasia. Close examination of fourteenth century paintings, vases, and clothing styles in China and Korea highlights how courts moulded the legacies of the Mongol Empire. By focusing on how cultural legacies were received, rather than what kind of legacies were bestowed, this essay will shed light on how and why Mongol legacies differed across Eurasia. Significantly, by bridging separate studies of Ming and Koryŏ fashion, this essay will be the first of its kind to compare how Korean and Chinese courts manipulated Mongol dress legacies differently.⁸

Comparative analysis of Korean and Chinese cultural customs illustrates how courts and officials shaped the legacies of the Mongol Empire. Examination of Korean and Chinese clothing and hairstyles in particular highlights how Mongol legacies were politicised in different ways by different courts. In Korea, Mongol dress customs were initially embraced. King Ch'ungnyŏl issued an order in 1278 requiring court officials to maintain Mongol style braids. By contrast, the Ming court

1 Bradley Smith, *China: A History in Art*. New York: Harper & Row, (1972), pp. 212–13.

2 James Watt, *Defining Yongle: Imperial Art in Early Fifteenth-Century China*, (2005), pp. 10–11.

3 Eiren L. Shea, *The Mongol Cultural Legacy in East and Central Asia: The Early Ming and Timurid Courts*, *Ming Studies* (2018), pp. 32-33; Schuyler Cammann, *Chinese Mandarin Squares*, *University Museum Bulletin*, (1953), pp. 38-49.

4 Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire: Its Rise and Legacy*, Transaction Publishers (2005), pp. 235-237; Valentin A. Riasanovsky, "The Influence of Ancient Mongol Culture and Law on Russian Culture and Law," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, (1937), p. 499; V. Szczesniak, "A Note on the Character of the Tartar Impact upon the Russian State and Church," *Etudes et est-europeens*, (1972), p. 95-98; David Morgan, *Nomads as Agents of Cultural Change: The Mongols and Their Eurasian Predecessors*, University of Hawaii Press (2014), pp. 275-278.

5 Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World*, Yale University Press, (2017) pp. 5-6; Thomas Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, Cambridge University Press (2009), pp. 5-8; Timothy May, *The Mongols*, Amsterdam University Press, (2019), pp.100-101; Pamela Crossley and Gene Garthwaite, *Post-Mongol States and Early Modern Chronology in Iran and China*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (2016), p. 296.

6 Charles J. Halperin, *Russia in The Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective*, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1983), pp. 260-261.

7 Shea, *Mongol Cultural Legacy*, p. 32.

8 Dang Baohai, *The Plait-line Robe. A Costume of Ancient Mongolia*, *Central Asiatic Journal* (2003), pp.208-211; Peter I. Yun, *Mongols and Western Asians in the Late Koryŏ Ruling Stratum*, *International Journal of Korean History* (2002), p. 61.

consistently dismissed types of Mongol clothing as a 'barbarian custom', though they did adopt a select few Mongol dress items such as xiongbei, or 'Mandarin squares', as Henry Serruys' research has shown.⁹ Interestingly, the different ways in which these courts interacted with Mongol legacies can be tied to their cultural roots: in China, the Ming court rejected Mongol plait-lined robes on the grounds that 'ancient customs' should be preserved.¹⁰ Analysis of a decree of Ming Taizu Zhu Yuanzha that was issued in February 1368 further illustrates how the Ming court's prohibition of Mongol dress was influenced by its cultural background: 'As to braided hair, plaits, barbarian clothes, barbarian speech, and barbarian names, these were all forbidden. This decision came from the imperial mind after deliberation on advantage and harm ensuing (from those things). At this time, after more than one hundred years of barbarian customs, all went back to China's old (institutions).¹¹ By contrasting Mongol 'barbarian' dress with traditional Chinese customs, the decree highlights how the Ming's reaction to Mongol legacies was a product of the court's unique cultural heritage.

Likewise, the Korean court's acceptance of Mongol dress in the late fourteenth century can be interpreted as a means of asserting their cultural identity; for the Koryŏ court, Yuan braids and plait-lined robes were a form of cultural resistance, a way of defying the Ming. Close analysis of Yuan style clothing in Korea illustrates how Mongol legacies were politicised by the court: when relations between the Ming and Korea deteriorated in the 1380s, just before Koryŏ launched a military expedition to Liaodong in 1388, the king banned the Chinese Ming style cap and ordered his officials to wear traditional Yuan clothes.¹² Interestingly, as well as this, before the military expedition of 1388 the king abolished the Ming regnal title of Hong-

wu. Consequently, when the policies are viewed in this context, Mongol dress in Korea can be interpreted as part of a political and cultural dialogue between the Ming and Koryŏ courts.¹³ Analysis of Yuan dress in the fourteenth century, therefore, shows how different political and cultural decisions made at court-level impacted Mongol legacies. Though traditional historiographical scholarship has mostly focused on the types of legacies Mongols passed down, this case study illustrates that Mongol legacies were shaped by how courts received, accepted and manipulated Mongol culture.

However, this model, that the Korean and Ming courts moulded Mongol legacies in different ways, is a potentially problematic one. Critically, it is difficult to establish the extent to which the Koryŏ and Ming courts influenced dress customs among the wider population.¹⁴ If cultural customs in the courts were disconnected from how ingrained these Yuan legacies were in China and Korea, then this raises the possibility that the courts shaped Mongol legacies for only a few high-ranking officials. Though there is much historiographical discussion about how widely heeded court policies on dress were, superficial examination of Mongol dress in Ming China suggests that there was a significant disconnect between high-ranking court dress and non-court dress.¹⁵ A memorial to the emperor that was written in 1443 confirms this: 'Officials in the Metropolitan area and in the provinces and the military, with regard to hats and garments, are still following the barbarian fashion ... They have tassels hanging and they fix plumes [on their hats].¹⁶ By criticising officials and soldiers for their Mongol dress, the memorial illustrates how the Ming court's rulings on clothing were limited in their impact. A painting of a Ming soldier wearing the Yuan plait-lined robe further suggests that the Ming rejection of Mongol dress did not fully

9 Henry Serruys, *Remains of Mongol Customs in China during the Early Ming Period*, *Momenta Serica* (1957), p.151; Peter I. Yun, *Popularization of Mongol Language and Culture in the Late Koryŏ Period*, *International Journal of Korean History* (2006), p. 32; David M. Robinson, *Politics, Force and Ethnicity in Ming China: Mongols and the Abortive Coup of 1461*, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1999), p. 85.

10 Baohai, *Plait-line Robe*, p. 208.

11 *Ibid.*

12 Yun, *Mongols and Western Asians*, p. 61.

13 *Ibid.*

14 BuYun Chen, *Wearing The Hat Of Loyalty: Imperial Power And Dress Reform In Ming Dynasty China, The Right To Dress: Sumptuary Laws In A Global Perspective, c.1200–1800* (2019), pp. 417–418.

15 Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*, University of California Press, (1998) p.44; Sarah Dauncey, 'Illusions of Grandeur: Perceptions of Status and Wealth in Late-Ming Female Clothing and Ornamentation', *East Asian History* (2003), pp. 49–51; Sophie Volpp, 'The Gift of a Python Robe: The Circulation of Objects in 'Jin Ping Mei'', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (2005), p. 145.

16 Baohai, *Plait-line Robe*, p. 208.

prevent the influence of these customs. Though some historians have suggested that this painting was a product of the Yuan dynasty, according to more recent analysis of painting techniques and the documents it was drawn during the Ming era.¹⁷ Likewise, the Koryŏ court's rejection of Mongol clothing in a decree issued in 1387 was not followed throughout Korea. While court officials adopted Ming dress, many others, even including royal attendants, were said to have continued to wear Yuan clothes.¹⁸ This apparent disconnect in dress customs between courts and citizens implies that Koryŏ and Ming courts potentially shaped Mongol legacies only within the courts themselves. Consequently, analysis of how court orders on dress were disobeyed raises the possibility that the court framework, which mostly relies on examination of royal decrees and the dress customs of court officials, does not fully explain how Mongol legacies differed across Eurasia.

Nevertheless, analysis of how cultural customs in courts were potentially disconnected from how ingrained Mongol legacies were in the country does not disprove the court framework. Rather, it means that court decrees and the dress of court officials should be considered in conjunction with the influence of the courts. Regarding how the Koryŏ court shaped dress customs throughout Korea, though some citizens disobeyed court declarations, the Koryŏsa suggests that court orders in Korea were generally respected. After King Ch'ungnyŏl imposed the Yuan clothing style on his subjects in 1278, Peter Yun's analysis shows that at least in Koryŏ, the custom was widely adopted.¹⁹ Though in China there is some archaeological evidence that the Ming's banning of Mongol dress was defied, Ming records reveal particular anxiety about dress codes occasionally being broken on the Empire's borders.²⁰ In 1449, for instance, Lo Heng-hsin, the governor of the military districts of Ta-t'ung and Hsüan-fu, reported that 'for the col-

or of clothes of officials and military people there are fixed patterns, but in recent years among the commandants, chiliarchs, and centurions, of every border commandery there have been men who unlawfully wear ... conical hats in fox skin of the foreign barbarians.'²¹ By highlighting how Yuan 'conical hats' were part of a 'recent' issue confined to borders, Lo's letter adds to a pattern of reports that discussed how dress laws were occasionally broken in certain regions of the Ming Empire.²² This framing of the wearing of Yuan clothes, as a phenomenon specific to border regions, paints a picture of an influential central government trying to impose their customs even on the outskirts of their territory. Therefore, though the limitations of the courts' influence must be acknowledged, evaluation of the Ming and Koryŏ courts implies that they did impact dress codes. This fits with the framework that the Korean and Chinese courts, received and moulded Yuan dress customs differently, according to their cultural backgrounds and political circumstances.

However, Morris Rossabi's research raises an important alternative model that provides a different explanation as to why cultural legacies varied across Eurasia.²³ In his seminal study of Mongol legacies in China and Iran, Rossabi focuses on how Mongol policies impacted cultural exchange. Rossabi's work implies that it was the actions of the Mongol Empire, rather than how the courts received Mongol culture, that primarily influenced Mongol legacies.²⁴ Of course, this model is correct to an extent. Close examination of the development of the field of astronomy in Ming China shows how direct Mongol action influenced the cultural legacies they left. Not only did the Yuan Mongols organise the founding Muslim Astronomical Bureau in 1271, but so too did Jamal al-Din, a Persian astronomer who worked for Khubilai Khan, the Yuan Emperor, assist the Chinese scientist Guo Shoujing in devising a new calendar for

17 Ibid, p. 209.

18 Yun, *Mongol Language and Culture*, p. 33.

19 Ibid, p. 32.

20 Woohyun Cho, *The Dress of the Mongol Empire: Genealogy and diaspora of the Terlig*, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung* (2015), p. 275; Luo Wei, *A Preliminary Study of Mongol Costumes in the Ming Dynasty*, *Social Sciences in China* (2018), pp. 174-175.

21 Serruys, *Remains of Mongol Customs*, pp. 161-164.

22 Ibid.

23 Morris Rossabi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353*, Yale University Press (2002), pp. 12-15; Michal Biran, *The Limits of Universal Rule: Eurasian Empires Compared*, Cambridge University Press (2021), pp. 248-249.

24 Morris Rossabi, *From Yuan to Modern China and Mongolia: The Writings of Morris Rossabi* (2014), p. 423; Morris Rossabi, *The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press (2012), p. 121-123.

China.²⁵ And Ho Peng-Yoke's research has shown how the Ming's treatment of Persian astronomers was a direct consequence of how the Yuan held the figures in high esteem.²⁶ As these developments continued into the Ming era – the first Ming Emperor, Chu Yuan-chang, allowed the Muslim Astronomical Bureau to function alongside the Chinese Astronomical Bureau – actions taken by the Yuan Mongols influenced the cultural legacies they left.²⁷

Though Rossabi's framework works well for astronomical legacies, the model is more problematic when it is applied to Eurasian art and cultural codes. While the Yuan Mongols directly bestowed the astronomical research and buildings they had worked on, the Yuan artistic motifs and dress styles were modified and politicised by the different courts that received these legacies. Consequently, for legacies like artwork and clothes, Rossabi's framework ignores half the story. Rossabi's overwhelming focus on Mongol rule and the legacies which the Empire bestowed means that he does not address how courts impacted and reshaped Mongol legacies.²⁸ Though this focus allows Rossabi to shed valuable light on how the actions of the Mongol Empire directly shaped cultures and systems of governance, it means that his model is insufficient when evaluating how legacies varied across Eurasia after the fall of the Mongol Empire. As more recent scholarship has shown how Mongol legacies were commonly manipulated and used as political tools, comprehensive analysis of Mongol legacies must include examination of how courts moulded these legacies. David Robinson's research, for instance, has highlighted how Zhu Yuanzhang, the Hongwu Emperor, emphasised specific parts of Mongol history in edicts in order to craft a legacy that could be used by the Ming as a political weapon.²⁹ Eiren L. Shea has explored how the Timurid Court stressed their ties with Chenggis Khan in artwork, manuscripts and

stories to legitimise their Empire.³⁰ Far from legacies that were passed down due to Mongol action, these recent studies suggest that Mongol legacies were, to some extent, manufactured by different courts. Therefore, by accepting elements of Rossabi's analysis and combining this research with close analysis of court-level decisions, this essay provides a richer picture of how and why Mongol legacies varied across Eurasia.

Crucially, different courts manipulated Mongol cultural legacies in radically different, and sometimes apparently contradictory, ways. While the Ming dismissed Mongol dress as a 'barbarian' custom, the court nevertheless crafted a narrative in their commissioned artwork that emphasised their connection with the Yuan Mongols' hunting customs; though the Koryŏ court initially embraced Yuan dress, this can perhaps be interpreted as more a way of defying the Ming than as a connection with Mongol legacies.³¹ Significantly, the Ming court, the Koryŏ court and the Timurid court all manipulated Mongol legacies to suit their political circumstances. The Timurid court, especially, emphasised their connection with Chenggis Khan in order to lend their Empire a sense of legitimacy.³² This analysis of how the courts embraced aspects of Mongol legacies exposes traditional historiographical scholarship that dismisses the Mongols as purely a destructive force that brought 'neither algebra nor Aristotle', as outdated and flawed.³³ Clearly, Mongol legacies contributed to Eurasian artwork, dress and objects, as many more recent studies have shown.³⁴ Of course, it is worth noting again that this essay has been limited in its geographical scope; by focusing on China, Korea and Iran, this essay has neglected to examine how Russian fashion and cultural codes were shaped by the Mongols, and this would be an important topic for future research to explore. Nevertheless, by deviating from Rossabi's influential work, and instead focusing on how Mongol legacies were

25 Morris Rossabi, *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China*, Cambridge University Press (2015), p. 209.

26 Ho Peng-Yoke, *The Astronomical Bureau in Ming China*, *Journal of Asian History* (1969), pp. 138-140.

27 *Ibid.*

28 Anran Wang, *Ethnic Identity, Modern Nationhood, and the Sino-Mongolian Contention over the Legacy of Chinggis Khan*, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2016), p. 357.

29 Robinson, *Mongol Empire*, pp. 273-279.

30 Shea, *Mongol Cultural Legacy*, pp. 35-6.

31 Stefan Kuzay, *The Moslems and the North-Western Barbarians in Chinese Drama* (1997), p. 223.

32 Shea, *Mongol Cultural Legacy*, p. 32.

33 Orlando Figes, *Natasha's dance: a cultural history of Russia*, Picador (2003), p. 367; Anil Çicek, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan – The Mongol Impact on Russian History, Politics, Economy and Culture*, *International Journal of Russian Studies* (2016), pp. 97-98.

34 Morris Rossabi, *Mongol Impact on China: Lasting Influences with Preliminary Notes on Other Parts of the Mongol Empire*, *Acta Via Serica* (2020), p. 25.

received, this essay has shed light on how courts shaped Mongol legacies.

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The Manchus and the Mongols

Tallulah Di Tomaso



To what extent did the Manchus ‘Conquer’ the Mongols?

The act of conquering can be defined as the overcoming and defeating of an entity or body of people to create a relationship in which the inferior party are subjugated under the complete command and authority of the conquerors. Subsequently, the political, social, and cultural structures of the conquered are undermined and dissolved as they capitulate to the systems of their conquerors. Historians such as Pamela Crossley have applied this definition to characterise the relationship between Manchus and Mongols as between conqueror and conquered under the Qing dynasty.¹ In this sense, these historians have understood the Manchu strategies of establishing governing administrative institutions such as the Lifanyuan, and the appropriation of pre-existing systems of Mongol authority as devices used to conquer the Mongol population. However, in examining these systems, it becomes evident that they cannot be characterised as methods which intended to, nor executed the conquering of the Mongol population. This is demonstrated when analysing the relationship generated from the implementation of these institutions as three of its characteristics are unbecoming to the idea that the Manchus conquered the Mongols. The first is that the implementation of systems created to administrate and control the Mongols consequently afforded them political power in a way that a “conquered” population would not be granted. The second is that by looking at these methods of government management, it is evident that the Mongols still retained agency as they were able to negotiate their power. Finally, the Manchu emperor’s appropriation of pre-existing Mongolian systems of authority and social hierarchy meant that the Mongols retained cultural structures that would have otherwise been discarded. Thus, when

understood within the project of empire building, these methods can instead be interpreted as devices which the Manchus employed to consolidate their unstable power and authority. Finally, though the “Mongols” were not a homogenous group, for the purposes of conciseness, this essay will be using this word as an umbrella term for various Mongol groups when applicable. Otherwise, when appropriate and possible, the specific group referred to will be named.

From the Manchu’s earliest efforts to usurp the Ming dynasty, preparatory measures were taken to subdue the vast and diverse peoples of the Ming under Qing control to establish their authority. One of the first of such measures was the creation of the “Mongol Department” in 1636, later renamed the Lifanyuan in 1638.² As a government institution, the purpose of this body was a tool for indirect rule over local issues of Mongolian populations including overseeing the resolution of legal cases, military mobilisation, and maintenance of social order.³ With the institution’s extensive authority over local issues, combined with its self-appointed power to select and install local state officials such as jasaqs and Tibetan religious hierarchs, many historians have characterised its installation as a means of conquering the Mongols.⁴ However, when examining these institutions, contrary to the definition of a “conquered” people, it becomes evident that the Mongols retained both local autonomy and power within this system.⁵ This is demonstrated by the fact that many Mongol elites were placed in high-ranking positions within the Lifanyuan. From 1644 until the end of the Qianlong emperor’s reign in 1795, Mongols occupied executive positions such as senior and junior vice ministers, directors, administrative aids and treasurers.⁶ Further, one must acknowledge this institution was not only placed on the same level of authority as the governing body the “Six Boards”, but was

1 Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford, 1997), p. 100.

2 Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley, 1999), p. 214; Dittmar, Schorkowitz, and Ning Chia, ‘Introduction’, in Dittmar, Schorkowitz, and Ning Chia (eds.), *Managing Frontiers in Qing China*, (Leiden, 2017), pp. 6-7.

3 Ning Chia, ‘Lifanyuan and Libu in Early Qing Empire Building’, in Dittmar Schorkowitz and Ning Chia (eds.), *Managing Frontiers in Qing China*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), p. 62.

4 Nicola Di Cosmo, ‘From Alliance to Tutelage: A Historical Analysis of Manchu-Mongol Relations before the Qing Conquest’, *Frontiers of History in China* 7, 2 (2012), p. 106; Pamela Kyle Crossley, ‘The Lifanyuan and Stability during Qing Imperial Expansion’, in Dittmar Schorkowitz, and Ning Chia (eds.), *Managing Frontiers in Qing China*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), p. 106.

5 Crossley, ‘The Lifanyuan and Stability’, p. 109.

6 Chia, ‘Lifanyuan and Libu’, p. 50.

simultaneously regarded by contemporaries as a critical institution for governing the empire.⁷ Thus, their occupation in these positions indicates Mongols were placed in positions of power connected to the inner workings of the Qing government. Further, to some extent, scholar Piero Corradini considers the Lifanyuan an exception in affording Mongols power, as positions of authority within the institution were exclusively reserved for Mongols and Manchus, elevating them above the ranks of Han officials.⁸

These instances demonstrate that the institutions erected for the governance of the Mongol populations not only acknowledged their pre-existing elites and hierarchies of authority, but granted them commensurate power within the Qing administration. Though this essay does not deny that the Lifanyuan served as an instrument for cementing the subordination of the Mongols, in acknowledging the evident power they retained through this institution, it is inaccurate to claim the Lifanyuan was a tool deployed to conquer the Mongols. Rather than their power being undermined, subjugated, and thus conquered completely, it is instead evident that this institution was a means to enhance the capability of management over its inherited diverse populace and to consolidate Manchu authority and power.⁹

Though these institutions were understood as efforts to consolidate power and rule under the Qing, Historians such as Johan Elverskog recognise that the Mongol population were not a passive victim under what he calls Qing “imperialism”.¹⁰ Instead, some historians such as Nicola Di Cosmo have recognised that within this relationship, the Manchus not only afforded them certain powers, however, to some extent Mongols held agency through their evident negotiatory power, and thus cannot be labelled a “conquered” populace. This is

demonstrated beginning from the initial institutionalisation of their relationship whereby Mongol groups such as the Qorčın were under threat of the ruler of the Mongol Chakhar entity, Ligdan Khan, who pursued the unification of the Mongolian population through violent means.¹¹ In 1619, these groups sought and found protection and military aid by forming an oath of alliance through negotiation with the Manchus under the leadership of Nurhaci, which was maintained in the 1630s under Nurhaci’s successor Hung Taiji.¹² Though the Mongols were subordinated, this relationship shaped by negotiatory exchange was institutionalised. This is demonstrated in the Lifanyuan, as it served as a tool of communication and negotiation between the Mongol groups and the Qing authorities, especially regarding the nature of their relationship.¹³ Further, this negotiatory power was also demonstrated with the inauguration of Manchu laws for the Mongols. Rather than being imposed autocratically upon the Mongols, the Manchu authorities and Mongolian noblemen created the legislation through a bilateral negotiation of interests.¹⁴ Contrary to a “conquered” status, their evident extensive negotiatory power was thus reflected in the resulting laws which were evidently imitative of pre-existing Mongolian laws.¹⁵ As such, Historian Ning Chia has gone so far as to label the different inner-Asian peoples such as the Mongols as different nations operating within the empire, whereby even under Manchu banner leadership, Mongol traditions were afforded space to be maintained within “Mongol entities”.¹⁶ By examining the structures under which the Mongol population was organised, it is evident that the Mongol population were not passive subjects who were granted designated powers by the will of the Manchu authority. However, as the relationship between the Manchus and Mongols was evidently shaped

7 Schorkowitz and Chia, ‘Introduction’, p. 7; William T. Rowe and Timothy Brook, *China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, USA, 2010), p. 39.

8 Piero Corradini, ‘On the Multinationality of the Qing Empire’, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 51, no. 3 (1998), p. 344.

9 Ning Chia, ‘Lifanyuan and the Management of Population Diversity in Early Qing (1636–1795)’ (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers 139), Halle/ Saale: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, 2012, p. 12.

10 Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism, and the State in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu, 2008), p. 12.

11 Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, p. 212; Di Cosmo, ‘From alliance to tutelage’, p. 188.

12 Di Cosmo, ‘From alliance to tutelage’, pp. 181, 188-9; Dorothea Heuschert-Laage, ‘From Personal Network to Institution Building: The Lifanyuan, Gift Exchange and the Formalization of Manchu-Mongol Relations’, *History and anthropology* 25, no. 5 (2014), p. 653.

13 Crossley, ‘The Lifanyuan and Stability’, p. 104; Chia, ‘Lifanyuan and Libu’, p. 45.

14 Dorothea Heuschert, ‘Legal Pluralism in the Qing Empire: Manchu Legislation for the Mongols’, *The International History Review* 20, no. 2 (1998), p. 312.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 312.

16 Chia, ‘Lifanyuan and the Management of Population Diversity’, pp. 13-14.

by negotiatory exchange, it is evident the Mongols retained political agency, thereby repudiating the status of a “conquered” populace. Therefore, by examining the Qing systems of rule, the implemented institutions did not create a relationship between conqueror and conquered. Contrary, they served as a tool in the consolidation of power through the systemised subordination and management of different peoples such as the Mongols.

A different strategy used to establish authority over the vast populations in the Qing project of empire building was the appropriation of traditions and socio-political structures of the subordinated peoples.¹⁷ Within this context, the Qing emperor inserted himself into the sovereign positions of these pre-existing social and political hierarchies to legitimate Manchu authority within their frameworks.¹⁸ This strategy is demonstrated within the context of the relationship between the Manchus and the Mongols in a multitude of instances from the beginning of the Qing dynasty. For example, one of the primary adversaries to Nurhaci in the early 17th century was the aforementioned Ligdan Khan, who subjugated other groups of eastern Mongolia whilst claiming the position of universalist Buddhist ruler.¹⁹ As this position was a patron to the Mahākāla cult, it was considered by Mongol elites as key to universal dominion, and thus without this title, the Manchu claim to rule over eastern Mongolia would be unsuccessful.²⁰ However, when Hung Taiji defeated Ligdan in 1633, he was consequently given the title of Chinggis incarnate and universal Buddhist ruler over the Chakhar.²¹ The succession of this title was maintained throughout the line of the Qing emperors whereby as late as 1691, the Mongolian group, the Khalkha Khan submitted under the Kangxi emperor as the Great Khan and successor to Chinggis.²² The appropriation of Buddhist hierarchies of rule, integral to the

structure of many Mongolian sects extended beyond this position. This is demonstrated when the Khalkha's Setsen Khan died in 1687, and immediately following, the Kangxi emperor informed the Khalkha leadership that he had already recognised the former Setsen Khan's son as the new Khan.²³ By doing this, the Kangxi emperor explicitly appropriated the Dalai Lama's exclusive right to sanctify the Borjigid rulers.²⁴

Consequently, by examining how the Qing frequently appropriated various political systems, Historians such as Crossley have characterised the relationship between the Manchus and these Mongol groups as that of conqueror and conquered respectively.²⁵ Deploying David Cannadine's theory of Ornamentalism, within the context of this strategy, historian Elverskog supposes this relationship was formed primarily due to how this strategy undermined the Mongolian systems of social hierarchy and political legitimacy by reconceptualising them under definitions of the Manchu court.²⁶ However, by analysing the relationship between Qing authority and Mongolian culture, it is evident that the latter was both afforded space, and promoted by the Manchus in a way that the culture of a “conquered” populace would not. This is demonstrated within the Qing imperial realm as Manchu princes were instructed in Mongolian by Mongol tutors in the palace school, whilst simultaneously, the Lifanyuan were operating Mongolian studies inside the forbidden city.²⁷ This was further demonstrated in the Kangxi emperor's sponsorship and deployment of an influential Buddhist Lama, the Second Neichi Toyin into political positions such as chief envoy to Tibet for the Qing in 1695.²⁸ This essay does not deny that the purposes of these methods, such as the promotion of Buddhism, were utilised to ensure the loyalty and submission of the Mongols under Manchu rule.²⁹

17 Sabine Dabringhaus, 'The Monarch and Inner-Outer Court Dualism in Late Imperial China,' In Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan and Metin Kunt, (eds.), *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, (Brill, 2011), p. 274.

18 Peter C. Perdue, 'Culture, History, and Imperial Chinese Strategy: Legacies of the Qing Conquests,' in Hans van de Ven (ed.), *Warfare in Chinese History*, (Leiden, 2000), p. 274.

19 Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, p. 212.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

21 *Idem*

22 *Ibid.*, p.312.

23 Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, pp. 76-7.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

25 Crossley, *The Manchus*, p. 100.

26 Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, p. 66.

27 Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, p. 312; Chia, 'Lifanyuan and Libu', p. 56.

28 Uranchimeg Ujeed, 'A Mongolian Source on the Manchu Manipulation of Mongolian Buddhism in the Seventeenth Century: The Biography of the Second Neichi Toyin,' *Inner Asia* 15, no. 2 (2013), p. 229-31.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 230.

However, due to the evident preservation and promotion of Mongolian culture and hierarchies, which would ordinarily be dissolved to conquer a population, it would thus be inaccurate to characterise the status of the Mongol population under the Qing as that of “conquered”. Instead, the appropriation of these cultural and political systems can be characterised as a strategic tool of appealing to different legitimating doctrines utilised to consolidate power over a vast, multi-ethnic empire.³⁰

Scholars such as Alice Lyman Miller have characterised the Qing dynasty under Manchu rule as a multi-ethnic empire, encompassing a mass of different peoples and their accompanying cultures, including various groups of the Mongol population.³¹ In examining the Manchu rulers and the Mongols within this context, many have characterised their relationship as that between conqueror and conquered respectively. This is primarily due to their evident institutionalised subordination of the Mongols through the implementation of tailored administrative systems and the appropriation of pre-existing socio-political hierarchies within Mongolian culture. This essay does not deny that these methods of rule were not only purposed for, but successfully maintained, the subjugation of the Mongol population under the Manchu regime. However, when analysing these modes of governance, a complexity is revealed whereby the maintenance of Mongolian power, agency, and culture within these systems suggests that to label the Mongols as “conquered” would be an inaccurate characterisation. Therefore, it is evident the Manchus did not “conquer” the Mongols. Instead, these methodologies of rule served as tools for the subordination of the Mongols under the Manchu project of consolidating their power and legitimating their authority over a vast, diverse, and composite empire.

30 Perdue, ‘Culture, History and Imperial Chinese Strategy’, p. 274; H. Lyman Miller, ‘The Late Imperial Chinese State’, in David Shambaugh (ed.), *The Modern Chinese State*, Cambridge Modern China Series (Cambridge, 2000), p. 25.

31 Miller, ‘The Late Imperial Chinese State’, p. 25.

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Crumbling Borders

Tiffany Chan



Crumbling borders: A reconsideration of the Qing-Choson relationship at the frontiers

Recent scholarship on early Qing (18th century) China's foreign relations is increasingly critical of the 'tributary system' conceptualised by John Fairbank, who described a 'Chinese world order' which was 'hierarchical and nonegalitarian'.¹ Asian states were situated within three concentric rings encircling the central Chinese state, thus defining their degree of subjugation as cultural and political 'tributaries'.² Historians have since criticised the Sinocentrism of this formulation of early modern Asian cultural-political networks, and suggested reimaginations of China as one actor amongst many. However, this is mostly directed at the relationships between China and the polities situated within what Fairbank has termed the 'Inner Asian' and 'Outer' Zones of influence, leaving uncontested China's impact on the 'Sinic Zone', meaning Korea and Vietnam.³

In particular, the Korean case is unique because of Choson - the Korean imperial dynasty's - generally accepted relation to Qing China as the 'model tributary', best outlined by Hae-jong Chun.⁴ This generalisation belies the fact that the borderlands were constant sources of conflict during the period in question, contradicting the idea of a 'model' Choson tributary. By examining quotidian commercial and political Sino-Korean exchanges at the frontier, here defined as the borderlands of Manchuria and the northern Korean provinces, I aim to challenge stereotypical notions of China as a unique cultural-political hegemon within early modern Asia that ruled inferior states through

peace. Through a study of largely Korean sources, I instead propose that the Chinese borderlands were places where imperial authority, founded as it was upon a false sense of cultural unity, crumbled first in the face of the exigencies of everyday survival, and secondly in response to political subversion by its 'tributaries'.

An examination of the much-recorded journeys from Seoul to Peking throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties reveals that Sinocentric ideals, as exemplified through the official ruler-vassal relationship between China and Korea, were effaced first in everyday encounters between travelling Koreans and local Chinese in the frontier regions, and secondly in the process of recording these encounters. To examine these dual, inseparable acts of defiance, it is important to understand the players involved. On the one hand, the incoming Koreans were often part of tributary embassies bound for Peking, and as such included high-ranking court officials.⁵ Yet, as they crossed over into Manchuria, their titles and ranks became meaningless. This erasure was even ritualised in a change of clothes to don military-style outfits before crossing the border. Marion Eggert points to the 'enhancing of virility and stimulation of an adventurous spirit' symbolised by this act, but in light of Peter Perdue's statement that crossing borders 'took the traveller out of his zone of comfort into an alien realm' and fostered 'encounters of different peoples with different expectations', it is more compelling to view such rites as a symbolic effacement of travellers' prestigious identities to prepare their entry into the 'alien realm' ahead.⁶ This

1 John K. Fairbank, 'A Preliminary Framework', in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968), pp. 1-19.

2 Ibid.

3 Andre Schmid, 'Tributary Relations and the Qing-Choson Frontier on Mount Paektu', in Diana Lary (ed.), *The Chinese State at the Borders* (Vancouver, 2007), pp. 126-150, p. 129.

4 Hae-Jong Chun, 'Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period', in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order*, pp. 90-112, p. 90; see also Donald N. Clark, 'Sino-Korean tributary relations under the Ming', in Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, Part 2: 1368-1644* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 272-300, p. 273.

5 Gari Ledyard, 'Korean Travelers in China over Four Hundred Years, 1488-1887', in *Occasional Papers on Korea* (Seattle, March 1974), pp. 1-42, p. 3; and Hae-jong Chun, 'Sino-Korean Tributary Relations', pp. 95-6.

6 Marion Eggert, 'A Borderline Case: Korean Travelers' Views of the Chinese Border (Eighteenth to Nineteenth Century)', in Sabine Dabringhaus and Roderich Ptak (eds.), *China and Her Neighbours: Borders, Visions of the Other, Foreign Policy 10th to 19th Century* (Wiesbaden, 1997), pp. 49-78, p. 71; and Peter C. Perdue, 'Crossing Borders in Imperial China', in Eric Tagliacozzo, Helen F. Siu and Peter C. Perdue (eds.), *Asia Inside Out: Connected Places* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2015), pp. 195-218, p. 196.

is because, having little understanding of the Chinese borderlands, Koreans had to depend on local knowledge in order to complete the long, arduous journey. For example, the Korean diarist Pak Chi-won's (1737-1805) account is characterised by a reliance on local intermediaries, from the boatman who carries Pak on his back over the Aici River, to the youthful yet experienced T'aebok who helps the Korean entourage reach Liaoyang before it becomes too dangerous to keep travelling.⁷ Pak's political prestige paled in importance to the practical knowledge possessed by the normally disregarded Chinese citizens living at the neglected corners of China. Meanwhile, the Chinese people the Koreans came in contact with relied on the foreigners for their financial security, and even preferred the material advantages the Koreans brought with them to the Chinese administration. For example, a shopkeeper in Shenyang tells Pak Chi-won that 'This place is a city in name only, being merely a backwater of China', but later reveals that he had travelled '5,000 ri' from Shu to Shenyang at the 'perimeter of the Great Wall' for business; clearly this frontier city enjoyed a widespread reputation of a flourishing trading hub.⁸ Elsewhere, the Korean official Hong Taeyong proclaimed the marketplaces of Mukden (Shenyang) to be the second 'most prosperous' after those in the capital.⁹ The contrast between the quotidian and the commercial features of this frontier city suggest that it was largely isolated from the centre of Chinese civilisation, such that its self-sufficiency and prosperity depended on travelling communities beyond the borders. This dispels the image of a culturally unified China constructed and propagated by the Manchu Qing rulers to legitimise usurping the Han Chinese throne.¹⁰

Given the isolation of peoples at the Chinese frontier, a network of interdependence formed, where Koreans depended on the Chinese for geographical and cultural expertise that would help them navigate unfamiliar terrain, while frontier Chinese communities depended on the Koreans for material support in return. Moreover, the opportunity for commercial exchange was also rele-

vant to the Koreans, as merchants and smugglers would often participate in the embassies disguised as members of the retinue.¹¹ Indeed, an average of 100,000 taels of silver flowed from Korea to China during each embassy mission, and this figure only accounted for legal trade, which composed a small part of overall transactions.¹² Though Hae-jong Chun does not elaborate his point that limitations on trade were disregarded by both sides across the border and constituted a persistent problem for both states – thus displaying a tendency to gloss over turbulent aspects within Sino-Korean tributary relationship – his statement remains valuable for suggesting that borderland life defied imperial authority and therefore threatened the Heavenly Mandate.¹³ Overall, mutual dependence based on practical needs necessitated an equality between the Koreans and Chinese that took priority over overarching political and cultural identities, which the Sinocentric imperial state tried to impose on the conquered. In reality, foreign imperial subjects mingled freely with Chinese citizens who shared in little of the state's imperial status, and in doing so they defied together the generalising tendencies of the Qing's attempts to construct a unique national culture.

Whilst quotidian interactions between Korean and Chinese peoples at the border suggest they were interdependent equals within a self-constructed community defiant of political borders, there was also a second, conscious effort on the Korean part to resist Sinocentric imperialism: the writing of personal diaries that were increasingly catered to public view throughout the four hundred years of Korean embassies in China. Gari Ledyard highlights the significance of diary-writing amongst Korean travellers to China, of which thirty volumes spanning 10,000 leaves of text were compiled by the Sŏnggyun'gwan University in Seoul: 'it is always clear that however general the writer may strive to make his description, he is still writing with reference to a particular time and place where he is the observer.'¹⁴ In other words, the act of diary writing allowed the author to reinscribe himself into the situation he was writing

7 Yang Hi Choe-wall (trans.), *The Jehol Diary: Yŏrha Igil of Pak Chiwŏn (1737-1805)* (BRILL, 2010), pp. 12, 75.

8 Yang Hi Choe-wall (trans.), *The Jehol Diary*, p. 99.

9 Gari Ledyard, 'Korean Travelers in China over Four Hundred Years', p. 23.

10 Elif Akçetin and Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Introduction', in Elif Akçetin and Suraiya Faroqhi (eds.), *Living the Good Life: Consumption in the Qing and Ottoman Empires of the Eighteenth Century* (BRILL, 2018), pp. 1-37, p. 8.

11 Hae-jong Chun, 'Sino-Korean Tributary Relations', p. 107.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p. 109.

14 Ledyard, 'Korean Travelers in China', p. 7.

about, allowing him both to make sense of events, and by extension to see himself at the centre of a series of events that were really happening in spite of him. Given the frequency with which diaries about Korean travels in China were published during the Choson period – Sônggyun'gwan University's compilation reflects only a fragment of extant material – diary writing should be seen as a fundamental self-empowering method for Korean officials undergoing effacement of identities at the frontier. By choosing to interpret unfamiliar terrain on their own terms, Korean travellers deliberately refused to recognise Choson's inferiority to the Qing. Put together, the numerous travelogues are an exposé of the superficiality of the tributary ideology. In contrast, the rites of tribute so often referred to by traditionalist Sinologists, such as the kowtow, appear as mere reassurances of nominal loyalty to the imperial centre, practices that had little real impact on foreign loyalties to China.¹⁵

In addition, diary-writing was beneficial not just to its authors, but also to the perspective that would otherwise have been silenced in history. In highlighting the silenced Chinese 'other', Korean travel writers had constructed a community that resisted the unequal Sino-Korean tributary relationship, thereby nuancing understandings of China as an authoritarian, culturally hegemonic power in early modern Asia. This is best illustrated in the Jehol Diary, one of the most detailed accounts of the Korean passage through the Manchurian borderlands. In his analysis of the writer Pak Chiwon's experience, Peter Perdue states that Koreans 'could bridge the cultural gap with China through their shared classical knowledge, while they could also gain access to popular knowledge that drew on classical precedents', suggesting that a new cultural sphere existed at the borderlands in spite of the borderlines.¹⁶ Yet the dual significance of this statement, one that is not explored further by Perdue, depends on the implication that Koreans were willing to learn about Chinese culture, be it common mannerisms or the elitism of Confucian letters. In relation to this, it is also important to note the omission of the process of translating Sino-Korean conversations throughout the diary. By removing intermediary acts from the depiction of

everyday interactions, Pak obscures the reality of cultural differences and instead imagines the visiting Koreans and isolated Chinese as one united demographic against their respective centres of state. In sum, the acts and recordings of Sino-Korean material exchange in the Chinese borderlands present a multi-layered defiance of Chinese cultural-political hegemony that erodes traditional conceptions of Chinese cultural unity, the ideal Sino-Korean tributary relationship, and therefore the entire concept of a Sinocentric world order.

Though it is convenient to view movements and exchange across the Sino-Korean border as mutually beneficial and therefore peaceful, this viewpoint negates the very real existence of conflict between the two countries. Siu, Tagliacozzo, and Perdue rightly state that borders 'were vibrant, venturesome places' that were 'by nature porous and ambiguous cultural zones', but it is equally important to remember that borders are also where "we" end and "they" begin [...] And as the site where different ways of doing things meet, they are likely to be replete with tension and conflict.¹⁷ By examining the Sino-Korean borderlands as sites of conflict instead of exchange, one qualifies the imperially constructed and traditionally accepted idea of Korea as the 'model tributary'. This not only calls Fairbank's concept of the Sinocentric tributary system into question, it also challenges the still existing idea that China maintained its empire through peaceful means, a worldview summarised and debated by Suisheng Zhao in his perception of the 21st-century 'Chinese world order'.¹⁸

Here, it is productive to compare two historiographies of the same incident, to redefine the ambiguous Sino-Korean border at Changbaishan (kor. Mount Paektu), so as to further challenge the notion of a benevolent Chinese empire. According to Andre Schmidt, Emperor Kangxi used the murder of Chinese officials by Korean smugglers in Fenghuang as an excuse to send a Manchu official, Mukedeng, to further define the long-disputed border at Changbaishan.¹⁹ Choson, fearing a disadvantageous realignment of the Qing-Choson borders, adopted a policy of 'unproductive cooperation', or the use of deception and half-truths in order to deter Mukedeng from obtaining useful

15 Suisheng Zhao, 'Rethinking the Chinese World Order: the imperial cycle and the rise of China', in *Journal of Contemporary China* (2015), pp. 961-982, p. 964.

16 Perdue, 'Crossing Borders in Imperial China', p. 202.

17 'Introduction', in Tagliacozzo, Siu, and Perdue (eds.), *Asia Inside Out: Connected Places*, pp. 12-13, 16; and Joel Migdal, in Perdue, 'Crossing Borders in Imperial China', in *Asia Inside Out: Connected Places*, p. 195.

18 Suisheng Zhao, 'Rethinking the Chinese World Order', pp. 962-3.

19 Andre Schmid, 'Tributary Relations', p. 134.

information 'while still meeting the most minimal expectations of tributary status.'²⁰ The Choson officials used their superior knowledge of the frontier area to obstruct the route, irritating the Manchu official till he eventually admitted defeat.²¹ Schmid goes on to describe the events of Mukedeng's eventual success in demarcating a border which continued to be disputed and illegally crossed, concluding that central rule was limited in the frontier regions. However, this initial success and subsequent attempts to undermine the Chinese state at the borders shows that Korean officials 'could circumvent the desires of the centre' through a superior knowledge of the frontier zones that the 'centre' did not have access to.²² In fact, Mukedeng, the imperial representative, enters the frontier region as an outsider, powerless within what is technically his space of jurisdiction. Ultimately, Schmid shows how Chinese efforts to claim ownership of the border shattered the image of a weak Korea subservient and dependent upon China.

In contrast to Schmid, Marion Eggert's analysis of the Mount Paektu border region moves away from the specifics of the politics of boundary demarcation, focusing instead on the 'shifting' meanings this line held for residents and travellers across a longer period of time. She gives a much shorter account of the actual delimitation, using it to show both Korean weakness in the face of Chinese encroachment. For example, she records Mukedeng berating a Choson official for having decided the nature of the boundary without first consulting the Qing emperor, despite this border having been mutually agreed upon for centuries.²³ Notably, in Schmid's article the same Korean response is seen as an ingenious side-stepping tactic meant to deter Mukedeng from interrogating further – and indeed the Manchu official is not recorded to have pressed this line of inquiry.²⁴ Eggert continues to show how the perceived Korean failure to retain the optimal amount of land in this border demarcation drove the Choson court to further stimulate the inhabitation of Korea's northern reaches, thus encouraging Korean literati to visit and write about the region. By analysing two such texts, Eggert concludes that the Mount Paektu region displayed three border-like features: 'a border with the Chi-

nese empire, a front line against the [Manchurian] "barbarians", and a liminal region of wilderness set off from the cultural realm. In its first aspect, the border is open to debate, in the second and third, open to enterprise and change. Paektu-san is thus a shifting border with both a dimension of hope and a dimension of threat [emphasis mine].'²⁵ Here, the fact that the Mount Paektu region borders China destabilises the otherwise prevailing sense of opportunity in the area, thus showing China to be a source of insecurity, not comfort, to Korea, allegedly its firmest ally. Eggert's article thus provokes reconsiderations of China as an ally of Korea through the ruler-vassal relationship, as well as the larger notion of early modern China as a uniquely peaceful conqueror.

Schmid and Eggert's analyses differ in their portrayal of Choson Korea in relation to Qing China, but in centring on the frontier regions as sites of political conflict, they discourage conventional readings of Korea as the ideal Chinese vassal, and by extension tendential depictions of China on the world stage as benevolent rulers. Schmid's appreciation of Choson's urge to maintain political autonomy in spite of their relational inferiority echoes Donald Clark's claim that in the early Choson/Ming dynasty, 'the Koreans appear to have prized their autonomy even more' than political security.²⁶ This contrasts with Eggert, who sees the Koreans as being powerless in the face of imperial attempts to define the borders and limits of Korean autonomy. But regardless of this difference in stance, the existence of tension at the borderlands points to Choson's desire to circumvent the unequal relationship the Qing had imposed on them, thereby dismantling secure notions of Korea as a malleable tributary. Furthermore, both historians contest long-held views of China as a benevolent imperial state, crucially in respect to Korea, a country with which it had always been perceived to have good relations. Moreover, this challenge to essentialist notions of China would not have been possible if one were to read the same incident from the imperial perspective. Schmid notes that Mukedeng's report to the emperor 'glossed over' all instances of conflict between himself and the unhelpful Korean envoys in order to protect imperial prestige,

20 Ibid., pp. 134-5.

21 Ibid., p. 138.

22 Ibid., pp. 141-2.

23 Eggert, 'A Borderline Case', p. 51.

24 Schmid, 'Tributary Relations', p. 144.

25 Eggert, 'A Borderline Case', p. 57.

26 Clark, 'Sino-Korean tributary relations under the Ming', *The Cambridge History of China*, p. 279.

'effectively silenc[ing] any dissonance between tribute ideology and the actual interactions of the two courts' representatives along the frontier.'²⁷ Thus revising historic ideas about China requires reviewing sources that look into China from the outside, such as the extensive collection of Korean travellers' diaries that Ledyard used to justify his foray into Chinese history.²⁸ Finally, though just one case study is used in the present discussion, conflict was a common occurrence at the Sino-Korean borders, as suggested by the fact that matters of border trespassers took up the most chapters (chüan) in the Choson Collection of Documents, Tongmun hwigo, second only to matters of seasonal embassies.²⁹ Expansive research on border trespassers is yet to be conducted, but its looming presence in the Tongmun hwigo indicates the political importance of controlling movements along the Chinese border, which implies the persisting difficulty early modern China had in exerting its authority in frontier zones where populations prioritised the expedient over the political.

Overall, examining the emergence of early modern China through border activity and life at the frontiers challenges imperial narratives and traditional historiographies which regard China as the centrifugal force in the shaping of Asia in the 18th and early 19th centuries, in particular the historiographical tendency to perceive Chinese foreign relations within a tributary system. In particular,

exploring the Sino-Korean border and the surrounding regions of Manchuria and Mount Paektu has been productive of alternate views of the Sino-Korean tributary relationship. Here, seemingly juxtaposing acts of commerce and conflict came together to form a cross-border community that actively defied the centralising forces of the centre. At the everyday level, material and cultural exchange allowed for the functioning of border towns and cities independent of imperial attempts to control border movements. On the less overt political level, Chinese officials realised the practical limits to the Son of Heaven's authority when attempting to control long-contested boundaries with a state nominally considered their inferior. For the 'model tributary' Koreans and other states conventionally considered to be under the Chinese sphere of control, borderlands were 'porous' areas where they could openly undermine the humiliating relations they were often forced to accept. All in all, this essay encourages approaches to Chinese history through the lens of outsiders looking in, in order to realise the fragile, constructed nature of the Sinocentric world order so touted by both traditional historians and the modern state itself. This corresponds with emerging research viewing early modern Eurasian states as increasingly interconnected; through this lens, China loses its hegemonic status, becoming one actor amongst many in a rising world economy.³⁰

27 Schmid, 'Tributary Relations', p. 140.

28 Ledyard, 'Korean Travellers in China over Four Hundred Years', p. 2.

29 Hae-Jong Chun, 'Sino-Korean Tributary Relations', pp. 91-2.

30 See William Atwill, 'Ming China and the emerging world economy, c. 1470-1650', in *The Cambridge History of China*, pp. 376-416.

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Apotheosis of Longinus

Alessandro Bianchi



The Apotheosis of Longinus

The tides of socio-ideological change in the Romantic period dredged up European tensions over the existence and form of God and brought them to a head. The world was transforming, and so was God—in this conceptual chrysalis, he had become more ambiguous than ever.¹ Yet Voltaire believed that God was still necessary to humans, so much so that “Si Dieu n’existait pas, il faudrait l’inventer.”² In writing this declaration, Voltaire was responding to *Le Traité des Trois Imposteurs*, which denied Christianity, Judaism and Islam: God’s existence was questioned.³ God, nonetheless, remained alive in the collective consciousness—but which God? A new figure was slowly rising and eating away at the pre-existing views on the divinity: man was beginning to substitute God. Tracking this process can only be achieved effectively not in temporal, but rather ideological terms, as developing in the minds of Europeans. Hence, for the sake of holism I will follow Arthur O. Lovejoy’s view of a ‘Romantic period’ constellated with a plurality of ideologies rather than limiting myself to strands of ‘Romanticism’—whatever it might mean.⁴ The first phase of the process saw the displacement of God to earth and his marginalization. Next, thinkers of this period subjected God to their ideological beliefs and rejected the traditional view of a benevolent being. Humanity then began the final ascent to substitute itself to God. Therefore, while Voltaire spoke of inventing God only in the case of his non-existence—as a conjectural

“could-be; is not”—Europeans began this invention even accepting God’s existence: it is not, then, an invention of God, but a re-invention. Or rather, the traditional God’s erasure into non-existence was a parallel process to inventing a new God. However, man’s ascent will only lead to his fall. When man challenges God, he embodies a new Longinus, the God-slayer; as man the God-slayer ‘becomes’ God, the only God left to slay is himself—thus he buries his lance deep within.

The first stage sees the binding of God into the physical world. The rising interest in physiology brought about a questioning of the nature of the spiritual—of that which was conceived to be, like God, part of Kant’s meta-physical ‘noumena’ rather than ‘phaenomena.’⁵ Julien Offray de la Mettrie epitomises this questioning through his *L’homme Machine* of 1747. He called the brain the “matrice de l’esprit”, a perspective that was later taken up by Pierre Maine de Biran, who described brain-activity as “l’activité de l’âme.”⁶ De la Mettrie himself questioned God, or at least accepted his non-provability, seeking nonetheless to ground the divine into the physical.⁷ His thought, then, illustrates Colin Jager’s claim that this period saw a paradigm shift: God had to be fitted in the material world rather than the other way round.⁸ *L’homme Machine* also abounded with deistic references, but de la Mettrie was no deist. If he and Maine de Biran after him compared man to a watch—following the deistic view of God as a watchmaker, and hence creator of man and time—de la Mettrie claimed that “Le corps humain est une machine qui monte elle-

1 Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism: Studies in Early Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 19.

2 Voltaire, ‘*Épître à l’auteur du livre des Trois Imposteurs*’, critical edition by Jeroom Verduysee, in *Writings of 1769 (IIA)*, Nicholas Cronk ed., from the series *Les Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire: vol. 70A* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015), pp. 227-46.

3 Geneviève Menant-Artigas, ‘*Traité des Trois Imposteurs* by Pierre Rétat’, in *Revue d’Histoire Littéraire de la France* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1975), p. 460.

4 Arthur O. Lovejoy, ‘The Meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas’, in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Arthur O. Lovejoy eds., vol. 2, no. 3 (Lancaster, Pennsylvania and New York: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), pp. 257-78.

5 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, [1781], ed. and trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 347-50.

6 Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *L’homme Machine*, [1747], ed. by J. Assézat (Paris: Frédéric Henry, Libraire-Éditeur, 1865), p. 41; Pierre Maine de Biran, ‘*Autobiographie*’, [c. 1794], in *Œuvres de Maine de Biran: accompagnées de notes d’appendices*, ed. by Pierre Tisserand, vol. 1 (Paris: Fondation Debrousse et Gas, 1920), p. 66.

7 De la Mettrie, p.23.

8 Colin Jager, *Unquiet Things: Secularism in the Romantic Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p. 229.

même ses ressorts”.⁹ We thus see a divergence from deism: it is both man beginning to learn the divine trade of watchmaking, and the intervention of God “Ex Machina”, with him manifesting through the “man-machine”. Furthermore, by transmuting the soul into the body—or rather reconceptualising the soul as body—he also seems to implicitly have problematized the soul’s immortality, one of the main principles of deism.¹⁰ Thus, the spiritual—including God—was partially transferred to the physical realm, and brought closer to man.

With God already in some ways seeping into the material, thinkers took a further social step to ground God into the world of phenomena. Novalis worried that religion was being trapped within national boundaries, and indeed a French deputy had claimed that “The Church is part of the state”.¹¹ However—sidelining “national messianism”, which is more problematic—it was usually rather the dynamics of nationalism than the nation per se that created boundaries; it was boundaries for religion, not necessarily God; and it was not only God that was being bound through society.¹² Friedrich Schleiermacher revealed his worries in 1799 regarding the diminishing of faith, claiming in his *On Religion* that people “must be restricted within the bounds of bourgeois life.”¹³ According to Schleiermacher, bourgeois life did not bind God, but separated man from Him: all that was not perceivably productive, including the religious, was discarded according to the new social norms arising with the French Revolution.¹⁴ The foremost expression of this binding was the emphasis on social action

that marginalised introspection—Schleiermacher believed that man sought phenomena, and thus lost the religious depth of noumena.¹⁵ Yet, here is where Schleiermacher’s perspective becomes limited by his bias. If—as previously discussed with de la Mettrie—God was conceptually displaced into the physical world, action became a form of seeking out God. Furthermore, the undermining of privacy was not just a separation of man from God; George Steiner’s claim that the French Revolution ‘destroyed’ privacy gives a sense of demolishing a barrier rather than creating one.¹⁶ Here, Voltaire’s declaration that God was “le sacré lien de la société” becomes significant.¹⁷ It was not as Schleiermacher saw it. Religion was not being rejected: it was being re-thought, re-invented—God was made social, the glue of national and ultra-national unity.

Brought down to earth, God could be now re-conceptualised and moulded into a figure of one’s liking. The French Revolution epitomises this process of re-invention. Maximilien Robespierre, on his last speech to the nation, set fire to an idol-like representation of atheism: there was to be faith, not faithlessness, through the cult of the Supreme Being—‘L’Être-Suprême’.¹⁸ The religion based itself on the deistic precepts of belief in God (qua Supreme Being) and the immortality of the soul, yet it was not orthodox deism.¹⁹ Michael Burleigh’s claim that the Revolution was elevated into the religion strikes at the heart of the matter.²⁰ Robespierre, indeed, publically declared that “le culte digne de l’Être-Suprême est la pratique des devoirs de l’homme”: these “devoirs” could be summarised in the

9 De la Mettrie, pp.37, 140-4; Maine de Biran, ‘Autobiographie’, p. 64; Raul J. Bonoan, ‘The Enlightenment, Deism, and Rizal’, in *Philippine Studies*, ed. by Joseph A. Galdon, S.J., and co., vol. 40, no. 1 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992), p. 54.

10 Bonoan, p. 53.

11 Novalis, ‘Christianity, or Europe: A Fragment’, [1826], in *The Early Political Writings of German Romantics*, ed. and trans. by Frederick C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 66.

Armand-Gaston Camus, in Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers: The Clash of Religion and Politics in Europe, from the French Revolution to the Great War* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), p. 57.

12 Lovejoy, pp. 272-74.

13 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, [1799], trans. and ed. by Richard Crouter, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 61.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., p. 60.

16 George Steiner, ‘Aspects of Counter-Revolution’ in *The Permanent Revolution: the French Revolution and its Legacy, 1789-1989*, ed. by Geoffrey Best (London: Fontana Press, 1988), p.150.

17 Voltaire, p. 241.

18 Maximilien Robespierre, ‘Second Discours du Président de la Convention, au Moment où l’Athéisme, Consumé par les Flammes, a Disparu, et que la Sagesse Apparaît à sa Place aux Regards du Peuple’, [1794], in *Œuvres de Robespierre*, ed. by Auguste Vermorel (Paris: F. Cournol, Libraire-Éditeur, 1866), pp. 338-40.

19 Robespierre, ‘Sur les Rapports des Idées Religieuses et Morales avec les Principes Républicains et sur les Fêtes Nationales’, [1794], in *Œuvres de Robespierre*, p. 335.

20 Burleigh, p. 78.

singular republican duty of re-establishing justice and social order through the slaying of tyrants.²¹ To crystallise Robespierre's new God, I would go one step beyond Burleigh's claim—there is little difference between the Supreme Being and the Revolution here: the Revolution is God.²² Revolutionaries, then, were in some ways physical extensions of this social entity. Robespierre builds upon Voltaire's belief that "Rois, si vous m'opprimez [...] Mon vengeur est au ciel; apprenez à trembler"; Voltaire's passivity was discarded, and revolutionaries became both emissary and embodiment of the divine.²³ It is thus that Jacques-Louis David's *Marat Assassiné* gains a Christ-like quality, while Robespierre eulogizes the martyr-like Joseph Barra in his convention on religion and the nation.²⁴ But then again, all revolutionaries were martyrs, Christs on a cross: as Robespierre claimed, "notre sang coule pour la cause de l'humanité".²⁵ These were the beginnings of an ideological shift from God to Christ, towards what Edward Berenson calls "christocentrism".²⁶ One specific view of this man-Christ association was his identity as a divine man abandoned by his father, God, on the cross. This opened the door to undermining the view of God as a benevolent being. From kind creator, God was re-invented as a betrayer of humanity. Goethe's poem *Prometheus* describes his first encounter with God:

"I raised bewildered eyes
Up to the sun, as if above there were
An ear to hear my complaint,
A heart like mine
To take pity on the oppressed"²⁷

However, this first look into the sun implies a first betrayal: the sun is too bright; the blinding light will only reinforce Goethe's bewilderment. It is exactly

this reversal—the light not as kind revelation, but as cruel barrier—that is expressed through William Turner's 1828 painting *Regulus*.²⁸ In *Regulus*, the faint, almost pastel-like palette becomes overpowering in its brightness, taking on connotations of Edmund Burke's 'sublime'.²⁹ I agree with Gerald Finley when he claims that this light gives 'insubstantiality' to the landscape: water, buildings, boats—even people become a haze, blurred by the light.³⁰ At first sight, *Regulus* presents a serene light-show; on closer inspection, however, the light is destroying the world, decomposing phenomena into ineffable noumena, concealing instead of revealing. In addition, the title is a reference to the Roman consul Regulus, whose eyelids were cut off by the Carthaginians before exposing him to the blinding sun.³¹ Finley sees the light only as an expression of this torture; however, in doing so, he dismissively ignores Turner's declaration on his death-bed—equivalent to Goethe's own implication in *Prometheus*—that "The sun is God".³² If the sun is then a representation of the divine in *Regulus*, this is a God that betrays man not by passively abandoning him, but rather taking an active part in torturing him.³³ Hence, there seemed no other option than to cast God from heaven and take his position: like politics, religion became revolutionary.

Man began ascending the heavens to confront his nemesis. Caspar David Friedrich's *The Wanderer above the Mist* gives an initial sense of this climb.³⁴ Man stands above the world in a hierarchical-geographical position of power—what lies before him, however, is mist-bound, ineffable noumena. But as Hugh Honour stresses the liminality of the wanderer—alienated from nature as much as us, the audience—it becomes clear that the foremost mist-

21 Robespierre, 'Sur les Rapports...', p. 335.

22 Burleigh, p. 78.

23 Voltaire, p. 242.

24 Jacques-Louis David, *Marat Assassiné*, [1793], oil on canvas, 1.28 x 1.62 meters. (Currently in Brussels: Musée Oldmasters Museum, part of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium); Burleigh, p. 71; Robespierre, 'Sur les Rapports...', p. 331.

25 Robespierre, 'Second Discours...', p. 340.

26 Edward Berenson, 'A New Religion of the Left: Christianity and Social Radicalism in France, 1815-48', in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, ed. by François Furet and Mona Ozouf, vol. 3: *The Transformation of Political Culture 1789-1848* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1989), p. 550.

27 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Prometheus', [1789], *The Essential Goethe*, ed. by Matthew Bell (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 3.

28 J. M. W. Turner, *Regulus*, [1828; reworked 1837], oil on canvas, 1.24 x 0.91 meters.

29 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757), pp. 41-42.

30 Gerald Finley, *Angel in the Sun: Turner's Vision of History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), p. 98.

31 Hugh Honour, *Romanticism* (Harper & Row, 1979), p. 96.

32 Finley, p.178; William Turner, in Honour (1851), p. 96.

33 Ibid.

34 Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above the Mist*, [1818], oil on canvas, 0.74 x 0.98 meters

which separates man from himself.⁵² The poem therefore seemingly actualizes Schleiermacher's vision that "The anxious wall of division will be torn down": inner and outer worlds are finally united.⁵³ Shelley thus envisions a return to a primal pool of souls, like Urizen's blood-globe of origins in William Blake: humanity is united, becoming "one harmonious soul of many a soul."⁵⁴ Despite issues of practicality—of the "how" and "when"—Shelley's simulation to achieve the "universal mind" seemed to run smoothly.⁵⁵

Meddling with the realm of the gods, nonetheless, could lead to unexpected outcomes. If Percy Shelley envisioned a human Eden, his wife Mary Shelley focused on the collapse of this Eden through her *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*. Robert Walton—the narrative voice—fails to inhabit a "Paradise of my own creation"; he thus leaves for the city of "Archangel" to craft a new paradise through discovery.⁵⁶ But the consequences of trying to manufacture an artificial heaven are catastrophic. Indeed, *Frankenstein* claims that "like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in eternal hell"—thus he dies amidst "the eternal frosts" in a Dantesque mimesis of Lucifer.⁵⁷ Ascent becomes a descent, and thus causality is twisted; this inversion of expectations appears throughout the novel. As he creates, *Frankenstein* is overcome with horror—completed, the monster exterminates the entirety of his relations: creation thus becomes synonymous with destruction.⁵⁸ Furthermore, when *Frankenstein* claims that "I was the slave of my creature", Mary Shelley seems to imply that rather than freeing, apotheosis binds.⁵⁹ The omnipotence of creation becomes literally self-destructive, as the monster is what Joyce Carol Oates terms a "shad-

ow or Doppelgänger" of *Frankenstein*.⁶⁰ Thus, in Didier Maleuvre's terms, "The individual is his own hostage"—again, literally.⁶¹ By inadvertently giving form to what lies beyond his "loathsome mask", *Frankenstein* thus enacts a psycho-physical suicide.⁶² Apotheosis can become asphyxiating, binding man and leading him to a tragic end—freedom, however, can be equally dangerous.

Absolute freedom unfolds a domain so vast as to threaten man with the peril of losing himself within it. As humanity began seeking to "become" or transcend into Fichte's "non-self", Wilhelm von Humboldt stressed that man ran the risk of losing himself in this "alienation".⁶³ The form Schleiermacher gave to this transcendence into the "non-self" is instrumental here:

"Let past, present and future surround us, an endless gallery of the most sublime wants of art eternally reproduced by a thousand brilliant mirrors".⁶⁴

Though Schleiermacher supported the movement towards this apotheosis-like state, the image presented here is reminiscent of a house of mirrors—man lost in a maze of ever-changing images. Thus, man, "In order not to become lost in infinity, empty and unfruitful, [...] creates a single circle" according to Humboldt's *Theory of Bildung*: the circle as enclosed space is a representation of the barriers apotheosis sought to destroy.⁶⁵ The barrier imprisons, but it also concretises a space and protects those within it from the outside world—it defines reality and the self. The "house of mirrors"-image becomes significant here, as these mirrors reflect aspects of the world as much as aspects of the self. These different viewpoints atomise the self and place its parts in opposition with one another, to the point that the original "compound"-self is lost

52 Ibid.

53 Schleiermacher, p. 70.

54 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts*. Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre, [1758], trans. and ed. by Allan Bloom (Ithaca, 1960), pp. 125-6.

55 McMahon, p. 131.

56 Mary Wallstonecraft Shelley, [1818], *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*, ed. by M. K. Joseph (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 17-18.

57 Ibid., pp. 206, 211.

58 Ibid., pp. 57-58.

59 Ibid., p. 153.

60 Joyce Carol Oates, 'Frankenstein's Fallen Angel', in *Critical Inquiry*, ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 548.

61 Maleuvre, p. 48.

62 William Blake, 'The First Book of Urizen', [1794], in William Blake, ed. by Peter Otto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 242-43.

63 Fichte, p. 104; Wilhelm von Humboldt, 'Theory of Bildung', [1793/94], trans. by Gillian Horton-Krüger, in *Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition*, ed. by Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann and Kurt Riquarts (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), p. 59.

64 Schleiermacher, p. 70.

65 Humboldt, p. 60.

in the multitude of “atomic”-selves. When all aspects of man are revealed separately, none takes precedence: action becomes a constant contradiction. Indeed, already Maine de Biran had declared in recognising a single other self beyond his “mask” that “je dis ce que je ne voudrais pas dire; je fais ce que je ne voudrais pas faire”: eternity contained an infinite amount of selves, and hence an infinity of these frictions.⁶⁶ Apotheosis, thus, set man against himself. By crystallising Kant’s phænomena-noumena worldview as a renewal of the ‘Platonic Cave’, Maleuvre reaches the core of the matter: though man did not content himself with shadows, stepping out of the cave’s confines produced too great a weight on the human mind.⁶⁷ Stability remained grounded in the physical.

The progressive *Bildung* of humanity towards apotheosis could only culminate in self-destruction, and hence apotheosis was discarded. The concept of (re-)inventing God as man had been conceived as a goal: it was a chimera, and hence, the process became all. Goethe’s claim that everything was in continuous flux meant that it was all in a constant state of becoming: in this sense, Voltaire’s hypothetical thought that “If God did not exist, He would have to be invented” was permanently actualized and re-actualized—God was erased, re-

placed, only to be rethought and substituted once more.⁶⁸ Through what Bernard M. G. Reardon calls the Romantic period’s “subjectivization of all religious truth”, God could be re-invented endlessly.⁶⁹ The apotheosis of man was impractical, and hence it was abandoned: man’s God-slaying was nonetheless still actualized, reconfigured as his ability to re-invent the divine. But deep down, the true essence of man was similar to that of Mary Shelley’s life-gifted creature. Abandoned by God, Frankenstein’s monster sought out its creator to be reunited with him.⁷⁰ Rejected by him, he sought to achieve Frankenstein’s destruction, dashing his God from heaven into a hell of suffering. Yet, the monster still comes to Frankenstein’s aid, giving him sustenance in the cold wilderness—he claims it is to extend his suffering, but the final scene reveals otherwise.⁷¹ The creature does not revel in Frankenstein’s death: only bitterness remains and a sense of complete alienation that the flames of death alone can release.⁷² This is the man of the Romantic period: his crusade against God is only a reaction to his being abandoned, an attempt to garner attention; his “murder” of the creator brings no release. It is all an elaborate ruse, a mask that man constructed to occult his true desire from himself—the child-like longing for reconciliation with his abusive parent.

66 Maine de Biran, ‘Autobiographie’, p. 52.

67 Maleuvre, p. 137.

68 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ‘From on Morphology (1807-17)’, [1807-17], *The Essential Goethe*, ed. by Matthew Bell (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), p.979; Voltaire, p. 241.

69 Reardon, p. 10.

70 Mary Shelley, pp. 99, 131.

71 Oates, p. 545.

72 Mary Shelley, pp. 219-23.

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Memory Dialectics

Tully Hyams



Memory dialectics: subalterns at the Hungarian-Slovak border

Hungarian and Slovak citizens of Komárno, the Danubian town on the Slovak side of the Hungarian-Slovak border, have long been subordinated to dominant memory cultures in a fashion of spatialising this particular border town as a crucible for conflicting narratives about the past. By analysing ‘dialectics’, this study adopts the sense of productive opposition, as developed from the Hegelian-Marxist argument for historical causation by scholars of the postcolonial Subaltern Studies collective, and proffers it to the domain of memory studies.¹ Oral history interviews conducted in 2008 evidence a tension between ‘ordinary’ memory and the ways Komárno has figured in the dominant shadows of nationalist memory debates.² The authors of this oral history study argue that Komárno is used as an instrument of “symbolic politics” which “intentionally detract[s] from the political reality (the lack of conflict in ethnic cohabitation) to pursue a specific manipulative agenda”.³ It is the “manipulative” and imposing aspect of certain memory cultures, obscuring, and sometimes coercing the memories of ordinary people, which opens grounds for a useful comparison with Subaltern Studies. As scholars of the collective have argued, subaltern histories are “constructed within a particular kind of historicised memory, one that remembers History itself as a violation”.⁴ This corresponds to Pierre Nora’s idea of History working to “besiege memory, deforming and transforming it” as the agent of memory’s “reconstruction”.⁵ This study will adopt a broadly chronological approach to demonstrate how the subalterns of Komárno have long suffered the in-

sidious potential of History to construct memory in an act of retrospective subordination. Mirroring the aims of Subaltern Studies, the citizens of Komárno will here be rightfully recast as subjects, rather than objects, in the remembered past.

The Treaty of Trianon in 1920 subordinated the people of Komárno to the manoeuvrings of higher politics and territorial aspirations. It redrew the map, cutting Komárno from Hungary along the line of the Danube so that the town itself was split between northern Slovak Komárno, and southern Hungarian Komárom. But on another level, Trianon made a lasting impression on interwar memory in the region and supplied a geographical element to Hungarian popular nostalgia. Katalin Sinkó cogently argues that reading “the body of the nation” as a *lieu de mémoire* underscores the intersections between geography, memory, and the cultural artefacts through which these mentalities are carried, ‘crystallized’, to the present.⁶ Images like *Hungary Crucified* published in the album, *Justice for Hungary!*, encapsulate the shift from an imperial national identity “which accepted multiple ethnicities”, towards “a national consciousness based on just a single entity”.⁷ In a spirit of revanchism, Hungarian political memory romanticised landscapes beyond its new frontiers, imposing an homogenising cultural understanding, fraught with ideological intent, upon the inhabitants of these regions.⁸ Borders, since the late-nineteenth century, had become “privileged sites for the articulation of national distinctions”.⁹ And Komárno, at the frontiers of a now ‘Dismembered Hungary’ (Csonka-Magyarország), found itself encircled by claims upon its political identity.¹⁰ By conceptualising different “modes of power”, as identified by Subal-

1 Ranajit Guha, ‘The Prose of Counter-Insurgency’, in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford, 1988), p. 83.

2 Muriel Blaive and Libora Oates-Indruchova, ‘Komárno: A Flagship of Symbolic Politics at the Slovak-Hungarian Border’, *Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest*, Vol.44, no. 4 (2013), pp. 93-122.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 96.

4 Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Marx after Marxism: A Subaltern Historian’s Perspective’ *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. 22 (1993), p. 1096.

5 Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations*, no. 26 (1989), pp. 8-12.

6 Katalin Sinkó, ‘The Offended Hungária’, in Dóra Hegyi, Zsuzsa László and Zsóka Leposa, eds., *War of Memories: A Guide to Hungarian Memory Politics* (Budapest, 2015), pp.13-38 [As cited in Nóra Veszprémi, ‘Whose Landscape Is It? Remapping Memory and History in Interwar Central Europe’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol.52 (2021), pp.227-252.]; Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, vols.1-3, (Paris, 1997).

7 *Ibid.* [Sinkó], pp. 21-22.

8 Veszprémi, ‘Whose Landscape’, p. 237.

9 Peter Sahllins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 5.

10 Veszprémi, ‘Whose Landscape’, p. 236.

tern Studies scholars, historians can read Komárno with fresh authenticity in light of its subordination to dominant cultures of territorial aspiration after Trianon.¹¹ A dialectic of bourgeois domination and subordinated “communal authority” transfers usefully to a Central European context, where such a bourgeois-nationalist framework makes “the individual the unit in political and legal transactions”.¹² Here, an essentializing system appropriates a marginalised individual or group’s agency to act, or – in this case – remember, autonomously. Reading into such a dialectic brings this border town’s subaltern memory back into focus.

Fascism reinforced Hungarian territorial aspirations, redrawing borders with the Vienna Arbitration of 1938, and obligating citizens of borderland towns like Komárno to prove their allegiance to Hungarian rule through the highly repressive Felvidék Loyalty Commission. Compelled to renounce loyalties to the Czechoslovak state and maintain a patriotic narrative of life-long faithfulness to the project of Hungarian sovereignty, individuals are presented in these records via self-fashioning accounts steeped in “shrewd opportunism”.¹³ Desiring posts in public service, people would insist on their Hungarian loyalties irrespective of their real beliefs. The lines between public and private lives are blurred by these trials; what was officially said seems often to conflict with what was really the case. Ferenc Piffkó’s claim that his homelife was “exclusively Hungarian” is contested by witnesses claiming he would beat his children if they spoke Hungarian.¹⁴ The pressures of Hungarian political and cultural hegemony forced the narratives of individuals like Piffkó into a uniform representation of memory, yet truer identities emerge from analysing this an-

tagonism. Partha Chatterjee perceives the colonial nation as the sum of two opposing nationalisms, the ‘material’ and the ‘spiritual’, which, in conflict, define a distinct subaltern cultural identity.¹⁵ Just so does an authentic amalgam of loyalties tentatively surface from Piffkó’s opposing public and private identities in his ‘remembered’ past. Reading the statements of those on trial by the commission at face-value would supply a false sense of overwhelmingly pro-Hungarian sentiment. But, as Subaltern Studies has pioneered, reading ‘against’ them, in light of the oppression via which they are constructed in the record, suggests far more culturally composite memories and behaviours engaged rather indifferently with the “assimilationist pressures of nation states”.¹⁶

Soviet victories in 1945 meant the revisionist successes of Hungarian territorial expansion were short-lived, giving way to a new dominant political culture under communism. In the immediate aftermath of the war, communist authorities in ‘liberated’ Czechoslovakia executed thousands of Slovak Hungarians, uprooting tens of thousands more, as part of an ‘anti-fascist reprisal’.¹⁷ Between 1945 and 1948, six thousand Komárno Hungarians were deported south of the border.¹⁸ Elena Mannová writes how this period of demographic engineering “is enshrined in the collective memory” of these displaced Slovak Hungarians “as ‘the years without a homeland’”.¹⁹ By combining Maurice Halbwachs’s idea that memories derive meaning only by being “part of a totality of thoughts common to a group” with Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha’s argument for the “epistemic violence” of peripheral exclusion by a dominant centre, these memories can be relocated in an integrally distinct domain, where subordinate memory emerges

11 Partha Chatterjee, ‘More on Modes of Power and the Peasantry’, in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 351-390.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 358-359.

13 Leslie M. Waters, ‘Adjudicating Loyalty: Identity Politics and Civil Administration in the Hungarian-Slovak Borderlands, 1938-1940’, *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 3 (2015), p. 365.

14 Trial of Ferenc Piffkó, file 334/1939, Galánta, MNL OL K568 [as cited by Waters, ‘Adjudicating Loyalty’, p. 366.

15 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (West Chichester, 1993), pp. 5-6.

16 [For reading ‘against’ historical texts] Ranajit Guha, ‘Chandra’s Death’, in Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 135-165 [especially p. 139]; [For indifferent behaviours and quoted material] Waters, ‘Adjudicating Loyalty’, p. 352.

17 Blaive and Oates-Indruchová, ‘Komárno’, p. 104.

18 Farimah Daftary and Kinga Gál, ‘The 1999 Slovak Minority Language Law: Internal or External Politics?’, in Farimah Daftary and Francois Grin, eds., *Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Language Politics in Transition Countries* (Budapest, 2003), p. 38. [As cited by Blaive and Oates-Indruchová, ‘Komárno’, p.104].

19 Elena Mannová, ‘Southern Slovakia as an Imagined Territory’, in Steven G. Ellis and Raingard Eßer, eds., *Frontiers, Regions and Identities in Europe* (Pisa, 2009), p. 198.

authentically out of its dialectic with a dominant culture that forsakes it.²⁰ After the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, when János Kádár's authoritarian government engaged in a programme of anti-fascist symbolic politics such as extensive pro-Soviet statue building, the 'centre' forcibly filled the 'periphery' with figments of a communist 'imagined' past, forming a new strain of Hungarian nationalism.²¹ Figuring the pro-democratic revolution as an anti-communist counterrevolution, Kádárist propaganda hijacked cultures of anti-fascist memory, deployed prolifically across the Soviet bloc, as a means of historicising its own legitimacy in Hungary's political memory.²² This shift marks an early foundation for Charles Maier's argument about "the waning of territoriality" towards the end of the twentieth-century, as territory lost "its role as a resource for political action" only to reappear "as a sort of elegiac enclave, transmuted from the site of policy contention to a landscape of memory".²³ Such a process consolidates the sense of coercive memory cultures as a new frontier of subordination. Framing Komárno's authentic memory as subaltern recovers it from dominant, essentializing projects of rewriting the past.

The memory of communism along the Hungarian-Slovak border after 1989 defines further the opposition between official message and ordinary experience, from which subaltern identities emerge. Oral history empowers the subalterns of Komárno to 'speak' about their post-communist memory.²⁴ In the interviews conducted by Muriel Blaive and Libora Oates-Indruchová in 2008, one retired worker typifies widespread nostalgia for the communist past: "without communism, my son would never have become an optician and I wouldn't have been able to build three houses".²⁵

This contradicts state-sponsored iconographies such as the Memorial to the Persecuted (*Pamätník prenasledovaní – Meghurcoltak emlékműve*), unveiled in 1999, which relates the Hungarian struggle against Slovak post-war retaliatory violence to the later abuses of communist power. Komárno's monument landscape has often been the object of controversy even in more recent years. In 2009, the Hungarian president, László Sólyom, wanted to unveil a statue of St Stephen, the day after his feast day is celebrated in Hungary on 20 August. The Slovak President, Ivan Gašparovič blocked Sólyom's entry to Komárno on grounds that 21 August in Slovakian memory was the day the Warsaw Pact invaded, supported by Hungarian troops, to quell the Prague Spring in 1968.²⁶ Ulrich Sarcinelli argues "symbolic politics" such as these clashing and highly historicised nationalist agendas, are a "publicly displayed deception or surrogate action that is used to detract from actual political reality".²⁷ By returning to the testimony of the aforementioned retired worker, historians might find more authentically this "reality", obscured in subalternity by dominant memory cultures. "In my opinion, there shouldn't even be a border," he says, "I don't make anything out of the fact that I was born as a Hungarian or that you were born a Slovak".²⁸ Political indifference like this defines the memory of ordinary people in Komárno who weather the tides of successive dominant cultures as subalterns in need of rescue from historical obscurity.

Reading the people of Komárno as subalterns not only recovers their status as subjects in memories of the past, but also constructs a worthy critique of westernised historiography that sustains their subordination. Subaltern Studies recasts historians themselves as participants in oppressive

20 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992), p. 52; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (London, 1990), p. 77; Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), p. 42.

21 Péter Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity in Soviet Hungary: The Afterlife of the First Hungarian Soviet Republic in the Age of State Socialism* (London, 2014), pp. 6-9; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2006), pp.187-206.

22 András Mink, 'The Revisions of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution', in Michael Kopeček, ed., *Past in the Making: Historical Revisionism in Central Europe after 1989* (Budapest, 2008), pp. 169-178.

23 Charles S. Maier, 'Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era', *The American Historical Review* 105, no.3 (2000), p. 829.

24 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (London, 1988), pp. 271-315.

25 Transcript from interview with Gábor Czár, in Blaive and Oates-Indruchová, 'Komárno', p. 105.

26 Blaive and Oates-Indruchová, 'Komárno', p. 100.

27 Ulrich Sarcinelli, 'Symbolic Politics', in Wolfgang Donsbach, ed., *The International Encyclopaedia of Communication* (London, 2008) [as cited by Blaive and Oates-Indruchová, 'Komárno', p. 114].

28 Transcript from interview with Gábor Czár, in Blaive and Oates-Indruchová, 'Komárno', p. 107.

frameworks, blurring the line between 'primary' and 'secondary' source.²⁹ In an East Central European context, this develops a more acute understanding about issues of contested memories and of the perception of these geographies in the wider academy. Deconstructing historiography fosters an important aspect of self-reflection in historical practice which remedies that complicity of historians in enterprises of controlling the subaltern "through knowledge even as they restore versions of causality and self-determination to him".³⁰ Maciej Górny and Kornelia Kończal argue that the instability of East Central European geographies, of the kind Komárno experienced over the course of the transitions covered by this study, produces memory studies which are equally as conflicted.³¹ This, allegedly, has made territory like the Hungarian-Slovak border intolerant to "travelling concepts" like Nora's lieux de mémoire.³² However, giving platform to cross-border interdisciplinarity, at least in the case of applying Subaltern Studies theory and techniques, reveals subaltern continuities withstanding hegemonic conflicts. Out of an 'othering' dialectic in western discourse which presents East-Central European geographies as retrograde to sustain western dominance, emerges an authentic narrative which better represents ordinary people in their remembered past.³³

At least since Trianon, the people of Komárno have been subordinated to dominant coercive memory cultures which produce a dialectic wherein ordinary memory may be glimpsed through a

subaltern-focused frame. Employing theories of relational power developed by Subaltern Studies scholars in a colonial context, this study has rendered ordinary Komárno citizens as subjects, not objects, in the scheme of twentieth-century political change. By piecing together authentic fragments such as oral history interviews or life-story narratives generated by the Felvidék Loyalty Commission, a sense of ordinary memory emerges in relief of the oppressive means by which it often enters the historical record. Against the flux of regime change and competing nationalist memory cultures, a continuity of relative indifference distinguishes this subaltern memory from the wrangling of dominant discourses. Subaltern Studies has equipped this study to also critique historiographical dialectics which signify furthermore the way History can oppress ordinary memory retrospectively with the same force as political ideologies and hierarchies oppress contemporarily. Professional historians "still hold a near-monopoly over the memory of the past", but the subalterns of Komárno ought to be dignified hereafter as historians of their own history.³⁴ Pierre Nora's dictum that "it is memory that dictates while history writes", requires alteration: coercive political memory dictates, history writes, while ordinary memory hides obscured.³⁵ This study has underscored the virtues of its recovery.

29 Guha, 'The Prose', pp. 45-63.

30 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography', in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford, 1988), p. 9.

31 Maciej Górny and Kornelia Kończal, 'The (Non-)Travelling Concept of Les Lieux De Mémoire: Central and Eastern European Perspectives', in Małgorzata Pakier and Joanna Wawrzyniak, eds., *Memory and Change in Europe: Eastern Perspectives* (Oxford, 2015), p. 67.

32 Ibid., p. 74-75.

33 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 2019).

34 Gábor Gyáni, 'Memory and Discourse on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution', *Europe-Asia Studies* 588, p. 1207.

35 Nora, 'Between Memory and History', p. 21.

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Knowledge, Rituals and Language

Eve Nicholson



Knowledge, Rituals and Language: Maintaining Masculine Hegemony in Afghan Radio (1925-1996).

For most of the twentieth century, radio represented the only “true” national mass medium within Afghanistan.¹ With terminal economic and infrastructural underdevelopment, a lack of trained journalists and literacy failing to ever rise above 30 per cent, radio offered a unique means of mass communication.² Despite the tendency of cultural studies to “ignore” radio as a serious field of investigation, and the Western delusion that radio began a process of “cultural demise” starting from the 1950s, the radio has been intimately connected to the development of the Afghan state.³ Indeed, the link between the radio and the Afghan state has formed the basis of virtually all existing academic research into this field – with some claiming that the radio formed one of the “few manifestations of...a pan-ethnic Afghan society”.⁴ Yet, the radio is also a crucial social medium for the production, reproduction and transformation of gender. Although extensive research has explored the relationship between gender and the Afghan state, few historians aside from Andrew Skuse, Megan Massoumi and Sarah Kamal have explicitly noted the interdependent relationships of all three.

The Afghan state under Amanullah Khan began purchasing radio technology almost immediately after its global commodification. By 1928, there

were 1,000 receivers and the first station in Kabul was ready to transmit its program as far as Kandahar.⁵ Broadcasts were to be in both Pashto and Persian and it was claimed the state-owned Radio Kabul would reflect the “national spirit”.⁶ Under the governance of Prime Minister Daud Khan, radio saw a huge expansion – with Daud attempting to utilise the radio as a means of propaganda and foreign policy, placing several loudspeaker systems in notable public spaces, such as significant streets.⁷ Programming increased from six to fourteen hours, with Radio Kabul broadening daily programs to include those in English, Urdu, Baluchi, Arabic, and German. In line with this approach, in 1964 Radio Kabul was renamed Radio Afghanistan and throughout this period it was used to broadcast parliamentary debates and give official updates.⁸ By 1976 it was estimated that there were 50,000 radios in Afghanistan – one radio for every 36 persons.⁹ Under Soviet rule, the spread of cheap transistor radios and Chinese-manufactured batteries bypassed weak infrastructure and within a decade there were an estimated 1.67 million radio receivers throughout the country.¹⁰ By 1990 there was an estimated listening audience of 10 to 12 million.¹¹ Despite – or perhaps because of – civil unrest, by 1992 there were 104 radio receivers per 1,000 people in Afghanistan. Upon the Taliban’s seizure of power in 1996, Radio Afghanistan

1 Andrew Skuse, “Radio, Politics and Trust in Afghanistan,” *Gazette* (Leiden, Netherlands) 64, no. 3 (2002), p. 268; Shir Mohammad Rawan, “Modern Mass Media and Traditional Communication in Afghanistan,” *Political Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002), p. 161.

2 Yahya R Kamalipour and Hamid Mowlana, *Mass Media in the Middle East* (Greenwood, 1994), p. 2; Mejgan Massoumi, “Soundwaves of Dissent: Resistance through Persianate Cultural Production in Afghanistan,” *Iranian Studies* 55, no. 3 (2022), p. 698.

3 Rosalind Gill, “Ideology, Gender and Popular Radio: A Discourse Analytic Approach,” *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 6, no. 3 (1993), p. 323.

4 See: Skuse “Radio, Politics and Trust”; Andrew Skuse, “Voices of Freedom: Afghan Politics in Radio Soap Opera,” *Ethnography* 6, no. 2 (2005), pp. 159–81; John Baily, “The Role of Music in the Creation of an Afghan National Identity, 1923–73,” in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, (London, 1994), pp. 45–57; Mark Slobin, “Music in Contemporary Afghan Society,” in Louis Dupree and Albert Linette (eds.), *Afghanistan in the 1970s* (California, 1974).

5 Shir Mohammad Rawan, “Modern Mass Media and Traditional Communication in Afghanistan,” *Political Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002), p. 160.

6 Nancy Hatch Dupree, “Cultural Heritage and National Identity in Afghanistan,” *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 5 (2002), p. 980.

7 Baily, “The Role of Music,” p. 57.

8 Ibid

9 Dupree, “Cultural Heritage,” p. 981.

10 Skuse, “Radio, Politics and Trust,” pp. 268–72.

11 Rawan, “Modern Mass Media,” p. 161.

was renamed Radio Shariah and the broadcasting of the female voice was outlawed.¹²

Sherry Ortner claimed that gender boundaries articulate the most deeply entrenched and “naturalised” form of domination.¹³ Within Afghanistan, gender is a symbol of social and political order. The control of gender behaviour is a means of controlling that order. The politics of gender is thus part of the Afghan state-building mission.¹⁴ Antonio Gramsci outlined the way in which ideology and culture helped preserve hegemony – defined as the consent given by the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant group.¹⁵ Gramsci argued that hegemony is exercised not just through “political society” but also through “civil” society and takes the form of an “education” which aims to win over the active consent of those who it rules.¹⁶ Combining Ortner and Gramsci’s thinking, the central idea is that cultural forms of hegemony can function not only to manage “political society”, but also manage gender relations – the most essential social boundary. In the case of Afghanistan, this can be seen through the normative construction of women as essentially domestic, due to the social and emotional segregation that emerges from the practice of *purdah*. Men, however, are constructed in direct opposition, with rationality, strength of purpose and fields of politics and economy being “normative cultural traits”.¹⁷ In typical Gramscian terms, to maintain one’s freedom is to maintain one’s political and economic agency, and by association, one’s reputation and honour.¹⁸ Wary of

a “creeping essentialism” however about the way in which Western theory can “absolutise” cultural difference, Ortner and Gramsci will be triangulated with the work of those like Nigerian gender theorist, Beatrice Oloko, Indian anthropologist, Purnima Mankekar and Pakistani media critic, Rai Shakil Akhtar.¹⁹ This is following the work of Sarah Kamal who noted that although these countries may be geographically and contextually different, they share similarities with Afghanistan’s multiethnic, polylinguist, rural and predominantly Muslim population.²⁰

Knowledge

Asa Briggs noted how human interest and anxiety are raised during periods of political unrest, with flows of information from broadcasters tending to rise to meet increased public demand.²¹ In the case of Afghanistan, this “human and interest and anxiety” is a chronic condition of public life, and during this period, its chief medium of communication was radio. According to interviews with girls in Ghambar, radio was how “all the good talk of the world is broadcast” and owning a radio was an essential requirement of public life.²² Yet, public life was a role almost exclusively closed to women. Men were universally perceived as the social arbiters of “news talk” for their ability to publicly discuss its merits and accuracy, whilst women were defined as being “outside the political consensus”.²³ This logic is a natural extension of the determinism which saw men defined by action, leadership, strength, and women by domesticity, patience, maternity and obedience.²⁴ Following

12 Kamalipour and Mowlana, *Mass Media*, p. 8.

13 Sherry Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” in Louise Lamphere, Joan Bamberger, and Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo (eds.), *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Stanford, 1974), pp. 67–87.

14 John Baily, “The Role of Music”.

15 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York, 1971), p. 12.

16 Antonio Gramsci, “Hegemony, Intellectuals and the State,” in John Storey (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader* (London, 2009), pp. 210–16.

17 Skuse, “Voices of Freedom,” p. 163.

18 *Ibid*

19 See: Beatrice Oloko, “Culture and the Media,” in Abiola Odejide (ed.), *Women and the Media in Nigeria* (Ibadan, 1996); Purnima Mankekar, “National Texts and Gendered Lives: An Ethnography of Television Viewers in a North Indian City,” *American Ethnologist* 20, no. 3 (1993), pp. 543–63; Rai Shakil Akhtar, *Media, Religion, and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi, 2000).

20 Sarah Kamal, “Cultured Men, Uncultured Women: An Exploration of the Gendered Hierarchy of Taste Governing Afghan Radio,” *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (Thesis, 2005), p. 22.

21 Asa Briggs, *The history of broadcasting in the United Kingdom. Volume III: The War of Words* (Oxford, 1970).

22 Kamal, “Cultured Men, Uncultured Women,” p. 46; Skuse, “Radio, Politics and Trust,” p. 276.

23 Skuse, “Radio, Politics and Trust,” p. 276; Patricia Holland, “When a Woman Reads the News,” in Helen Barber and Ann Gray (eds.), *Turning It On: A Reader in Women and Media* (Arnold, 1996), p. 408.

24 Erika Knabe, “Women in the Social Stratification of Afghanistan,” in A O van Nieuwenhuijze (ed.), *Commoners, Climbers and Notables* (The Netherlands, 1977), p. 408.

Gramsci's understanding of hegemony as being constructed through the interaction of relative autonomous public, private; political and cultural spheres, one can say that here the social construction of radio as a tool for men was not only reflective of hegemony, but productive of it.²⁵ Given that radio was a "social imperative" for men who, through gaining "information capital", marked their primacy, the radio legitimised masculine dominance.²⁶ Moreover, since Afghan women were excluded from the experience of public life, their everyday conversation topics were inevitably few – revolving around gossip and intrigue – thus cementing their subaltern position.²⁷ Despite the claims of Missoumi that Afghan radio historically included "trailblazing women" like Farīda Usmān Anwārī and Latīfa Kabīr Sirāj, these women exclusively spoke of cultural topics concerning literary criticism or reciting the classical works of Persianate poets.²⁸ They thus cannot be considered as transgressing into the "news talk" which defined androcentric public life. Moreover, they were generally elite, Kabul-educated women – representing a temporary fraction of the Afghan female experience. Oloko speaks of the tendency of the Nigerian media to be "centralised and clustered in urban areas", much like Radio Afghanistan, and dominated by the prevalence of "culturally alienated media practitioners".²⁹ The Kabul-based literati – of which those like Anwārī and Sirāj qualified for – did not constitute a form of female emancipation, but rather instead an expression of class hegemony. Their 'literary criticism' did little but further exclude and ostracise ordinary Afghan women from the public sphere.

The introduction of international broadcasters like the BBC in 1981 further cemented masculine hegemony within the country. Although the BBC

was able to become Afghanistan's "de facto" national broadcaster due to its perceived political neutrality and reliability, its most popular output was the weekly soap opera, *New Home New Life* (NHNL) which broadcast in both Dari and Pashto.³⁰ On the surface, it appears that NHNL bypassed the separation of spheres, including women characters and the audience. Yet, its strict impartiality was complicit in upholding patriarchy. Characters like Jabbar Khan were introduced to intentionally oppose emancipatory issues, such as female education or employment. During the 1990s civil war, Taliban-like figures were introduced to do similarly. Moreover, when women were included in the show, they were done so in safe and culturally appropriate ways that complied with *purdah*, such as exchanging gossip around the *goder* where they collect water – reinforcing their subaltern position.³¹ Gramsci describes "every relationship of hegemony...[as] an educational relationship".³² NHNL was pitched as an "informational, humanitarian lifeline", yet ultimately – once imported into the Afghan landscape – it became victim to preaching naturalised notions of female identity.³³

Ritual

Although its presence was often ubiquitous, those like Ian Woodward and Skuse have noted radio's position as a "pivotal, even epiphanic household community" and one of the only "symbols of modernity" within an underdeveloped domestic space.³⁴ Television was unavailable even in Kabul until the end of the 1970s, meaning that for most of the illiterate population, radio was the only linkage to the outside world. Gramsci describes how hegemony is "performed", often through ritual.³⁵ Radios were treated as a valorised good, often ritually shrouded in elaborately dust covers,

25 TJ Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985), p. 571.

26 Skuse, "Radio, Politics and Trust," p. 276.

27 Knabe, "Women," p. 334.

28 Mejjan Massoumi, "Soundwaves of Dissent: Resistance through Persianate Cultural Production in Afghanistan," *Iranian Studies* 55, no. 3 (2022), p. 703.

29 Beatrice Oloko, "Culture and the Media," in Adiola Odejide (ed.), *Women and the Media in Nigeria* (Ibadan, 1996), p. 83.

30 Skuse, "Radio, Politics and Trust," p. 274.

31 Andrew Skuse, "Vagueness, Familiarity and Social Realism: Making Meaning of Radio Soap Opera in South-East Afghanistan," *Media, Culture & Society* 24, no. 3 (May 2002), p. 419.

32 Gramsci, "Hegemony," p. 212.

33 Skuse, "Voices of Freedom," p. 162.

34 Skuse, "Vagueness," p. 125; Ian Woodward, "Domestic Objects and the Taste Epiphany," *Journal of Material Culture* 6, no. 2 (2001), pp. 115–36.

35 Rosario Forlenza, "Antonio Gramsci on Religion," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 21, no. 1 (2019), p. 39.

sewn by women of the household who were ironically prevented from listening to it themselves.³⁶ They were placed in tin-ware chests by men and hidden on high shelves or in locked rooms, away from both the hands of children and women of the household. Although Skuse is right in noting that the preservation of radio receivers was also to ensure their resale value if required, the significance of these 'rituals of care' is more symbolic.³⁷ Representing global connectivity and the public sphere, the radio sat uncomfortably when visible in the private, female domain – disturbing the naturalised balance between the two worlds, and subtly flirting with the hegemonic order. The ritualistic separation of spheres is also illustrated within the space of the exclusively male Hujra. Perceived to be a "haven of peace and tranquillity" beyond the reach of women, the Hujra became the focal point for male radio activity during the period – spatially reinforcing gender difference.

Language

Holland claims that women are left outside the "masculine structure of language", whilst Kamal notes that the issue with Afghan radio was not so much "in its content, so much as in its packaging".³⁸ By the 1990s, the content on Radio Afghanistan was frequently aimed at improving women's lives and knowledge – yet much of the difficulty women had in accessing it stemmed from its "encoding" and "radio language" that the bulk of the illiterate female population found incomprehensible. Whilst interviewing Dari-speaking women about their experience listening to Dari programming, Kamal found recurring references to being "blind from illiteracy".³⁹ Many women knew the informal mode of Dari or Pashto but had no education in the formal form used in literary and official set-

tings.⁴⁰ In this way, access to language directly limited women's access to knowledge which in turn, confined them to their private spheres – reproducing masculine hegemony.

A central aspect of Gramsci's framework concerns the "active consent" which the dominant group is given by the subaltern themselves.⁴¹ Gramsci argues that the subaltern is aware of their domination, and participates in their own subjection due to the prestige with which the dominant group enjoy.⁴² There is the sense that rural Afghan women could have learned to understand the radio, but were not inclined to do so – happy to equate their "mountain woman" identity with inherent stupidity.⁴³ Radio was seen as a tool of the educated and mobile, and thus outside the scope of their own lives.⁴⁴ Ethnographic reports from the end of the period note that the majority of women "did not touch the radio sets", waiting instead for their husbands who "knew how to turn it on".⁴⁵ This is the embodiment of Ortner's "nature into culture" hypothesis, whereby a woman's body and its functions give her a psychic structure which generates her cultural position.⁴⁶ Here, women's domestic functions – tied to their roles as child-bearers, and enshrined in Sharia law – create a cultural identity so internalised as to produce self-regulation without recourse to male authority.

As well as an object of incomprehension, the radio symbolically served to silence women within the home. Following Bausinger's claim that a man uses radio to non-verbally express his desire to be alone, in the highly social context of Afghan rural life, the radio was able to symbolically silence domestic noise and signal male hegemony.⁴⁷ Women describe how when the radio was on, they were not allowed to make noise.⁴⁸ Alongside being left

36 Andrew Skuse, "Enlivened Objects: The Social Life, Death and Rebirth of Radio as Commodity in Afghanistan," *Journal of Material Culture* 10, no. 2 (July 2005), p. 128; See also, BBC researchers quoting an Afghan man claiming he did not let his wife listen to the radio because, "I do not wish my life to listen to a strange man without me being present", in, Kamal, "Cultured Men," p. 26.

37 Skuse, "Enlivened Objects," p. 128.

38 Holland, "When a Woman Reads the News," p. 408; Kamal, "Cultured Men," p. 26.

39 Kamal, "Cultured Men," p. 26.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 41-42.

41 Gramsci, "Hegemony," p. 216.

42 Gramsci; Leary, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony," p. 573.

43 Kamal, "Cultured Men," p. 46.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

46 Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?," in Louise Lamphere, Joan Bamberger, and Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo (eds.), *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Stanford, 1974), pp. 67-87.

47 Hermann Bausinger, "Media, Technology and Daily Life," *Media, Culture & Society* 6, no. 4 (October 1984), pp. 343-51, cited in, Kamal, "Cultured Men," p. 48.

48 Kamal, "Cultured Men," p. 49.

outside the “structure of language”, women were at times banned from accessing it altogether. Acting as a “technology of male control” within the bustling household, the radio facilitated an established routine and a way to create order.

Conclusion

Manekar notes that mass media can “inform viewers, in a frighteningly fundamental way, about their place in the world”.⁴⁹ For Afghan women during the period 1925-1996, the radio acted to both symbolically reflect their subjugation and actively produce it. Through conflating “information capital” with power, and formulating a gendered approach to knowledge, the radio served to become an engine for producing masculine hegemony. The symbolism and rituals associated with radio further delineated the masculine and female spheres whilst also conflating masculinity with modernity and the outside world. Language too, only legitimised feelings of inferiority and si-

lenced women further – resulting in a Gramscian “consent” by women of position as “stewards of the domestic sphere”.⁵⁰ Most research has chosen to look at either the relationship between gender politics, or the development of radio, and the Afghan state. Yet, a Gramscian framework has attempted to show how the maintenance of masculine hegemony through radio was a function of the Afghan state. As noted, the highly centralised and paternalistic management of radio during this period was directly linked to a patriarchal conception of the Afghan body politic. Johannes Fabian claimed that a cultural medium’s most “significant achievement” is to “create collective freedom precisely in situations where individual freedom is denied”.⁵¹ However, Gramsci notes that ultimately, hegemony cannot be separated from the routine, “civil” spheres of ideology and culture, but rather is upheld by it. The case of Afghan radio throughout this period and today has shown this to be true.

49 Manekar, “National Texts,” p. 557.

50 Kamal, “Cultured Men,” p. 46.

51 Johannes Fabian, *Moments of Freedom : Anthropology and Popular Culture* (Charlottesville, 1998), p. 19.

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Weimar Propaganda and historiography

Megan Yocum



Transitions in the Significance of Weimar Propaganda Throughout Historiography

What is propaganda, and what role does it have in political life? That is the question of greatest interest to us. How should propaganda look, and what is its role in our movement?"

Joseph Goebbels, 1928

Spoken to a crowd of party members in a series of talks, this quote highlights the fundamental place propaganda held in the political developments of the interwar period.¹ As the National Socialists' first Minister of Propaganda, historians have often considered Joseph Goebbels and his understanding of the powers of propaganda as integral to the political battles waged throughout the Weimar Republic.² Yet, Goebbels is only one example of the vast number of political figures that grappled with the power of propaganda throughout the interwar decades, thus highlighting how questions of propaganda and its impact on shaping public opinion is key to any understanding of the interwar period.

While propaganda has been in use for centuries, it was only with the advent of the First World War that propaganda took on a whole new meaning as an essential political weapon. Consequently, the years following World War I saw a wave of propaganda studies, as contemporaries exaggerated the power of propaganda and assumed that the public were passively susceptible to rhetorical manipulation.³ Developed among sociologists in the 1920s, this 'manipulation thesis' marked the first conceptualisation of the significance of propaganda produced in the Weimar Republic. However, since the 1920s, this understanding of propaganda's significance and the ways it has been used to construct

frameworks for researching the interwar period has gone through many transitions, resulting in complex debates within the historiography on the Weimar Republic.⁴ By examining a number of influential texts and discourses on the significance of propaganda in the Weimar Republic, this essay will demonstrate how the historiography on this topic has developed over the decades, providing valuable insights into both the history of Weimar Germany and the ways historians actively shape narratives of the past. From these sources, we will see the initial turn away from the 'manipulation thesis,' with historians of the 1960s and 1970s viewing propaganda as having immense political power in shaping public opinion. Following this, an exploration of how propaganda was fit into historical narratives in the 1980s will demonstrate a transition to focusing on propaganda's potential in reinforcing the emerging historical narratives of the interwar period. Historiography from the 1990s again witnessed a shift in the understanding of methods of Weimar propaganda and how political figures persuaded the public for political support. Finally, the most recent historiography from the 2000s onwards reveals a recent turn toward the limitations of propaganda in the interwar period, as older historiographical narratives have undergone revision. Ultimately, consideration of these historical processes will reveal not only the complicated role of Weimar propaganda within the socio-political discourses of the interwar period, but also the importance of historians in building narratives of the past.

Any investigation into how historians have understood the significance of propaganda must, first of all, explore what is meant by the term 'propaganda.' Definitions of propaganda have been much debated by historians for decades, with questions of intention, audience, reception, and effectiveness being considered.⁵ Most historians,

1 Joseph Goebbels, speech (Berlin, January 1928), quoted in Randall Bytwerk, 'Knowledge and Propaganda,' German Propaganda Archive (1999), from <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/goeb54.htm> (Accessed 10 March 2023).

2 Zbynek Zeman, 'The State and Propaganda' in Robert Jackall (ed.), *Propaganda* (New York, 1995), pp. 174-176, 188-189.

3 Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany, Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford, 2008), p. 207.

4 Jeffrey Verhey, 'Some Lessons of the War, The Discourse on Propaganda and Public Opinion in Germany in the 1920s' in Bernd Hüppauf (ed.), *War, Violence and the Modern Condition* (Berlin, 1997), pp. 103, 116.

5 Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London, 1979), pp. 8, 15; Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State. Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 1-2.

including Steve Neale and Richard Taylor, have highlighted that the most fundamental aspect of propaganda is its 'purpose'.⁶ When importance is placed on propaganda's purpose, historians have generally agreed that propaganda is, therefore, a systematic attempt by any available media to persuade others to think or act in the desired way of the propagandist.⁷ This essay will, accordingly, consider propaganda studies that have examined propaganda materials fitting this definition, more specifically examining the press and print media, film, art and imagery, and the radio. In considering how historians have understood the significance of these types of propaganda, this essay will take a chronological approach and examine understandings of propaganda within the historiography of the Weimar Republic from the 1960s until the present.

The first significant transition that took place within the historiography of propaganda was the turn away from the 'manipulation thesis' toward an emphasis on the role of propaganda in shaping the political landscape of the Weimar Republic. Beginning in the 1960s, many studies began to rework the idea that audiences could be passively manipulated by propaganda, and consequently started to emphasise the necessity of receptive audiences to produce effective propaganda.⁸ As Jeffrey Verhey explains, this led to a shift in historical discourse, as scholars focused on the significance of political propaganda content and what it reflectively revealed about the political culture of the Weimar Republic.⁹ One example of this is Fritz Stern's *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, which argues that the cultural pessimism of interwar Germany has often been ignored in understandings of the success of the National Socialist Party (NSDAP).¹⁰ Propaganda played a key role in this argument, as it was the National Socialist propaganda's direct appeal to a

political culture of criticism that led to the group's eventual success.¹¹ Therefore, the influence of propaganda in the political battles of the interwar years highlights how historians began to understand propaganda in terms of its political power, which continued into the 1970s. For instance, Modris Eksteins' *The Limits of Reason*, published in 1975, examines three newspaper firms in the Weimar Republic in order to illustrate both the political influence of newspapers in the interwar years and the ways in which the disintegration of the German Democratic Press is reflective of the failure of democracy in Weimar.¹² Furthermore, Eksteins argues that this failure gave the NSDAP no opposition when establishing power.¹³ These examples of studies on the significance of Weimar propaganda, thus reveal how historians turned away from the concept of passive audiences in the 1960s and 1970s to holding a strong political view of propaganda, in which propaganda was instrumental in the rise of National Socialism.

The 1980s saw another transition in the historiography on the significance of propaganda, as scholars focused on propaganda's potential in reinforcing existing historical narratives within Weimar Germany. One of the historical narratives that emerged within Weimar historiography of this decade was the prevalence of political violence in Weimar and the importance of the public sphere in fighting these political battles.¹⁴ Consequently, Eve Rosenhaft's article on working-class politics that looks to the fundamental place of political propaganda in public spaces demonstrates how studies on the significance of propaganda developed alongside historical narratives of political violence and the importance of territorial spaces.¹⁵ Another historiographical work that illustrates this shift is Holger Herwig's 'Clio Deceived,' which asserts the use of propaganda as an effective form of self-cen-

6 Taylor, *Film Propaganda*, p. 8; Steve Neale 'Propaganda', *Screen* 18, no. 3 (1977), p. 39.

7 Some notable examples of historians who consider this definition of propaganda are, Gareth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London, 1986), p. 6; Leonard Doob, *Propaganda, Its Psychology and Technique* (New York, 1935), pp. 75-76; Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind, A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era* (Manchester, 2003), p.7.

8 Verhey, 'Some Lessons of the War', p. 116.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

10 Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: a study in the rise of the Germanic ideology* (Berkeley, 1961).

11 *Ibid.*, p. 293.

12 Modris Eksteins, *The Limits of Reason, The German Democratic Press and the Collapse of Weimar Democracy* (Oxford, 1975).

13 *Ibid.*, p. 310.

14 Eve Rosenhaft, 'Working-class Life and Working-class Politics, Communists, Nazis and the State in the Battle for the Streets, Berlin 1928-1932' in Richard Bessel and Edgar Feuchtwanger (eds.), *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany* (London, 1981), pp. 207-240.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 215-217.

sorship towards war guilt in Weimar Germany.¹⁶ Since historical narratives of Germany's reluctance toward the war guilt clause were prevalent in this decade, this work further reveals how historians in the 1980s developed understandings of the significance of propaganda in reinforcing these existing narratives.

While these understandings of the significance of propaganda began to emerge within historiography, they also began to face historiographical criticism and debate. At the end of the 1980s, Thomas Childers' 'Political Sociology and the 'Linguistic Turn'' argues for how the linguistic turn of the past decade, characterised by new linguistic and rhetorical scholarship that views language as not merely as reflective but also constructive, can have valuable applications to the study of German history.¹⁷ In particular, Childers criticises the lack of studies on how political parties 'constructed their public identities, how they targeted their constituencies, or formulated their appeals.'¹⁸ As a result, Childers opened the door for the pursuit of studying the significance of propaganda not in a reflective dimension targeted at political culture or historical narratives, but more importantly as an active contributor that reveals information on the political and social assumptions, interests, and aspirations of the Weimar Republic.¹⁹ Therefore, the 1980s not only saw a shift toward emphasising the role of propaganda in the development of emerging narratives on the Weimar Republic, but also brought attention to the limitations of the historiography on the significance of propaganda thus far, ultimately suggesting paths for further exploration and research.

The next transition in the historiography on this topic can be seen throughout the 1990s, as responses to Thomas Childers' work and the linguistic turn in historiography led to a new understanding of the methods of propaganda and how they prove significant in revealing how political figures persuaded the public. In Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross' *Mass Media, Culture and Society in*

Twentieth-Century Germany, which reflects on the German historiography of the 1990s, they identify a trend over this decade in which scholars move away from looking at structural societal history and towards an understanding of the meanings and mentalities of these structures.²⁰ One example of this is Gerhard Paul's *Aufstand der Bilder*, which analyses NSDAP propaganda, illustrating the importance of political myth-making in the Weimar Republic.²¹ By focusing on the actual formulation and dissemination of propaganda, this work shifts from previous narratives on the significance of propaganda by providing insight into the mentalities of political figures and the measures taken by political groups to engage with particular audiences. Additionally, Jeffrey Verhey's 'Some Lessons of the War' explores post-war propaganda and its appeal to the Weimar Republic based on 'a widespread desire for faith.'²² Verhey follows these historiographical shifts by drawing attention to the previous lack of emphasis on political figures and their employment of propaganda, ultimately revealing how radical and revolutionary elites often employed arguments about the necessity of powerful political figures in uniting Weimar Germany through national myths and propaganda after the First World War.²³ While these works take a significant step in the direction suggested by Childers and focus on the significance of propaganda in revealing the motivations of political figures and the production of mass persuasion, they still place the significance of propaganda within the context of general assumptions that characterised Weimar Germany as a 'crisis state,' in which political groups held homogenous beliefs. Hence, these understandings of the significance of propaganda in revealing the ideologies or agendas of an entire political group often overlooked the fragmentation and complexities that were fundamental to both the political and social composition of the Weimar Republic, thus leaving room for further development within the historiography.

These criticisms of the general assumptions incorporated into the historiography of the Weimar

16 Holger Herwig, 'Clio Deceived, Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany after the Great War', *International Security* 12, no. 2 (1987), pp. 5-44.

17 Thomas Childers, 'Political Sociology and the 'Linguistic Turn'', *Central European History* 22, no. 3/4 (1989), p. 381-393.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 389.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 389-90.

20 Karl Führer and Corey Ross, 'Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany, An Introduction' in Karl Führer and Corey Ross (eds.), *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany* (London, 2006), p. 3.

21 Jay Baird, 'Gerhard Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder*, *Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933*', *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 2 (1992), p. 575.

22 Verhey, 'Some Lessons of the War'.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 116.

Republic continued at the turn of the century, causing another significant transition as historians revised long-held narratives of the Weimar Republic by highlighting more complex understandings of propaganda in the interwar period. Most significantly, recent historiography has focused on the potential limitations of propaganda in the interwar period and its occasional role in dividing social and political groups rather than always uniting them. The work done by Corey Ross is most accomplished in this regard, as he places Weimar propaganda into wider social and cultural contexts that allow for more complicated views on the diverse impact propaganda had on the political discourse of Weimar Germany.²⁴ Furthermore, Ross argues that the significance of propaganda lies in the social and economic backgrounds that influenced those audiences who were then receptive and influenced by it.²⁵ Another example of this development in historiography is Bernhard Fulda's 'Industries of Sensationalism,' which re-examines the importance of newspapers and tabloids in narratives of Weimar political culture.²⁶ As a result, Fulda asserts not only the importance of newspapers in influencing political opinion, but also the fragmentation and diversification of opinions among both political and social groups.²⁷ Other works, like that of Timothy Brown, touches on the ways in which National Socialist propaganda had to '[bend] itself to the requirements of locale and clientele,' showing that propaganda was directed by the diversities found within social groups.²⁸ A final work worth noting is Julia Sneeringer's *Winning Women's Votes*, which not only contributes to recent shifts in historiography towards uplifting long-neglected women's history, but also demonstrates the ways in which social groups were influential on propaganda and political discourse in the Weimar Republic.²⁹ Sneeringer uses a large array of propaganda sources in order to examine the political appeals made towards women throughout Weimar's key political campaigns, and ultimately argues that

the parties defining women's roles along traditional lines were the most politically successful in receiving female votes.³⁰ This is profoundly revealing as it demonstrates not only the significant role propaganda played in political discourses on women in Weimar Germany, but also the importance of its reception in shaping political ideologies throughout the Weimar Republic. Therefore, transitions in historiography at the turn of the century led to a shift in looking at the significance of propaganda in revealing the complex social compositions of Weimar Germany, as well as the influence diverse social groups had in shaping propaganda campaigns.

Historiography on the Weimar Republic is continually developing as constant transitions have caused revisions of older narratives and pursuits into new research. Understandings of the significance of propaganda produced in the Weimar Republic are no exception to these transitions. Even within the last decade, there have been developments within historiography that have caused new understandings of propaganda's role in Weimar Germany, such as Julia Roos' recent 'Nationalism, Racism, and Propaganda in Early Weimar Germany,' which explores new avenues into the connections between black shame propaganda and National Socialist ideological pursuits.³¹ As this essay has demonstrated, the historiography on the significance of propaganda has transitioned away from its original 'manipulation thesis,' toward the influence of propaganda in the political landscape of Weimar in the 1960s and 1970s, and subsequently its use in reinforcing the emerging narratives of this period in the 1980s. Criticisms on the limitations of this propaganda pushed understandings in the 1990s into the ways propaganda reveals the motivations of political figures and their persuasion of the masses. More recently, this historiography has continued to develop as historians turn further towards the limitations of propaganda by focusing on the influence of social groups in shaping pro-

24 Notable examples of Corey Ross' work that examines propaganda in this manner include, Ross, 'Mass Politics'; Ross, *Media and the Making*.

25 Jo Fox, 'Book Review, Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany, Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich*,' *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2010), p. 554.

26 Bernhard Fulda, 'Industries of Sensationalism, German Tabloids in Weimar Berlin' in Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (eds.), *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany* (London, 2006).

27 *Ibid.*, p. 198.

28 Timothy Brown, *Weimar Radicals, Nazis and Communists between Authenticity and Performance* (New York, 2009), p. 47.

29 Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes, Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany* (North Carolina, 2002).

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 280.

31 Julia Roos, 'Nationalism, Racism and Propaganda in Early Weimar Germany, Contradictions in the Campaign against the 'Black Horror on the Rhine'', *German History* 30, no. 1 (2012), pp. 45-74.

paganda campaigns. Taken together, this essay has not only suggested the importance of propaganda and its significance towards socio-political studies of the Weimar Republic, but also the ways in which historians create frameworks for understanding the past that are constantly changing. Ultimately, this demonstrates how a study of the past is never static, and instead should be considered an active construction of knowledge. Consequently, this essay indicates the richness of this field of study

as a framework for understanding the past, and highlights the value of further investigations into propaganda, with historians like James Chapman explaining how problems of assessing the effectiveness and reception of propaganda continue to challenge propaganda historians.³² Therefore, historians' understanding of the significance of propaganda proves to be a deeply revealing area of academic study with widespread implications on how historians' shape narratives of the past.

32 James Chapman, 'Review Article, The Power of Propaganda', *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 4 (2000), pp. 688.

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