



# **R**ICE HISTORICAL REVIEW

*furthering the future by promoting the past*

VOLUME IV  
SPRING 2019

# RICE HISTORICAL REVIEW

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**Mailing Address:** Rice Historical Review - MS 42,  
Rice University, PO Box 1892 Houston, TX 77251-1892

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NUMBER 1

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Four eventful years have passed since the first volume of the Rice Historical Review. In the first “Welcome from the Editors,” founding Editors-in-Chief Mary Charlotte Carroll and Rachel Landsman discussed their hope of providing a space to share historical scholarship. Since then, much has changed. The editorial board has doubled; the submissions, quadrupled. The scope of the journal has evolved: beyond simply publishing annually, the Rice Historical Review now runs a podcast, hosts events around campus, and sponsors speakers for the greater Rice community. Beneath these changes, however, the core of the journal remains firm. It is the Rice Historical Review’s unwavering mission to promote outstanding undergraduate historical research done at Rice. In doing so, we are furthering the future by promoting the past.

For this issue, we present five exceptional essays. We open with our inaugural Floyd Seyward Lear Prize winner, “Contested Symbols” by Emma Satterfield. Emma’s analysis of the Vichy regime’s attempts to skew the meanings of revolutionary symbols is a reminder that controlling and distorting historical memory is an important tool of legitimacy. We next turn our attention close to home with Andrew Maust’s “Remembering Rice.” Andrew’s paper forces every reader to confront the difficult history of Rice University by highlighting the important role slavery had in the life of William Marsh Rice, and thus the university itself. This research is temporally relevant given recent Rice Thresher exposition, and other university and student responses to our institution’s history of race relations, particularly problematic traditions of blackface. In the essay “Jahangir, Collector” Clair Hopper enhances our understanding of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, who was avid collector of art and culture, throughout his life and reminds us of the role of material culture in defining identity. We then turn to medical history in Ginger Hooper’s “Hysteria.” By exploring the long and peculiar history of hysteria, Ginger points out concepts that at first glance seem scientific and empirical are often contingent on prevailing social paradigms. Finally, we finish with Meredith Aucock’s “Through the Looking Glass.” In examining the continuities and changes of travel narratives, Meredith allows us to understand the role of power dynamics in altering the gaze through which we see the world. Through these five pieces, we hope that you will not only enjoy these historical works, but also reflect on the problems and concepts these excellent authors have brought to the surface.

On a personal note, this year marks the final time that members who played a part in the first volume will be on the editorial board of the journal. Eddie, Daniel, Anthony, and I started off our careers in publishing as copy-editors for the first issue of the journal. As we pass the baton to a new generation of editors and leaders, it is our fervent hope that the Rice Historical Review will continue to not only promote the very best that Rice undergraduate historians have to offer, but also find new ways of sharing historical studies to the wider Rice community. We are more than confident that our successors will be more than up for the task that lies ahead.

Darren Pomida and Daniel Russell  
Co-Editors-in-Chief



# THE FLOYD SEYWARD LEAR PRIZE <sup>4</sup>

The Floyd Seyward Lear Prize for Best Essay is an annual prize awarded jointly by the *Rice Historical Review (RHR)* and the Rice University History Department for the best submitted article to the *RHR*. The award is in honor of Dr. Floyd Seyward Lear, who was a member of the faculty at the Rice Institute (later Rice University) in the Department of History from 1925 to 1975, the year of his death. He was Assistant Professor from 1927 to 1945, Professor in 1945, Harris Masterson Jr. Professor of History in 1953 (the first to hold this chair), and Trustee Distinguished Professor from 1965. He served as chairman of the Department of History from 1933 to 1960.



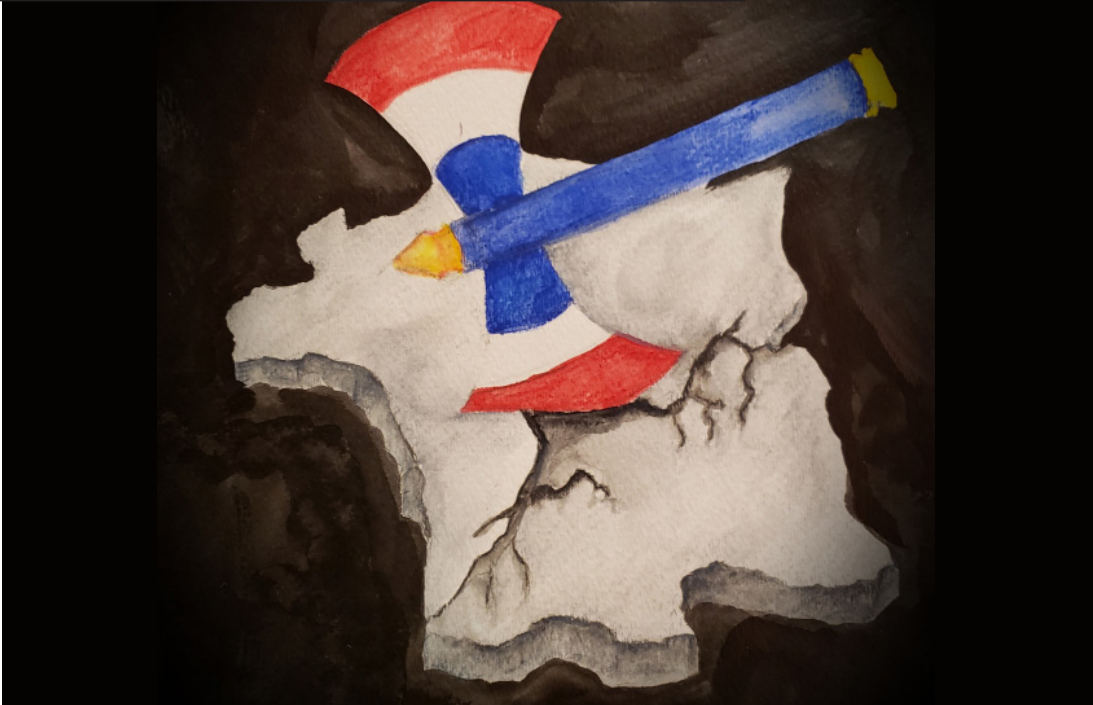
Dr. Floyd Seyward Lear (left)  
and Dr. Katherine Fischer Drew  
Source: Woodson Research Center

The student awarded with the prize will receive a \$500 scholarship. All papers submitted to the *Rice Historical Review* were automatically considered for this award. After all articles have been read and papers have been sent to copy-editing, all nominated articles that were selected for consideration were reviewed by the *RHR* editorial board. Through consensus, the board narrowed down the pool to two nominees for a final round of deliberation, which consists of the *RHR* Faculty Board. This committee will read through the final three articles and decide the winning article.

This year, the Lear Prize was given to Emma Satterfield for her article, “Contested Symbols: Vichy France and the Legacy of the French Revolution” for its persuasive analysis of primary sources in French, its rich historical contextualization, its compelling argument, and its elegant prose.

The *Rice Historical Review* would like to thank Dr. Katherine Fischer Drew, Autry Professor Emeritus, for giving us the possibility to provide this scholarship.

# LEAR PRIZE WINNER



## CONTESTED SYMBOLS:

### VICHY FRANCE AND THE LEGACY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

*This paper examines how Vichy, the authoritarian government in France throughout most of the Second World War, reckoned with the legacy of the French Revolution. I investigate this relationship through the regime's treatment of four revolutionary symbols: the figure Marianne, the anthem "La Marseillaise," the national holiday of Bastille Day, and the slogan of Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. Because these symbols were deeply embedded in French social and political life, I argue that Vichy could neither fully reject nor embrace them; instead, it pursued a middle ground by twisting the symbols' meanings and introducing alternatives in line with the traditionalism and ethnocentrism of its National Revolution. In doing so, Vichy attempted to replace the French Republic and the revolutionary values that it stood for with its own vision of the French past, present, and future.*

**Emma Satterfield**

Written for History 457:  
Modern Revolutions 1776, 1789, 1917, 1989, 2011  
Dr. Peter C. Caldwell

SPRING 2019

Since 1789, the themes and struggles at the heart of the French Revolution have been invoked and re-invoked at times of political crisis and change, from the empire of Napoleon to the brief Paris Commune of 1870. At the onset of the twentieth century, even as the Revolution grew more distant with the passing of time, its legacy remained central to the identity of both the French Republic and its citizens. This crystallization of French identity was made possible by the government's use of a repertoire of revolutionary symbols embodying the ideals of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. When the Republic ceased to exist, however, as it briefly did during the Second World War under the Vichy regime, what would become of these symbols? In other words, how did Vichy, by all definitions an authoritarian government, address the inescapable yet threatening legacy of the French Revolution?

Vichy's dismantling of the French Republic through its National Revolution served to undermine the revolutionary values that it stood for. These values were far from abstract in French society, however: they were embodied in countless monuments and festivals across France, as well as in widely-known songs and works of art. Thus, with the French Revolution present in so many aspects of French society, it was as impossible for Vichy to ignore its legacy as it was for the regime to embrace it. Instead, Vichy attempted to adapt revolutionary symbols to the ideals of the National Revolution by altering their meaning and introducing alternatives, thus conjuring an ethno-nationalistic myth of a "true" France obscured by modernity. This paper investigates Vichy's contentious relationship to the French Revolution through its treatment of several such revolutionary symbols: the figure Marianne, the anthem "La Marseillaise," the national holiday of Bastille Day, and the slogan of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity).

Vichy's approach to these symbols furthers existing debates about both the regime and the French Revolution. In attempting to manipulate and transform revolutionary imagery, Vichy, by all means a nationalist government, demonstrated that its vision of the French nation diverged from that conceived of by the revolutionaries of 1789 as well as the bureaucrats of the Third Republic, the country's longest republican regime up to that point. While Vichy defined its cultural program as a "revolution" and mobilized many revolutionary images, it simultaneously defied the core values of the French Republic, and consequently drew attention to the contradictions inherent in its vision of France's past, present, and future. Whether a regrettable "parenthesis" in French history or a more serious "past that does not pass," Vichy and its treatment of the revolutionary legacy thus bear implications beyond the popular question of whether or not the regime was fascist: at question here is the meaning of the modern French nation and the values upon which it is ostensibly based.

*Origins of L'État Français (The French State)*

While Vichy put an end to the Third Republic, which had been in place since 1870, the France of the 1930s was by no means a liberal paradise. As in the rest of Europe, struggles between the left and right escalated steeply during this decade. With the economic modernization of the 1920s metered by the global economic crisis of the 1930s, the interwar period had brought a mixture of prosperity and strife to France. Trade unionism and immigration, both of which had ballooned in France during *les années folles* (the Roaring Twenties), met with increasing opposition in the form of conservatism and xenophobia. Extreme-right leagues like *L'Action française*, which existed before the war, and the *Croix de Feu*, created in 1927, attracted members and gained political clout through heated rhetoric blaming immigrants, Jews, and communists for France's economic woes. Bourgeois workers, veterans of the Great War, and devout Catholics were particularly drawn to these leagues and their demands to "return France to the French."<sup>1</sup>

The victory of the Popular Front, a coalition of communist, socialist, and radical parties in the 1936 presidential election, marked a potential break from this apparent trend towards the far right in France and elsewhere in Europe. The Popular Front was formed in response to several separate crises, including the growth of fascism in Europe as well as a riot led by several French far-right leagues on February 6, 1934, which the left had viewed as an attempt at a fascist coup d'état. Following a large rally on July 14, 1935 and a campaign calling for "bread, peace, and liberty," the Popular Front brought together the French left during the following year's election and formed the country's first socialist government under the leadership of Léon Blum, a Jewish socialist. Once in power, Blum's regime appealed to working-class interests, introduced paid leave, and attempted to dissolve the extreme-right leagues. However, persistent economic troubles and divisions over international affairs like the Spanish Civil War weakened the Popular Front internally and in the eyes of the French public. Blum, a Jew, fell victim to a wave of antisemitism generated by the far-right leagues and ultimately resigned in 1937.<sup>2</sup>

In the aftermath of Blum's resignation, the Popular Front collapsed, leaving the French Republic in a "remarkably threadbare" state.<sup>3</sup> In April 1938, Edouard Daladier, leader of the Radical party and Minister of War under Blum, formed his new government in a France in which "the whiff of war was strong."<sup>4</sup> Despite inheriting the troubles of the preceding years, including massive strikes and dissent within the leftist coalition, Daladier enjoyed relatively high approval from the French.<sup>5</sup> However, the circumstances surrounding Daladier's government made his popularity short-lived. By 1938, Hitler's invasion of Central Europe began and led to the Munich conference between France, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy on September 29-30, permitting the German annexation of the Sudetenland in return for a pledge of peace from Hitler. The majority of the French were relieved that the



conference resolved the conflict peacefully, but this relief did not last: less than a year later, Germany completely occupied Czechoslovakia and invaded Poland, prompting France and Great Britain to declare war on September 3, 1939.<sup>6</sup>

Following the declaration of war, the French military took on a defensive strategy as both an attempt to avoid repeating its great losses of WWI and a general underestimation of the German army's capabilities. Bearing in mind the heavy costs of the previous war, many French people, civilians and soldiers alike, did not favor entering another conflict. As a result, the German invasion in May 1940 proved quick and decisive, prompting a massive exodus of civilians towards the southern and western regions of the country and a series of military defeats on the eastern front.<sup>7</sup> The armistice signed between France and Germany on June 22, 1940 signaled the effective collapse of the Third Republic. The French government, then in exile in Bordeaux, nominated Marshal Philippe Pétain, an eighty-four-year old hero of the First World War, to negotiate the terms of the armistice.<sup>8</sup> The result was a France divided in two, between an Occupied Zone in the north and along the Atlantic coast, and an Unoccupied Zone in central and southeastern France. Excluded from occupied Paris, the French government relocated to Vichy, a town near the line of demarcation.<sup>9</sup> There, the government swiftly consolidated its power and on July 9, the French parliament voted overwhelmingly in favor of abandoning the constitution of 1875. The next day, Parliament granted Pétain full powers to form a new government: the French State.<sup>10</sup>

### *La France Éternelle (Eternal France)*

Vichy signified “not only a change in government but a change in regime,” as it quickly instituted an ideological program for national renewal.<sup>11</sup> Pétain, along with vice-premier Pierre Laval, used the French defeat to promote a rejuvenation of French society under the guise of a National Revolution. This “intellectual and moral recovery” was rooted in an ideology of ethnocentric traditionalism and rejection of the “decadence” of the interwar years in favor of a return to the spirit of the “true” French nation.<sup>12</sup> Many tenets of the National Revolution aligned closely with the pre-war rhetoric of the French far right, particularly that of writer Charles Maurras, who promoted causes such as the “centrality of the family” after decades of falling birth rates and a “return to agriculture” after the large-scale urbanization of the interwar period. To achieve these ends, large families were subsidized, legal restrictions limited access to divorce and abortion, and farming became heavily incentivized.<sup>13</sup> Through these policies, Pétain's National Revolution capitalized on a “romantic nostalgia for an idealized past” that blamed modernity for the materialism and individualism of French society.<sup>14</sup>

However, the romantic vision of the French nation that Vichy championed was far from harmless. Reflecting German pressure as well as the pre-existing

xenophobia of the French right, the National Revolution entailed the exclusion of foreigners from France and increasingly intolerant policies towards the country's Jewish population. Indeed, the National Revolution was exclusionary at its core, its purpose being to "reassemble the dismantled components of the national body, to re-include in the national community the elements lost by 'bad shepherds.'"<sup>15</sup> Implicit in this restoration was a definition of the French nation that excluded a wide variety of people, including the most vulnerable. This exclusion proved to be more than rhetorical and between 1940 and 1942, Vichy enacted a series of measures targeting foreign Jews. Beginning with a mandatory census and exclusion from public service, and culminating in deportations to Nazi death camps, Vichy's policy regarding its "Jewish problem" became increasingly intolerant over time.<sup>16</sup> Despite post-war claims that these initiatives were entirely the result of German orders—and that the exclusion of foreigners prevented a worse fate from befalling French Jews—Vichy's role in the Holocaust is now officially accepted to have been one of active participation, and the National Revolution's efforts to "renew" the French nation have largely been recognized as a nationalist crusade of exclusion.<sup>17</sup>

*Because Vichy did not fully adopt the rhetoric of the French far-right, it could not simply reject the Revolution and its imagery.*

The National Revolution's message of the rejuvenation of the French nation and the exclusion of outsiders was transmitted throughout the Unoccupied and Occupied Zones. This was achieved primarily through propaganda—the government's "instrument for the control of civil society."<sup>18</sup> Because parliamentary assemblies like the Senate had been dissolved upon the creation of the French State, thereby limiting the regime's contact with French citizens and their representatives, it was necessary for Vichy to have a "state apparatus" through which to convey the themes of the National Revolution.<sup>19</sup> Vichy propaganda was therefore directed through the new Ministry of Information, headed from 1941 to 1944 by Paul Marion, a former communist.<sup>20</sup> With its own bureaucratic network of officers and task forces, the Ministry of Information disseminated propaganda in a variety of ways—from speeches given by Pétain himself to flyers posted throughout French towns.

The circumstances surrounding Vichy's existence, from its atypical rise to power to the types of programs that it instituted, make any classification of the regime rather difficult. Having ended the Third Republic and dissolved its representative assemblies, Vichy was far from a modern republic. It was certainly conservative, even authoritarian, but it was anti-republican in a manner different from previous reactionary French regimes. Unlike the Napoleonic empires or the

Restoration of the nineteenth century, Vichy was not counter-revolutionary in the sense of desiring a return to a monarchical order. Rather than a pre-revolutionary past, it called upon a mythic past rooted in ethno-nationalism, a past that hinged upon the notion that there existed an “eternal France” laying dormant, simply waiting to be rediscovered.<sup>21</sup> This vision of the past, a past barely grounded in historical fact, owed itself greatly to the proliferation of fascist-style leagues in the decades before the war, which had encouraged rightists to “furnish themselves with a specifically anti-republican vision of French history with which to change the present and the future.”<sup>22</sup> In this regard, it is clear that Vichy was no counter-revolutionary conspiracy; rather, it was the result of the collision of rising authoritarian currents, a loss of faith in democracy during the interwar period, and the shock of losing the war so suddenly.<sup>23</sup>

The enigmatic nature of the Vichy regime is crucial when examining its relationship to the French Revolution. For better or for worse, any new regime had to define itself in terms of the Revolution due to it being the “foundational event” of the modern French state.<sup>24</sup> As Petain and other top Vichy officials dismantled the Third Republic, under which many revolutionary symbols and values had become entrenched in French political and social life, they faced a cultural lexicon that they had no choice but to address. At the time, members of the French right generally viewed the Revolution as a whole through the lens of the Jacobin dictatorship and the Terror: to Maurras, for instance, “the ‘liberty’ proclaimed by the Revolution destroyed the citizen’s respect for all law, state and natural.”<sup>25</sup> Others, such as Jacques Bainville of *L’Action française*, even linked the French Revolution to communism by claiming that the 1790s had given rise to a “Bolshevization of modernity.”<sup>26</sup> However, because Vichy did not fully adopt the rhetoric of the French far-right, it could not simply reject the Revolution and its imagery. Instead, Vichy attempted to pursue a middle path between acceptance and rejection of the Revolution by reading into it the values of the National Revolution.

### *Revolutionary Symbols Under Vichy*

Marianne, the national allegory of the French Republic, was one revolutionary symbol with which Vichy had to contend. As is the case for many symbols dating to the revolutionary period, the origins of Marianne are complex, and her meaning has evolved considerably over the centuries since her inception. Marianne’s form was derived from the ancient allegory of Liberty, a woman draped in robes and wearing a Phrygian cap, itself a symbol of liberty under the Roman Republic.<sup>27</sup> Liberty was officially chosen as the allegory of the new French Republic on September 25, 1792 following a demand from Abbé Grégoire that “our emblems circulating the globe present to all peoples the cherished images of liberty and republican pride.”<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile in Languedoc, a province in southern France, the name Marianne circulated as a euphemism for the Revolution, and the question

of “How is Marianne?” became a way of inquiring about current events. This final association of the name Marianne with the Revolution came from a song, “La Guérison de Marianne” by Guillaume Lavabre, a Protestant shoemaker.<sup>29</sup> The song described Marianne’s recovery from a “great malady” due to the care of the “new executive power,” celebrated the storming of the Tuileries on July 10, 1792, and rejoiced in the official end of the monarchy shortly thereafter.<sup>30</sup>

The union of the name Marianne and the figure of Liberty did not occur in the revolutionary period; instead, it would take the inauguration of the Third Republic nearly a century later for the icon to attain its final form. In the interim, a reactionary period of empires and monarchies, Liberty became a symbol of republicanism and resistance, exemplified by Eugène Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People*, a painting completed in 1830 commemorating of the July Revolution of that year.<sup>31</sup> When the brief Second Republic was founded in 1848, the need to replace royal emblems and effigies once again brought Liberty to the forefront of French national imagery. However, cleavage between right- and left-leaning republicans at the time ultimately gave rise to two separate visions of Liberty as a symbol for the Republic: the revolutionary Republic, popular icon of subversion and even combat, and the official Republic, a wise and matronly figure often without her Phrygian cap.<sup>32</sup>

This double-image endured through the Second Empire and into the Third Republic, when it abounded at a time of widespread “republican affirmation via image.”<sup>33</sup> The name Marianne had been largely restricted to provincial use until a series of workers’ revolts in the 1850s in southern France brought it, and its code-meaning for the French Republic, to national attention. Thereafter, Marianne became the common name for the figure of Liberty-as-Republic, a fact epitomized in the Third Republic’s initiative to place busts of “the Marianne” in town halls across the country. This initiative ballooned into a veritable phenomenon of *la statuomanie* (statue-mania) by the end of the nineteenth century, with commemorative effigies—often of questionable artistic value—consuming nearly every inch of available public space.<sup>34</sup> In many ways, the proliferation of Marianne’s image was a banalization of her meaning and a betrayal of the revolutionary values that she originally stood for. As an allegory of the French state, Marianne became associated with order and governance and her link to the universal value of liberty became increasingly ambiguous, and even ignored.

It was this Marianne, an allegory of the French Republic with tenuous ties to the revolutionary struggle for liberty, that Vichy faced in 1940. Perhaps its best-known “strategy” towards Marianne was the destruction of bronze busts in town halls and other public spaces, though Vichy neither officially banned the image of Marianne nor explicitly ordered its destruction. Instead, a decree on October





Frances Williamson (2019)

11, 1941 demanded that statues lacking “significant historic or artistic value” be removed and melted down for industrial use.<sup>35</sup> Given the abundance of Marianne busts under the Third Republic, it is possible to argue, as Elizabeth Karlsogodt has, that these busts were recycled for practical and aesthetic reasons rather than as part of a concerted attack on republican symbols.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, of about 1,700 dismantled statues, only six percent were republican allegories.<sup>37</sup> However, many of the representations of Marianne, from busts to postal stamps, were replaced with the image of Pétain, indicating that political symbolism was indeed an important factor in Vichy’s decision-making process. The regime’s hesitancy to erase Marianne’s image from public spaces and her replacement by symbols of the National Revolution demonstrate Vichy’s inability to fully reject or accept the revolutionary legacy, and ultimately attest to the regime’s ambiguous self-definition.

Another strategy Vichy adopted towards Marianne was the distortion of her meaning—what Maurice Agulhon has termed “killing by effigy.”<sup>38</sup> Caricatures in the far-right press had long depicted Marianne as either a hideous, obese old woman or an exaggeratedly seductive youth, thereby portraying the Republic and its professed values as corrupt.<sup>39</sup> Although official Vichy propaganda tended to avoid these depictions of Marianne, her vilification in the press primed the regime to propose an alternative feminine icon more in line with the values of the National Revolution: Joan of Arc. Long venerated by monarchists and nationalists, she emerged between 1940 and 1944 as “the emblem of eternal French resistance against the English.”<sup>40</sup> While Marianne stood for universal liberty, Joan of Arc was unambiguously nationalist, a figure from the mythic French past whose image could be used to embody Vichy’s ideal female citizen: Catholic, maternal, and anti-English. Indeed, as Joan Tumblety argues, in Joan of Arc the French right found “both a military prowess and a comforting maternal presence to rival the republican Marianne.”<sup>41</sup> Through festivals, speeches, and other forms of propaganda, Vichy wholeheartedly embraced this “cult” of Joan of Arc. With Marianne quickly becoming a key symbol of the Resistance, Joan of Arc proved a safer pick for Vichy’s “it-girl” and allowed the regime to avoid overt confrontation with Marianne’s revolutionary and republican legacy while still using an undeniably French symbol.

Vichy adopted a similar approach towards “La Marseillaise,” the French national anthem. Like Marianne, “La Marseillaise” can be traced to the revolutionary period, though its significance and popularity evolved considerably between its first appearance in 1792 and Vichy’s inception in 1940. Composed by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle on the night of April 25, 1792, the song, originally titled “War Song for the Army of the Rhine,” was written for the French troops garrisoned in Strasbourg following the revolutionary regime’s declaration of war against Austria on April 20.<sup>42</sup> The song quickly spread to other French troops and earned the name “La Marseillaise” after being sung by volunteer soldiers from Marseilles who

had marched all the way to Paris by foot.<sup>43</sup> It was then sung at the storming of the Tuileries on August 10, thereby becoming “inevitably associat[ed] with the fall of the monarchy, and with the next step of the Revolution.”<sup>44</sup> The rapid popularity of “La Marseillaise” can be explained by its spirited rhythm as well as the universality of its lyrics. As Bernard Richard notes, it is a patriotic war song whose lyrics are “strongly ideological, but in which neither the homeland nor the enemy are explicitly named.”<sup>45</sup>

After the French Revolution, the history of “La Marseillaise” followed a path similar to that of Marianne, one of “long silences interrupted by emergences or rediscoveries.”<sup>46</sup> Forbidden by the counter-revolutionary regimes of the nineteenth century, it nevertheless persisted in the collective memory of the French, often resurfacing as a symbol of resistance. Just as Marianne reemerged to beckon the French towards liberty, “La Marseillaise” and its call for citizens to rise against tyranny accompanied the popular uprisings of 1830, 1848, and 1870. Upon the establishment of the Third Republic in 1870, “La Marseillaise” reappeared permanently in the public eye, officially becoming France’s national anthem on 14 February 1879. In doing so, the Third Republic officially laid claim to the legacy of the French Revolution; adopting “La Marseillaise” was “a means for republicans, as opportunistic as they were radical, to reattach themselves to the French Revolution, [and] to establish themselves as children of the Revolution.”<sup>47</sup> As much as it marked the victory of republicanism against the previous regimes, the choice of “La Marseillaise” as national anthem proved paradoxical and once again represented the government’s banalization of a revolutionary symbol.

Despite the Third Republic’s claim on “La Marseillaise” and the implications therein, the national anthem was but one iteration of the song. Between the 1870s and 1940s, different forms of “La Marseillaise” abounded in France and elsewhere in Europe. Groups on both sides of the political spectrum created their own versions of the song, from an “Anti-Jew Marseillaise” during the Dreyfus Affair to the “May Day Marseillaise” penned by a socialist association.<sup>48</sup> During the interwar period, “La Marseillaise” and its spin-offs became increasingly associated with the radical left to the point of sparking dispute between French socialists over whether to sing “La Marseillaise” or “L’Internationale,” the actual anthem of the Second International.<sup>49</sup> Viewed as a hymn for the international left, “La Marseillaise” reached beyond the borders of its home country; it was sung upon Lenin’s return to St. Petersburg from exile in 1917, played in 1931 in Madrid during the ceremonies inaugurating the Spanish Republic, and even adopted and translated by several socialist parties in Latin America. As these connections to the radical left intensified, the French right, which had never favorably regarded “La Marseillaise” because of its revolutionary origins, treated it with growing hostility.

The dual function of “La Marseillaise” as an official anthem and a subversive hymn explain its complex trajectory during the Vichy period, under which it simultaneously functioned as a nationalist anthem and a symbol of resistance. Although it was forbidden in the Occupied Zone, Vichy continued to use “La Marseillaise” in an official capacity and played it at various ceremonies and festivals across the Unoccupied Zone. Essentially ignoring its revolutionary origins and republican associations, Vichy presented “La Marseillaise” as a hymn for the eternal French nation that Pétain and his National Revolution claimed awaited rediscovery through the people’s return to traditional values and occupations. This was a “Marseillaise” onto which Pétain and his men heavily projected their own values, just as leftists and rightists alike had done for decades before them. They focused on lyrics of “La Marseillaise” that suited their purpose and drew attention to lines that emphasized the pride and protection of the homeland rather than the spirit of revolution and fight for liberty. The sixth stanza proved particularly useful for this purpose:

Sacred love of the Fatherland,  
Lead, support our avenging arms  
Liberty, cherished Liberty,  
Fight with thy defenders!  
Under our flags may victory  
Hurry to thy manly accents,  
So that thy expiring enemies  
See thy triumph and our glory!<sup>50</sup>

Referred to as the “Marshal’s couplet,” this stanza captured the patriotism of Vichy rhetoric and indicated that there was no need for Pétain to look beyond “La Marseillaise” for his national anthem, revolutionary as its origins were.

Although Vichy did not attempt to replace “La Marseillaise” with an anthem of its own, the regime introduced a number of original songs, most of which were taught at schools and performed by children. These new songs were nationalistic to an extreme, their lyrics often hailing Pétain as the great defender of the nation. In “Maréchal, nous voilà!” (Marshal, here we are!), for instance, a chorus of Pétain’s self-proclaimed children announced their willingness to serve their leader, “France’s savior,” who had given them hope that their country would be reborn.<sup>51</sup> Pétain evidently took full advantage of his reputation as a hero of the Great War to cultivate this image of a benevolent father-figure. Indeed, according to songs like “Maréchal, nous voilà!” and “L’Hymne au Maréchal” (Hymn to the Marshal), Pétain had saved the nation by signing the armistice and collaborating with Germany. In combination with their selective interpretation of “La Marseillaise,” these new songs contributed to an ethno-nationalist re-reading of the French past that disregarded



many aspects of its revolutionary history while not fully refuting it. Music thus functioned as a major tool of Vichy propaganda, forming an “unrivaled catalyst of enthusiasm centered on Pétain” that spread across the country, from household radios to choirs of schoolchildren.<sup>52</sup>

“La Marseillaise” and other patriotic songs were typically played on Bastille Day, the French national holiday occurring on July 14. As the Vichy regime had decided to “anchor its cultural identity in a nostalgic view of old France and its values” and “[treat] the Revolution as an unfortunate, finite episode,” it was forced to grapple with questions of whether and how to commemorate the unequivocally revolutionary holiday.<sup>53</sup> Compared to Marianne or “La Marseillaise,” the origins of Bastille Day are clearly rooted in the Revolution: the people of Paris stormed the Bastille on July 14, 1789.<sup>54</sup> While the sacking of the fortress was unplanned and its consequences unanticipated, the fall of the Bastille became a watershed moment in the Revolution, marking “the first manifestation of the French people to claim their liberty and their civic emancipation.”<sup>55</sup> The following year, the *Fête de la Fédération* (Holiday of the Federation) commemorated the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille and other events of 1789. Held at a time when many thought the Revolution had reached its natural end with the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, the festival celebrated the “rebirth of the nation, founded on the values of 1789 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.”<sup>56</sup>

Of course, the French Revolution did not end in 1790 and the violence of the Terror forever shaped collective remembrance of events like the storming of the Bastille. Under the reactionary regimes of the nineteenth century, commemoration of Bastille Day was predictably forbidden and replaced by more suitable holidays, although rebellious French republicans continued to celebrate in secret.<sup>57</sup> Once the Third Republic came to power, the legacy of the French Revolution was proudly reclaimed by the government but the choice of a date within it to commemorate as France’s national holiday proved contentious: would the Republic prioritize the “bourgeois” Revolution of 1789, or the “democratic” Revolution of 1792?<sup>58</sup> Acceptable to both radical and conservative republicans, and significant enough as the rupture between the Ancien Régime and modern French state, Bastille Day emerged as the only valid choice.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, because it represented both the popular fervor of the storming of the Bastille and the more tempered celebration of unity of the *Fête de la Fédération*, the choice of July 14 was ultimately a means for the Third Republic to create its own mythic past of sorts, a past in which the violence and division of the Terror was less important than the Revolution’s promise of universal liberty and equality.

The Third Republic’s official selection of the July 14 as its national holiday in 1880 did not absolve the date of controversy, however. The French right fervently

disputed the decision by arguing that it was a celebration of the scenes of carnage and cannibalism it associated with the Terror. Decades later, the holiday remained equally controversial. With the concurrent rise of extreme-right leagues and the Popular Front during the 1930s, the 150th anniversary of the storming of the Bastille in 1789 set the stage for a heated confrontation between competing visions of the Revolution and its legacy. During the interwar period, the prevailing accounts of the Revolution were “optimistic” and “firmly republican” thanks to historians like Georges Lefebvre and Albert Mathiez. In response, the French far-right seized the occasion “as an opportunity to deconstruct the national myths [...] and to offer instead a critique of French history that situated 1789 at the birth of a decadent modernity.”<sup>60</sup> The controversies surrounding Bastille Day’s sesquicentenary festivities thus implicated more than the national holiday alone: at stake was France’s relationship to its past and, by extension, how the country could define itself in the present.

Vichy’s establishment appeared to mark a victory for the far-right’s vision of the French past. This victory was tempered, however, by the regime’s refusal to fully repudiate the French Revolution. Whereas an explicitly counter-revolutionary regime would likely have abolished Bastille Day entirely, the July 14 holiday and its related festivities remained a part of the regime’s official calendar until 1942, when total German occupation of the country prohibited the celebration of all French holidays. According to Ethan Katz, this was “more by political necessity than by choice,” as Vichy’s first Bastille Day came only a month after the signing of the armistice.<sup>61</sup> In true Vichy fashion, Pétain quickly endeavored to adapt the holiday to his own purposes by transforming it “from a celebration of republicanism and liberty into a solemn day for France’s war dead.”<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the July 14 between 1940 and 1942 was accompanied by somber ceremonies and religious services, and the holiday’s revolutionary origins remained evident only from its date. Pétain’s status as a respected veteran of World War I lent him a great deal of authority in enacting this change and cementing him at the center of the newly revised national holiday.<sup>62</sup> As a result, religion, order, and veneration of the French homeland replaced Bastille Day’s original values of liberty, unity, and – most threatening of all to the French State – popular demolition of state power. Once again, Vichy had taken a symbol of the Revolution and adapted it to suit its own vision of the French nation.

Along with its transformation of Bastille Day, Vichy also promoted alternative holidays in line with the National Revolution’s values. The November 11, when the French honored the fallen soldiers of the First World War, was promoted as a major holiday under Vichy. The reminder of the great losses suffered by the French during the war served to reinforce the notion that the French-German armistice, and indeed Vichy collaboration with Hitler, was a beneficial decision that had saved the nation from ruin and guaranteed it a place in the future European order. Vichy also endorsed the celebration of Mother’s Day, as it was a perfect occasion to endorse the

National Revolution's image of mothers as dutiful housewives responsible for the moral education of their children; in Pétain's own words, mothers were "the muses of our Christian civilization."<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the Festival of Joan of Arc was promoted as a holiday for Vichy's version of the saint—the Catholic, maternal, anti-Marianne—as children covered statues and churches with flowers each May.<sup>64</sup>

Vichy even introduced new holidays, including a festival for workers on May 1. While the notion of a workers' holiday may seem rather leftist, Vichy ensured that the holiday was centered around the figure of Pétain, who "grasped the hand of the worker and explained that he was putting France to work and would keep his promises."<sup>65</sup> Through their labor, then, workers contributed to the rebuilding of a prosperous French nation, just as mothers ensured the continuation and education of the French people and veterans guaranteed the safety and integrity of the homeland.

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Perhaps the symbol that best summed up the vision of the National Revolution was its motto of *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (Work, Family, Fatherland) and its blatant opposition to the model upon which it was based, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. Like Marianne, "La Marseillaise," and Bastille Day, France's original national slogan was irrefutably revolutionary. First popularized by Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau and Voltaire, the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity were included in countless maxims invoked during the Revolution, though they were often accompanied or replaced by others like unity and reason.<sup>66</sup> It is impossible to trace the emergence of the liberty-equality-brotherhood trio to an exact moment but it generally followed a three-part trajectory: liberty was present from the early days of the Revolution and equality joined it after the storming of the Tuileries on April 10, 1792. Finally, brotherhood was popularized in 1793 by the Montagnards, a radical group that controlled the French government at the time.<sup>67</sup> The slogan's ties to the radical current of the French Revolution, including the Terror, are undeniable. It allegedly appeared at a meeting of the populist Cordeliers Club in May 1791, where members proposed that *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* be inscribed on the uniforms and flags of the National Guard.<sup>69</sup> The trio emerged again in 1793, after which point the French were encouraged to paint "Unity, indivisibility of the Republic; Liberty-Equality-Brotherhood or death" on their houses.<sup>68</sup>

The slogan was unsurprisingly suppressed during the empires and monarchies of the nineteenth century, but resurfaced with other revolutionary symbols during the republican interruptions of 1830, 1848, and 1870. In the short-lived French constitution of 1848, for instance, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* was defined as a principle of the Republic.<sup>69</sup> Under the Third Republic, the slogan and its revolutionary origins were officially recognized by the French government and the words were inscribed on the edifices of town halls across the country as part of the 1880 Bastille Day celebrations.<sup>70</sup> Despite its “canonization” at this time, the Republic’s official adoption of the motto did not spare it from controversy and outright opposition. While most accepted the slogan, and to an extent it became yet another banal symbol of the French government, the far-right continuously voiced its opposition even through the interwar period. In his 1931 *Dictionnaire politique et critique*, (Political and Critical Dictionary) Maurras summed up the far-right’s stance towards the motto: liberty was a “dream” and equality a “folly,” while fraternity alone deserved its place “on the façade of the national union.”<sup>71</sup>

On 10 July 1940, the same constitutional law granting Pétain full powers to form a government proclaimed that the new constitution must “guarantee the rights of work, the family, and the fatherland.”<sup>72</sup> Vichy’s motto of *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (Work, Family, Fatherland) was thus introduced upon the very creation of the French State.<sup>73</sup>

Adopted from the *Croix de Feu* and its successor, the *Parti social français*, the motto was an obvious nod to the rhetoric of the extreme-right movements of the interwar period and an explicit refutation of the legacy of 1789.<sup>74</sup> Implementation of the slogan therefore entailed more than the inscription of the words on public edifices: it demanded a serious reconfiguration of French ideals and a transformation of the existing social order. To that end, the policies of Vichy’s National Revolution were all constructed around the notions of work, family, and fatherland. Posters demanding that French men to do their part for the nation by working in Germany and the festivities on May 1 commended French laborers as a crucial pillar of support for Pétain. Laws and subsidies encouraging conception and festivals valorizing motherhood extolled the family as the “fundamental cell” of the national organism.<sup>75</sup> Lastly, Pétain’s countless speeches about the beloved yet neglected *patrie*, along with the regime’s exclusion of foreigners and Jews, cemented the fatherland as an ethno-national community whose importance vastly exceeded that of any individual. However, Vichy’s efforts to restructure French society and values through its new slogan proved incomplete and left the regime’s position vis-à-vis the French Revolution as equivocal as ever. While catchy, the three-part mantra of *Travail, Famille, Patrie* remained an inescapable reference to the revolutionary model that it sought to replace. Moreover, far from being banned from use, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* was even evoked in official Vichy discourse. On September 15, 1940, for



instance, Pétain himself called for the French to strive towards a “real Liberty,” a “real Equality,” and a “true Brotherhood,” though these were all accompanied by appropriately conservative disclaimers that one must defer to a “rational hierarchy.”<sup>76</sup> The revolutionary slogan evidently proved too deeply embedded in French institutions and society for Vichy to fulfill the far-right’s wish of its elimination, ultimately drawing attention to the failings of the regime’s strategy of simultaneous “investment in French continuity” and inspiration from the forward-looking mass dictatorships of the 1930s.<sup>77</sup>

*Conclusion: Vichy, the Revolution, and Modern France*

The treatment of revolutionary symbols under Vichy demonstrates how contentious the legacy of the French Revolution was for a regime that had abolished the Third Republic without being explicitly counter-revolutionary. Because these symbols were deeply embedded in the French social and political fabric, and because Vichy failed to sufficiently define itself between republic and autocracy, it could neither embrace nor ignore a large portion of revolutionary imagery. Instead, as demonstrated, the regime pursued a middle ground by twisting the meaning of certain symbols and introducing alternatives in line with the values of its National Revolution, thereby attempting to replace the Republic and the values it stood for with “a neo-traditionalism tinged with paternalism, clericalism, and authoritarianism.”<sup>78</sup>

However, Vichy’s mission was destined to fail. While the majority of the French viewed Pétain with a level of respect bordering on veneration, this *pétainisme* did not translate into the widespread success of his policies and wholehearted adoption of his traditionalist values. Decades of state approval of the French Revolution and the institutionalization of its symbols had stacked the odds against any attempts to take control of the revolutionary legacy and transform France’s relationship with its past. Moreover, many of the symbols that Vichy endeavored to reclaim and adapt to its own vision were appropriated by the Resistance. Marianne’s image abounded in the clandestine press,<sup>79</sup> political prisoners at Chateaubriant on October 22, 1941 defiantly sang “La Marseillaise” before their execution, and Resistance leaders rallied around July 14 as a source of motivation for their own movement.<sup>80</sup> Revolutionary symbols that had become commonplace under the Third Republic made a victorious comeback during the Liberation in 1944, and were proudly reclaimed by the Fourth Republic. Contrary to Vichy’s intentions, the National Revolution ignited a renewal of fervor surrounding France’s revolutionary past.

Nearly eighty years later, Vichy’s legacy remains surprisingly controversial for a regime that held power for only four years. Was it an “accidental, antirepublican parenthesis” in French history, or a deeper manifestation of political and intellectual

currents that had long been fermenting?<sup>81</sup> The “parenthesis” theory remains the easiest to swallow: it holds that Vichy was an aberration, essentially absolving the French of any responsibility for its actions and excluding Vichy from discussions of France’s relationship to the Revolution and to itself. On the other hand, acceptance of the notion that Vichy was more than an anomaly requires a deeper engagement with its meaning and its relationship to the modern French identity. Over the last several decades, this approach has gained traction in scholarly and official circles, allowing for a more nuanced vision of Vichy’s place within French history to emerge— a vision in which the regime provoked “a series of military, political and cultural reckonings with the French past, present and future, that changed forever how the French people saw their Revolution, their country, and themselves.” Antirepublican and antirevolutionary as it was, then, Vichy has nevertheless provoked and encouraged a closer examination of the principles upon which the modern French state, identity, and memory are founded.

## NOTES

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**Author: Emma Satterfield**

*Hanszen College, Class of 2019*

Emma Satterfield is a senior from Hanszen College majoring in anthropology and history. Her research interests broadly include the history and archaeology of modern and contemporary Europe and the United States, with an emphasis on collaborative and community-driven projects. After college, she plans to work for a few years before pursuing a graduate degree in archaeology.

**Contributing Artist: Frances Williamson**

*Brown College, Class of 2020*

Frances is a junior majoring in History and Evolutionary Biology and minoring in Politics, Law, and Social Thought. She is from Corpus Christi, Texas and loves drawing, painting, and photography.





## REMEMBERING RICE:

HOW SHOULD THE UNIVERSITY ACKNOWLEDGE  
AND REPRESENT ITS FOUNDER'S PAST?

*William Marsh Rice, who chartered the Rice Institute, is popularly remembered for his philanthropy and for his dramatic murder. Often left out of the common narrative is his involvement in slavery, and the Texas cotton trade. This paper explores the current remembrance of Rice, details his connections to slavery, and provides a recommendation to Rice University on how to address the history of its founder. This recommendation is contextualized with how other universities have begun to address their ties to slavery.*

**Andrew Maust**

Written for HIST 300:  
Universities and Slavery (Independent Study)  
Advised by Dr. W. Caleb McDaniel

SPRING 2019

Despite the abolition of slavery by the Thirteenth Amendment over a century and a half ago, America still wrestles with how to remember and address slavery's painful legacy. One of American slavery's most common associations is with the growing of cash crops, but it also built and funded many of the early institutions in the American colonies and later states. During the past decade and a half, institutions of higher education, starting with Brown University in its ground-breaking study, have begun to take a closer look at how they were founded and what role the slave trade had in their early history.<sup>1</sup> Over thirty American universities, in both the North and South, have even joined an international group of universities whose goal is to research the lasting effects of slavery in their institutions.<sup>2</sup> These studies, as well as work by independent historians, show that many early American universities had a connection to slavery. For some it was through direct financing from slave traders. Others utilized slave labor to build and maintain university grounds, or they advanced the pseudo-science of white racial superiority that helped to moralize the ownership of other human beings.<sup>3</sup> These universities, in addition to their connections to slavery, were all founded before 1865, the year that marks the end of legal slavery in the United States. But could there be universities founded after the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment that still benefited from slavery, albeit indirectly?

Rice University, which opened its doors in 1912, is a prime example of a university founded after abolition that owes its existence to the legacy of slavery. While the Rice Institute, later changed to Rice University, was not active during the time of slavery, its founder and namesake, William Marsh Rice, benefitted from the slavery driven economy of antebellum Texas.

William Marsh Rice was a New England businessman who moved to Texas after the panic of 1837.<sup>4</sup> He spent nearly three decades in Houston as a merchant before splitting time between Texas, New York, and New Jersey for the rest of his life.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps Rice's greatest accomplishment, which will place him in the footnotes of Texas history forever, was the donation of his fortune upon his death to endow the Rice Institute in Houston.

Outside of this action, Rice is not a heavily studied figure. He has one widely published full-length biography, published in 1972 and based on the research notes of Rice University professor and Rice graduate, Andrew Forest Muir.<sup>6</sup> This book, and Muir's notes, lay the groundwork for most of our current understanding of William Marsh Rice. Muir's biography paints a picture of an astute businessman, who helped to found and develop the city of Houston.<sup>7</sup> As Rice's fortune grew, so did his idea to use his wealth to advance education. William Marsh Rice's story has a tragic ending, however. On the night of September 23rd, 1900, Rice was murdered by his butler in a conspiracy to defraud him of his fortune. Muir sets this drama at the center stage of

Rice's biography, and it continues to dominate the modern remembrances of Rice. A statue of Rice occupies the center of the main academic quad at Rice University, and when tour groups pass by, the one story they tell of his life is the tale of his dramatic death. Rice University's website has a small history section under the "about" tab, however, it only starts in 1891, with the signing of the Institute Charter.<sup>8</sup> Included are two paragraphs of biographical information for William Marsh Rice that state he was a businessman, chartered the university, and explain the circumstances of his murder.<sup>9</sup> Rice University's Fondren Library constantly curates rotating exhibitions across campus, including a current installation in the student center titled "The Butler Really Did Do It: The Murder of William Marsh Rice."<sup>10</sup> William Marsh Rice's story is at risk of becoming a lie by omission, by which his death has become so sensationalized that his actions have been forgotten. A philanthropist and the victim of a gruesome murder, William Marsh Rice was also a slaveholder and profited from the Texas cotton trade before and during the Civil War.

While Muir's work acknowledges that Rice did own slaves, Muir downplays this portion of his life. In the 180-page biography, Muir sets aside only 12 pages to cover Rice's involvement with cotton, slavery, and the Civil War.<sup>11</sup> This period represents a third of Rice's life. Muir's biography very carefully cultivates a complimentary view of Rice. Without passing judgement on Rice based on modern sensibilities, it is important to clearly and fully detail the business activities in which he was involved.

Muir describes Rice as a general store owner, who acted as an importer and distributor and provided the people of the newly founded city of Houston with their assorted sundries.<sup>12</sup> Muir describes his customers as "settlers and plantation owners" and the "ladies of the gulf coast."<sup>13</sup> At the time, Texas had a primarily agrarian economy, as the discovery of oil and the rise of the energy industry did not take place until after the turn of the century, a year after William Marsh Rice's death.<sup>14</sup> Less than five percent of Texas families made their living off of commerce professions, but the major merchants and traders in the state were primarily located in Houston and Galveston.<sup>15</sup> Within the agricultural community, the most important cash crop was cotton, which was planted, cultivated, harvested, and processed using slave labor.<sup>16</sup> In 1860, slaveholding farmers harvested 27,758 bales of cotton worth \$999,288.<sup>17</sup> Though Houston had some of the largest amount of commercial activity in the state, the surrounding counties had some of the largest concentrations of slave labor. In 1850, the counties of Brazoria, Fort Bend, Matagorda, and Wharton, all located immediately southwest of Houston, were four of six counties in the state with majority slave populations.<sup>18</sup> By 1860, thirteen counties in Texas had majority slave populations, with nine adjacent to Houston to the north and southwest.<sup>19</sup> The existence of a majority slave population likely indicates that plantation slavery was practiced by at least some of the residents of these counties. William Marsh Rice's

own brother, Frederick Allyn Rice, had a plantation in Fort Bend County that, in 1863, consisted of over 1600 acres of land and 43 slaves.<sup>20</sup> These wealthy planters who surrounded Houston would have looked to merchants like Rice to buy goods imported from the North and Europe and paid for these goods with money earned from slave labor.

In addition to their roles as store owners, Rice and his business partners served as sources of capital and loans. When Texas politicians were writing the Republic of Texas constitution, they drew influence from Jacksonian economic principles, and chose to ban the existence of banks.<sup>21</sup> This meant that local merchants and planters, who had excess wealth, were the only people in their communities who could provide loans to drive economic growth. Rice's firm, and other merchant firms like his, "extended credit as part of their business transactions, thereby playing the part of private banks."<sup>22</sup> While some of these loans were intended to sustain farmers before they were paid for their crops, others went towards building new business ventures. In 1849, one such loan of up to \$4,000 was granted to James Love of Brazoria County to purchase the materials necessary to begin processing sugar at his plantation.<sup>23</sup> While cotton was the main cash crop in Texas, slaves were also involved in sugar production in South Texas. Rice was not only involved in the slave economy through his acceptance of money from plantation owners, but he also gave plantation owners money to expand their businesses. The terms of these loans were also noteworthy; under collateral, Rice and his firm were entitled to recoup slaves as payment for defaulted loans. This was a common practice in antebellum Texas, where slaves were treated as capital assets.<sup>24</sup> This was the manner by which Rice received some of the fifteen plus slaves he owned in his lifetime.<sup>25</sup> While Rice's position as a merchant allowed him to interact passively with the slave economy by merely accepting the money of plantation owners, his actions as a lender rendered him an active participant who helped to grow the plantation businesses around Houston and acquire slaves through debt repayment.

As an importer and exporter of goods, Rice was directly involved with the largest export of Texas, cotton. Muir's original biography does not discuss the scale of Rice's cotton exportation; it merely notes that he was involved with the business. The updated centennial edition of *William Marsh Rice and His Institute* features some new documents, including a letter from 1852 in which R. G. Dunn & Company, a credit score assessor, notes that Rice "had made considerable money on cotton recently."<sup>26</sup> Rice's ledger books from 1857 to 1862 reveal that he had a separate account from that of his imported goods which strictly tracked his buying and selling of cotton bales. The ledgers reveal that Rice bought from farm owners, then sold in bulk to other exporters who handled transport out of Texas. His purchase of cotton was settled both in cash payments to these producers, as well as settlements for their debts in purchasing his goods. In March through mid-October of 1858, Rice's ledgers

show credits of over \$50,000 from his cotton accounts, meaning he resold \$50,000 worth of cotton in eight months.<sup>27</sup> This would be valued at approximately \$1.5 million dollars in 2018 when adjusted using consumer price index ratios.<sup>28</sup> While this number accounts for revenue and not profit, it does show that a large volume of cotton moved through Rice's business. To put this in perspective, Rice's total worth in 1858 was thought to be \$400,000, and he was likely the richest man in Houston.<sup>29</sup> Without making a moral judgment of Rice, he was involved through the cotton trade in profiting from slavery, and it should be clearly stated and understood that he had a role in perpetuating its existence in Texas.

Perhaps the most direct way in which Rice participated in the peculiar institution was through slave ownership. The 1860 census lists Rice as owning fifteen slaves, ranging in age from three to forty-five years old.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the slaves Rice received from defaulted loans, he also purchased slaves. One example is Amanda, a seventeen-year-old he bought in 1861 for \$1050.<sup>31</sup> Though cotton exportation was one of Rice's businesses, he never participated in plantation slavery. Muir writes, "Cannily, he was too shrewd to get into cotton raising himself, subject as it was to the endless uncertainties of labor."<sup>32</sup> This is a euphemistic manner of saying that Rice, with great foresight, avoided growing cotton himself, partly because it would have been difficult to control and manage so many slaves. Instead, his slaves would have worked in his home, as well as potentially around his business.<sup>33</sup> In 1856, one of Rice's slaves, thirty-year-old Merinda, ran away. Rice believed that she was probably "lurking around town" and placed a wanted-ad in the *Houston Telegraph*, offering a "liberal reward for her apprehension."<sup>34</sup> In addition to his efforts to track down his own runaway slaves, Rice served for a year on the local slave patrol in Houston.<sup>35</sup> Rice, therefore, actively worked to prevent the loss of property both of his own slaves and in the larger Houston community. If Rice had only received slaves through defaulted loans, one could theorize that his slave ownership was a purely passive consequence of his business, but these actions reveal that he deliberately engaged in slave ownership.

A claim in Muir's biography that Rice was a Unionist risks misrepresenting Rice's feelings about the Civil War and secession.<sup>36</sup> The term "Unionist" is commonly perceived as someone who supported the federal government and its policies during the Civil War. These policies include efforts taken by the Lincoln administration to begin limiting slavery, such as the Emancipation Proclamation issued in 1863. However, this is not a complete description of Unionism, which in the antebellum period was simply the belief that the United States should remain a single united country. By this broader definition, the term Unionist carries no judgments on slavery or preference for government policy addressing it. A popular form of Unionism in the antebellum South, especially among merchants and businessmen, was a movement called Constitutional Unionism.<sup>37</sup> Members of this movement were



in favor of keeping the Union together, “but were by no means opposed to slavery.”<sup>38</sup> In 1860, the Constitutional Union ticket provided a “conservative alternative [to Southern Democrats] for Southern voters who wished to preserve slavery within the Union.”<sup>39</sup> Merchants during this time-period, including Rice, were caught between two regional economies, and many viewed secession as a “dire threat to their economic well-being.”<sup>40</sup> They relied on the industrial goods produced in the North to sell in their stores, but they also needed the Southern slave economy to succeed in order to have customers.<sup>41</sup> Both political extremes, secession and abolition, would spell disaster for Southern merchants. As a result, they clung to a middle option, which was to maintain the status quo.

Governor Sam Houston provides an excellent example of a Texas politician who supported the ideals of Unionism. A slave owner, Houston believed that despite the rise of the Republican Party and Lincoln, the United States and its Constitution still provided the best defense of property rights, and by extension slavery.<sup>42</sup> Houston viewed the Republican party as a Northern sectional party, and instead of advocating for Southern secession, he “ask[ed] not for the defeat of sectionalism by sectionalism, but by nationality.”<sup>43</sup> He saw uniting with Northerners who opposed abolition as the only way forward for the South. Houston most closely aligned with the Constitutional Union party; he finished second for their presidential nomination in the 1860 national convention, and eventually endorsed the party’s candidate after a failed independent presidential run.<sup>44</sup> Sam Houston is significant to understanding Rice’s beliefs, as Rice was considered by Muir to be a “lifelong admirer of Sam Houston.”<sup>45</sup> An interaction between Houston and Rice is recorded in an 1897 letter, in which Rice reminisces about the last time he had seen “Old Sam,” who had come into Rice’s store shortly before his death in 1863.<sup>46</sup> Muir notes that Rice twice wrote to Sam Houston asking him to give public addresses.<sup>47</sup> Rice also publicly urged Sam Houston to convene the Texas legislature six days after Lincoln’s election, ostensibly to address calls for Texas’s secession.<sup>48</sup>

While we may not have any direct writings from Rice detailing his political beliefs, we can deduce an educated guess based on the beliefs of those with similar occupations and the types of politicians that he supported. Rice most likely would have opposed secession. However, it is unrealistic to believe that Rice supported any type of abolition movement, since his economic prosperity was tied to a slave-driven economy. Instead, he might have believed that there would be more stability in the Union than in a secessionist Confederacy that might be on a path towards armed conflict. This set of beliefs would have allied him with the conservative sectional parties that supported slavery but opposed secession, such as the Constitutional Union movement. He most likely did not support liberal Northern sectional parties, such as the fledgling Republican Party. To describe Rice simply as a Unionist is to ignore a complex spectrum of his possible beliefs about the Union and slavery.

Rice's actions following secession provide further evidence that he did not have an ideological allegiance to the North. During the beginning of the Civil War, Rice remained in Houston, where he continued to operate his business.<sup>49</sup> Two of his customers during this time were the state of Texas and the Confederate States of America. Ledgers show that in 1861, the CSA used Rice's service as a financier to pay nearly \$17,000 in salaries to Confederate military officers.<sup>50</sup> There are also records that indicate Rice's first wife, Margaret Bremond Rice, provided material support to the Confederacy through uniform donations to troops and monetary donations to troops' families.<sup>51</sup> While Rice may have preferred for Texas to stay in the Union, he nonetheless supported and advanced the interests of the Confederacy following secession.

*This leads to an important question: how much of William Marsh Rice's fortune, and the university's original endowment, can be traced back to profits made from slave labor?*

William Marsh Rice's true allegiance was likely to profits and his business interests. As the war dragged on, Federal blockades of Southern ports made it difficult to import Northern and European goods and to export Southern cotton.<sup>52</sup> These products were the basis of Rice's business. Like many Texans, he was forced to consider smuggling through Mexico in order to continue exporting cotton and importing European goods.<sup>53</sup> Rice's wife died unexpectedly in 1863, and shortly afterwards Rice decided to leave the city. He travelled to Mexico, to the town of Matamoros.<sup>54</sup> Matamoros was a hub for smuggling activity, which took Texas cotton out of the Confederacy and around Union blockades.<sup>55</sup> Most shipping records from Matamoros have been destroyed, but historians estimate that over 320,000 bales of cotton were smuggled out of the port, which would comprise more than twenty percent of the Confederacy's total cotton exports.<sup>56</sup> It is not immediately clear whether Rice cooperated with the Confederacy or worked outside of its smuggling system. The Confederacy attempted to control and benefit from the exportation of cotton, but "private profiteers, having arrived first with the most, dominated the trade throughout the war, making enormous profits from it."<sup>57</sup> The smuggling of cotton afforded the opportunity for the most enterprising of businessmen to make millions.<sup>58</sup> After Rice's cotton left Matamoros, it travelled to Cuba, and then onto the United Kingdom, where Archibald St. Clair Ruthven, Rice's former employee, received it.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the absence of records detailing whether Rice worked with or around the Confederacy, there is significant documentation showing that his former

business partner and close friend, E. B. Nichols, was involved in cotton speculation and evaded paying money to the Confederacy by working with the state of Texas towards the end of the war.<sup>60</sup> During the middle of the war, Rice and Nichols appear to have worked together to sell cotton. In a series of letters between Rice and E. B. Nichols in September of 1863, Nichols complains that months after sending cotton to Mexico “nothing has been done with our cotton,” but two days later he had “arranged with the forwarding agents to send our cotton . . . at once.”<sup>61</sup> These letters carry significance, as Nichols uses the term “our cotton.” Later in the letter Nichols references other shipments using the phrase “my cotton,” meaning the cotton shipment that had been stalled was shared by Rice and Nichols. In the letter from September 12, 1863, Nichols also complains about the difficulties of doing business from across the border, stating that “we have slept on our rights . . . if one of us had come here a month ago we could have gotten all our cotton off.”<sup>62</sup> This provides a potential motive for Rice’s decision to move to Mexico after the death of his first wife. Whether Rice cooperated with the Confederacy or acted as a private profiteer, his wartime cotton smuggling, by which he benefited from inflated prices of the scarce resource, made him rich.

Following the war, Rice briefly returned to Houston before heading north to New Jersey, where greater financial opportunities existed. The import business would have been difficult in Reconstruction Houston, where federal troops governed and controlled property.<sup>63</sup> The finances of the city were also in turmoil, as those who held Confederate currency and bonds were left with useless paper. Rice had escaped financial ruin by avoiding the use of Confederate bonds in favor of gold and silver coins, selling his merchant business, and investing heavily in real estate.<sup>64</sup> When he believed that the South was no longer the best seat of his business, he moved, seeking better financial stability.

An examination of Rice’s actions before, during, and after the Civil War reveals that his true ideological loyalty was to economic prosperity, whatever would make him the most money. He was a slave owner who directly participated in the cotton trade and profited from the institution of slavery. He may have been anti-secession, but he likely would not have supported any government action that limited his ability to profit from slave labor. When cooperation was advantageous for his business, he worked directly with the Confederacy. During the war he smuggled cotton, potentially for his own gain as a privateer. When Rice left Texas in 1867, he was a rich man.

This leads to an important question: how much of William Marsh Rice’s fortune, and the university’s original endowment, can be traced back to profits made from slave labor? Towards the end and directly after the Civil War, Rice began to buy land and increase his wealth through real estate. Real estate made up a large portion

of the endowment that Rice pledged to the Institute.<sup>65</sup> Some of this land, therefore, could have been purchased directly with proceeds from the cotton trade. At the very least, Rice's fortune was based on his early success in Houston. If he had not been a successful merchant who participated in the slave economy, Rice University might not exist.

What responsibility does the University have to acknowledge its founder's actions, especially since its first students did not arrive until over a decade after his death? Though William Marsh Rice was never involved in the daily operations of the Rice Institute, he wrote the founding charter and set the initial vision for the school. This included a provision that instruction at the Institute was to be for "white inhabitants of the City of Houston, and State of Texas," which became an issue when the University began the process of integration.<sup>66</sup> Several alumni filed a lawsuit that attempted to block integration on the basis that the founding charter, and William Marsh Rice's intentions, only provided for the education of white students. In hopes of providing evidence during the trial, Rice historian Andrew Forest Muir searched for any statement from William Marsh Rice outside of the charter detailing his intentions about who could receive an education at Rice. However, he found nothing. Rice University eventually won the court case, successfully integrating, but it was "the last university of its type to complete this action."<sup>67</sup> As the University's founder, William Marsh Rice and his beliefs had an outsized effect on campus policy long past his death, even when similar organizations no longer accepted these ideas. The University also stands as the most visible piece of Rice's legacy and will be associated with him as long as it bears his name.

Rice University now has a unique opportunity to be proactive in understanding and acknowledging its connection to slavery and to be a leader among its peer institutions. While we cannot change our past, it is time for us to better understand our history, and rise to address it. In early 2019, political scandals surrounding blackface incidents inspired a Rice student to examine and begin sharing examples of racist pictures published in past issues of Rice's *Campanile* yearbook.<sup>68</sup> This story was picked up by the media, and prompted Rice University President David Leebron to send a campus wide email addressing the fact that Rice has a "clear and painful," history of racial intolerance.<sup>69</sup> One of his calls to action was for "members of the Rice community . . . to learn about our own history and acknowledge aspects of that history that are distasteful and painful."<sup>70</sup> This email is encouraging because it shows an awareness and willingness from the University's administration to address past actions. The administration could go further, however, as the earliest event President Leebron mentioned in his email was the creation of the Institute charter in 1891.<sup>71</sup> To support President Leebron's call to learn about and acknowledge Rice's history, the University should charter a working group to further research William Marsh Rice's connections to slavery and provide a formal





Linda Wu (2019)



recommendation to the university on how to recognize this chapter in its founder's past.

Other institutions of higher education that explored their historical connections to slavery have commonly employed chartered working groups. These working groups are typically composed of history professors, current and former students, administrators, and other university stakeholders, and often spend months to years completing in-depth research. They then produce a report of their findings and often provide a recommendation to the administration on actions that can be taken on campus to incorporate this history into physical and published remembrance. Brown University completed the first of this type of study in 2006, after the university president commissioned the group to study Brown's historical connection to slavery and the general history of injustices and reparations.<sup>72</sup> The study found a deep institutional connection to slavery and recommended that Brown report the full truth of these findings, memorialize the fact that the university had been involved with the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, and create further initiatives and programs to study injustice.<sup>73</sup> The University of Virginia, who commissioned a study in 2013 to "report on UVA's historical relationship with slavery, highlighting opportunities for recognition and commemoration," provides another example of success by this type of working group.<sup>74</sup> The report, which was delivered in 2018, contains a recommendation to create sizable changes to the physical landscape of UVA by placing commemorative markers at historical locations around campus that were associated with slavery, as well as creating new monuments on campus dedicated to the memory of enslaved laborers.<sup>75</sup> Georgetown University commissioned the Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation in 2015 to engage with the university's history and propose a path forward for its community and those affected by Georgetown's historical actions.<sup>76</sup> The report was published in 2016 and contained recommendations for physical memorialization on campus, as well as steps towards reconciliation with those affected by Georgetown's involvement in slavery.<sup>77</sup> Georgetown has connected with descendants of slaves who were associated with the university, brought them into the conversation about how to move forward, and offered preferential status to these descendants for any program that factors legacy affiliation into the admission process.<sup>78</sup> This is a step towards not only acknowledging the past, but also working to overcome its effects. While these are only a few of the examples of working groups chartered to explore slavery at universities, these studies, and others like them, create a strong precedent for Rice to begin its own process of historical recognition.

Commissioning further study into William Marsh Rice will be integral to this effort, as the historical record is incomplete. There are still gaps in the story of William Marsh Rice's personal and professional life. There is a chance that there either was no original documentation or that it has not been preserved and is lost

to history. However, it has been over five decades since Andrew Forest Muir did his research, and new primary source documents, such as the Rice Papers collection at The Heritage Society, have been found. Neither the original publishing of Muir's biography nor the updated Centennial Edition incorporate these documents. By chartering a working group, the University would be able to give a team of professional historians the time and resources needed to continue to research this issue and hopefully close some of the knowledge gaps.

A working group would also give students a chance to gain valuable research experience in the humanities, as well as allow representation and input from a diverse selection of student groups. Rice University takes pride in its status as a world-class research university; giving students the chance to work with professional historians on in-depth archival research would further the University's educational mission. Rice also has a rather unique campus culture, in which its undergraduate students enjoy and expect a certain level of autonomy and responsiveness from the administration. If Rice chooses to address its history, students will need to be key stakeholders in the efforts of shaping the University's response.

Understanding our past, good and bad, is a vital part of understanding the present, as well as shaping the future. History is not just confined to textbooks, but also has a tangible effect in shaping the environment around us. Rice University still feels the effects of the racially intolerant views held by previous students and faculty. This history cannot be changed, but by understanding it, the Rice community can come together to understand where we stand today and where we want to stand in the future. The whole truth is necessary to combat biases that distort history to serve an agenda. Historians thus serve a vital purpose, to find the truth of our past, keep us informed of it, and accurately preserve the historical record. It is time that William Marsh Rice's truth comes to light. Rice was a philanthropist, and his generosity has, arguably, positively impacted the lives of the entire Rice community. This philanthropy, however, should not absolve or erase the actions he took in regards to slavery. His statue, and interred remains, take up a prominent position in the University's academic quad. He is placed on a pedestal, rising above the rest of us, both metaphorically and literally. Most students walk by this statue daily, and it is a near mandatory stop for all visitors to campus. However, few of the University's stakeholders know the full story of his history, instead fixating on the dramatic circumstances of his death. How can they know his full history when it previously has not been openly shared? Historical context should be added both to the larger than life physical space, as well as the written and oral histories the University shares about its founder. William Marsh Rice was a man of his time, but he chose to participate in slavery when other options existed. In his home state of Massachusetts, slavery had already been abolished by the time he was solidifying his fortune on the eve of the Civil War. Even though Rice University and its campus may not have been

directly touched by slavery like other American universities, it serves as the largest and most visible legacy of William Marsh Rice, and it therefore has a platform to recognize the role slavery played in its benefactor's life. It is time for Rice University to acknowledge the complicated history of the man who sits upon a pedestal at the center of its campus.

## NOTES

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**Author: Andrew Maust**

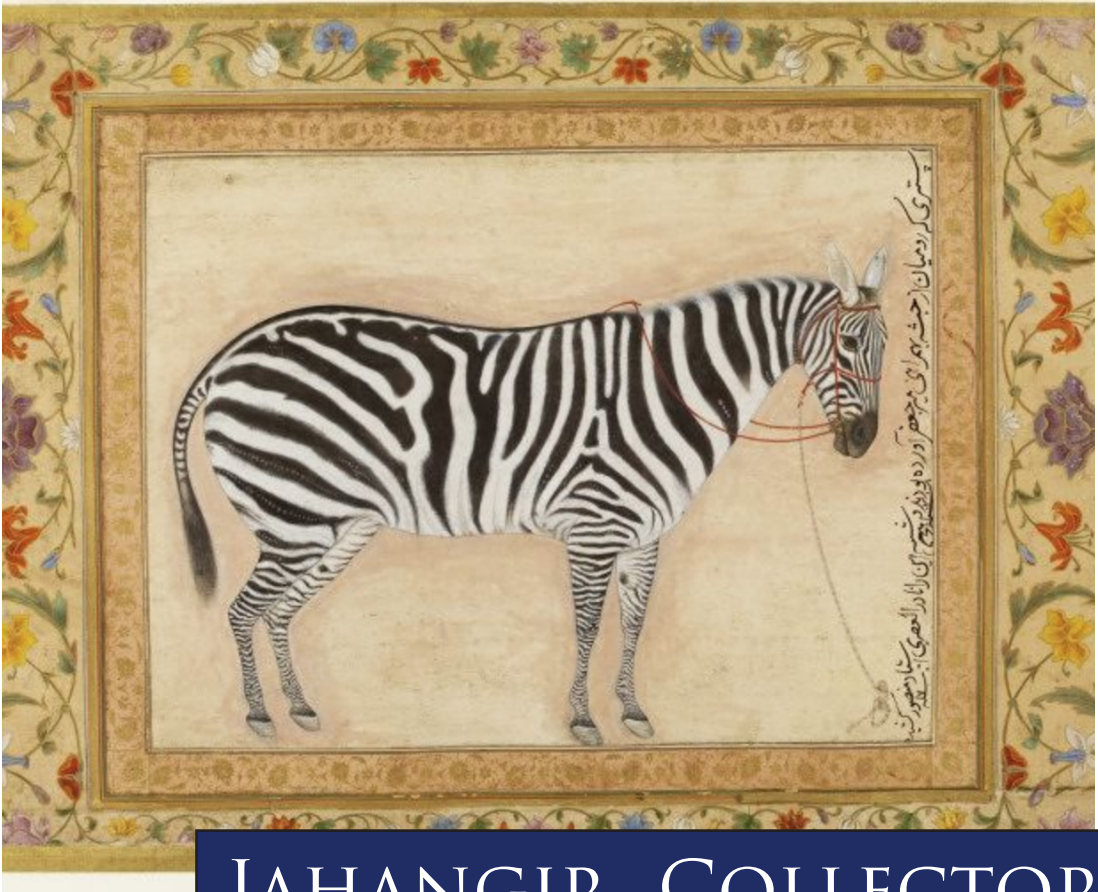
*Brown College, Class of 2019*

Andrew Maust is a senior from Brown College majoring in Political Science and minoring in Business. Andrew's first love is food, and when he has free-time he can often be found in the kitchen researching and trying new recipes. After graduation, Andrew plans to move to Washington D.C. to open a Bubble Tea Shop with several other Rice graduates.

**Contributing Artist: Linda Wu**

*Recent Rice Graduate*

Linda Wu is a recent Rice graduate with a major in Visual and Dramatic Arts (Studio Art Track) and a minor in Business. She has created illustrations for three issues of RHR, served as graphic designer for RPC, and was vice president of RU Animating, the first animation club at Rice. After graduation, she worked as studio assistant to Rice VADA professor, Natasha Bowdoin, and assisted in the production and installation of Sides Ways to the Sun, currently on view at the Moody. She is currently working with local non-profit art institutions such as the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and Lawndale Art Center to support the local creative community.



## JAHANGIR, COLLECTOR: SEIZING THE WORLD

*Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-1627) was an avid collector of many things: art, animals, and natural wonders. By tracing his acquisition habits, including networks of trade and types of acquisitions, this article reveals how the emperor constructed his self-concept by way of his collection. Jahangir collected prestige objects to reinforce his own wealth, but also desired to know and possess the most fantastic animals, plants, stones, or other natural oddities. By allowing him to place his mark on such a wide range of objects, Jahangir's collection justified his regnal title: Jahangir, World-Seizer.*

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**Cover Image: Figure 2, Mansur. Zebra. 1620-21.**  
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper. 18.3 x 24cm.  
London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

**Clair Hopper**

Written for HIST 477:  
Islamic Art and Empire  
Dr. Lisa Balabanlilar  
and Dr. Aimée E. Froom

9 mules very fayre and lardg, 7 Camells laden with veluett, two Sutes of ... Venetian hanginges of veluett with Gould...two Chestes of Persian Cloth of Gould, 8 Carpettes of silke, 2 Rubyes ballast, 21 Cammelles of wyne of the Grape, 14 Camelles of distilld sweet waters, 7 of rose waters, 7 daggers sett with stones, 5 swordes sett with stones, 7 Venetian looking glasses, but these so fame, so rich that I was ashamed of the relation.<sup>1</sup>

The above passage was recorded by Sir Thomas Roe, English emissary to the court of Mughal emperor Jahangir, upon seeing a convoy of finery acquired by the emperor. Roe is palpably stunned by the vast show of wealth; not only could Jahangir acquire innumerable objects of the highest quality and rarity, but he could source them from far reaches of the world, from Persia to Venice. Jahangir had a famous penchant for collecting objects like these: rare, fine, unique, and stunning. Over the twenty-two years of his rule, he amassed a collection of objects, animals, and natural rarities that spoke both to his universal power as emperor and his own personal tastes. This paper investigates that collection and the ways in which the emperor assembled it, tracing the motivations and ideological meanings behind each of the pieces in the collection.

Jahangir's collection contained the best and most interesting things his world had to offer him, bringing together "the marvels of nature and the masters of human ingenuity...at once a means and an expression of the monarch's universal grasp".<sup>2</sup> Natural oddities and rarities, including those Jahangir found on his journeys and those brought to him from afar, feature prominently in his memoirs: narwhal teeth, bezoar stones, and other striking naturalia.<sup>3</sup> Rare and striking animals were a large part of Jahangir's collection, both in portraits and in live animals kept at court (especially royal elephants, such as his much-loved pet Nur Bahkt).<sup>4</sup> As in many other imperial collections, things of great value were a crucial ingredient in Jahangir's collection: costly gemstones, decorative weaponry, and prestige textiles from around the world are enumerated countless times in the *Jahangirnama*. These valuables were quite clearly meant to amaze and impress, adding to Jahangir's image of power. In collecting the best and rarest objects possible from across his world, Jahangir lived up to the full meaning of his regnal title *Shah-i-Jahangir*: World-Seizing Monarch.<sup>5</sup>

Jahangir's collection and collecting habits are not well studied, and I was unable to identify any full-length studies that address them in their entirety. However, I have identified a few key, related avenues of research through which we can begin to construct an image of Jahangir as a collector. In focusing on Jahangir's acquisition habits, self-conception as seizer of the world, and attitudes as artistic and scientific naturalist, I argue that Jahangir collected and acquired objects not only to possess them in the most literal sense of the word, but also to frame himself as

possessor of the world. This sense of universal possession is heavily associated with Jahangir's conceptions of self and empire.

*Jahangir, Collector: Jahangir's Acquisition Networks*

Any discussion of a collection, especially a personal collection, must include a pragmatic line of questioning: Where did the collector acquire these objects? What do the acquisition networks used reveal about the collector's values and principles? This is where I begin my research, identifying the most common ways in which Jahangir came across valuables and rarities for his collection. There seem to be four main ways in which he made acquisitions: gifts of rare plants and animals, natural phenomena he encountered firsthand on his travels, gifts and trade of valuables with Safavid Iran, and trade of valuables with the Portuguese at Goa. The former two systems are of vital importance for my later discussions of Jahangir's self-concept as world-seizer and as naturalist. In the sections that follow, I will discuss in detail the latter two networks, gifts and trade with Safavid Iran and trade with the Portuguese at Goa.

The Mughals self-identified as a sibling empire to the Safavids, via their shared Timurid lineage. Jahangir emphasized and utilized this kinship in many ways, including a consistent relationship of gift-giving and trade of valuables between himself and Safavid emperor Shah 'Abbas. The *Jahangirnama* outlines many examples of Jahangir acquiring rarities for his royal treasury as gifts from the Safavid emperor. One foreign observer, Iskandar Beg, describes one gift envoy from Iran:

One thousand five hundred pieces of precious fabrics, velvets, gold- and silver-shot textiles, beautiful gold and silver brocades, European and Chinese silk brocades and velvets, as well as goods and textiles from Yazd and Kashan, and all sorts of gifts and presents worthy of the rank of both giver and recipient that would take too long to enumerate [sic].<sup>6</sup>

In acquiring such vast amounts of prestige goods and wealth as gifts from Shah 'Abbas, not only was Jahangir elevating his own status as owner of valuables, but he was solidifying, strengthening, and reaffirming his close relationship with the large, powerful Safavid empire. Affirming their familial relationship, in fact, seems to be one of Jahangir's primary concerns in his acquisitions from the Safavid emperor. Jahangir describes in his memoirs a gift sent from Shah 'Abbas, a fifty-thousand-rupee turban ornament holding a sizable ruby. He coveted the ruby not only for its monetary value, but also because it was inscribed with the names of their shared ancestors, Ulughbeg, Mirza Shahrukh Bahadur, and Amir Temur Kuragan (Timur). Jahangir had his goldsmiths inscribe his own name on the ruby as well, permanently associating himself with the Safavid's Timurid heritage and documenting it on an object of high value and prestige.<sup>7</sup> Similar incidents recur throughout the

*Jahangirnama*. In one, Jahangir describes a particularly lavish envoy of gifts sent by “my brother Shah ‘Abbas”, including “fine horses, textiles, and suitable rarities of every description”—as well as a lengthy letter, copied verbatim in the memoirs, affirming the emperors’ familial relationship.<sup>8</sup> In another anecdote, Jahangir requests high quality bitumen and turquoise from Shah ‘Abbas, and the Shah’s response reveals the lengths to which he would go to maintain the two emperors’ trade relationship: “these two things can’t be bought, but I will send them to him.”<sup>9</sup> In regularly acquiring objects from Safavid Iran that were of high symbolic and monetary value, Jahangir continually affirmed his place as conceptual and material inheritor of Safavid lineage.<sup>10</sup>

The Safavid empire was not Jahangir’s only valuables acquisition network; the Mughals maintained a profitable, sometimes tense relationship with the Portuguese traders at Goa, through which Jahangir acquired many rarities and valuables from around the world. Mughal contact with the Portuguese came after Akbar, Jahangir’s father, conquered nearby Gujarat in 1572-73.<sup>11</sup> The two empires had a somewhat tense trade relationship under Akbar, with underlying mistrust periodically boiling into outright hostility. During Akbar’s rule, at the plea of the Mughal court, the Portuguese authorities granted one annual opportunity for the Mughals to cross the Red Sea, purportedly to worship at the tomb of Mohammad. The Mughals took high advantage of this concession, loading a fleet of ships once a year with traders and valuables, and returning with ships full of goods traded in the West.<sup>12</sup> Clearly, this was not simply a religious journey—the Mughals exhibited not only a shrewd ability to manipulate their Portuguese neighbors, but also an overriding concern with trade networks and acquisition of finery from across the globe. Some of this underlying tension would become overt, such as a brief and sporadic war in 1613-15. However, relations between the Mughals and Portuguese never soured enough to permanently damage their trading relationship until after Aurangzeb’s rule.<sup>13</sup>

Akbar was interested in any exotic commodities he could acquire from the Portuguese, especially wine and clothes from Portugal. Akbar tells us in his memoirs that he sent one Hajji Habibullah Kashi to Goa to retrieve European curiosities, accompanied by Mughal craftsmen tasked with studying their art. Upon their return Akbar was

. . . attended by a large number of persons dressed up as Christians and playing European drums and clarions. [They displayed] the choice articles of that territory. Craftsmen who had gone to acquire skill displayed the arts which they had learnt and received praises . . . the musicians of that territory breathed fascination with the instruments of that country, especially with the organ. Ear and eye was delighted, and so was the mind.<sup>14</sup>



Akbar displays here a fascination with exotic European goods and habits. Not only did he desire to see and own the goods of Europe, but he had the living craft and performed art of the far-off West brought directly to his court. He translated exotic arts into his own familiar context, and used Portuguese Goa to bring the world to him.

This trade relationship with the Portuguese was actively maintained by Jahangir. He regularly tasked courtiers with retrieving the most impressive and interesting rarities from Portuguese Goa.<sup>15</sup> Most famously, Muqarrab Khan (described in the *Jahangirnama* as “one of the most important and long-serving Jahangirid servants”), was a consistent liaison between Portuguese and Mughals.<sup>16</sup> Muqarrab Khan was knowledgeable in the jewel trade, and sent rarities and exceptional jewels to the imperial court quite regularly.<sup>17</sup> Jahangir used him to satiate his often forceful desire for exotic goods from Goa; on diplomatic visits to the Portuguese vice-rei, Muqarrab Khan was authorized “to purchase any rarities he could get hold of there for the royal treasury . . . without consideration for cost, he paid any price the Franks [Europeans] asked for whatever rarities he could locate.”<sup>18</sup> As this selection illustrates, though visits to Goa may have been partially political, one of their primary purposes was to acquire goods for the imperial collection. In his study of Mughal-Portuguese interaction, Jorge Flores refers to one unpublished Jesuit chronicle. It tells us that in 1611, Muqarrab Khan traveled to Goa with 300 companions. There, after a brief diplomatic meeting with the vice-rei, he failed to acquire a rare piece of furniture valued at 30,000 *cruzados*. Jahangir was incensed at this failure, and harshly criticized his advisor and friend.<sup>19</sup> Jahangir continued a relationship with the Portuguese at Goa expressly to acquire goods through their vast trade networks.

Though the Mughals strongly desired to benefit from the vast trade networks of the Portuguese, theirs was not a simple relationship of desire for Western things and dependence on European trade resources. Their relationship was unequal: though Portuguese sources are generally very concerned with the doings of the Mughals, Europeans are hardly mentioned in many Mughal sources. Europeans are not mentioned in the *Jahangirnama*, not even Thomas Roe’s diplomatic expedition that was so important an event for the English.<sup>20</sup> The overwhelming majority of documentary evidence comes from Portuguese sources, indicating that “the Portuguese needed Mughal Gujarat much more than the Mughals needed them.”<sup>21</sup> Safavid Iran and Portuguese Goa provided two fruitful routes by which Jahangir could acquire valuables for his collection. Through these, he could continuously affirm a kinship with the wealthy Safavid empire, and a lucrative affinity with Portuguese Goa, for both him and his empire.

*Jahangir, Naturalist: Artistic & Scientific Fascination*

The main modes of acquisition which I have not yet discussed—presentation as gifts or personal acquisition on travels—pertain mainly to natural phenomena and rarities, perhaps the most frequent and significant additions to Jahangir’s collection. The frequency with which the emperor sought such goods, and the great attention he paid them, indicates the high esteem in which he held them. I have identified two major themes in Jahangir’s interactions with naturalia in his collection: an association with artistic naturalism, representing the natural world accurately as it appeared to the human eye; and a preoccupation with measuring and quantifying the natural world in a quasi-scientific mode of inquiry. I argue that Jahangir used both as means to assert his ownership over his collection.

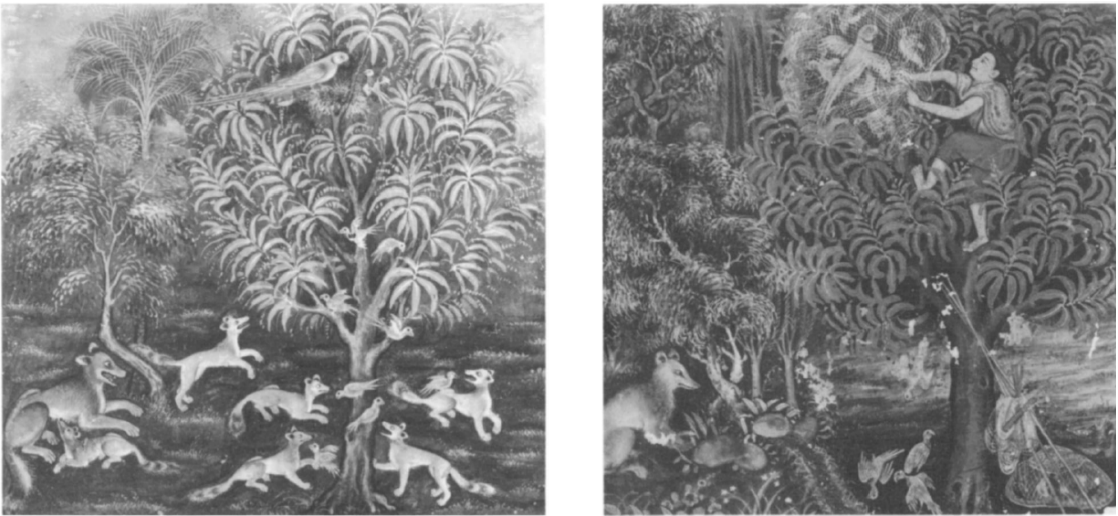


Figure 1. (Right): Daswanth. *The Parrot Mother Cautions Her Young*. Ca. 1560. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art. (Left): Basawan. *The Hunter Throws Away the Baby Parrots*. Ca. 1560. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art.

By the time Jahangir took the throne and began collecting, naturalistic, detailed painting was already in vogue. In a painting commissioned by Akbar, the fantastic and otherworldly coexisted with the natural. As an example, in the parable paintings *The Parrot Mother Cautions her Young* and *The Hunter Throws Away the Baby Parrots* [Fig. 1], fanciful subjects are depicted with a treatment so detailed as to appear lifelike.<sup>22</sup> Naturalism was most prominently shown through the work of Akbari painter Basawan, who favored clear compositions with detailed subjects and perceivable depth, and shied away from the more fantastical subjects and styles favored by his contemporaries.<sup>23</sup> Basawan created paintings that were intimately tied to Akbar’s personal desires and life experiences, “virtually extensions of his own life” and with a strong dependence on reality. Though there was a strong current of otherworldly subjects and fanciful, elaborate treatments under Akbar’s reign, Akbar patronized artists that painted in a naturalistic style, depicting the world he ruled with almost scientific detail.

Jahangir too commissioned naturalistic, extremely detailed artworks—but the works he commissioned served his collection in a completely different way. Where most Akbari paintings tended toward the richly decorated, fantastic, and mythological, most Jahangiri paintings (with the exception of the allegorical paintings I discuss later) tended toward the un-patterned, detailed, and natural. Analysis of the paintings he commissioned reveals a preference for “quieter works with fewer figures and less action . . . fine craftsmanship, control, individual character exploration . . . aspects present but of secondary importance in Akbari works”.<sup>24</sup> The following paragraphs will discuss how Jahangir’s painters used naturalism to incorporate much-loved animal portraits into the emperor’s collection, and the possibility of their drawing inspiration from European painters of nature.

The emperor was quite fond of memorializing his encounters with unusual flora and fauna by commissioning paintings of them. The *Jahangirnama* is replete with similar episodes, in which Jahangir sees, or is brought as a gift, an unusual specimen—most often an animal—and after a detailed description, Jahangir commissions a portrait of it. The following passage relates one such instance:

Around this time a dervish came from Ceylon bringing an unusual animal called a *devang* [slender lori]. Its face looks like that of a large bat, and overall the body is similar to a monkey’s but has no tail. Its movements are like those of the black ape called *ban manus* [orangutan] in Hindi. The body was the size of a baby monkey two or three month old. Since it had been with the dervish for five years, it was obvious it was not going to get any bigger. It drinks milk and eats bananas. Since it looked extremely strange, I showed it to the artists and ordered them to make a likeness of it with its various movements. It is really horrible looking.<sup>25</sup>

Because the lori belonged to the dervish and could not, in this case, remain at court with Jahangir, he ordered a portrait of it, one that captured the movements that made the animal so strange. He immortalized his encounter with the lori and turned it into an object that he himself owned. The painting was the permanent, tangible, ownable simulacrum for the experience. Similar encounters repeat throughout the memoirs. Some animals were brought to Jahangir’s court, such as the famous and often-studied zebra [Fig. 2] and turkey [Fig. 3], brought to him from Goa.<sup>26</sup> Some Jahangir encountered while he and his company were traveling, such as the mottled polecat.<sup>27</sup> Each of these prompted not only a detailed, carefully observed verbal description in the memoirs, but also a commissioned artistic likeness so that Jahangir could incorporate the rarity of the animal into his collection.



Figure 3. Mansur. *North American Turkey*. Ca. 1612. Opaque watercolor on paper, 22.5 x 15.5cm. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Naturalistic, detailed portraits enhanced the animals' strangeness. As previously mentioned, his court artists operated in a highly detailed mode that required careful observation and attention to detail. Jahangir explains that he utilized their skills not only because they could memorialize his encounters with the animals, but because they could do so accurately and in such a way that captured their true essence and personality: "Since these animals looked so extremely strange to me, I both wrote of them and ordered the artists to draw their likenesses so that the astonishment one has at hearing of them would increase by seeing them".<sup>28</sup> Even the marginalia of many Jahangiri manuscripts contain accurate miniature paintings and drawings of animals, most so accurate that contemporary scientists and art historians can note the exact species based on their physical attributes.<sup>29</sup> Jahangir sought not only to document his encounter with strange animals and plants, but to capture the essence of what made them special, from their most minute physical details to their personalities and characters.



Many scholars have identified European painting as a possible source of inspiration for naturalistic Jahangiri depictions of flora and fauna. Milo Cleveland Beach demonstrates that Abu'l Hasan, famed painter of Jahangir's allegories, studied and copied works of the European Renaissance, sometimes incorporating design elements into his own works.<sup>30</sup> Ebba Koch similarly argues that Mansur, creator of most of Jahangir's portraits of flora and fauna, drew inspiration from European scientific plant books. At the same time Jahangir was commissioning his animal and plant portraits, Europeans were creating scientific reference books with highly detailed drawings of plants and animals. Formal similarities between the two are sometimes striking—for example, a painting by Mansur and one from a European botanical magazine show tulips in almost identical compositions, showing bud and open bloom at the same time.<sup>31</sup> The key difference, however, between Jahangiri and European plant drawings is function and purpose. Jahangir was certainly not creating images for scientific reference. His commissioned paintings were highly personal works meant to represent important moments in his life, and to add to his own personal memoirs, collection, and prestige. Historian Michael N. Pearson's argument adds dimension to Koch's and Beach's, suggesting that though there were commonalities between early modern India and Europe, Mughals did not view European naturalism as superior to more local painterly traditions. There was demonstrably more interest in copying European works so that Mughal painters could learn from their foreign techniques, than in purchasing large amounts of European artworks or patronizing European artists.<sup>32</sup> Rather, Mughal artists identified an artistic mode (naturalism) that suited their patron's (Jahangir's) tastes, and incorporated it into their own artmaking.

Scientific naturalism—a concern with objective observation, experimentation, and measurement in order to increase one's knowledge of the world—was a large part of Jahangir's self-conception. Jahangir was constantly dedicated to increasing his body of knowledge, for example through his extensive collection of books. Upon Akbar's death, the imperial library already contained 24,000 volumes, and Jahangir expanded it significantly. Almost half of Jahangir's library contained books of non-Mughal origin, illustrating his desire to know the nature of the entire world. Jahangir was also the first Mughal to mark his books with his ownership and the names of any previous owners.<sup>33</sup> He applied this thirst for knowledge to the natural world in particular.

Not only did the emperor carefully observe and describe any striking natural phenomena he encountered, but he also documented and kept his observations for his own collection and records. Upon spotting a group of dipper birds on his travels, Jahangir “ordered two or three of them caught and brought to [him] so that [he] could see whether its feet were webbed like a duck's or open like other birds of the field.”<sup>34</sup> After observing the birds and determining that they were not related to



ducks, Jahangir ordered Mansur to paint a portrait of the birds for his collection. Similarly, on another journey Jahangir's retinue came across a field of banyan trees "of a size, greenness, and lushness that had seldom been seen". Desiring to know more about these spectacular trees, Jahangir ordered them measured and determined their exact sizes; he ends the account, "since it was so extremely strange, it has been recorded".<sup>35</sup> Again, in these episodes Jahangir measures in order to record and keep the unique, rare natural phenomena he encounters.

Jahangir also measured and recorded his empire as a whole, further evidence that measurement was for him a means of ownership and control. In an extensively detailed description of the region of Kashmir, Jahangir was unsatisfied by the geographic measurements Abu'l Fazl recorded in the *Akbarnama*. Rather than taking his father's assessment at face value, he assembled a team of experts to measure the entire territory with ropes by width and length, so that he could more accurately record his held territories in his own memoirs.<sup>36</sup> He ordered a similar assessment and measurement of the diamond mines in Barakar only after they had been captured, so that he could record it as his.<sup>37</sup> In his eleventh regnal year, a reflection on the importance of hunting to his reign prompted Jahangir to commission a list of all the animals that his court had hunted and killed since the time of his accession to the throne. An enormous research undertaking carried out by many hunters and scouts, this list—finally cataloguing over 28,000 animals killed during Jahangir's rule—was a physical, empirical embodiment of Jahangir's dominion over the natural world.<sup>38</sup> It enabled him to record and keep the impact of his activities, an impact that would otherwise be largely invisible. Not only was Jahangir here driven by a desire to factually know his strength as emperor, but in the costly act of creating a permanent list, he is adding each animal he killed to the same collection as each animal portrait and strange natural phenomenon he owned. It was not enough for him to know that he had killed thousands of animals; each one had to be carefully documented and added to the list. Measurement, not only of interesting individual phenomena but also of the holistic empire, was a main way by which Jahangir expressed his ownership of the world.

This impulse to measure and record was not entirely driven by scientific curiosity. In addition to a desire to own, it was driven by an idiosyncratic aesthetic sense, a taste for beauty and strangeness that resonated throughout his collection.<sup>39</sup> When Jahangir stated in his memoirs that he wrote of and commissioned portraits of animals like the lori "since these animals looked so extremely strange to me", "so that the astonishment one has at hearing of them would increase by seeing them",<sup>40</sup> he indicated that he valued them expressly for their beauty and strangeness. Not only was Jahangir interested in knowing and representing the exact physical nature of the animals and birds, but he was prompted by a markedly personal, aesthetic

reaction to them. This reaction is clear throughout Jahangir's memoirs. Upon first viewing the zebra in Fig. 2, Jahangir first describes it at length, then rhapsodizes on its rare form: "You'd say the painter of destiny had produced a tour de force on the canvas of time with his wonder-working brush". Next, of course, he orders Mansur to paint the animal.<sup>41</sup> When Ibrahim Khan Fath-Jang brought him a diamond that was "indistinguishable from a sapphire", Jahangir's jewel appraisers gave it a fairly low monetary valuation, claiming that if it was clearer it would be worth more money. Jahangir, however, kept it for his own all the same, loving it so much for its uniqueness that he inscribed his name onto it. It was not the diamond's inherent value that prompted Jahangir to acquire it, but his own personal love for its strangeness.

*Not only does Jahangir here transcend Alexander, another world-conqueror, but he equates the entire world with his own empire.*

One particularly famous Jahangiri drawing, Mansur's portrait of the dying Inayat Khan [Fig. 7], also falls into this category of natural phenomenon valued for its rarity. The drawing is striking for its naturalistic, hauntingly accurate depiction of a gaunt man living on his last breaths; it rivals the beloved animal portraits for its naturalistic detail, yet is rare in its depiction of a singular, isolated human. Though it is a portrait of a human, it was commissioned for the same reasons as the animal portraits, motivated by a desire to record a deeply moving strangeness. Jahangir's description of Inayat Khan's decrepit state proves his deep fascination with his deterioration, a degree of which Jahangir had never seen before. He describes his motivations for capturing the deterioration in a portrait: "nothing remotely resembling him had ever been seen. Good God! How can a human being remain alive in this shape?" Jahangir even transcribed two lines of poetry that the sight evoked: "If my shadow doesn't hold my leg, I won't be able to stand until Doomsday. / My sigh sees my heart so weak that it rests a while on my lip."<sup>42</sup> Again, the drawing was commissioned to record both the high emotion and the novelty of Inayat Khan's body, or rather, of Jahangir's interaction with it. The drawing was a physical, scientific documentation of a rare, deeply subjective experience.

Jahangir clearly had a loving relationship with the natural world, constantly striving to know it and collect it. He did so by recording his most striking interactions with the natural world, either by measuring them or commissioning paintings of them. Both were means by which Jahangir could assert his ownership of natural phenomena, and convert his ephemeral experiences with them to tangible, ownable representations of his experiences.

*Jahangir, World-Seizer: Owner of the World and its Finest Goods*

Collecting and recording rare and remarkable objects allowed Jahangir to own them. Though personal ownership is a necessary component of any private collection, for Jahangir it constituted a crucial part of his self-concept, one by which he defined his empire and rule. In naming himself *Jahangir*—translated, *World-Seizer*—the emperor asserted his ownership of the entire world. The following section will discuss ways in which Jahangir represented himself as world-seizer, and how his collection of valuables and naturalia reinforced that self-concept.

Jahangir's self-concept as seizer of the world is well-evidenced outside of his collection habits. In addition to his choice of the word *Jahangir* for his regnal title, the emperor commissioned many allegorical paintings that depicted himself quite literally seizing the world. [Fig. 4, Fig. 5] In allegorical paintings featuring a globe, Jahangir is always depicted subjugating it in some way, standing on it or holding his hand, in a visual extension of the world-seizer title.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, in nearly all of these paintings Jahangir is centrally located and physically connected to the globe: standing on it, holding it, or receiving it as a gift.<sup>44</sup> In these pictures, Jahangir actively presents himself as possessor, conqueror, or divine ruler of the world. Globes and maps were always manipulated, either to show only suggestions of landmasses (ideas of maps rather than accurate depictions of them), or to place the Mughal Empire in the center of the world.<sup>45</sup> Globes that showed only the Empire and its borders implied that the entire world consisted of the Mughal empire, the world that Jahangir controlled. The globes in these paintings often appear populated with animals, predator and prey, lying peacefully with one another in a state of coexistence known in Persian as *dad-u-dam*. They serve as a further symbol of Jahangir's competence and legitimacy as ruler, and the goodness of his reign that extended throughout the world and into the natural realm.<sup>46</sup> One allegorical painting particularly drives these points home. Jahangir, seated in a throne with a radiating halo, holds a globe in his hand, about the size of his own head.<sup>47</sup> The painting bears the Persian inscription: Jahangir's "visage as world-illuminating . . . if a hundred kings like Alexander came to the World, they would all prostrate themselves a hundred times at a glimpse of his face . . . the kings of Rum and China wait at the gate."<sup>48</sup> Not only does Jahangir here transcend Alexander, another world-conqueror, but he equates the entire world with his own empire. This mode of expression of global ownership and rulership became so paradigmatic of the Mughal empire that it continued long after Jahangir's reign.<sup>49</sup>

There are quite a few European referents for the allegorical use of globes to symbolize imperial ownership. For example, art historian Milo Cleveland Beach argues that Jahangir's choices to depict the globe in this manner was based on English allegorical paintings of empire. He does provide convincing comparanda, for example, Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger's *Portrait of Elizabeth I*, in which the queen stands upon a large globe herself.<sup>50</sup> However, the evidence presented here

suggests that though Jahangir was likely aware of such European paintings and may well have drawn inspiration from them, he was not simply emulating them; rather, he was incorporating what he saw as the most useful elements of European imperial representation, and adapting them to his own ends. Jahangiri allegorical paintings often depicted specifically, idiosyncratically Jahangiri relationships—most famously, his brotherly relationship with Shah ‘Abbas [Fig. 4], or his antagonistic relationship with Malik ‘Ambar [Fig. 5]. Both paintings depict Jahangir with a globe, yet depict ideas and relationships that are undeniably, wholly Mughal. There is no denying that globes and maps, as scientific instruments, were important parts of early modern Europe, symbols of and tools for measuring an increasingly global world. They were also parts of the same prestige networks through which Europeans traded spices, metals, and other sought-after materials of global trade, networks that the Mughal empire certainly participated in.<sup>51</sup> In Jahangiri paintings, however, globes are never represented as European scientific instruments—if they bear recognizable landmasses, they are always manipulated and never show the world as it truly is. If Europe appears on the globes at all, it is only on the fringes.<sup>52</sup> Though globes may be instruments of European scientific knowledge, Jahangiri painters appropriated them to represent Jahangir’s idiosyncratic conception of himself as emperor. On the pages of these paintings, globes became signifiers of Jahangir’s cosmological reign as world-seizer.

These allegorical representations relate to Jahangir’s collection and collecting habits in their shared elaboration of global ownership. Unlike many other imperial collections like those of the Habsburgs, to which Jahangir and his collection are often compared,<sup>53</sup> Jahangir does not seem to have desired his collection to be displayed, or made available for study. Rather, it was stored in royal workshops or storage rooms, and made available whenever the emperor desired.<sup>54</sup> Jahangir clearly took great pride in his personal ownership of objects in his collection; the aforementioned gemstone on which Jahangir inscribed his own name next to Ulughbeg’s and Timur’s illustrates Jahangir’s literal inscription of his ownership onto the objects he acquired. The emperor similarly imprinted many objects in his collection with his ownership, especially books. As previously mentioned, Jahangir was the first Mughal to write ownership histories in the books he acquired for the vast imperial library, ending, of course, with himself.<sup>55</sup>

Even nature itself was claimed for the Jahangiri collection. Examples of Jahangir’s ownership of nature abound in the *Jahangirnama*.<sup>56</sup> In one example from his eleventh regnal year, Jahangir came across a palm tree with an unusual forked trunk while on his travels. He prompted his companions to help him measure it exactly, then built a terrace or platform [*chabutara*] around the unique tree in a gesture Ebba Koch termed “the imprinting of nature.” Furthermore, Jahangir ordered a painting of the scene to be made for the *Jahangirnama*.<sup>57</sup> Just as he inscribed

his ownership onto the books and gemstones he acquired, Jahangir constructed a physical sign of his contact with this rarity, marking it permanently as partially his. In commissioning a portrait, he also immortalized the experience and acquired a physical memento of it for his collection. [Fig. 6]

News of a meteor strike in Jalandhar prompted a similar reaction from the emperor. He ordered the meteor brought to him, and commissioned two swords and one dagger to be made out of its ore, working with his craftsmen to find a combination of metals that would render the meteoric metal suitable for a blade. A court poet composed this verse about the event: “The world attained order from the world-seizing monarch, / And during his reign raw iron fell from lightning. / From that iron was made by his world-conquering order / A dagger and a knife and two swords.”<sup>58</sup> Jahangir literally seized the tangible manifestation of this rare natural event, manipulated it into prestigious objects for his collection, and memorialized the experience with art reaffirming his status as seizer of the world. When Jahangir could not put natural phenomena into his collection directly, he marked, altered, or captured the nature he desired in order to forever imbue it with his ownership.

All private collections must reveal something about their collector; by definition, they are a group of objects that appeal to one, idiosyncratic person. Jahangir’s collection was by no means a traditional collection, but it certainly revealed much about him as an emperor and as a person. He collected beautiful objects from his neighbors to solidify political relationships, and from faraway lands to lay claim to the world’s strangest phenomena. He collected encounters with flora and fauna by writing and drawing about them, by including them in the permanent record of his life, thus defining himself by his encounters with them. And he took great pride in that record, making sure that at every opportunity it reflected his self-concept of World-Seizer. All these were ways for him not only to acquire fantastic and valuable goods, but also to feed his hunger for knowledge, to further seize his world and immortalize his ownership of it.



## NOTES

- 1 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. W. M. Thackston (New York: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with Oxford University Press, 1999), 122.
- 2 Corinne Lefèvre, "Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India: The Imperial Discourse of Jahāngīr (r. 1605-1627) in His Memoirs," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 50, no. 4 (2007): 479.
- 3 Lefèvre, "Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India"; Jahangir and W. M. Thackston, *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India* (New York: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with Oxford University Press, 1999), 193.
- 4 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 229.
- 5 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 363.
- 6 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 122.
- 7 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 357. Wheeler Thackston clarifies that the stone in question was most likely a spinel, not a ruby.
- 8 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 121-124.
- 9 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 143.
- 10 The veracity of the Mughal claim to shared Timurid heritage with the Safavids is highly tenuous, but clearly one that Jahangir sought to emphasize; the episodes I list here as well as many more in the *Jahangirnama* support this. This discussion concerns only the symbolic attributes of their relationship, not any real genealogical relation.
- 11 M.N. Pearson, "Portuguese India and the Mughals," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 59 (1998): 407-26.
- 12 Pearson, "Portuguese India and the Mughals," 413.
- 13 Pearson, "Portuguese India and the Mughals," 420.
- 14 Pearson, "Portuguese India and the Mughals," 414-415.
- 15 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*.
- 16 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 94.
- 17 Jorge Flores, "The Sea and the World of the Mutasaddi: A Profile of Port Officials from Mughal Gujarat (c. 1600—1650)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21, no. 1 (2011): 60.
- 18 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 133.
- 19 Flores, "The Sea and the World of the Mutasaddi," 61.
- 20 Pearson, "Portuguese India and the Mughals," 408.
- 21 Pearson, "Portuguese India and the Mughals," 420.
- 22 Milo Cleveland Beach, "The Mughal Painter Daswanth," *Ars Orientalis* 13 (1982): 121-33.
- 23 Beach, "The Mughal Painter Daswanth".
- 24 Beach, "The Mughal Painter Abu'l Hasan and Some English Sources for His Style", 7.
- 25 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 94.
- 26 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 133; 360.
- 27 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 75.
- 28 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 133.
- 29 Das, *Wonders of Nature: Ustad Mansur at the Mughal Court*, 72.
- 30 Beach, "The Mughal Painter Abu'l Hasan and Some English Sources for His Style", 18. See, for example, the *putti* in Fig. 5, a common element of Renaissance painting. Beach somewhat objectionably describes a young Abu'l Hasan's depictions of fabric modeling as "better" than those of his contemporaries because they used more highlights and shadows, in the style of European painters.
- 31 Koch, "Jahangir as Francis Bacon's Ideal of the King as an Observer and Investigator of Nature", 312-314.
- 32 Pearson, "Portuguese India and the Mughals", 409-420.
- 33 Lefèvre, "Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India," 482.
- 34 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 339.
- 35 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 207.
- 36 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 331.
- 37 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 268-69.
- 38 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 216.
- 39 Lefèvre, "Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India," 474-75.
- 40 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 133.
- 41 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 360.
- 42 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 280-281.
- 43 Ebba Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World: European Cartography in Mughal Allegory and History Painting," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, no. 2/3 (2012): 556.
- 44 Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 4 (2007): 711.
- 45 Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," 753-58.
- 46 Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World," 556.
- 47 Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," 773. The orb in his hand bears no visible landmasses, but is identified by scholars as a globe.
- 48 Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," 773.
- 49 Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," 769.
- 50 Milo Cleveland Beach, "The Mughal Painter Abu'l Hasan and Some English Sources for His Style," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 38 (1980): 6-33.
- 51 Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," 755.
- 52 Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World," 556.
- 53 See especially Ebba Koch, "Jahangir as Francis Bacon's Ideal of the King as an Observer and Investigator of Nature," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19, no. 3 (2009): 293-338. Asok Kumar Das also describes how Habsburg collections were displayed in special viewing galleries.
- 54 Asok Kumar Das, *Wonders of Nature: Ustad Mansur at the Mughal Court*, 2nd ed., vol. 64, Marg (Mumbai: Radhika Sabavala, 2012), 20.
- 55 Lefèvre, "Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India," 482.
- 56 A fruitful line of further investigation, for example, could be Jahangir's relationship with hunting and killing animals, as it is a recurrent and morally fraught theme throughout the *Jahangirnama*. The instances discussed in the previous section of Jahangir recording and making tangible his interactions with nature are further clear demonstrations of Jahangir's ownership of nature.
- 57 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 208; Koch, "Jahangir as Francis Bacon's Ideal of the King as an Observer and Investigator of Nature", 325-327.
- 58 Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama*, 363.

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## FIGURES REFERENCED

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Figure 1: (Right): Daswanth. *The Parrot Mother Cautions Her Young*. Ca. 1560. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art. (Left): Basawan. *The Hunter Throws Away the Baby Parrots*. Ca. 1560. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art.

Figure 2 (Title Image): Mansur. *Zebra*. 1620-21. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper. 18.3 x 24cm. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Figure 3: Mansur. *North American Turkey*. Ca. 1612. Opaque watercolor on paper, 22.5 x 15.5cm. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Figure 4: Abu'l Hasan. *Allegorical Representation of Emperor Jahangir and Shah 'Abbas of Persia* (St. Petersburg Album). Ca. 1618. Opaque watercolor, gold, and ink on paper, 23.8 x 15.4 cm. Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 5: Abu'l Hasan. *Jahangir Shoots Malik Ambar* (Minto Album). Ca. 1616. Ink, Opaque Watercolor, and gold on paper, 25.8 x 16.5 cm. Washington D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 6: *Jahangir has a palm tree with a forked trunk measured* (*Jahangirnama*). N.d. Opaque watercolor on paper, 34.3 x 22 cm. Rampur, Raza Library.

Figure 7: Balchand. *The Dying Inayat Kahn*. Ca. 1618. Ink and color on paper, 9.5 x 13.3 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

**Author: Clair Hopper**

*Martel College, Class of 2019*

Clair Hopper is a senior at Martel studying History and Art History with a minor in Museum Studies & Cultural Heritage. When not writing about art and museum history, she can be found steaming milk at Rice Coffeehouse or leading tours at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. Clair graduates in May 2019 and plans to do education & outreach work in the Houston museum field.



## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: THEMES IN NARRATIVES BY ARABS, AMERICANS, AND EUROPEANS FROM 1890 TO 1960

*As relations between the United States and the countries of the Middle East evolved from the arrival of Protestant missionaries in 19th-century Jerusalem to the imperialist presence of American oil companies in Saudi Arabia in the 1950s, travel narratives written about America and the Middle East also evolved. This article documents the changes and continuities over time that occur in these narratives while also taking into account similar narratives from European sources that provide context for these changes and continuities. From 1890 to 1960, travel narratives written by American and European authors grew to reflect more clearly the stark imbalance of power in favor of countries with imperialist ambitions in the Middle East. At the same time, travel narratives about America written by individuals from the Middle East increasingly tried to fight this imbalance through their depictions of East and West.*

**Meredith Aucock**

Written for HIST 436:  
U.S. in the Middle East,  
Dr. Nathan Citino and Dr. Ussama S. Makdisi

In Muhammad Labib Al-Batanuni's description of his time in New York City in 1927, he noted, "One can view many things in a hurry and not know exactly which to write about and which to ignore."<sup>1</sup> His was one of a few pieces of travel writing which recognized the fact that one's experiences in place are hardly representative of the whole, given that there is a great deal that the observer did not see during the trip. In addition, he captured the idea that the subjects that the observer chooses to pay attention to during their travels are formative in the observer's perceptions and subsequent depiction of a place. In studying the nuances of travel narratives, including what subjects they focused on, the tone(s) in which they were written, and how they showed the author's method of understanding a place previously unbeknownst to them leads to a better understanding of the relationships between the observer and the observed.

From the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, travel narratives written by Arab and other visitors from the Middle East to America and other "western" countries such as Britain and France steadily used the concepts of "East" and "West" as well as "us" and "them" in order to either write a favorable or unfavorable account of the place they visited. In many instances, this was tied to a political agenda, especially if the account was to be published in a newspaper or magazine. However, separate narratives written in different eras by different authors showed change as a whole in the sense that they reflected a shift over time of attitudes towards America and other countries that are traditionally considered to make up the "West." American involvement in the Middle East shifted from independent missionary groups hoping to gain converts in the late nineteenth century to Woodrow Wilson's inadvertent endorsement in 1919 of self-determination efforts in countries that endured the colonization of Britain and France.<sup>2</sup> It then shifted again following World War II, as some scholars argue that America more or less adopted the colonial presence that Britain and France started to move away from.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, in the early years of Arab travel to America, many travel narratives portrayed it using the familiar rhetoric of a land where the oppressed and downtrodden could make a new, fulfilling life for themselves. With the "Wilsonian Moment" came travel narratives and letters describing travel that emphasized feelings of self-determination and Arab nationalism in their descriptions of America.<sup>4</sup> Following World War II, the most prominent accounts grew to emphasize the ambiguity of American society and often reflected some level of disillusionment with it. This was related to the growth over time of a substantial difference in power (and a subsequent change in the nature of the relationship) between the United States and the countries of the Middle East. The use of "East" and "West" in these narratives represented an opposition to what Wail Hassan identifies as the "European, and later the American, cultural, political, and military onslaught" in the Middle East.<sup>5</sup> This dichotomy was a way through which Arabs and other people in the Middle East not



only separated themselves from those with imperialist ambitions but also tried to combat the presence and influence of them in the Middle East.

From the time of missionaries to the undertaking of a neo-colonial presence in the region due to the explosion of the oil industry and American foreign policy objectives, American travel narratives in the Middle East also continuously employed the binaries of “East” and “West.” The concept of the division between the two in writing served as a kind of distancing mechanism, thereby rendering the observer to be someone who existed apart from the peoples and places that they wrote about in order to establish themselves as belonging to the dominant power in the relationship. As time progressed, however, American, British, and French travel narratives in the Middle East increasingly made explicit comparisons of their surroundings while traveling to the conditions of their home countries as a sort of measuring stick for modernity in the Middle East. This phenomenon was undoubtedly a reflection of the greater power that the United States as a whole grew to possess and employ in pursuit of its own geopolitical and economic interests in the region. For British and French travellers, these comparisons served a similar function except for the fact that the colonial presences of these two nations had been established long before that of America.

Scholarship in the area of American and other “western” travel narratives to the Middle East and Arab depictions of the United States and the “West” tend to focus on either topic. Very few examine both in the same space, as Lisa Pollard does in *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805-1923*.<sup>6</sup> Yet the examination of both these strains of narratives within one analysis is important because it reveals much more than simple ideas about characterizing and compartmentalizing what one observed in one’s travels. Through the examination of how these narratives changed and stayed constant throughout the given period, much is revealed about how individuals related to each other within the larger context of growing discrepancies in power between nations. The emphasis on comparisons of modernity between “western” home countries and “eastern” destinations in the Middle East did not only serve as a way to process one’s travels for the consumption of others. Rather, the practice was a kind of distancing mechanism employed in order to establish and reinforce the position of greater power and control that the United States and its fellow imperialist nations grew to have over the countries of the Middle East. Consequently, Arab travel narratives written about America and Britain also reflected the growth of this power imbalance, as many changed throughout the period from mostly favorable accounts of the “West” to ambiguous, undecided, and even heavily dissatisfied ones. The hope for a land where one could be free of political turmoil and where one could pursue boundless opportunities was a prominent theme in the travel narratives written by Arabs and other travellers from the Middle East when they visited or immigrated to



America in the late nineteenth century, when American involvement in the region was minimal. However, by the 1950s, the United States had become increasingly involved in the oil market of the Middle East, and its foreign policy strategized in order to pursue economic and geopolitical goals at the expense of the countries in the region. By then, the difference in power between these countries and the United States had augmented into a colonial relationship, as was evident in the operations of Aramco, which systematically oppressed Saudi workers and intentionally employed segregationist policies in order to distinguish Americans, who belonged to the greater power, from Saudis, who were treated much like colonial subjects.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the examination of American, British, and French travel narratives in the Middle East while also examining those written by Arab and non-Arabs from the region who travelled to these “western” countries creates an intricate narrative of its own that discusses how the inequalities of power were brought to attention and reinforced through the way one communicated their experiences abroad in writing. In this way, how the observer and the observed related to one another is told through the medium of travel writing, and in light of the changing relationship between the United States and the nations of the Middle East, the ways in which one portrayed these relationships through writing conveys how views of the “other” changed and remained continuous throughout the period.

In some instances, there is a lack of American travel narratives available to examine. Therefore these gaps are filled by the sources that at the time were closest to American ways of thinking about the “other” in the Middle East, meaning the authors of these sources also employed the binaries of “East” and “West” in order to align themselves with the more powerful entity in the relationship and thus justify imperialist and colonialist objectives in the region. At times, British and French sources help fill these gaps in order to form a more complete representation of how travel narratives were written in relation to the observer and the observed. This is in no way meant to further entrench the binaries of “East” and “West” that Edward Said’s *Orientalism* brought to scholars’ attention, nor is it a display of the “us versus them” mentality that often accompanies these binaries and thus further entrenches the aggressions tied to stark differences in power.<sup>8</sup> Rather, grouping American sources with British and/or French sources is a reflection of how many travellers from these countries who visited the Middle East came to understand its many different people, cultures, and ways of life in the same way. To these travellers, the world was always very much divided according to “East” and “West.” Certainly, American, British, and French individuals with the means to travel did not always see each other as belonging to such a united group. Yet when confronted with the realities of the many different cultures and societies of the Middle East, many clung to these notions of “us” and “them” in order to process their travels and identify themselves as belonging to the more powerful sphere. Due to the imbalance of power that became increasingly relevant to the relationship of the United States and the

nations of the Middle East, travel narratives over time became increasingly similar to their British and French counterparts, who had already established their presences in the region as colonizers, as the British had in Egypt.

*Late Nineteenth Century American and European Accounts of the Middle East*

At the beginning of the narrative of American involvement in the Middle East, the presence of the United States in the region consisted of zealous Protestant missionaries who hoped to make converts out of the followers of varying sects of Islam and other sects of Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Notably, there has been much debate surrounding whether or not American missionaries should be considered as greater instruments of imperial power structure. However, due to the fact that these missionaries never made great strides in their conversion efforts,<sup>10</sup> their presence in the Middle East remained an anomaly within the context of American non-involvement there. Yet these immigrants from the United States as well as other travellers were fascinated by the biblical significance of the Middle East—particularly that of Jerusalem. Bertha Spafford Vester’s memoir, *Our Jerusalem*, conveyed the kinds of distinctions that authors of travel narratives often made between “East” and “West.” Her inclusion of her cousin Robert Laurence’s description of life in Jerusalem made a hard distinction between the two, as he recorded, “I carry on a trade of all kinds indiscriminately, blacksmith, mason, carpenter, and literally astonish the natives with a slight exhibition of American go-ahead-ness.”<sup>11</sup>

*The observer was thereby instructed to distance him or herself from the observed in order to preserve long-held assumptions and perceptions of the foreign “other” as a weaker being who was beneath the observer.*

In this narrative, the author expressed that the desirable qualities in question belonged to America, or the “West,” and claimed that they were nonexistent to the largely Arab residents of Jerusalem, or the “East.” Such distinctions rendered the “other” to be an entity that existed separately from the author, and it served the purpose of delineating where the “familiar” of one’s world view ended and where the “foreign” began. Bertha Spafford’s depiction of the clothes their servants wore also captured this phenomenon. The servant women “were like pictures of beautiful women in Bible days.”<sup>12</sup> In accordance with her faith, Spafford’s conception of the Middle East aligned with the characteristics of the Bible. Yet when the popular modes of dress for Palestinian women changed, she expressed her disappointment that “The bright colors they loved, so becoming in native costumes, looked cheap and dowdy when used in European clothing.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the narrative conveyed the traditional delineation in what constitutes “East” versus “West,” and it revealed

that this practice enabled the author to better establish their distance in relation to the “other” while traveling or living abroad. This was indeed the embodiment of “Rudyard Kipling’s doctrine that ‘East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.’”<sup>14</sup> As time passed, however, these distinctions between “East” and “West” and the distancing of oneself from the foreign “other” grew to be reinforcements of a greater difference in power between the United States and the Middle East.

Though many visitors to the Middle East in the late nineteenth century were missionaries hoping to claim misguided souls, there were also American and European travellers who similarly employed the binaries of “East” and “West” in order to distinguish themselves from the foreign “other.” Karl Baedeker’s prominent guidebook *Egypt and the Sudan: Handbook for Travellers* (1908) portrayed Egyptians as unintelligent and removed from the desirable qualities of the “West” when he cautioned,

The average Oriental regards the European traveller as a Cræsus, and sometimes too as a madman, so unintelligible to him are the objects and pleasures of travelling. He therefore looks upon him as fair game, and feels justified in pressing upon him with a perpetual demand for *bakshish* which simply means ‘a gift.’<sup>15</sup>

In this way, Europeans travelling to Egypt clearly distinguished themselves from Egyptians through the concept of greater wealth. The observer was thereby instructed to distance him or herself from the observed in order to preserve long-held assumptions and perceptions of the foreign “other” as a weaker being who was beneath the observer. This in turn further entrenched the use of imperialist power structures on the part of British and French in the Middle East. The British traveller was to see him or herself as a part of the power that the British imperialist mandate held over the Egyptians, and this was to be embodied in the way they were to treat local Egyptians. As Baedeker’s guide also instructed, “intimate acquaintance with Orientals is to be avoided, disinterested friendship being still rarer in the East than anywhere.”<sup>16</sup> The “East” was therefore a place that existed separately from the desirable “sphere” of the “West,” and the former represented a negative, distrustful kind of exoticism and the unknown, while the latter was a place of both familiarity and superiority that the traveller belonged to. This kind of distancing also occurred in French travel narratives, as one author stated, “les domestiques arabes font généralement leur service presque aussi silencieusement que les Chinois ou les Japonais,”<sup>17</sup> or “the arab servants generally do their work almost as silently as do the Chinese or the Japanese.” Thus the imperialist relationship between France, Britain, and the nations of the Middle East where they maintained a presence extended into these distancing terms, as delineating “East” versus “West” and “us” versus “them” allowed the powerful to justify their oppression and subjugation of the less powerful.

It is important to note that individuals living in the Middle East were not ambivalent to the American and European presences in the region. A passage in the book *A Period of Time* by Egyptian Muhammad al-Muwaylihi provided the vantage point of an Egyptian witnessing travellers from the “West” come to his country. He wrote, “They’re tourists from Western countries . . . They’re used to civilized living and regard Oriental people with utter contempt . . . Their activities are evil and their knowledge is pernicious.”<sup>18</sup> Al-Muwaylihi’s use of the binaries of “East” and “West” was a reactionary response to the colonialist presence of these “Western countries,” as he claimed that these tourists “use their knowledge and ideas to occupy and control countries.” For himself and other Arabs, separating “East” from “West” was important for different reasons than it was for their American, British, and French counterparts, who adopted the practice as a means of enforcing their own empirical power in the region. Rather, for Al-Muwaylihi and his contemporaries, clearly demarcating who and what belonged to each sphere of influence was a way to try and combat the presences of colonialist oppressors.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, al-Muwaylihi understood that these tourists from “western” countries perpetuated, while traveling abroad, the heavily stereotypical and racist themes that justified their oppression and subjugation of the people living in the area. For this reason, his dichotomization of “East” and “West” and his identification of the “other” was a crucial tactic employed to resist the very real threat of colonization and subsequent oppression.

#### *Early Arab Accounts of the United States*

The first Arab travellers to the United States also placed a heavy emphasis on the binaries of “East” and “West,” however, they did so in order to better understand their own cultural identities. In the late nineteenth century, the United States received many Arab immigrants, primarily Syrian Christian people.<sup>20</sup> Some of which intended to make a life there, though many at the time hoped to stay only temporarily. Many of those who wrote accounts of their travels in America expressed favorable opinions of their experiences, though they still used comparisons between “East” and “West.” The account “A Stranger In the West,” written by Mikhail Asad Rustum and published in 1895, included a two-columned list of comparisons, which begins with “1. We are Easterners, 1. They are American Westerners.” Some of the differences in the direct comparison list were factual, such as the fact that in Arabic, one writes from right to left, and vice versa in English. Others, however, were broad generalizations, such as the assertion that in the Middle East, “Women submit to their men,” while in America, “Men submit to their ladies.”<sup>21</sup> This intense focus on the differences between “East” and “West” was a way for the author to process his travels in America while being surrounded by a society whose opinions and understanding of Arabs were sometimes quite negative.<sup>22</sup> By compartmentalizing what belonged to America, or the “western” sphere with that which belonged to the “eastern” sphere,

immigrants and travellers to America could communicate what they had seen while also reinforcing what group they belonged to, as in Rustum's initial comparison when he used the terms "we" and "they."

Similarly, an article in the *New York Daily Tribune* from June 20, 1881 describing the experience of a Syrian family who immigrated to the United States expressed how early Arab immigrants and travellers used comparisons between America and their home countries in order to better understand their own relationship to the two. This early account of life in America conveyed the generally positive and hopeful outlook that many Arab immigrants who wrote about their experiences expressed. The newspaper reporter interviewed the patriarch of the Arbeely family, Yusif, who, through the translation of his son, stated,

The change from Damascus, almost the oldest city in the world, to this the newest and most active civilization in the world, was very great. But I have not been disappointed. I left my relatives and friends behind because I desired freedom of speech and action and educational advantages for my children. In coming here I have escaped the disadvantages of a retrograding civilization and a tyrannical government . . .<sup>23</sup>

In order to better understand the change from being immersed in what was familiar and known to being in a place that was foreign and unfamiliar (and sometimes hateful towards immigrants), many immigrants related their perceptions of America through comparison to their home country. In this case, the speaker's hopefulness for a future in America reflected the fact that American involvement in the Middle East was still very limited, and the two had not yet come to form a real relationship other than that of the few independent missionaries who were unsuccessful in their conversion efforts. It also was part of the larger trend of exclusion and pressured assimilation that the first Arab immigrants to the United States had to navigate if they wanted to survive in a place that tended to demonize minorities.<sup>24</sup> In this way, Arab immigrants tried to avoid being labelled as the "other" or the weaker player in the power dynamic through the comparison of "East" and "West" in relation to the concepts of "past" and "future."

*Arab Accounts of the United States in the Years Surrounding the "Wilsonian Moment"*

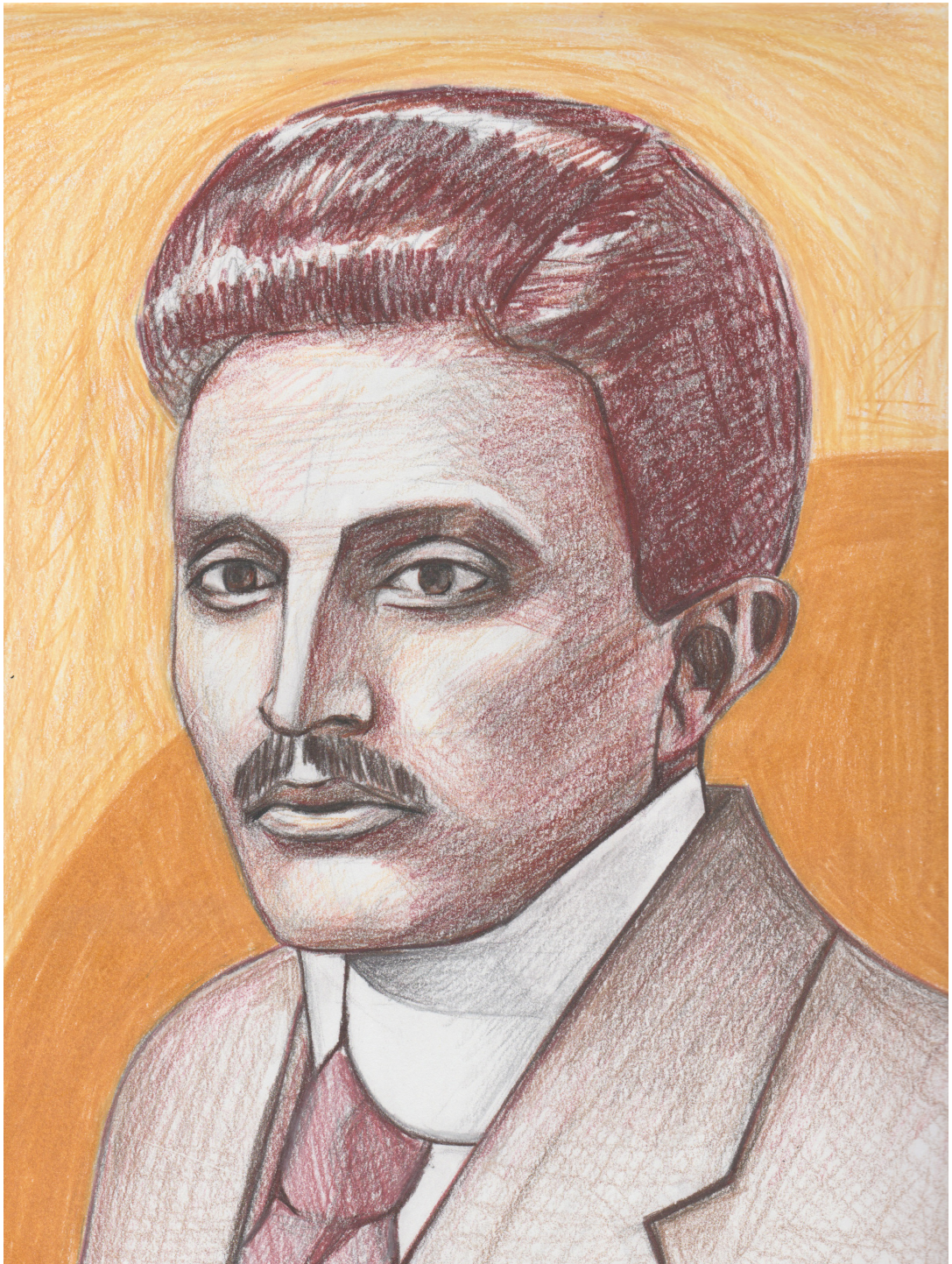
The tumult of World War I had lasting implications for the way global politics would play out. One factor of this emerged when President Woodrow Wilson issued his famous Fourteen Points in 1918, which some scholars claim unintentionally endorsed anti-colonialist and self-determination movements in countries where Britain and France had staked imperial claims, such as in Egypt.<sup>25</sup> However, the question of whether or not Wilson should be accredited with this is under debate, considering the fact that Arab nationalism was a concept that



originated years beforehand.<sup>26</sup> Yet following Wilson's statement, those who advocated for Arab nationalism and sought the assistance of the United States in achieving self-determination against colonial rulers were sorely let down, and the Middle East continued to be divvied up by France and Great Britain.<sup>27</sup> Many of the most prominent travel narratives, letters, and publications written by Arabs visiting or immigrating to America reflected the hope and then disenchantment of these years. In addition, they stayed constant in their processing of the world as "East" and "West," though by this time the practice began to reflect the heightening difference in power between the United States and the countries of the Middle East. The letters of Ameen al-Rihani, the prominent Arab writer and proponent of Arab nationalism, communicated these sentiments. Al-Rihani's letters showed a strong belief in the assistance of America in the realization of self-determination efforts. In a letter written to Shoukry Bakhsh on April 18, 1917, he claimed,

I have no doubt that the small, oppressed nations will be liberated and live a new life after this war. How could this not be so while America today is their greatest supporter and ally, and in the peace conference tomorrow, America will raise its voice on their behalf calling for their independence?<sup>28</sup>

This optimism in the belief that Wilson's statement meant that America would help overthrow colonial oppressors turned into disappointment after these dreams did not manifest. Though he was known for his belief in "the marriage of East and West,"<sup>29</sup> following the disenchantment of assistance in self-determination efforts, Ameen al-Rihani's letters conveyed ideas of being caught between the two. He also portrayed his life in America as though he was compelled to denounce either "East" or "West" in order to fully belong to the other, and he frequently compared America to places in the Middle East. Now that America had failed to assist Arab nationalization goals, the heightened difference in power between the United States and the Middle East became thornily evident. In a letter from February 20, 1920, al-Rihani penned, "I feel baffled and perplexed as I hesitate between my doubts in the New World and my certainty about the Old World . . . Today I am a prisoner to both and a hostage to each one. I am far away from my people, my hopes and aspirations . . ." <sup>30</sup> The idea of being caught between two worlds, one "East" and the other "West," reflected the confusion and pain associated with the realization that America's power could and would be used in order to maintain oppressive, imperial power structures in the Middle East. For al-Rihani, following the disappointment of the "Wilsonian Moment" it was painfully evident that there was no chance of emerging the most powerful and resistant if he aligned with the "East." Yet he also knew that aligning himself with the "West" meant giving in to an ever-expanding leviathan of power at the expense of his own people. Such was the difficulty of this binary for those who did not stand to gain from its employ.



Portrait of al-Rihani

Maggie Yuan (2019)



Other Arab accounts of travelling in America during the 1920s reflected both the continuity of using comparisons between “East” and “West” as well as the change in what these meant in terms of the growing difference in power that characterized the relationship between America and the Middle East. In one account in which an Egyptian tourist was pleased to see American tobacco growing in Ireland, he lamented, “As for our own unfortunate country, it is still prevented from growing this profitable crop in spite of the fact that our soil and climate are particularly suited to it.”<sup>31</sup> Ireland, he said, was much like America in the sense that its productivity and propensity for enterprise were much more alive than back home in Egypt. Similarly, in Philip K. Hitti’s account of his experiences in America for the *al-Hilal* magazine in 1924, he wrote that America was a place of “tremendous energy,” and he characterized American society as a kind of ruthless jungle where “No neighbor will aid you, and no relative will have pity on you. If you don’t work, you will simply perish.”<sup>32</sup> Interwoven with Hitti’s descriptions of America were comparisons which began with, “in our East,” and, “the ideal thing for an Easterner.” His narrative exemplified the kind of weighing and measuring that many Arab intellectuals did in regards to the differing cultural and political characteristics of the “East” and “West,” which also represented an attempt to contend with the gross discrepancy in power between America and the Middle East.<sup>33</sup> For though America was represented as the place where skyscrapers bloomed and work was prioritized, Hitti’s narrative combatted the idea that these characteristics deemed America to be wholly better than the societies of the Middle East. In fact, he took it one step further through the claim that “the Easterner has become the world’s teacher of literature (or good manners) and its spiritual master” while “the American . . . has become the master of the world’s land and the commander of the seas.”<sup>34</sup> Another description of travel in America in 1926 similarly claimed that America and the Middle East were at odds because the former used tradition to grow and endeavour in the future while the latter followed tradition and values the past.<sup>35</sup> Authors of accounts such as these employed the binaries of the roles of “East” and “West” in order to reconcile the fact that American foreign policy did not follow through on the “adjustment of all colonial claims” of imperial Britain and France. They even went so far as to formally recognize the British protectorate or occupation of Egypt, thus highlighting this power difference that loomed over the self-determination efforts of the countries of the Middle East.<sup>36</sup>

#### *American and European Accounts of the Middle East Pre-World War II*

As tourism to the Middle East became more stylish in the 1920s and 30s, American and other “western” travel narratives about the Middle East continued to describe the world in terms of “East” and “West” in order to position themselves amongst the greater disparity in power in terms of “colonizer” and “colonized.” In addition, travel narratives to the Middle East began to increasingly incorporate

comparisons between the culture and way of life of the familiar “home country” that belonged to the “modern” West and those of the “primitive” places travelled to in the Middle East. In this way, the concept of measuring modernity through a “western” lens was a way through which authors of travel narratives further entrenched the ever-expanding gap in power between their home country and those that they travelled to. When one inquisitive traveller visiting Tel Aviv in the early 1930s asked his British guide about the conflict between Jews and Arabs, the response was “If the country is to be developed, the Arabs must suffer, because they don’t like development,” and the author agreed.<sup>37</sup> Representing the “other” as resistant to “western” ideals of modernization was a way in which those who identified with imperial power could both justify and reinforce the staggering imbalance of power between countries with colonial presences in the Middle East and the people there. In this particular instance, the use of the resistant “other” to what was deemed societal progress served to justify the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which in turn meant the exclusion and suppression of the Palestinian people.

Many travel narratives written by “western” authors during the period exemplified the burgeoning use of “western” conceptions of modernity in order to identify the “other” as the more inferior, weaker party in the power dynamic. While describing the previous attempts to map the Rub’ al Khali desert through the use of planes, British author Bertram Thomas claimed that it would not be feasible, and in addition, that “also there seems something indelicate in the intrusion of Western machines into these virgin silences . . . . The camel-back and the long marches go to make the magic of Arabia.”<sup>38</sup> In this instance, the alignment of technology with the “West” and the subsequent rejection of its application in the Middle East was an exercise in power. Here, the observer was aware of his own ability to disturb the environment of the observed, and he prided himself on more or less *allowing* the foreign “other” to remain undisturbed, thereby declaring the “other” to have no agency. In traveling within the Middle East, therefore, Thomas not only comprehended that he belonged to the nation that possessed the power in the relationship, but he reinforced this by employing his conception of modernity as a way to portray the “other” as less powerful in relation to himself. Another travel narrative accomplished this through a description of Egyptian women who “have entirely discarded the veil, and move about as freely as if they were in England.”<sup>39</sup> Within the context of Britain’s colonial presence in the Middle East, this way of describing what those travellers saw and interacted with abroad showed how the pre-existing power structure of imperial mandates in the region also affected the way that those travelling there expressed themselves in relation to the “other.”

*The Manifestation of “East” and “West” through European Travel Guides*

Similarly, the application of the binaries of “East” and “West” through the terminology of modernization was manipulated in travel guides and other publications in order to show would-be travellers to the Middle East that they could see the region however they wished to. Often, this was phrased so that popular destinations for travel such as Cairo and Jerusalem would be appealing regardless of whether the traveller hoped to see antiquities and exoticized images of local life or enjoy a luxury hotel with state-of-the art facilities, or even both. One tourist guide from 1937 asked the potential traveller,

‘Which Egypt is that you wish to visit? . . . Is it the Egypt of ancient lore, the oldest country in the world? . . . Or, it may be, you delight in contrast and wish to see, in its age-old setting, the new-born Egypt of today. Here, for you to behold, is a nation advancing by leaps and bounds in the path of modern progress.’<sup>40</sup>

Once again, the concept of modernity was employed as a kind of measuring stick in order to reaffirm Egypt’s place as the less powerful foreign “other.” Thus the relationship between the powerful imperial overlord and the subjects of this power was reestablished through the implicit claim that “Western” standards and conceptions of modernization were superior and that the less powerful entities in the relationship were to be encouraged to emulate as such, which in turn served as a kind of justification for an intrusive, imperialistic presence in the Middle East.

*Post World War II American and European Accounts of the Middle East*

Post-1945, the relationship between America and the countries of the Middle East took on an even greater disparity in power in the sense that Great Britain passed the torch of imperial orientalism to the American political arena.<sup>41</sup> The role that oil production came to play in American foreign policy during this era as well as clashes centered around the establishment of Israel, among others, were areas in which a true American imperialism came to emerge. To further complicate the increasingly wary economic strategizing between Britain and America in regards to oil in the Middle East, the onset of the Cold War with the Soviet Union emphasized the role of the commodity in foreign policy.<sup>42</sup> During the Cold War, proponents of American foreign policy in the Middle East employed modernization rhetoric in order to present the “American Western” version of society as the ideal goal for perceived “underdeveloped” and “Third World” countries to strive for.<sup>43</sup> Yet this was a reflection of the growth of a kind of American imperial presence in the Middle East. Authors of travel narratives to the Middle East during this time used the rhetoric of modernization in order to identify themselves as belonging to the desirable “West” as they travelled through a “backward” area of the world. Modernization rhetoric,



therefore, reflected how deeply entrenched the self-serving strategies of American foreign policy were. Politicians and oil companies claimed that the countries of the Middle East were places that desperately needed to be set on the path of American development, yet this was in fact a justification for an American presence in the region that in many ways adopted colonialist practices. Post-1945, more and more authors of travel narratives portrayed the Middle East through these terms, which reflected the growth of American imperialism.

*Which Egypt is that you wish to visit? . . . Is it the Egypt of ancient lore, the oldest country in the world? . . . Or, it may be, you delight in contrast and wish to see, in its age-old setting, the new-born Egypt of today.*

The imbalance of power between the United States and the countries of the Middle East was even more evident in the travel narratives written about the latter in the 1940s and 50s than in prior decades. The binaries of “East” and “West” as well as “modern” and “ancient” represented perceptions of the “other” in terms of basic power strategizing. This was also reinforced by popular publications such as *National Geographic*, which presented Arabs in the Middle East as lesser beings who qualified as colonial subjects along with simple justifications such as “there are many peoples who are not yet ready for independence on the lines of Western democracy.”<sup>44</sup> Much like these publications, travel narratives reinforced these ideas of “East” and “West” being divided into “modern” and “primitive.” One British account stated that boys in Iraq are “as eager to be circumcised as boys to buy sweets at the counter of a school shop in England,” thus presenting the foreign “other” as belonging to a savage, primitive world.<sup>45</sup> And in one letter written from Jerusalem in 1956, an American noted, “the contrast between an energetically determined Israel and a stubborn, colorful and slowly progressing Jordan . . . One side is willing and capable of doing the job. The other is still almost feudal, clannish and with a ‘baksheesh’ (personal charity approaching graft) mentality.”<sup>46</sup> In this case, Israel, a growing power in the region, was not grouped with the other Arab countries in the “East.” This marked a stark change from the time of missionaries, when Jerusalem was considered part of the “East.” In addition to the growing power of Israel, throughout the 1950s and 60s the Israeli lobby grew in power and influence within the politics of the United States, while Arab states in the Middle East had nowhere near the kind of influence or representation.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the incorporation of Israel into the “West” resulted in the reinforcement of the great disparity in power between the United States and the “eastern” countries of the Middle East. Though Jerusalem was in no way quite as “western” as the continental United States, it was one degree removed from the “backwards,” “unmodern” Arab “other” who American foreign policy routinely minimized in order to achieve its goals.

As the twentieth century progressed, the rhetoric of modernization appeared in travel narratives very frequently in the depiction of the comparative American and Arab roles in the oil industry. It also related to the traveller's understanding of identity in the sense that the traveller used the comparative measuring tools of modernity in order to reestablish the relative positions of themselves and the "other" as unequal. John Eddy described, in a letter, the amenities for American Aramco workers on a developing railroad in Saudi Arabia to have had "repair cars and shops; a couple of sleepers, a dining car and kitchen-car," while stating that there was machinery "operated by dust-covered Saudi drivers, who, we were assured, are just as good as Americans, with less nerves."<sup>48</sup> The explicit identification of the Saudi workers as inherently different from Americans in the sense that they could allegedly perform more strenuous tasks was, in reality, a way to recognize and reinforce the role of the United States as the powerful member/partner of the relationship. Taking into account the oppressive and segregationist track record of Aramco during this time period, continuing the distinction of the "other" in terms of modernization created a kind of justification of America's dominant role in power dynamics.<sup>49</sup>

#### *Post-World War II Arab Accounts of the United States*

While the American presence in the Middle East began to grow rapidly through oil companies and other means, Arab travel narratives in the United States as a whole conveyed a general confusion in terms of how to process and portray America. Some showed a great feeling of distrust of and disillusionment with America, while others seemed to view it with ambivalence. Writing about their travels through the concept of separate roles for the "East" and the "West" in terms of contributions to the world advanced these sentiments. In Mahmud Taymur's account *The Flying Sphinx*, following a comparison of American monuments to those of Egypt, he wrote that skyscrapers in America

... are eloquent in expressing the inherent inferiority complex in the American psyche, which prompts this young rising nation that has been blessed with resources, knowledge, and an undisputed position among nations, to cry out to the world: 'Look at me, I am the greatest one of all!'<sup>50</sup>

This negative account directly compared America to Egypt through the recognition that the power dynamic between the two was in no way equal. The presentation of Egyptian culture as more valuable played into the division of the separate roles of "East" and "West," and it was a way through which one could try to push back against the growing influence and presence of America in the Middle East.<sup>51</sup> Though Sayyid Qutb's work is considered radical, he wrote about his travels to America in a similar fashion, though more intensely negative, stating, "All that requires mind power and muscle are where American genius shines, and all that requires spirit and emotion are where American naivete and primitiveness become

apparent.”<sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> Following this, Qutb warned against emulating America for fear of losing a sense of morality, which he claimed America was devoid of. His separation of the roles of “East” and “West” and the subsequent antagonism of America as lacking in morality was also an attempt to resist the presence and overbearing influence of America in the Middle East post-1945.

It is important to note that not all depictions of America were negative during this period, as some Arab authors of travel narratives recognized and praised America’s cultural, economic, and political power in order to make the claim that Middle Eastern states should emulate it. One visitor to America in 1955 noted that making comparisons between America and Egypt is “unfair, for I am comparing one of the richest nations on earth with a nation that is among the world’s poorest.”<sup>54</sup> However, he continued on in the narrative to compare American productivity and ways of life with those of Egypt, through which he combated what he considered to be the common perception of Americans by Egyptians as devoid of morality and spirituality. But the power of the United States on the geopolitical stage was evident in his statement that “it is more important for newspapers here to fill their pages with pictures of brides that got engaged or married than to publish even the slightest news of the revolution in Egypt.”<sup>55</sup> Thus the admiration of the cultural and economic achievements of the United States was tempered by the reminder that American politics and media were powerful enough to keep other states in a status of lesser importance. One similarly positive account exaggerated the equality of social conditions in America in order to antagonize conditions in Europe, as it claimed that many fellow Arabs disliked America based on information provided by European sources. Yet despite this positive depiction of America, the author admitted in the end that the American propensity to work after retirement lacked consideration that “the body and the soul have needs and these needs ought to be met in the right stage in one’s life.”<sup>56</sup> Though it was a subtle example, this narrative also showed the practice of compartmentalizing America and the Middle East into separate roles in the world. Despite the fact that America represented the height of wealth, production, and power on the geopolitical stage, it was not the master of spiritual affairs. For many Arab authors of travel narratives, this dichotomy was a way in which to reconcile the great difference in power between the United States and the countries of the Middle East. Yet even this distinction could not shake the entrenched presence of American geopolitical strategizing initiatives in the region, and the United States continued to pursue its own interests at the expense of those who sought control of their respective homelands.

The changes and continuities of American and Arab travel narratives to the Middle East and the United States closely followed the story of the change in the relationship power dynamics between the two. From the time of limited involvement in the form of evangelical missionaries to the growth post-World

War II in imperialist foreign policy in the Middle East, the identifiers of “East” and “West” remained constant in both American and Arab travel narratives, albeit for different reasons. For the Americans who hailed from the more powerful member of the relationship, these terms as well as the rhetoric of modernization were used in order to establish distance from (and, therefore, justify their power over) the people and cultures they saw and interacted with while travelling. Yet for Arabs visiting the United States, the binaries of “East” and “West” were increasingly used as attempts through which they could push back against the growing influence and presence of the United States in the region.

In addition, the examination of travel narratives within the greater context of geopolitical power is important in the sense that it reveals how people who travelled came to understand and process the “other” as well as themselves. As was the case with the Middle East, America, and Europe, this understanding was rooted within the broader context of vast discrepancies in power, with those who belonged to the more powerful entity exercising stark binaries in order to justify their position as ruler, and with those who found themselves at risk of subjugation fighting through these binaries to identify their oppressors.

## NOTES

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**Author: Meredith Aucock**

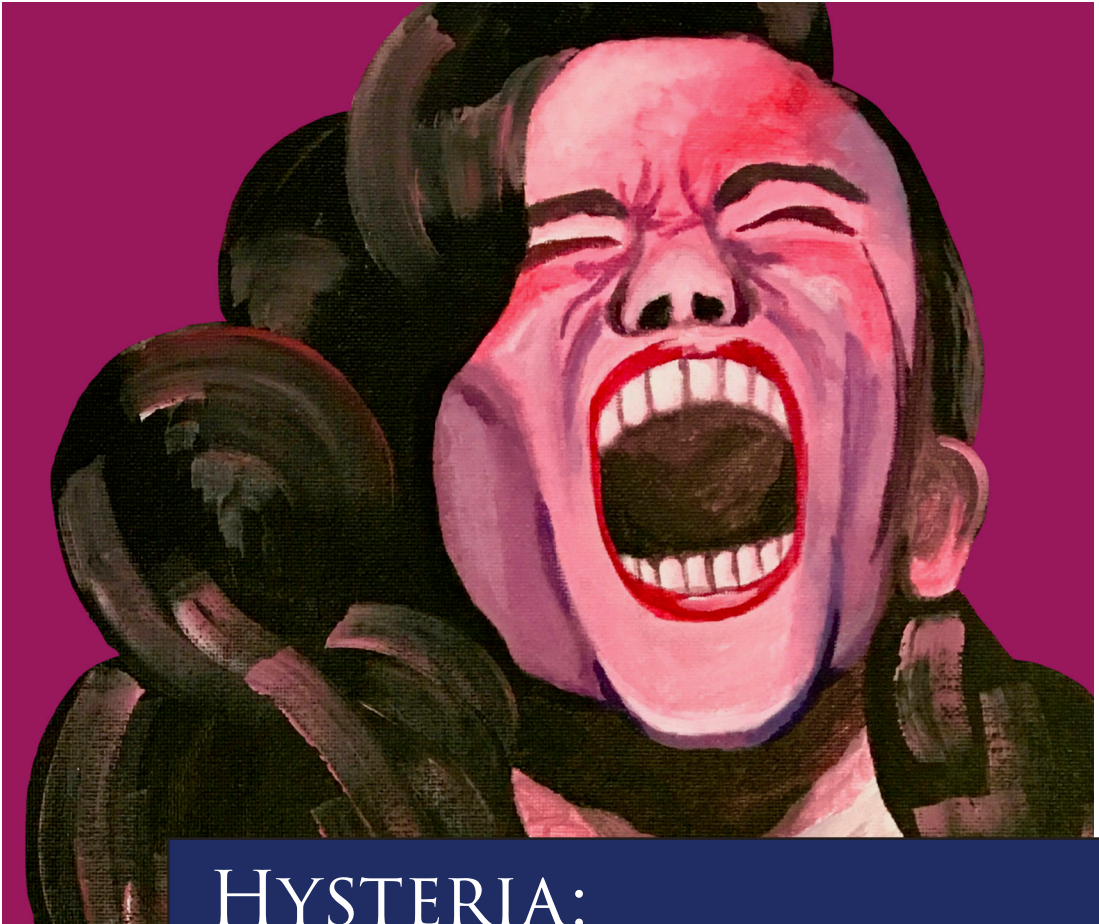
*Baker College, Class of 2020*

Meredith Aucock is a history major in her third year at Rice. She is a proud member of Baker College who enjoys discovering the intricacies of language (in English, French, or Japanese) and loves to play Irish and American folk tunes on the violin. Following graduation from Rice, she hopes to attend law school.

**Contributing Artist: Maggie Yuan**

*Baker College, Class of 2022*

Maggie Yuan is a freshman at Baker College double majoring in English and Visual Arts (concentration in Studio Art). A freelance graphic designer and visual artist, she loves creating eye-catching designs and artwork that are both thought-provoking and practical. Follow her on Instagram at @maggiekyuan to see her adventures in portrait art and midnight sketchbook sessions!



## HYSTERIA:

### MEDICINE AS A VEHICLE FOR GENDERED SOCIAL CONTROL

*This paper analyzes the historical phenomenon of hysteria, a psychiatric label once commonly applied to female patients to explain a variety of physical ailments and deviant behaviors. Beginning with an examination of its ancient historical roots, the paper then focuses on hysteria's application in Victorian England. Hysteria can be viewed as both cause and consequence of a male-dominated society and medical profession, used as a means of enforcing traditional gender roles and expectations for feminine sexuality. By emphasizing and pathologizing the female reproductive organs, diagnoses of hysteria reinforced cultural ideas about women's reproductive role and the male physician's right to regulate that role. In these ways, hysteria is a compelling example of the socially contingent nature of illness and the power of medicine as a tool of social control.*

**Ginger Hooper**

Written for HIST 312:  
Biomedical Approach to History  
Dr. Moramay López-Alonso

Today, the term ‘hysteria’ is typically taken to mean uncontrollable or irrational emotion or fear, particularly in a collective sense (for example, ‘mass hysteria’). A century and a half ago, however, hysteria was known as a diagnosable psychiatric condition—one peculiar to women. Its manifestations were many and varied, including symptoms of somatization (conversion of a mental state into physical symptoms without an organic cause), overdramatic behavior, dysfunctional appetite, depression, anxiety, abnormal sexuality, defunct reproductivity, irregular menstruation, and epileptic-like fits; hysteria was thus a broad category, and its exact definition was contested and variable over time.<sup>1</sup> In another sense, the disease itself seemed to be a symptom of a male-dominated society, serving as both a cause and effect of cultural and medical sexism. In this paper, I analyze perceptions of hysteria over time, beginning with its ancient roots and then focusing on Victorian England as a case study of how hysteria was used as a means of enforcing traditional gender roles and expectations for feminine behavior.

Many historians locate the origins of hysteria in ancient times. Specifically, the term hysteria—which comes from the Greek word *hystera* meaning womb, the same root from which we obtain the word hysterectomy—is frequently attributed to Hippocrates.<sup>2</sup> However, recent historians have argued that this reading and translation of the ancient Greek and Egyptian texts was heavily influenced by the biases of nineteenth-century academics, to whom hysteria was already an established disease.<sup>3</sup> Especially considering the socially-contingent nature of this illness, and its broad and variable symptoms, it is not fruitful to treat it as an objective disease category which has existed unchanged throughout history; rather, we must recognize how its diagnosis and definition have shifted depending on time and place and culturally dominant ideas and prejudices. However, one can still analyze ancient medical thought as an important precursor for the way hysteria was eventually conceptualized in Victorian England.

The roots of hysteria can be traced back to an Egyptian text known as the Kahun Gynaecological Papyrus, dated at around 1825 BC, and the Ebers Papyrus, dated at around 1600 BC—some of the oldest medical texts known to history.<sup>4</sup> Based on these texts, the Egyptians seemed to believe that disorders of the womb, such as starvation or displacement, were connected to other conditions in the female body, ranging from toothaches and blindness to a woman who “wishes to lie down” and will not get up. Various treatments were recommended, including massages with oil and fumigation of the nasal and vaginal canals with fragrant materials, which were believed to make the womb “return to its proper place.”<sup>5</sup> The Ancient Greeks elaborated upon and specified the Egyptians’ ideas. The Greeks incorporated their own humoral theory—which believed illness to be caused by imbalances in body fluids known as humors—by postulating that hysterical behavior was caused by an accumulation of poisonous humors within the womb. This accumulation was

thought to be caused by a lack of sexual intercourse with men; intercourse was believed to provide the uterus an opportunity to expel those poisonous humors. Thus, virgins and widows were most at risk for the disease. Plato, for instance, claimed that the uterus grows melancholy when it does not have intercourse and bear children. Hippocrates agreed with the Egyptians that uterine movement was to blame, and recommended marital sex as a means of expelling the poisonous humors which were apt to develop within the illness-prone uterus. Fumigation continued to be recommended as a way of forcing the uterus back into place. Preeminent physicians in Ancient Rome such as Galen agreed with their Greek teachers about hysteria—with the notable exception of Soranus, considered one of the ancient founders of gynecology, who actually recommended sexual abstinence as its cure.<sup>6</sup> This ambivalence about the role of female sexuality in the disease is a theme repeated throughout history. The most significant contribution to the idea of hysteria by these ancient thinkers is the emphasis on the uterus as determinant of female physical and mental health, as well as the emphasis on marital sex and reproduction as critical to a woman's well-being.

While ancient Greek theory laid the foundation for medical thought in Victorian England, the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment era undoubtedly shaped Victorian morality and culture. During the Middle Ages, Europe was dominated by Christian theology and the Church, which was heavily paternalistic in nature. Women were believed to be spiritually inferior to men and therefore more susceptible to the influence of sin and demonic possession, both of which could cause hysterical behavior and might require treatment with a religious exorcism. At one point, hysterical behavior was even associated with sorcery and witchcraft.<sup>7</sup> Enlightenment-era Europe moved away from ideas such as dark magic, and towards theories of reason, empiricism, philosophy, and morality. Prominent Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau and the physician-philosopher Pierre Roussel argued for a direct connection between the moral and physical worlds; women were the weaker sex physiologically and therefore also morally. Rousseau and Roussel believed that one's biological role naturally equated to one's social role, and that women were bound to their essential nature and biological destiny—that is, reproduction. Within this line of thought, hysterical behavior was a pathology that resulted from women not adhering to their natural role.<sup>8</sup>

An important development in the etiology of hysteria was the beginning of the new field of neurology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some physicians began to postulate that hysteria was a disease not of the uterus but of the nervous system; however, hysteria was still viewed as primarily a woman's disease—at the time, it was believed that female nerves were more delicate than male nerves, and thus more prone to disruptions that could cause hysterical behavior. Hysteria came to be categorized under the wider term of 'female nervous disorders.' However, the



uterine etiology remained very influential; many physicians simply incorporated these new ideas by claiming that the uterus was connected to the rest of the body via nerves, and this ‘sympathetic’ association allowed the pathological uterus to affect other areas of the female anatomy.<sup>9</sup> Though the exact organic cause of hysteria was debated—one of the frustrating hallmarks of hysteria was that physicians were often unable to find any organic cause—it was believed to be rooted in the very nature of being female.

The first usage of the word ‘hysteria’ in the English language (‘hysterical’ appeared earlier in English, and both appeared even earlier in French) is attributed to a London medical journal in 1801; thus, hysterical behavior can be viewed as an ancient sociomedical category, while the specific diagnosis of hysteria was relatively new to England under the reign of Queen Victoria, from the years 1837 to 1901.<sup>10</sup> Still, Hippocratic and Galenic thought remained very influential in this time period. For example, most ladies carried around with them a bottle of smelling salts, which were used to wake a woman up after swooning, as women were prone to do. It was believed that fainting was caused by a displaced uterus, and that the odor of the smelling salts caused the organ to shift back into place, allowing the woman to regain consciousness—closely reflecting the ancient Egyptian and Greek beliefs about the wandering womb and their recommendations for herbal fumigation.<sup>11</sup> The uterine etiology in hysteria remained prominent, as evidenced by the great emphasis placed on the uterus as central to women’s health by English gynecologists in their medical writings during this time period. Eminent obstetrician Dr. W. Tyler Smith, for example, wrote that the uterus is the largest muscle in the female body, connected to the entire body via nerves, and in fact controls the entire anatomy outside of the conscious will of women. Dr. Smith believed that hysteria was in part caused by disruptions of the menstrual cycle—in fact, if you were a hysterical patient, likely the first question your doctor would ask you would be whether your periods were regular. It only makes sense that the uterus was believed to be behind a variety of physical and mental/emotional disorders in women; the womb—the sacred birthplace of man—was the center of the female body and believed to be her single most important organ. Dr. M. L. Holbrook, as quoted by Poovey, wrote that the female body was organized “as if the Almighty, in creating the female sex, had taken the uterus and built up a woman around it,”<sup>12</sup> in part reflecting the continuing influence of religious thought on the public perception of a woman’s naturally ordained role.

The ovaries, too, were emphasized by physicians of this era as somewhat of the headmasters of the female reproductive system (in what has been called by some “The Psychology of the Ovary”).<sup>13</sup> In fact, “ovariotomy”—the term used for surgical excision of the ovaries at the time—was commonly practiced as a treatment for female mental and emotional disorders. Clearly, the great emphasis placed on

reproductive organs as the most important determinants of a woman's health is reflective of the social importance placed on reproduction; a woman's value as a member of society was entirely dependent on her ability to bear children, and an intrinsic connection between a woman's reproductive and mental health was simply taken for granted. An example of the great importance placed on reproduction can be seen in the Conservation of Energy Theory. This theory—drawing from contemporary developments in the fields of physics and chemistry—postulated that the human body was a closed system with a set amount of energy. In females, a substantial portion of that energy must be devoted to the reproductive systems, leaving less energy available for other parts of the body, such as the muscles and brain, than is available in the male anatomy.<sup>14</sup> For instance, Henry Maudsley, an eminent Victorian-era English psychiatrist, argued that education was harmful to women's reproductive health because it diverted energy from the reproductive organs to the brain in a zero-sum game manner—a sentiment famously echoed by Harvard president Edward Clarke in 1873.<sup>15</sup>

*This reminds us that medicine is not only a personalized endeavor for the sake of individualized healing, but also a collective industry for the purpose of maintaining a socially and economically functioning society.*

Undoubtedly, medicine and science helped legitimize and reinforce social views about reproduction as a woman's most important social and biological purpose. Male obstetricians and gynecologists were able to exert control over that social role by framing reproductive processes and female anatomy as inherently pathological. For example, Dr. W. Tyler Smith (who was referenced earlier) wrote that childbirth and menstruation are “at the boundary between physiology and pathology.”<sup>16</sup> Dr. Thomas Laycock, another prominent physician of the Victorian era, called this phenomenon the “doctrine of crisis,” wherein a woman's body is in a constantly changing, volatile state, and any disruption in this unstable system could cause hysteria.<sup>17</sup> Dr. Isaac Ray put it the most bluntly: “With women, it is but a step from extreme nervous susceptibility to downright hysteria, and from that to overt insanity.”<sup>18</sup> As these quotes illustrate, women are seen as walking a razor's edge between normal and abnormal, healthy and sick; even her natural cycles and bodily functions are viewed as inherently pathological and requiring constant medical intervention and treatment from male doctors. Her very nature and anatomy predispose her to illness of the body and mind. This pathologization allowed for the social regulation of women's bodies and reproductive activities. An American civil rights advocate of this time period, Mary Livermore, noticed this trend, calling it “the monstrous assumption that woman is a natural invalid,” and decrying “the

unclean army of ‘gynecologists’ who seem desirous to convince women that they possess but one set of organs—and that these are always diseased.”<sup>19</sup> Though brave and astute, Livermore—quoted here from a 1970s feminist pamphlet—appears to be an exception rather than the rule; most men and women alike accepted physicians’ word as gospel.

Perhaps the most controversial and well-known example of the treatment of hysteria in Victorian England is the case of Dr. Isaac Baker Brown, a well-respected gynecological surgeon who practiced in London. In 1866 he published a book called *On the Curability of Certain Forms of Insanity, Epilepsy, Catalepsy, and Hysteria in Females*. Dr. Brown viewed hysteria as being caused by a loss of “nerve power” as a direct result of masturbation (“peripheral excitement of the pudic nerve”).<sup>20</sup> He viewed the disease as having a specific chronological trajectory: it began with hysteria (including symptoms of menstrual irregularity and, interestingly, indigestion), then spinal irritation, hysterical epilepsy, cataleptic fits, epileptic fits, “idiotcy” [sic], mania, and finally death.<sup>21</sup> Considering this grave prognosis, it was critical to catch and treat the disease early on. Brown claimed that most, if not all, female nervous disorders could be cured via clitoridectomy, the surgical excision of the clitoris—a surgery he called a harmless procedure which he performed dozens of times throughout his career. Not to be accused of taking credit for a well-established procedure, Dr. Brown makes it clear in his book that he is not claiming to introduce a new surgery, but rather advocating its usefulness and for his particular method—in fact, Brown provides a long list of colleagues who he says share his views and whose work he was influenced by. Through the case studies in the book, Brown portrays his procedure as a miracle cure for a variety of ills ranging from indigestion, insomnia, and back pain to melancholy, nervousness and even sterility. The patients’ return to health is described in reference not only to the patient herself—she was now able to get a good night’s sleep, her periods became regular, her appetite returned to normal, her aches and pains disappeared, and so on—but also in reference to others. Through the woman’s return to proper social function, she would become “a good wife” or a “useful member of the community.”<sup>22</sup> This reminds us that medicine is not only a personalized endeavor for the sake of individualized healing, but also a collective industry for the purpose of maintaining a socially and economically functioning society.

Once a hysterical or otherwise afflicted woman was brought into Dr. Brown’s office—often by her husband—Brown would perform a physical examination, whereby he would be able to determine by the genitals’ appearance if the woman was in fact a masturbator and therefore a good candidate for his surgery. Masturbation was viewed as pathological because it implied a female sexuality that was active and solitary; women were not, after all, supposed to possess a sexuality independent of heterosexual intercourse (note that this was a highly heteronormative era and

homosexuality itself was viewed as a psychiatric disease) within the confines of marriage.<sup>23</sup> Clitoridectomy quite literally restricted a woman's sexuality to the purposes of childbearing—though Dr. Brown confidently denied that the surgery at all affected her ability to feel “the normal excitement consequent on marital intercourse.”<sup>24</sup> It was a common belief at the time that hysteria could result from hypersexuality, or nymphomania. However, it was also commonly believed that hysterical women were frequently sexually ‘frigid.’<sup>25</sup> The fact that these contradictory views were able to coexist reflects the ambivalence towards the topic of female sexuality in general during this era; Victorian minds seem to have been morbidly fascinated by it, yet it was not a topic allowed to be discussed in polite circles. Sexuality was of great concern to a woman's morality, and male doctors who dealt with a woman's intimate anatomy were highly aware of this; the *British Medical Journal* in 1867 is quoted as saying: “Obstetricians, beyond other men, are not only the guardians of life, but, by force of circumstance, often also the guardians of female honour and purity.”<sup>26</sup>

In addition to being an example of medical violence and regulation of sexual norms, the story of Dr. Brown is also a clear example of the medicalization of a social problem. While some of the women diagnosed with hysteria undoubtedly did suffer from some mental or neurological disorder, it is likely that many hysterical women were only labeled as diseased because of their socially deviant behavior. In his book, Brown describes the classic symptoms to look for in an afflicted woman, including becoming “restless and excited, or melancholy . . . and indifferent to the social influences of domestic life.”<sup>27</sup> The sick woman may also be “desiring to escape from home,” want to get a job, or have a “distaste for marital intercourse.”<sup>28</sup> In one illuminating case study, Dr. Brown describes a woman who had “a great distaste for her husband,” attributed by Brown to her menorrhagia, causing her to leave the home and live apart from him.<sup>29</sup> After receiving the operation, she reportedly returned home, got pregnant, and “became a happy and healthy wife and mother.”<sup>30</sup> Dr. Brown goes so far as to confidently postulate that many other cases of women leaving their husbands were actually the result of diseased genitalia, and that these “domestic miseries” could be easily cured with his surgery.<sup>31</sup> In general, physicians reported a high incidence of hysteria among women who felt overwhelmed by the burdens of pregnancies, child-rearing, and housekeeping.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, many of these women were not sick, but rather rebelling against or expressing displeasure with their marriages, domestic burdens, and restrictive social roles. This is especially salient in the context of Victorian England, a time when despite great social and economic change related to industrialization and urbanization, women's roles and expectations for behavior remained rigid. Some feminist historians have argued that hysteria was a medicalized argument for keeping women confined to the domestic sphere in the context of industrialization and especially the women's rights movement of the late Victorian era.<sup>33</sup>





Yi Luo (2019)



The medicalization of this social problem illustrates doctors' often-overlooked but significant power to define what is normal and abnormal, acceptable and deviant, and to define these concepts in terms of health and disease; illness is not, then, simply an objective state of being, but also always a social construct. Beyond being a disease, hysteria was also a label, and one that had social consequences; for example, 'hysterical' was used as a derogatory term to demean the actions of women activists such as the suffragettes in the early twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> Hysteria is an interesting case in that it was sometimes used to force a diseased label upon women who did not identify as sick—for example, in the cases of women defying gendered expectations—while in other cases it was used to belittle the experiences of women who did identify as sick. Hysterical women were frequently described as lazy or dramatic or attention-seeking hypochondriacs by frustrated physicians who believed that the patient was exaggerating her symptoms and suffering; for example, the DSM-II, published in 1968, has this to say about hysterical patients: "Often the patient shows an inappropriate lack of concern . . . about these symptoms, which may actually provide secondary gains by winning him sympathy or relieving him of unpleasant responsibilities."<sup>35</sup> Other women may have actually embraced the label and accompanying sick role as a rare opportunity to seize some measure of power that was unavailable to them before, through the ability to demand physician visits and time off from domestic chores.<sup>36</sup>

It is important to note that Dr. Brown's book was actually denounced by the British medical community, and that Brown himself was disgraced by his peers following the book's publication. The reasons for his fall from grace, however, are particularly revealing. Other English physicians criticized Brown's failure to back up his bold claims with scientific evidence, as well as his failure to obtain proper patient consent for his procedures (it seems likely that many of his patients—or victims, as some might prefer to call them—did not fully understand what exactly Dr. Brown was going to do to them before they went under chloroform and the knife).<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, the medical community also vehemently disapproved of how Dr. Brown had written openly about masturbation in his book, thereby causing the public to think about this indecent topic. They did not, however, refute the underlying theories behind Dr. Brown's practice; it continued to be widely assumed that female emotional disorders were caused by some dysfunction of the genitalia or reproductive organs, and ovariectomies continued to be commonly performed as a cure.<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note, too, that some historians have argued for the usage of critical race theory in our understanding of hysteria. Hysteria seemed to have been most commonly diagnosed in white women of the urban middle or upper class—perhaps reflecting anxieties about the indulgences of modern, urban life during this time period of social and economic change. This disease of "overcivilization" did not

as readily apply to women of lower classes or women of color, who were viewed as less socially evolved, especially in the context of colonialism and social Darwinism. Wealthy white women were viewed as constitutionally weaker and more susceptible to nervousness than their hardier counterparts in the working classes and non-white races. In addition, hysteria was often associated with a dysfunctional reproductive system; lack of fertility was of far greater concern in a white, upper-class woman than in a lower-class woman or immigrant.<sup>39</sup> This is particularly salient in the context of a society which would, in the early twentieth century, become the birthplace of the eugenics movement. Some physicians even cited the use of contraceptives as a cause in their patients' hysterics, reflecting the perceived duty of well-off white women to continue reproducing members of their preferable sector of the population. In a more physical and concrete sense, one of the looked-for indicators of hysteria at the time was an enlarged clitoris, which was also believed by doctors to be typical of prostitutes and African women—not at all acceptable for a white English woman of respectable society.<sup>40</sup> This reflects the deeply entrenched racism of this era, and how that racism intersected with classism and sexism.

In a general sense, the case of hysteria provides evidence for the idea of medicine as a vehicle of social control. Far from being an objective scientific pursuit external to society, medicine not only reflects the dominant social values of the culture it is embedded in, but actively creates and recreates those values. For centuries, doctors provided quasi-scientific explanations for why women were the lesser sex and should be confined to the domestic sphere, legitimizing broader misogynistic views which served to degrade and confine women while ensuring the power and privilege of men. Hysteria—as a social category, not a disease category—was a way of controlling female sexuality as well as enforcing traditional gender roles, reinforcing prevalent conceptions of femininity. In many ways, the hysterical patient was the stereotypical woman taken to the extreme; she was passive, dependent, unstable, narcissistic, and overly emotional—providing a direct foil to the active, independent, stable, logical male physician who embodied all of the paternalism of medicine in his efforts to diagnose and treat his female patients. The practice of diagnosing deviant women as sick and requiring disfiguring treatments such as clitoridectomies was both a physical and social means of keeping women in their place, and was surely successful in many cases. Perhaps the most compelling evidence for this is the dearth of primary sources offering the opinions and experiences of hysterical women themselves; as is the case with most of history, the literature is instead dominated by male words. This is illustrated by Dr. Brown's book on clitoridectomy, which includes only a few patient testimonials that were filtered through him, casting doubt on their accuracy and honesty.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the popular and scientific conception of hysteria was completely reoriented by the psychoanalytic revolution

and the writings of Sigmund Freud, who was heavily influenced by his teacher Jean-Martin Charcot and colleagues Pierre Janet and Josef Breuer. Freud was enraptured by the disease, which informed many of his theories, and believed that hysteria and hysterical neurosis were not caused by the uterus or genitalia, but rather by repressed sexual desires or repressed traumatic memories, particularly of childhood sexual abuse. These repressed psychological experiences would be unconsciously converted to somatic symptoms, resulting in neurosis. In an ironic spark of gender equality within his otherwise problematic theories, Freud popularized the idea of male hysteria, helping to dismantle the idea of hysteria as a strictly female disease. He recommended various psychoanalytic treatments such as free association and hypnosis.<sup>41</sup>

*It is interesting to note the replacement of the term 'hysterical' with the term 'histrionic' within the diagnostic manuals . . . . The word hysteria does not appear in the DSM-5 at all.*

Despite such intense interest in hysteria during the Victorian era and the time of Freud, the disease was discredited and abandoned in the late twentieth century. The disease category of hysteria was officially broken down into and supplanted by separate categories of somatoform disorders, dissociative disorders, factitious disorders, and histrionic personality disorder in the DSM-III (meaning, the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the official, standardized diagnostic guide published periodically by the American Psychiatric Association), published in 1980, as psychiatrists came to believe that hysteria was actually a conglomeration of multiple psychiatric disorders.<sup>42</sup> It is interesting to note the replacement of the term 'hysterical' with the term 'histrionic' within the diagnostic manuals. For example, the DSM-I, published in 1952, uses 'hysteria' or 'hysterical' 26 times, and 'histrionic' zero times, while the DSM-5, published in 2013 (and also six times as long as the first DSM), uses 'histrionic' 43 times and 'hysterical' only twice.<sup>43</sup> The word hysteria does not appear in the DSM-5 at all. Histrionic does not come from the same etymological root as hysterical (histrionic comes from the Latin word meaning actor), yet the two sound quite similar. The DSM-III officially replaced 'hysterical personality disorder' with 'histrionic personality disorder,' though the listed symptoms remain very similar. The DSM-II, published in 1968, describes patients with hysterical personality disorder as excitable, emotionally unstable, dramatic, attention-seeking, seductive, self-centered, and dependent.<sup>44</sup> The DSM-III, published in 1980, adds characteristics such as acting out a "role, such as the 'victim' or the 'princess,'" having "irrational, angry outbursts or tantrums," and being highly impressionable and manipulative.<sup>45</sup> The DSM-III describes histrionic patients as "typically attractive and seductive . . . Flights into romantic fantasy are common; in both sexes overt behavior often is a caricature of femininity . . . Some

individuals are promiscuous; others, naïve and sexually unresponsive; but still others have apparently normal sexual adjustment.”<sup>46</sup> The DSM-III adds that “when the disorder is present in men, it is sometimes associated with a homosexual arousal pattern. The disorder is apparently common, and diagnosed far more frequently in females than in males.”<sup>47</sup> The DSM-5, published in 2013, lists many of the same symptoms as the earlier editions (excluding the “homosexual arousal pattern”), but reports no significant difference in diagnosis based on gender in clinical settings.<sup>48</sup> Regardless, it is clear that many of the personality and behavioral traits of a histrionic patient today closely resemble those of a Victorian hysterical patient, illustrating the continued saliency of those stereotypes.

Though hysteria is no longer acknowledged or diagnosed as a legitimate disease, its underlying sexist ideologies continue to influence modern society. Women’s rights advocates have made great strides towards gender equality—with women obtaining legal rights, entering the workforce, and gaining significant political representation in many countries—but stereotypically hysterical female characters are still prevalent in modern media stories, and our culture still has rigid expectations of femininity as well as stigma around the female body and sexuality. Though a woman likely will not have mood swings blamed on a wandering uterus, it is quite common for her emotionality to be blamed on her hormones or periods, a phenomenon for which men face no analog; and though gynecology, and medicine in general, is increasingly a female profession, positions of power within medicine are still very much dominated by men. In order to better understand how gender roles continue to interact with our perception and practice of medicine, we must critically examine the lessons and mistakes of the past. A feminist analysis of the history of hysteria, particularly how it was employed in Victorian England, provides illuminating insights into the socially contingent and variable nature of illness. The power to diagnose, held by a select few actors, is also always the power to define—what is normal and what is sick, what is desirable and what is shameful, and how bodies ought to be treated and used.

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### Author: Ginger Hooper

*Sid Richardson College, Class of 2020*

Ginger is a Junior at Rice University's Sid Richardson College majoring in Sociology and double-minoring in Biochemistry and Cell Biology and Medical Humanities. She is originally from Austin, Texas, though Houston has always been a second home. Her hobbies include walking her dog Daisy, playing trumpet in the Rice Symphonic Band, and writing in her journals. After graduating next year, she plans to attend medical school, where she hopes to learn more about health from a social and humanistic perspective.



### Cover Artist: Laura Li

*Sid Richardson College, Class of 2020*

Laura is a junior at Sid Richardson College majoring in History and minoring in Politics, Law, and Social Thought. In her spare time, she enjoys going to art exhibitions, traveling, and watching documentaries. After she graduates next year, she hopes to either become a journalist or attend law school, focusing on human rights law. Her ultimate goal in life is to be able to write like Joan Didion and paint like Rembrandt.



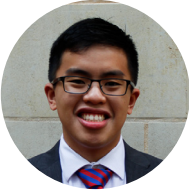
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