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Letter from the Editor

Editing is first and foremost an act of intimacy—often times a process of mutual edification, but sometimes fraught and in some cases even perilous. It’s possible that circumstances call for feedback that can be terse and unhelpful on the one hand or copious and equally unserviceable on the other. I have had the pleasure, however, of editing historical-argumentative literature of considerable quality, to the extent that such extremes were not necessary. In the seven articles published in these pages, many (if not all, in one way or another) engage the themes of memory and remembering with aplomb and skill. I am confident that the authors represented in this issue of Quaestio will go on to do great work in their fields, if not competent and qualified historians.

On a closing note, I recognize and lament the fact that the articles submitted to the journal for consideration this academic year did not span diverse geographies. With the exception of the articles by Mr. Krutilek and Mr. Ruppert, the focus tends towards Europe and the United States. The difficulty of working on a project of this magnitude with a very small editorial team was not lost on the authors published in this volume, who endured myriad emails sent back and forth. I thank them for their patience. I give my heartfelt congratulations to the graduating class of 2017, my sincere appreciation to the History Department at UCLA, and my immeasurable gratitude the following individuals and professors who have profoundly affected my growth as a learner and as a human being: Paul Padilla, Prof. Caroline Ford, Prof. Debora Silverman, Prof. Andrea Goldman, Prof. Sara Melzer, Prof. Peter Stacey, Prof. Minayo Nasiali, and Prof. John Langdon.

Merci pour tout!

Keanu Heydari
Editor-in-Chief
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Isabella Welch
Andrew Kenneth Brewer earned his B.A. at UCLA where he majored in History and Anthropology. He graduated Summa Cum Laude and completed the Honors Program. He currently works in engineering in San Jose and is writing a series of novels. His undergraduate thesis was written under the guidance of Dr. Teofilio Ruiz and examines courtly love, a historical body of literature often presented as a single genre. He explores the change in the genre between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries through a literary analysis of the works of Chretien de Troyes and Sir Thomas Malory. His thesis, The Evolution of Courtly Love: de Troyes to Malory, earned him Highest Departmental Honors from UC-LA’s History Department. Andrew would like to thank first and foremost Dr. Kristina Markman, who initially encouraged him to pursue this subject and acted as a mentor throughout the entire process. Her guidance and advice were essential to the success of this thesis. Andrew would also like to thank Dr. Teofilio Ruiz for his guidance and support; his mother, Karen Frey, for always encouraging him to pursue his passion for history and writing; his wife, Dida Brewer, for motivating him throughout the duration of the project; and Dr. Naomi Taback for her advice and help. Thank you all for your support!
The Evolution of Courtly Love: de Troyes to Malory

Andrew Brewer

The courtly love form is often presented as a distinct literary genre that adheres to specific standards of what constitutes authentic love. However, the genre, which includes stories written centuries apart in a variety of locations in fact reflects changing conceptions of love and authenticity. As culture changed in various parts of Europe, so did interpretations of behaviors like adultery. Furthermore, as institutions like marriage evolved and fulfilled different roles in society, changing perception of these constructs were reflected in contemporary literary representations. This paper examines several classic examples of courtly love, specifically four books written by Chretien de Troyes in France in the twelfth century, and the text Le Morte D’Arthur by Sir Thomas Malory, written in England in the fifteenth century. It discusses the wide range of basic elements in the genre. A close analysis of these works reveals that de Troyes and Malory employed varied techniques of representation regarding 1) women, 2) love, 3) marriage and adultery, and 4) sex. Recognition of these fundamental differences in modes of representation underscores the internal variation of the genre. As the genre evolved, it grew beyond a basic study of authentic love and incorporated themes of institutionalized obligations that men and women had towards each other.

Courtly love developed in medieval Europe and was a literary trope of an ideal type of love: courtly love was a specific type of love. This narrative style involved a lady and a knight who may or may not be her husband. In the past, scholars have tended to group literature identified as courtly love into one genre. However, closer analysis of the individual stories reveals that, depending on the time of composition, courtly love stories define love differently and present varying ideals of acceptable behavior for men and women. It could therefore be argued that changing social conventions coupled with an author’s experiences likely contributed to each author’s ideas about women, love, adultery, and sex. This paper draws on four Arthurian romances of Chretien de Troyes’ (written in the twelfth century for Marie of France, Countess of Champagne)

and the book *Le Morte D’Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory, who wrote and compiled the text in the fifteenth century. This essay compares de Troyes and Malory’s depictions of women, love, adultery, and sex, arguing that their writings belong to two separate genres based on the acute differences between their works.

De Troyes wrote his most notable works in the court of Champagne surrounded by powerful noble women. He often portrays women as good and loyal to the knight who loves them. He describes his leading ladies as being very beautiful and he uses physical beauty to represent integrity in women. His women are involved in reciprocal sexually monogamous relationships with their lovers, whether they are married to them or not. Malory, on the other hand, presents an extremely negative view of women. Unlike de Troyes, he was not employed in a court but wrote for himself. His life experiences may have also contributed to his negative views of women and relationships because he was imprisoned on charges of rape and armed assault. Malory portrays women as manipulative and vile. He does not equate external beauty with internal virtue and the women in his book do not always return a knight’s love. In contrast, de Troyes depicts love as a virtue to which all aspire. He portrays true love as a passionate feeling that needs to be expressed physically for it to be real. De Troyes forgives infidelity as long as it is based in true love. His characters that do engage in adulterous relationships are spared tragedy because their love is seen as true. Malory depicts love as a functional emotion, one that can be traded for a knight’s service, or one that can be used to manipulate a knight. His portrayal of love is not passionate and the presence of love does not forgive breaking the covenant of marriage. Infidelity is not acceptable for Malory and his characters that engage in physical adulterous relationships face tragedy, which destroys their lives and the lives of those around them. The difference in portrayals of women and the depiction of love indicates that the works of the two authors should be considered parts of two separate genres of writing.

**The Genre of Courtly Love in its Historical Context**

The ideas behind courtly love take some inspiration from the works of the Roman poet Ovid, whose works circulated widely throughout Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and also from stories by court poets in Islamic Iberia and the Arabian states, which spread through Europe along trade networks and by knights of the first crusade who returned home. The literary concept that became known as courtly love developed in regions of modern day France and Germany in the early

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twelfth century. These stories were commissioned by members of the aristocracy who employed troubadours in their courts as writers and poets. By the thirteenth century, this style of narrative had spread to other parts of Europe.

These new stories for the aristocracy often focused on love and the adventures of knights. This love, which is idealized, is a passionate and lustful form of love where the knight and lady spend every moment thinking of each other and lusting for each other’s company. This love is portrayed as ideal because it is not based on a political arrangement but on mutual attraction. Both the knight and his lady desperately wish to be with each other but cannot because to be together ultimately means doom. Tales of courtly love must involve a trial or adventure that the knight must complete in order to win his lady.³

The term courtly love originated and was made popular in the late nineteenth century by a French scholar named Gaston Paris. His 1883 article “Études sur les romans de la Table Ronde: Lancelot du Lac” put forth the idea that courtly love was a specific genre of literature which has to contain specific traits including a forbidden love, lovers following the rules of love, a knight earning his lady’s love by winning battles or tournaments, and an elevation of the lady to the level of a deity. Paris wrote his article with only one story as a source, Chretien de Troyes’ story The Knight of the Cart. As a result, Paris provides one overarching definition of courtly love, which he generalizes to all courtly literature based on his reading of this source. This model of courtly love was further expanded by scholars and writers such as C.S. Lewis in The Allegory of Love⁴ and Denis de Rougemont whose influential book, Love in the Western World, continues to be a definitive text for courtly love scholars, despite the fact that it was first published seventy-five years ago.⁵

This singular model of courtly love is still used by contemporary scholars who examine aspects of the courtly love genre. Peter Goodrich, for example, analyzes the concept of love in his book The Laws of Love. More specifically, he looks at the historical rules of love in the courtly love genre and how the rules affect our modern system.⁶ Fiona Tolhurst in her article, “Helping Girls to Be Heroic?” looks at the portrayal of


⁴ CS Lewis published The Allegory of Love in 1936 which presents courtly love as one genre and presents the idea that marriages in the Middle Ages were based on political matchups and not love, therefore infidelity was idealized because it was based on true love.

⁵ Denis de Rougemont published Love in the Western World in 1940. The book presents courtly love as one genre where infidelity is idealized and love in marriage is looked down upon.

women in Arthurian fictions. Jennifer Wollock examines the complete genre of courtly love and its history and also groups de Troyes and Malory together into one genre. Grouping all the stories dealing with love into one genre is an overly simplistic view of medieval courtly literature and incorrectly assumes that these works maintain similar ideas and lessons, especially over time.

This singular model is not supported when stories of courtly love are given a closer examination. The four Arthurian romances of Chretien de Troyes written for Marie of France, do not wholly support this model, although de Troyes’ stories are notably closer to the model than the works of Sir Thomas Malory. For de Troyes, love is indeed presented as an ideal, a knight must go on a quest either at the request of a lady or to rescue her and a knight must obey the commands of his lady. De Troyes prefers the union of marriage as the ideal vehicle for a relationship, however, in the event that either the knight or his lady are already married, an adulterous relationship is acceptable as the two share true love. This is not the case for Malory. In examining his works, we do not find any happy adulterous relationships. His adulterous relationships end tragically and occur not out of desperation for an expression of true love, but out of self-serving desire by one or both of the involved parties as well as a need for the knight to obey his lady.

De Rougemont also argues in Love in the Western World that for love to be courtly love, it must never be physically consummated. He argues that love and sex are separate in stories of courtly love. He explains that romantic love fulfills a different purpose than sexual intercourse for procreation, and that romantic love is never-ending. Consummating courtly love, which is supposed to be forbidden, through sex leads to disaster for the involved parties. This is not supported by a majority of de Troyes’ stories. De Rougemont tells us that a love like this cannot exist in marriage, and that is why adulterous love is presented as an ideal. This idea is also not supported by de Troyes. Stories about courtly love by different authors present different ideas about relationships and what acceptable behaviors are for men and women. Depending on who wrote the story and when, similar behaviors are interpreted differently. Because of this, it is incorrect to group all stories of courtly love together under one genre especially since many of these stories were written hundreds of years apart and in regions hundreds of miles away from each other. The conflicting ideals presented in each story

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8. See Jennifer Wollock, Rethinking Chivalry and Courtly Love (Santa Barbara, Prager, 2011).
tell us that stories of courtly love need to be examined on an individual basis, with each author’s personal circumstances taken into account. De Troyes’ and Malory’s different ideas on the nature of love, women, the effects of adultery, and the effects of sex show that their writings belong in two separate genres.

**The Twelfth Century**

The twelfth century brought a period of food surpluses and prosperity to Western Europe. This was due to an increase in the amount of food produced. Increased agricultural production and more effective usage of new and existing lands gave farmers better crop yields. George Holmes writes, “From the eleventh century lands began to be cultivated which had previously lain fallow. ...Forest clearance, improved drainage, and in Flanders a laborious reclamation of land from the sea all brought fresh land under cultivation.”

In addition to an increase of arable land, technological advances allowed land to be farmed to its greatest capacity. Cereal production was improved by using horses instead of oxen, which led to the increased popularity of the three-field system of plowing, which replaced the two-field system in some areas so that land was left unused for shorter periods of time. Both of these advances, coupled with an improvement in the climate led to population growth in Western Europe. This population increase helped bring about the commercial revolution and the development of towns, which brought new methods of earning a living. This led to an increase in trade, which brought new goods and ideas into the area. As wealth and prosperity increased, lords became more powerful due to the development of cash crops which were used to support towns. Jean Frappier states, “In Champagne, Flanders, Picardy, and elsewhere, a thriving courtly life thus developed.” The aristocracy became patrons of new forms of art and new literary genres. Out of this came the ideals of courtly love, and a place in society for writers like de Troyes.

During de Troyes’ lifetime, people in Western Europe lived in the feudal system. The feudal system was established around 1060 AD and was a crucial juncture in the history of power. Feudal relations were based upon reciprocal obligations between a vassal and his lord. A vassal could be a lord of other vassals, while still owing loyalty to his lord. This was not a pyramidal society, but one based on allegiances and oaths be-

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tween people. This created an intricate web of relationships. The relationship between a lord and vassal was incredibly important and was considered a binding contract. The number of vassals a lord had increased his power and wealth. As a result, some lords became more powerful than the king who, for the most part remained nominal figureheads until the 13th century. The lord vassal relationship was created by a lord giving land or privileges to his vassal. Vassals owed allegiance to their lord and this could take the form of monetary payments, goods, or military service. George Holmes writes “Relations between lords and vassals were feudal in the sense that lords came to assert that their vassals held their land as fiefs, and that they must therefore render military service, attend their courts, pay them dues, and accept their judgment over the succession to their lands.”

During the twelfth century, the ideal relationship between a vassal and his lord was expected to be based on a loving relationship. This was not always the case and often lord-vassal relationships led to bitter and violent disputes. Despite this, the idea of what the relationship could be, mutually beneficial and good-natured, is mirrored in the courtly love romances of the time, which portrayed a similar loving relationship between a knight and his lady. De Rougemont writes “An Arthurian knight…regarded himself as the vassal of some chosen lady.” In de Troyes’ romances, the love that a knight has for his lady mirrors the love a vassal should have for his lord. The devotion that de Troyes’ knights have for their women mimic the supposed relationships between the lords and vassals that attended the court in which de Troyes wrote and worked.

The Fifteenth Century

In the fifteenth century, life in Western Europe had changed for many people. In the early fourteenth century, overpopulation combined with lands being over-farmed led to food shortages. In 1348, the Black Death reached Western Europe and after several outbreaks in 1353, 1357, 1377, and 1385, the population of many places had been reduced by twenty-five to fifty percent. The Black Death claimed people of every social class, including the nobility. This meant that not only was the general population decreased, but also the nobility. Many areas were now sparsely populated and peasants moved onto lands whose inhabitants had died in an effort to find more fertile soil and create a better living situation. The members of the nobility that survived were able to

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further consolidate their power.

The decrease in population caused a reordering of the economic and social system especially in England and France. Serfs and free farmers now had more social mobility and had more freedom in choosing who to work for. They were able to do this because the population of serfs had decreased dramatically and the nobility relied on the working population to farm their lands. The nobility still held most of the power, however nobles now had to offer better incentives and rewards to entice serfs and farmers to remain on their lands. In this period, Western European society gradually began to shift away from feudal institutions thus laying the groundwork for more centralized fiscal and judicial systems, which eventually became centralized governments. As a result, people started to view themselves as being part of a larger system, instead of simply vassals to a lord, or peasants working the land owned by a lord. Moreover, the title of knight also became more of a ceremonial honor that had little to do with actual fighting ability or military skill.

Warfare was a constant in the fifteenth century and conflicts between France and England over the right to the French throne became known as the Hundred Years War. This war was a different kind of war because many of the soldiers were paid in gold for their military service. 20 Earlier in the Middle Ages, military power was in the hands of knights who fought each other either for personal gain or at the request of their lord. As the title of knight became more ceremonial, the need arose for a separate segment of the population who were willing to fight. This marked the beginning of wage-based warfare in Western Europe. Full-time soldiers paid by the central government did more of the fighting and private armies and mercenaries also played a larger role in the military affairs of the time. This changed landscape meant that Malory had very different first-hand experiences of knighthood and aristocratic relations to draw on while writing his book.

The Depiction of Women

As previously noted, de Troyes and Malory portray women very differently. De Troyes usually presents women as beautiful and loyal. He portrays his women as representative of an ideal that all women should strive for. His women are often connected to a male lover and devoted to this man’s well-being. By devoting herself to her lover, a woman is ensuring her own well-being because a male lover is tasked with doing anything desired by his lady. Knights and ladies often appear to work together willingly. In Malory’s text, he portrays women negatively, as devious creatures to be wary of. A

woman is rarely loyal to her knight and several women exhibit only negative qualities. Often seen acting as their own agents, rarely do Malory’s ladies and their knights work together toward the same goal. His women often use men to achieve some goal that benefits only them.

*De Troyes’ Portrayal Of Women*

De Troyes presents a very positive view of women in his romances. The female characters of his stories are generous lovers with pure hearts. They love their male companions as much as their male companions love them. They act with good intention and do not try to manipulate men into fulfilling their schemes. In *Erec and Enide* when Erec and Enide are offered shelter by Count Galoin, the Count attempts to steal Enide away by complimenting her and discrediting Erec. He tells her:

> Your beauty deserves the highest honour and nobility. I would make you my lady, were it pleasing and agreeable to you; you would be my beloved and mistress over all my land. Since I deign to court you with my love, you must not reject me. It is obvious to me that your lord neither loves nor esteems you; you will have a proper lord if you remain with me.  

Here, the Count is trying to tempt Enide to marry him and he is trying to discredit Erec by saying that he does not treat her in the proper way. The Count attempts to manipulate Enide into being unfaithful through flattery and grand promises. He also seems fixed on the idea that since he loves her, she must reciprocate his love. He believes she would be foolish to reject him. Enide loves only Erec and is loyal to him. She responds to the Count,

> Sir, your efforts are wasted … that cannot be. Ah! Better that I were not yet born, or burned in a fire of thorns so that my ashes might be scattered, than that I should in any way be false towards my lord, or wickedly contemplate disloyalty or treason! You have made a very great error by requesting such a thing of me; I would not do it in any way.

We can see here that although Enide has been complimented on her beauty and tempted with a promise of a lord who will dote upon her even more than she has been already, she is still loyal to Erec. For Enide, the thought of being unfaithful to Erec is unbearable and she would rather suffer physical pain than break her oath of fidelity to her lord. Enide’s gender is important in this decision. As a woman, Enide’s value in society is not based on her physical resilience. If Erec had made a similar declaration about enduring physical torment, it would not have the same effect on the reader be-

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cause as a man, he was expected to be able to endure pain in a way that a woman could not. These quotes show that not only does Enide love Erec, but she also has a strong sense of loyalty toward him because their love is true. She is not tempted by promises of riches or better treatment because her love guides her morals.

In *The Knight with the Lion*, Yvain upsets his lady by breaking a promise to her. As a result he must go on a long arduous journey to regain her favor. During his travels he rescues Lunete, the lady in waiting to his lady Laudine. After he rescues her, he asks her to put in a good word for him to his lady, who he is still out of favor with. De Troyes writes:

He begged her to remember him and to speak a good word for him in her lady’s presence, should the occasion arise. She told him to say no more about that, and that she would never forget him and would not be unfaithful or idle.²³

Lunete is a good spirited woman with sound judgment and respect for love. Although Yvain has just rescued her and acts as her champion, she does not try to thank him in a way that would betray his relationship and love for Laudine. Her statement that she would not be unfaithful or idle shows her intent to honor his desire and that she will go speak with Laudine on his behalf in a timely manner. Throughout the story, Lunete appears to have feelings of love for Yvain. However, since he is in love with Laudine and Laudine with him, Lunete keeps her distance. She never makes any advances on Yvain either directly or indirectly. It could therefore be argued that de Troyes’ portrayal of her is very positive. Although she is in love with Yvain she respects his relationship and love for Laudine.

For de Troyes, a woman’s physical beauty and her heritage are indications of her good character. He writes of Enide’s beauty:

On the outside the clothing was poor, but the body beneath was lovely. The maiden was very beautiful, for nature in making her had turned all attention to the task. Nature herself had marveled more than five hundred times at how she had been able to make such a beautiful thing just once, for since then, strive as she might, she had never been able to duplicate in any way her original model. Nature bears witness to this: never was such a beautiful creature seen in the whole world. … She was truly one who was made to be looked at.²⁴

The mere existence of Enide’s beauty is looked at as an achievement of nature. Enide’s father is a knight and she is a member of the nobility. When Erec first meets her, de Troyes writes that her body was beautiful, even though her clothing was poor. He emphasizes the words “outside” and “beneath” to denote a difference between her form

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and her appearance. In this passage he explains that clothing can be deceiving and that what is beneath the clothing is what is important. Enide’s natural beauty is the real marker of her character. De Troyes mentions that her beauty is a creation of nature, and that she is one out of many tries, meaning that Enide is unique in her beauty and unable to be replicated, therefore, irreplaceable. Although he describes beauty as being something that radiates from within, it manifests itself physically and should be looked at and admired.

For de Troyes, Enide’s physical beauty is also an indication of good moral character. Not only is Enide physically attractive, but she is virtuous and fiercely loyal to Erec. De Troyes writes of her personality: “Indeed, though beautiful, her good sense is worth even more than her beauty; God never made such a wise creature nor one so noble in spirit.” Enide’s beauty is a positive character trait, but her spirit and mind are valued just as much if not more. This tells us that women in the twelfth century wanted to be valued not just for their beauty, but for their wisdom and spirit as well. The noble women that surrounded de Troyes in court did pay attention to fashion and their physical appearance, but they were not occupied solely with just that. They were also involved in politics and matters of the state. Seeing more than just a woman’s beauty means that the knight would be appreciative of the woman as a whole and not just as a purely physical object. Being physically attractive was an important part of being a woman and physical beauty was a central part of the passionate love shared by the lovers. By the same token, a woman without virtue or wisdom was not seen as good enough.

De Troyes’ positive portrayal of women as beautiful, virtuous, and loyal to their man may have been influenced by the women with whom he associated during his time at the court of Marie of France. De Troyes wrote the four Arthurian romances discussed in this paper between 1164 AD and 1191 AD. During this time he was employed as a court poet by Marie of France Countess of Champagne and her court patrons in the region of Champagne. Jean Frappier, a noted expert on medieval France argues that de Troyes’ style of writing is artful, personal, and mature. Although it is not known where de Troyes received his education, Frappier claims that de Troyes must have been an educated and talented writer. It is generally believed that he may have been a native of Troyes, or Champagne due to the fact that he was employed there.

25. De Troyes, Erec and Enide, 42
27. Frappier, Chretien de Troyes, 3.
29. Frappier, Chretien de Troyes, 5.
and used elements of the local dialect of medieval Champagne in his works.  

The French courts in the twelfth century were home to many women who held much power and influence. Peter Noble writes, “Women no longer accepted the secondary role assigned to them in society quite so passively.” Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine, who lived from 1122 to 1204 was one of the wealthiest and most powerful women in Europe and ruled as regent of England while her son Richard I fought in the Third Crusade from 1190 to 1194. Her daughter Marie of France was de Troyes’ patron. She was also a powerful and strong-willed woman who ruled as regent in Champagne while her husband was on a pilgrimage from 1179 to 1181. Being surrounded by, and employed by these women must have influenced de Troyes’ more positive view of women. His writings show that women could hold power in their own right. Nonetheless, as his writings also reveal, women in the twelfth century were still required to have a husband or be closely related to a ruler. Many women had great influence, even if they were not sitting in seats of power.

The female characters of de Troyes’ Arthurian romances conform to the model of the strong-willed woman who completes her tasks with dignity and maintains her alliances and loyalty especially to her beloved. Enide and Laudine have great influence because of the loyalty owed to them by their beloved knight or male counterpart, and because they return this loyalty by adhering to their promises of fidelity. This positive portrayal would have likely appealed to de Troyes’ female patron. His stories would likely have conformed to what he believed his patron would have wanted to read. Malory did not have a need to conform to someone else’s preferences while writing Le Morte D’Arthur.

**Malory’s Portrayal of Women**

Malory’s depiction of women is extremely negative. In Le Morte D’Arthur, he portrays women as mean-spirited, vicious, and self-centered. These women follow their own ambitions and manipulate men in a sinister way with no concern about what happens to the man afterwards. They abuse the chivalric ethos by forcing knights to fight for them in order to achieve their own selfish goals. There does not appear to be any mutual concern between a lady and a knight for each other’s well-being and happiness.

In Book IV of Le Morte D’Arthur, King Arthur’s sister Morgan Le Fay steals his sword and its magical scabbard and replaces it with a copy. Morgan Le Fay is married to one of Arthur’s vassals, King Urien. However, she hates her brother because of his unselfish nature and military prowess, which contrasts to her own selfishness and phys-

ical weakness. After she steals his sword and scabbard she sends Sir Accolon, a knight of the round table to kill Arthur. She seduces him by telling him that he will rule over the land and that she will be his queen. When King Arthur defeats Accolon in combat, Accolon tells Arthur:

This sword hath been in my keeping the most part of this twelvemonth; and Morgan le Fay, King Uriens’ wife, sent it me yesterday by a dwarf, to this intent, that I should slay King Arthur, her brother. For ye shall understand King Arthur is the man in the world that she most hateth, because he is most of worship and of prowess of any of her blood. Also she loveth me out of measure as paramour, and I her again; and if she might bring about to slay Arthur by her crafts, she would slay her husband King Uriens lightly.  

Malory presents Morgan le Fay as a manipulative woman who has no qualms about murdering her brother or her husband out of hatred and using Sir Accolon as her pawn to commit the murders. Accolon promises to fight for Morgan because as a knight, he is honor bound to fight for a lady or obey her wishes. Morgan abuses this privilege that she, as a woman, holds and uses it to get Accolon to commit a treasonous act against his lord. Malory does not portray Accolon as faultless however. He is tempted by Morgan’s promise of lordship over new lands, Nonetheless, Morgan’s manipulation of Accolon leads to his final defeat by Arthur. Although Arthur shows mercy and spares his life, it is implied that Morgan’s vendetta against her brother could have been the cause of his death if it were not for Arthur’s kindness. Morgan’s jealousy for Arthur speaks to her pettiness; she is willing to go to whatever lengths necessary to destroy Arthur.

In addition to showing Morgan’s manipulative character and hatred of Arthur, the passage above demonstrates that Morgan is capable of unspeakable crimes, including murdering her husband King Uriens without any reservations. This tells us that not only is Morgan willing to kill, but she does so lightly and does not exhibit feelings of remorse. Her hatred of Arthur provides insight into Malory’s attitude toward women. Morgan, as a woman, will never be able to achieve the military prowess that Arthur has, nor will she be able achieve his level of mercy. Since she will never attain his good qualities, she resorts to attempting to murder him and constantly puts him in situations where he has to choose between sparing a man’s life or killing him. By constantly placing Arthur in these situations, she is attempting to corrupt him. She maintains this obsession with ruining Arthur throughout the story. The love that she shares with Accolon does not seem to be based on real or true love. Accolon does Morgan’s bidding, but while she claims to be his lover, she is actually just using him to get what she wants. This kind of shallow love is very prevalent in Malory’s writing. Accolon being

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used in this way is similar to how Nimue uses Merlin to gain his knowledge, before trapping him under a rock and leaving him.

Book IV begins with a story of how Merlin, the wise man who advised Arthur, falls in love with Nimue, the Lady of the Lake. Nimue grows bored of Merlin and so convinces him to show her his magic, which she uses to trap him. Malory writes,

And so on a time it happened that Merlin showed to her in a rock whereas was a great wonder, and wrought by enchantment that went under a great stone. So by her subtle working she made Merlin to go under that stone to let her wit of the marvels thee, but she wrought so there for him that he came never out for all the craft he could do. And so she departed and left Merlin.  

Merlin is in love with Nimue and shows her his tricks in order to win her approval. Nimue however uses this as a way to manipulate Merlin. She uses her wiles to deceive him and get him in a position where he is helpless. Once he is helpless she abandons him. This highlights her malicious nature. She has an attitude that men are dispensable. Once she has learned all she needs from Merlin she deserts him. Eventually, she also takes Merlin’s place as Arthur’s advisor. This makes her tricking Merlin look like a very intentional manipulation so that she could dispose of Merlin. Being Arthur’s advisor is a position of power and it appears that Nimue coveted this position for herself and was willing to sacrifice Merlin to get it. She plays on his love for her advantage. Nimue, however, is a complex character and Malory does not always portray her as doing wick- ed things. For example, Malory notes that she raised Lancelot when he was a boy, and as Arthur’s advisor, she uncovered and prevents several plots by Morgan le Fay to murder Arthur. This shows that she is not necessarily a purely evil person even though she shows no remorse for manipulating anyone who gets in the way of her achieving her ambitions.

Malory also portrays Guinevere very negatively in his work. Guinevere is selfish, vengeful, and immature. Merlin warns Arthur that Guinevere is not a good person before they are married, and his foresight proves true. Guinevere’s affair with Lancelot leads to Arthur’s death and the fracturing of his kingdom. Throughout the book, Guinevere is unkind to many people and manipulates people to achieve her own goals. When she is confronted about this, she uses her position of power to remove anyone who displeases her. For example, when Dame Elaine, who deeply loves Lancelot, confronts Guinevere about their affair, the queen responds by banning her from attending court. Elaine says to the queen:

Alas, madam, ye do great sin, and to yourself great dishonor, for ye have a lord of your own, and therefore it is your part to love him; for there is no queen in this world hath

Elaine feels that Guinevere is being selfish and that her relationship with Lancelot is not right. Elaine loves Lancelot and wants her love to be returned. She even mentions Guinevere’s husband Arthur, thus reminding the reader of Guinevere’s selfish nature. She has two men whom she has amorous relationships with while Elaine is left with none. Guinevere’s petty nature is shown by her response to Elaine. Guinevere responds, “Dame Elaine … when it is daylight I charge you and command you to avoid my court.” Guinevere is unwilling to accept any criticism of her actions. Her banning Elaine from her court exemplifies her willingness to use her position to remove anyone who displeases her. Guinevere’s pettiness and jealousy are meant to discredit her in the eyes of the reader.

Guinevere’s character remains unchanged throughout the entire book. She is always selfish and jealous, especially in matters involving Lancelot. When Lancelot wears the colors of another lady to hide his identity at a tournament, Guinevere takes it as a sign of betrayal. Malory writes, “When Queen Guenever wist that Sir Launcelot bare the red sleeve of the Fair Maiden of Astolat she was nigh out of her mind for wrath.” Guinevere is a jealous lover and she is angry at what she feels is a betrayal on Lancelot’s part. Her response is to have him killed. She states, “Have ye heard say how falsely Sir Launcelot hath betrayed me? … no force … though he be destroyed, for he is a false traitor knight.” Her willingness to have him killed and discredited, instead of trusting her lover shows how Malory portrays women different than de Troyes. In De Troyes’ stories, the lady usually trusts her knight and the love that they share. The bond that Lancelot and Guinevere share in Le Morte D’Arthur is not nearly as strong, as evidenced by Guinevere’s jealousy. Her vengeful nature causes the reader to view her as a character who undermines the stability of the friendship between Arthur and Lancelot, as well as the stability of the entire kingdom through her actions.

For Malory, beauty is not always an indication of a noble character. The beautiful women of Malory’s work can possess negative character traits such as infidelity or manipulative tendencies. This is shown in Merlin’s warning to Arthur when Arthur decides to marry Guinevere. Following Arthur’s praise of Guinevere’s beauty, Merlin states,

Sir … as of her beauty and fairness she is one of the fairest alive, but and ye loved her not so well as ye do, I should find you a damosel of beauty and of goodness that should

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like you and please you, and your heart were not set; but there as a man’s heart is set, he will be loth to return.”

Malory does not see physical beauty and goodness as inherently related. Merlin can appreciate Guinevere’s physical characteristics, however his desire to find Arthur a woman who is both beautiful and good shows his concern that Guinevere’s looks are only surface deep. The power of physical attraction that women sometimes hold over men is also shown in this quote. Merlin wants Arthur to wait to find a worthier bride, even though he recognizes that Arthur will not change his mind due to his physical attraction to Guinevere. While Guinevere does not intentionally manipulate Arthur, through Merlin’s warning, Malory is communicating to the reader that this is a power that women hold and one to be wary of. Guinevere’s actions and affair with Lancelot prove that Merlin was right when he warned Arthur of her character.

Malory tends to blame his female characters for seducing men and causing situations of infidelity. When Ulfius confronts Queen Igraine about her sexual encounter with Uther Pendragon, Ulfius states, “Ye are the falsest lady in the world, and the most traitress unto the king’s person.” The fact that Igraine is accused in the first place speaks to Malory’s attitude toward women. Ulfius’s first instinct was to blame Igraine and consider her the one at fault for infidelity.

The circumstances of Malory’s life may have influenced his negative portrayal of women. An inscription at the end of the original manuscript of Le Morte d’Arthur states that Thomas Malory was a knight prisoner when the book was completed. The charges brought against him included armed assault, theft, and rape. This tells us that Malory was a knight and knew firsthand about the customs of the nobility. We also know that he was a prisoner while writing his book and unlike de Troyes, would have been writing for himself. Because of this, the book is not aimed to please anyone, especially a female patron. Malory presents a harsh world full of manipulative women and loveless relationships where knights are bound to obey any orders given to them by their lady. Malory’s experiences likely influenced his decision to portray characters in the way that he does. If he was imprisoned on charges of rape and armed assault, he may have had less than cordial interactions with women and may have maintained an attitude that women were evil or could not be trusted. Furthermore, if he was indeed a knight, there may have been instances where women took advantage of him. This attitude certainly is prevalent in his work.

41. Lawlor, introduction, viii.
The Depiction of Love

Given the differences in how de Troyes and Malory depict women, both authors also portray love differently. De Troyes portrays love as a mutual feeling shared by two individuals. His idea of love is passionate and physical. Both man and woman feel it equally and cannot to live without it, or without their lover. Love is central to his character’s existence and without it their lives have no meaning. It guides their actions and it gives them strength. Malory, on the other hand, portrays love as a functional tool. It is a means to get what one wants. Love is rarely shared by two individuals and is usually used by one person to manipulate another. For Malory, love is a tool to achieve one’s ambitions.

De Troyes’ Depiction of Love

De Troyes depicts love as a powerful emotion that both the man and woman share equally. The man is required to do whatever his lady asks of him. De Troyes writes, “One who loves totally is ever obedient, and willingly and completely does whatever might please his sweetheart.” Obedience is an essential part of love between a knight and lady. A knight will do anything commanded of him, and a lady will not take advantage of this by asking a knight to do a dishonorable deed. Love makes a knight stronger. A knight who has love in his heart cannot be defeated.

The love portrayed in de Troyes’ Arthurian romances is passionate and both lovers share this desire for each other. Such love is always reciprocated and is always monogamous. It can occur between a man and wife, such as the love shared by Erec and Enide. De Troyes describes Erec’s feelings for Enide as follows:

Erec left his host, for he was extremely impatient to return to the court of the king … for he had an extremely beautiful lady, wise and courtly and well-bred. He could not gaze at her enough; the more he looked at her, the more she pleased him. He could not keep from kissing her; eagerly he drew near to her. Looking at her restored and delighted him; he kept looking at her … and from this a great affection touched his heart. He admired everything.

Erec is deeply in love with Enide and merely the thought or sight of her is enough

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to bring his feelings to the surface. She is at the center of his thoughts and he is impatient that his journey back to court will take so long. He wants to finish the task at hand so that he can return quickly to his lady. The passion that he feels is stimulated primarily by physical beauty. He admires her appearance and wants to look at her and be near her. This primal attraction is central to de Troyes’ description of love and reveals that contemporary audiences likely viewed a passionate physical expression of love as the best way to show this attraction. Many of the courtly women who read de Troyes’ stories probably lacked this kind of passion in marriage and yearned for their husband to display such emotion for them. In the twelfth century, marriages were often political arrangements and did not emphasize the need for love. In de Troyes’ story, Erec does not hold back while physically proving his love, which he does by defeating other knights. He also does not hold back emotionally while declaring his love for Enide, he puts himself completely at the mercy of Enide by acting as her knight.

This kind of full commitment speaks to a mutual trust that the two share. Fully committing to love in this way can leave someone vulnerable and Erec is not worried that his vulnerability will be exploited by Enide. The trust that Erec places in Enide is not one sided and Enide feels the same way for Erec. She returns his love as seen in de Troyes’ description of Enide’s feelings:

> The damsel, for her part, looked at the knight no less than he looked at her, with favourable eye and loyal heart, … They would not have accepted a ransom to leave off looking at one another. They were very well and evenly matched in courtliness, in beauty, and in great nobility. They were so similar, of one character and of one essence, that no one wanting to speak truly could have chosen the better one or the more beautiful or the wiser. They were very equal in spirit and very well suited to one another. Each of them stole the other’s heart; never were two such beautiful figures brought together by law or by marriage.46

Enide is as in love with Erec as Erec is with her. Their love is equal and neither one loves the other more or less. De Troyes emphasizes not only the similarity in feeling between the two lovers but also how they are matched in looks and heritage: both are physically attractive and from a lineage of knights. The lovers are also noble in the sense that they both follow a moral code. This tells us that readers were interested in finding a compatible partner. De Troyes’ audience was the nobility, who often were in arranged marriages with partners they did not care for. The idea of having a partner with a similar outlook on life would have been a powerful fantasy for readers.

For de Troyes, this type of passion is not limited to married couples. In de Troyes’ romances true passionate love can be adulterous as well, such as the love shown by

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Lancelot and Guinevere. Regardless of whether the love is adulterous or not, de Troyes always represents it as pure or true. The notion of purity of the love is what makes adulterous love acceptable to the reader. De Troyes writes of the love between Lancelot and Guinevere:

The queen stretched out her arms towards him, embraced him, clasped him to her breast, and drew him into the bed beside her, showing him all the love she could, inspired by her heartfelt love. But if her love for him was strong, he felt a hundred thousand times more for her. Love in the hearts of others was as nothing compared with the love he felt in his. Love had taken root in his heart, and was so entirely there that little was left over for other hearts.\(^{47}\)

The love these two feel for each other is a love that no one else has ever felt. They are in competition with each other for who loves the other the most. Their love is not only emotional, but physical as well. They want to touch each other and be close to each other. Their love is not love that is fantasized about from afar. The physical nature of their relationship makes it real.

The love that Guinevere and Lancelot share is not only passionate, but monogamous as well. Lancelot and Guinevere are not married or recognized as a couple. In fact, Lancelot is officially seen as a bachelor and women constantly ask him to be their champion. Lancelot is bound by honor to obey the code of chivalry and the requests of these women; however, he does so with reluctance. While on his quest to rescue Guinevere, Lancelot finds shelter for a night in the house of an elegant woman. The woman offers to feed him and house him for the night if he promises to spend the night in her bed. Lancelot reluctantly agrees, but makes great efforts to avoid physical contact. De Troyes writes,

They entered the hall hand in hand; yet he was not pleased, for he would gladly have been free of her. … the girl lay down upon the bed, but without removing her shift. The knight was at great pains to unlace and remove his leggings. He was sweating from his efforts; yet in the midst of his sufferings his promise overpowered him and urged him on. … he lay down with great reluctance; like her, he did not remove his shift. He carefully kept from touching her, moving way and turning his back to her. Nor did he say any more than would a lay-brother who is forbidden to speak when lying in bed. Not once did he look towards her or anywhere but straight before him. He could show her no favour. But why? Because his heart, which was focused on another, felt nothing for her; not everyone desires or is pleased by what others hold to be beautiful and fair.\(^{48}\)

Although Lancelot is bound by honor to uphold his promise, he takes no plea-

\(^{47}\) De Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*, 264.

\(^{48}\) De Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*, 222.
ure in this arrangement and spends the entire time thinking of Guinevere. He also avoids touching the other woman in an attempt to delay his promise of sex. Luckily for Lancelot, when the woman senses his discomfort she leaves the bed and he is never required to go through with the act. This fortuitous turn of events ensures that the monogamous relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere remains intact. Although Lancelot agreed to sleep with the woman, he is saved from having to fulfill his promise by her deciding to leave him alone. This development allows Lancelot to maintain his honor by obeying a lady’s wishes without having to compromise his monogamous relationship with Guinevere. Additionally, this tells the reader that sex without love is not worth having. This type of monogamous love is also seen in *The Knight of the Cart* and *Erec and Enide*, but also in *The Knight with the Lion*.

In *The Knight with the Lion*, Yvain is in love with Laudine, the wife of another man. Laudine and her husband are loyal and monogamous. Yvain only consummates his love with Laudine after her husband is killed. Their love is passionate as well. Yvain can barely contain himself around Laudine. De Troyes writes of Laudine while she is mourning for her dead husband: “Then she ripped at her clothing, tearing whatever came into her hands. Only with great difficulty did my lord Yvain restrain himself from running to seize her hands. But the damsel, with courtesy and graciousness, besought him and warned him not to do anything foolish.”49 Here we can see that Yvain is smitten with Laudine and is so passionate that he is at risk to do something he may regret. While Laudine is mourning, she is not yet fully available to Yvain. Nonetheless, the audience knows that he is deeply in love with her. Despite this, he manages to restrain himself and not approach Laudine.

While this kind of passionate love surely existed in the twelfth century, as previously mentioned, it could be argued that marriages between the nobility in the twelfth century were one place where it was lacking. Denis de Rougemont writes, “It is well known that the nobles in the twelfth century made of marriage simply a means of enriching themselves, either through the annexation of dower estates or through expectations of inheritance.”50 Arranged marriages for political gain were the norm for the nobility and often lords had several mistresses outside of their marriage. George Holmes explains that “Those marriages had themselves mostly taken place with the approval of kings, whether to win allies, reward service, or provide for the succession.”51 De Troyes not only worked as a writer for the French nobility, but it is well known that many of his patrons were women. Perhaps to please these women, he portrays love in his stories

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49. De Troyes, *The Knight with the Lion*, 311.
as an ideal. This tells us that marriages in the twelfth century in France lacked this kind of passionate love between husbands and wives. An adulterous relationship outside of a loveless marriage, like the kind that Lancelot and Guinevere shared, may have appealed to many who felt tied to partners they did not love. For noble women in loveless marriages, the story of Yvain and Laudine would have presented a fantasy of the ideal solution to this problem. For these two couples, what began as adulterous love quickly becomes acceptable through the untimely death of the woman’s husband, leaving the lovers free to be together.

Lovers like Lancelot and Guinevere, or Yvain and Laudine are notable because of their devotion to each other. The portrayal of men in these romances as fiercely loyal and obedient, and women as gracious lovers is a fantasy that likely appealed to women. Lancelot and Yvain both pledged themselves to their respective ladies and would have done anything for them and, at least in fantasy, pined only for them. For women at least, this would have been a desirable trait in men as many knights and nobles had mistresses as well as wives. To be the sole object of a man’s desire would have been a wonderful fantasy.

De Troyes examines the problem of a loveless marriage and the acceptable solution of an adulterous relationship based on true love in *Cliges*. In *Cliges*, Fenice, the main female protagonist is in love with Cliges, but finds herself being forced to marry Alix, a man she does not love. De Troyes writes,

> She could no longer say that love had mocked her. She had no cause for complaint, because Love had made her give her heart to the fairest, the most courteous, and the bravest knight to be found anywhere. Yet she was being forced to marry someone who could bring her no pleasure, which made her anxious and distraught.52

This passage demonstrates that loveless marriages happened frequently and were prevalent enough that de Troyes felt the need to write about one in his romance. We can also infer that women of the time were upset about the fact that they were being married to men they did not love. As de Troyes explains, Fenice could not marry Cliges because she does not have freedom of choice in the matter. She is forced against her will to marry someone not of her own choosing and this is very upsetting. Fenice is in love with a man who cannot be her husband. She is upset with the notion of marriage without love rather than with love itself. She does not feel that love is scoffing at her, but believes in its power and accepts that her feelings are true and right. Instead of wanting to love the man who will become her husband and feeling like love is playing a cruel trick on her by having her love another, she finds fault in the circumstances of

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her eventual marriage.

De Rougemont argues that love and marriage in the twelfth century were incompatible. He writes, “Loyalty was incompatible with the fidelity of marriage. The romance misses no opportunity of disparaging the social institution of marriage … as well as of glorifying the virtue of men and women who love outside, and in despite of, marriage.”\(^{53}\) De Rougemont’s argument that love and marriage are incompatible is not consistent with the content in de Troyes’ romances. *The Knight of the Cart* presents an adulterous relationship that is seen as acceptable by the reader only because the love that Lancelot and Guinevere share is true. Erec and Enide also share true love as husband and wife. Although *Cliges* appears to glorify an adulterous relationship, it really tells us that marriage is something that should be respected and not taken quite so lightly. While Fenice is contemplating what her life will be like if she marries a man she does not love she states,

> I’d rather be torn limb from limb than have our love remembered like that of Tristan and Isolde, which has become a source of mockery and makes me ashamed to talk of it. I could never agree to lead the life Isolde led. Love was greatly abased for her, for her heart was given entirely to one man, but her body was shared by two … her love was contrary to reason, but my love will always be constant.\(^{54}\)

This passage shows us that adulterous relationships were not something that were admired or glorified. Rather, true love in marriage was admired and desired. De Troyes tells us in this quote that the love shared by Tristan and Isolde should be treated with disdain and not considered an ideal. Fenice has no desire to have an adulterous relationship, she wants to be in love with only one man and have that man be her husband as well. This quote tells us that adulterous love is considered contrary to reason and clearly not the ideal that de Rougemont argues for. Isolde is not considered a virtuous woman for having an affair and she is not regarded as a model for Fenice. Later in *Cliges*, Fenice has the good fortune of having her husband die. This leaves her free to marry her true love Cliges and the two have a happy life together only after the death of her husband. For de Troyes, marriage and love are compatible and a marriage with love is the ideal. Jean Frappier argues that de Troyes intended to “criticize the extravagant side of the courtly doctrine and to depict the marriage of true love as the ideal type of union. In Enide, Erec’s wife, mistress and lady coexist: she thus increases in value, keeps her social attractiveness, and wins esteem and honor.”\(^{55}\) Erec and Enide are married and in love. Something important to remember is that for de Troyes, love is the most important. In an ideal world men and women could be in love and married,

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55. Frappier, *Chretien de Troyes*, 47.
however, if this was not a possibility then love should be pursued instead of marriage. If a woman was married to a man she did not love, engaging in an adulterous relationship with the one she does love is tolerable. Lancelot and Guinevere are an example of this. Love outside of marriage was acceptable if it was part of a monogamous sexual relationship, although true love and sex within a marriage was clearly preferred. This is the reason why Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship is presented as acceptable to the reader. Unfortunately for Guinevere and Lancelot, King Arthur does not have a tragic accident and fate does not step in to present a legal way for the two to be together. In lieu of this they settle for an adulterous relationship.

**Malory’s Depiction of Love**

Malory’s depiction of love is different from de Troyes’. His characters are not madly in love with each other. Knights fulfill tasks because they are honor bound, not because they love their ladies. Malory describes love as unstable and fleeting. He compares love to the seasons of summer and winter. He writes about summer, “In May, in likewise every lusty heart that is in any manner a lover, springeth and flourisheth in lusty deeds.” About winter he writes “A little blast of winter’s rasure, anon we shall deface and lay apart true love for little or nought.” Malory sees love as coming and going like the seasons and incapable of enduring. This idea of love is very different from de Troyes’. Malory’s idea that love is similar to the processes of the natural world means that in his view, love is not a higher power or above man’s law. Malory believes that love will bloom and wither like a plant and therefore one should not devote so much to it that everything else in life is sacrificed. As a result, the love that he portrays in his book is not passionate or physical and is less important than the honor of a knight.

In Book XVIII of *Le Morte d’Arthur*, Malory explains Lancelot’s explicit reason for becoming Guinevere’s champion. When Lancelot talks of the day he became a knight he says,

> That day my lady, your queen, did me great worship, and else I had been shamed; for that same day ye made me knight, through my hastiness I lost my sword and my lady, your queen found it, and lapped it in her train, and gave me my sword when I had need thereto, and else had I been shamed among all knights; and therefore, my lord Arthur, I promised her at that day ever to be her knight in right other in wrong.

Malory’s view of courtly love is very rational, at least for men. Lancelot does not fight for Guinevere because he loves her or because he cannot bear to be away from

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her. Rather, he becomes her champion because he is a committed knight bound by a
code. He is afraid of the shame that could follow if he does not follow the chivalric
code. This idea differs greatly from de Troyes’ idea of courtly love, which holds that a
knight should do whatever it takes, even lose his honor and status as a knight in order
to win the love of his lady. Malory’s Lancelot appears much more distant from Guine-
vere and is not pursuing her or following her wishes out of a need to be near her. It is
almost as if he is being forced to obey her by law.

For Malory love is functional; it is a tool that people use to get what they want.
For a man, it is less important than something like honor. Lancelot shows this senti-
ment before he fights Sir Mador as the queen’s champion in order to uphold her hon-
or. He agrees to fight, but wants to leave immediately after the tournament. Lancelot
states,

Therefore came I hither and therefore, sir king … tarry me no longer, for I may not
tarry. For anon as I have finished this battle I must depart hence, for I have ado many
matters elsewhere.  

Lancelot seems disinterested in love. He fights for his lady, the queen, but is so caught
up in the other matters that he is not giving her, or the battle his full attention. He is
not rushing to be her champion because of love, but because of duty. It appears that
given a choice he would not choose to fight, but he does so only because his status as
an acclaimed knight depends on it. This is a big difference from de Troyes’ Lancelot,
who thinks only of Guinevere while he is fighting, and even gains strength from think-
ing of her. Malory’s Lancelot seems concerned only with what is important to him and
not about the needs of his lady. He fights because he is obligated to but does not do
more than the minimum that is required of him. In this way he is only thinking about
himself and not about the needs of his lady.

Malory shows the functional nature of love in the story of Percival. On his quest,
Percival encounters a damsel who asks him for help. Percival agrees, but trades his ser-
vice as a knight for the love of the lady. Malory writes of their agreement,

Sir Percival, wit you well I shall not fulfil your will but if ye swear henceforth ye shall
be my true servant, and to do nothing but that I shall command you. Will ye ensure
me this as ye be a true knight?

‘Yea,’ said he, ‘fair lady, by the faith of my body’

‘Well,’ said she, ‘now shall ye do with me what so it please you; and now wit ye well ye
are the knight in the world that I have most desire to.’

The relationship these two share is not based on a mutual love for one another, but on the needs of each party. The lady needs the services of a knight, and Percival needs a lady to love him. The situation works for all those involved and both parties have their stated needs met. However this is not a story of true love. The lady does not have unconditional love for Percival and he is helping her only because he wants the physical prize, not because he loves her. On the surface, Lancelot’s actions could be understood as similar to the unconditional love shown in de Troyes’ stories, however his reasoning and attitude are very different. In de Troyes’ depiction of love, the lovers help each other because of their love for one another, not because of a desire for a reward, even though the reward is the same in all the stories. Percival and his lady do not act on account of true love. They both act on account of a selfish need to have their own desires fulfilled. They both think of their own happiness before that of their lover’s. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that there is no real love between them.

In de Troyes’ version of the story of Lancelot and Guinevere, Lancelot pursues and fights Guinevere’s kidnapper, Meleagant, because he truly loves the queen. In Malory’s version of the same story, Lancelot is much more concerned with the queen’s honor and how Meleagant has tarnished it. This preoccupation with honor tells us that Lancelot is not seeking a fight with Meleagant because of his love for Guinevere. Malory writes,

Then the queen came to him and said, ‘Sir Launcelot, why be ye so moved?’ ‘Ha, madam,’ said Sir Launcelot, ‘why ask ye me that question? Meseemeth … ye ought to be more wroth than I am, for ye have the hurt and the dishonour, for wit ye well, madam, my hurt is but little … the despite grieveth me much more than all my hurt.’

This passage demonstrates Lancelot’s preoccupation with honor. He cannot understand why Guinevere is not more upset about the fact that Meleagant has dishonored her. He does not seem concerned for her welfare or ask her if she has been hurt or try to find a way to address the needs of the queen. Instead, he focuses only on the matter of honor and the shame that could follow if her honor was not defended. This obsession that Lancelot has with defending honor was not uncommon in the Middle Ages. Knights were required to defend their honor and the honor of their ladies in order to maintain their status. However in the genre of courtly love, love was expected to be the main reason for a knight to fight for his lady. Malory does not mention love as someone writing in the genre of courtly love would have done. In Malory’s work, Lancelot does not state that he is defending her honor because he loves her, nor that he is defending their love, or even that his honor as her lover has been tarnished by Meleagant’s actions. Malory writes “Alas,’ said Sir Launcelot, ‘Now am I shamed for

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ever, unless that I may rescue that noble lady from dishonor." Here, as well, Lancelot tells the reader that he is rescuing the queen because he fears a loss of his honor, not because of a passionate love for the queen. He is the queen's favorite champion because of his military prowess. Their love affair is secondary to his martial excellence.

We see Lancelot's preoccupation with honor when his relationship with Guinevere is uncovered and presented to Arthur. After Sir Aggravain and Sir Mordred find Lancelot in the queen's bedchamber, Lancelot escapes alone and makes his way back to his castle, Joyous Gard, where he meets knights who are loyal to him. Malory writes of a dialogue between Sir Bors and Sir Lancelot that occurs upon Lancelot's return:

'I will counsel you my lord, Sir Launcelot, that and my lady, Queen Guenever, be in distress, insomuch as she is in pain for your sake, that ye knightly rescue her; and ye did otherwise, all the world will speak of you shame to the world's end. Insomuch as ye were taken with her, whether ye did right or wrong, it is now part to hold with the queen, that she be not slain and put to a mischievous death, for and she so die the shame shall be yours'

'Jesu defend me from shame, said Sir Launcelot, 'and keep and save my lady the queen from villainy and shameful death, and that she never be destroyed in my de-

fault.'

Sir Bors explains to Lancelot that the queen is suffering because of him and that it is his duty as a knight to rescue her from the situation. Bors' comment does not initially seem to faze Lancelot. Only when Bors mentions the shame that will be transferred to Lancelot if he does not rescue the queen does Lancelot begin to get upset. His response has nothing to do with the queen's wellbeing, but is focused only on his own shame. He mentions here that he wishes to be defended from shame, and that he does not wish a shameful death on the queen. His remark shows that he is thinking of himself first, and not of his lady. He also states, "I would be loth to do that thing that should dishonor you or my blood, and wit you well I would be loth that my lady, the queen, should die a shameful death." Lancelot only wants to rescue the queen because of the shame that would befall both of them if he did not. He does not say that he is reluctant to let her die; only that he is reluctant to let her die a "shameful death." The fact that Lancelot is more concerned about honor than about the queen's death demonstrates that their relationship is not based on true love.

A knight in de Troyes' stories would have rushed to rescue the queen regard-

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less of whether her death was shameful or not. More importantly, however, he would have sacrificed his own honor for the life of his lady. De Troyes exemplifies this in *The Knight of the Cart* when he writes about Lancelot’s reason for fighting with Meleagant. He states, “The knight had not undertaken the battle for her sake, nor for that of the common people assembled in the square; he would never have agreed to it had it not been for the queen.”66 De Troyes’ Lancelot fights only for the queen and if the queen is not involved he loses interest. This is very different from Malory’s Lancelot whose primary focus is on his own well-being. Lancelot’s reaction to the threat on Guinevere’s life tells us that law and honor dictates the love between Lancelot and Guinevere more than love. In addition to Lancelot’s focus on honor in this situation, he also must be urged by his fellow knights to rescue Guinevere. He does not rush to save the queen on his own and even seems reluctant to do so at all. A knight who is truly in love with a lady does not require encouragement. Such a knight rushes to rescue his lady because he is deeply in love with her. Lancelot is not eager to rescue Guinevere. Their love is a different kind of love than that presented in *The Knight of the Cart*. Lancelot’s attitude toward Guinevere tells us that they do not share a passionate love and highlights how Malory’s depiction of love is different from de Troyes’.

Love in Malory’s stories is not passionate nor is it reciprocal. In de Troyes’ work, both lovers feel genuine love for each other. In Malory’s work, love is often one-sided. In Book XVIII of *Le Morte D’Arthur*, Elaine, the Fair Maiden of Astolat, nurses Lancelot back to health after he is injured in battle. She falls in love with him and wants him to reciprocate. Lancelot never returns her affection and she dies of a broken heart. Elaine explains her feelings towards Sir Lancelot:

> Why should I leave such thoughts? Am I not an earthly woman? And all the while the breath is in my body I may complain me, for my belief is I do none offence though I love an earthly man; and I take God to my record I loved never none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, not never shall, and a clean maiden I am for him and for all other; and sithen it is the sufferance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight.67

Here we see how deeply Elaine loves Sir Lancelot. She is not ashamed of the feelings she has for him even though he is known to love Guinevere. Elaine does not see her feelings as wrong, but instead sees them as natural. She mentions that Lancelot is the only one she has ever loved and the only one she will ever love. She is even willing to die for the love. Elaine refers not only to her cleanliness and loyalty, but also Lancelot’s nobility. The combination of these virtues means love between Lancelot and herself would be socially acceptable since he is a knight, and she is an unmarried lady.

maidens. However, the love that she feels for Sir Lancelot is one-sided because he does not return her love. This is a common occurrence in Malory’s work and for him, a more realistic version of love. In de Troyes’ works, the love that is presented is ideal because it is both passionate and reciprocal. The love Malory presents is not passionate and is often not reciprocal. When it is reciprocated, it is often not real, and the other party uses love as a tool to gain some favor or to find some weakness in the lover. Lancelot uses Elaine when he allows her to tend to his wounds while he is injured with no intention of returning her love. This appears to be a subtle manipulation on Lancelot’s part. Because Elaine is so in love with him, she probably would not betray him or hurt him while he was injured, so it would benefit Lancelot to have someone who loves him tend to his wounds.

Malory writes in *Le Morte D’Arthur*, “By unstable love in man and woman … but the old love was not so.” In this he is alluding to the love that existed before his time, that is, the love portrayed by de Troyes. De Troyes model of love is superior because it is genuine and based on real heartfelt emotions. Malory feels that true love is rare. His work tells us the concept of love has been corrupted by his time and is now used as a tool to achieve one’s selfish desires. This is why in his stories, the relationships between knights and their ladies are based on obligation instead of love. In Malory’s version of the Lancelot and Guinevere story, the motives of the characters and the consequences of their actions are evidently more negative than in de Troyes’ stories. The differences between the two versions of the Lancelot and Guinevere story are explicitly shown that the two bodies of work occupy different genres.

The Depiction of Adultery

De Troyes and Malory also portray adultery in different ways. De Troyes views adultery as acceptable as long as the lovers are committed and monogamous. Adultery does not always have negative consequences and the lovers are not punished for their actions. Malory, however, views adultery as the leading cause of the breakup of Arthur’s kingdom and the cause of the king’s death. For Malory, adultery is the worst thing that can happen, not just for the involved parties, but for everyone around them as well.

Marriage as an institution was different in the twelfth century than it was in the fifteenth century. In the time period between when de Troyes and Malory wrote, the institution of marriage changed dramatically. Natalie Zemon Davis writes,

In the tenth and early eleventh centuries, the marriages of warriors and kings were made by abduction as well as by arrangement and might join a couple incestuously …

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varieties of concubinage existed openly… Most of this was not done out of wickedness but out of rightful concern for dynastic and family alliance … By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the picture was very different and many of the features of what we think of as the traditional Christian marriage system were in place, whatever divergences there were in behavior, marriage was at least conceived of in the same way by knight and priests, king and pope … competing forms of concubinage had lost their earlier legitimacy.69

Pope Alexander III caused this change in the system of marriage with his doctrinal synthesis, which ended the conflicting and diverse opinions about the nature of marriage and cemented the idea that marriage should be a matter of consent.70 This change in the institution of marriage altered popular understanding of marriage and extra-marital relations. Because marriage was seen differently in the fifteenth century than in the twelfth century, adultery also had different consequences. As Davis explains, adultery was not a major transgression in the twelfth century.71 It was not hailed as particularly noble, but for a knight to have a mistress was not seen as a sin. This acceptance of extramarital relations allowed de Troyes to depict adulterous relationships as normal. This contrasts sharply to Malory’s stories where adultery is something to be ashamed of and hidden. By Malory’s time, adultery had lost some of its earlier acceptance and the church played a much larger role in regulating marriage.72

De Troyes’ Depiction of Adultery

De Troyes approves of Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship because it is based on true love. Although Lancelot and Guinevere are engaged in an adulterous relationship, it is justifiable because de Troyes sees love as a higher order that surpasses man’s laws. Despite this, he does suggest that adulterous love should not be public. Lancelot and Guinevere keep their love private. This is shown by Guinevere’s feelings when Lancelot returns to Arthur’s court. De Troyes writes,

She was so near him that she could scarcely restrain her body … from following her heart to him. Where then was her heart? Welcoming Lancelot with kisses. Why then

70. In the early tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries there were two competing forms of marriage. These forms are outlined by Georges Duby in his book Medieval Marriages: Two Models From Twelfth Century France. He presents the ecclesiastic model, defined as the idea of marriage accepted by the church, and the lay model, presented as the idea of marriage accepted by the nobility. See Juraj Kamas, The Separation of the Spouses with the Bond Remaining: Historical and Canonical Study with Pastoral Applications (Roma: Pontificia Università Gregoriana), 98–100. Accessed January 18, 2016, https://books.google.com/books?id=FS-kaB37VisC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
71. Davis, introduction, viii.
72. Davis, introduction, viii.
was the body reticent? Was her joy not complete? Was it laced with anger or hatred? No indeed, not in the least; rather, she hesitated because the others present – the king and his entourage, who could see everything – would immediately perceive her love if, in sight of all, she were to do everything her heart desired … everyone present would have understood her feelings … Reason encompassed and bound her … postponing the full display of her affections until she could find a better and more private place where they might reach a safer harbor than they would have now.\textsuperscript{73}

Guinevere realizes that she cannot publicly express her love for Lancelot and that she must wait until they are in a safe and private place. Although she cannot physically express her love, she still has strong feelings. Guinevere knows that her relationship with Lancelot must remain secret and realizes she cannot act on her feelings or everyone will be aware of her affair. The fact that their love is secret does not mean that it is any less pure or true than the love shared by Yvain and Laudine or by Erec and Enide. This is because true love is not inherently connected to marriage. This is similar to how de Troyes interprets the heart and the body as separate. The heart may desire what the body cannot have or the body may have something that the heart does not want. This is similar to de Troyes’ explanation of the relationship between love and marriage. Love will exist with or without marriage and lovers must do what is needed to keep the love alive. For Lancelot and Guinevere, that means maintaining a secret relationship. Love for de Troyes is of the utmost importance. Ideally it can occur in a marriage, but even if it does not, infidelity is acceptable if the love is pure.

The relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere is also considered acceptable because Lancelot is the knight who defends Guinevere. He, not Arthur, is the one who is presented as powerful enough to rescue the queen from Meleagant. De Troyes portrays Arthur as weak-willed and unable to act as needed. De Troyes mentions Arthur’s weakness at the beginning of the story when Meleagant first appears in court to challenge him. De Troyes writes,

‘I want to inform you that you have neither wealth nor power enough to ensure their release. And know you well that you will die before you are able to come to their aid.’

The king replied that he must accept this, since he could not change it for the better, but that it grieved him deeply.\textsuperscript{74}

Meleagant is able to intimidate and threaten Arthur without fear of retaliation by the king, who admits that he is unable to stop the knight. The admission of weakness by Arthur tells the reader that although he is king, he does not hold very much power, not even enough to defeat this one knight or ransom back the imprisoned members of his court. In the feudal society of the twelfth century, it was not unusual

\textsuperscript{73} De Troyes, \textit{The Knight of the Cart}, 291.

\textsuperscript{74} De Troyes, \textit{The Knight of the Cart}, 208.
for a lord to hold more influence and power than the king. This certainly seems true in Arthur’s kingdom as evidenced by Arthur’s inability to rescue Guinevere and maintain his honor. Lancelot is the only knight who is powerful enough to rescue the queen. His military prowess and ability to succeed where Arthur has failed tells us that Lancelot is the only one worthy of Guinevere’s love. Lancelot, not Arthur, is the one who kills Meleagant at the story’s end. His military prowess proves that he is the one who deserves her affection with or without the sanctity of marriage. She reciprocates his love, which cements the purity and trueness of their love.

The fact that no tragedy befalls Lancelot and Guinevere, and that their love endures even after it is consummated tells the reader that their love is acceptable. Lancelot is able to rescue the queen and he maintains his affection for her throughout the story. Guinevere is accused of infidelity when Meleagant finds blood from a wounded knight in her bed, but she is able to deflect the accusations and keep her relationship a secret. De Rougemont writes, “The rule of courtly love did not allow a passion … to turn into a reality, to result in the full possession of his lady.” De Troyes’ work proves this idea is incorrect in twelfth century writings because Lancelot is able to fully express his passion for Guinevere and to fully possess her emotionally and sexually. The fact that no tragedy befalls the lovers and that their love remains true, despite the fact that their relationship is adulterous and physical proves that de Troyes views infidelity as acceptable as long as the love between the two parties is true.

This phenomenon also occurs in Cliges. In the last paragraph of the story, Cliges and Fenice finally consummate their love. When they arrive in Greece, where Cliges is to be crowned emperor, the two are finally able to be married and live together in peace. De Troyes writes,

> Then they gave Cliges his sweetheart to be his wife, and the two of them were crowned. He had made his sweetheart his wife, but he called her sweetheart and lady; she lost nothing in marrying, since he loved her still as his sweetheart; and she too loved him as a lady should love her lover. Each day their love grew strong. He never doubted her in any way or ever quarreled with her over anything.

No tragedy befalls the couple and they are able to live happily ever after. Not only are they in love, but they can experience the ideal form of love, which is a monogamous marriage. The marriage does not dull their passion and their love continues to be reciprocal and monogamous. Although their love began as an adulterous affair they are able to live out their days in happiness. Cliges continues to love Fenice as his sweetheart and they do not encounter any hardship because of their marriage. This contradicts de

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Rougemont’s argument that in courtly love a knight can never fully possess his lady, as well as his argument that courtly love mocks the idea of marriage. This passage tells us that Cliges trusts Fenice completely. This may appear odd considering Fenice betrayed her husband to have an affair with Cliges. However since their love is true, Cliges is not worried. Both follow love first and foremost regardless of their legal status as knight and lady, or husband and wife. This is further evidence that adultery, according to de Troyes, is acceptable as long as it occurs because of true love.

_Malory’s Depiction of Adultery_

Malory views infidelity as unacceptable and the cause of the death of King Arthur as well as the fragmentation of the alliance between the knights of the Round Table. After Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship is exposed, Guinevere is sentenced to death for her adulterous actions. Lancelot rescues her by slaying several knights including the brothers of Sir Gawain. This causes friction between the knights of the Round Table. Arthur states,

I lost the fairest fellowship of noble knights that ever held Christian king together. Alas, my good knights be slain away from me: now within these two days I have lost forty knights, and also the noble fellowship of Sir Launcelot and his blood, for now I may never hold them together no more with my worship. Alas that ever this war began.77

Arthur realizes that his fellowship of knights is splintering. The situation has been irreparably damaged by Lancelot’s relationship with Guinevere. The knights are fighting with each other and killing each other instead of supporting each other. Arthur states that he can never repair his relationship with Lancelot and Lancelot’s supporters. Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship caused these events and the entire kingdom is affected. Knights who had nothing to do with the situation are being brought into it and killed. Even those who were initially hesitant to place so much blame find themselves taking sides once they are personally affected. An example of this is Sir Gawain who was initially hesitant to blame Lancelot, but found himself affected when his two brothers were killed during Lancelot’s rescue of the queen. Malory is thus warning his readers of the consequences of infidelity. Infidelity in Malory’s book is always exposed and the exposure often leads to many much larger problems. The effects are far-reaching and long lasting. Malory writes about the effects of Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship:

‘The death of them,’ said Arthur ‘will cause the greatest mortal war that ever was; I am sure, wist Sir Gawain that Sir Gareth were slain, I should never have rest of him till I

had destroyed Sir Launcelot’s kin and himself both, other else he to destroy me. And therefore,’ said the king, ‘wit you well my heart was never so heavy as it is now, and much more I am sorrier for my good knights’ loss than for the loss of my fair queen; for queens I might have enow, but such a fellowship of good knights shall never be together in no company.”

Malory is telling the reader that the consequences will be far reaching and have a permanent effect on the knights of the Round Table. He tells the reader about the effect Gawain’s participation will have. The situation has become larger than just a conflict between Arthur and Lancelot. Arthur is left with no options. He cannot attempt to reconcile with Lancelot because he has to appease his knights who have also been hurt by the situation. There is no way for Arthur to spare Lancelot. Arthur must kill him, thereby retaining his own honor, while avenging those, like Gawain, who Lancelot wronged. This causes Arthur great sorrow.

The fact that Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship destroys not only the fellowship of the knights of the Round Table, but also fractures the kingdom of Britain, is evidence that Malory views infidelity as unacceptable. For Malory, the secrecy of the love does not factor into whether it is acceptable or not. He continually views the relationship, secret or not, as unacceptable. The exposure of their relationship tells the reader that it is impossible to keep an adulterous relationship such as theirs secret forever.

We see further evidence of this in the Tristram section of *Le Morte d’Arthur*. Books VII through XII follow the adventures of Sir Tristram and his trials, including his adulterous relationship with Isolde, the wife of his lord and uncle King Mark. Mark is not as powerful as Arthur, so Tristram’s relationship with Isolde does not have the same wide-reaching effect that Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship has. The consequences are more personal.

When Tristram’s relationship with Isolde is initially discovered, Tristram takes it upon himself to leave Mark’s court. Mark decides to forgive this initial trespass and accept Tristram back as a friend. Mark has reservations about this decision, but he recognizes that banishing Tristram, his most powerful knight, could lead to a larger threat to his kingdom. After Tristram’s return, all is well in Mark’s kingdom of Cornwall. Mark and Isolde are married and Tristram retains his position as Mark’s most formidable knight.

Tristram and Isolde continue their relationship secretly after initially being exposed. The two are exposed again when a knight sends to Mark a horn designed to test Isolde’s faithfulness. She naturally fails this test. Nevertheless, Mark still does not reprimand her, even though he is becoming increasingly upset. When Tristram

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is caught naked in bed with Isolde he is finally held responsible for his actions and sentenced to death. Mark does not take the responsibility of executing Tristram upon himself, instead he allows Tristram’s cousin Sir Andred to fulfill the sentence. Sir Andred states to Tristram, “Fie upon thee … false traitor that thou art, with thine avantage; for all thy boast thou shalt die this day.” Sir Andred is equally as upset with Tristram as Mark is, perhaps even more so, even though it was not his wife or honor that was jeopardized by Tristram’s actions. This tells us that Malory saw infidelity as a problem that affected more people than those directly involved, and that he considered it a problem that more people should be upset about. This is further evidence that Malory viewed infidelity as unacceptable.

The consequences that Tristram and Isolde suffer for their indiscretions are very different than those suffered by Lancelot and Guinevere. Unlike Lancelot and Guinevere’s relationship, Tristram and Isolde’s adulterous relationship does not necessarily lead to great disaster for the kingdom. The consequences are much more personal to the characters themselves. Tristram manages to escape death by leaving Mark’s court, but he does so without his love. Isolde stays married to Mark and is not burned at the stake, however she is forced to live without Tristram because Mark keeps her confined and under careful watch. The two lovers are thus forced to lead separate lives. Their love therefore ends tragically.

Examining the Tristram and Isolde section of Le Morte d’Arthur, as well as the two forms of the Lancelot and Guinevere story suggests that there are two variations of courtly love. In one, love is separate from marriage, and is considered more powerful and important than the institution of marriage. As long as love is true, it is acceptable whether it is between two married people, or two people having an affair outside of their marriages. In the other, a physical relationship outside of marriage inevitably will be discovered and lead to a tragedy as evidenced by the breaking of the fellowship of the Round Table. All of de Troyes’ romances end happily for the lovers. The knights and their ladies live happily ever after and enjoy a continued relationship. For Malory, however, infidelity ends in tragedy for at least one party. Because of this reason it is incorrect to group the writings of the two authors under one all-encompassing genre. The writings of de Troyes and Malory should be viewed as two different genres, which are not only different, but conflicting as well.

The Depiction of Sex and its Effects

The two authors portray the physical act of consummating the love dif-
ferently. In de Troyes’ works, love must be consummated for it to be real. In Malory’s works, the physical expression of the love in the form of sex leads to tragedy. De Rougemont refers to Lancelot’s physical relationship with Guinevere as a “sin against courtly love” and a “profanation of love.” He argues that Lancelot is forced to endure such an arduous journey because of the sin of sex. This idea only applies if one looks at all courtly love stories as having a common theme that a physical and adulterous relationship is wrong. A closer examination of Lancelot’s journey in de Troyes’ version of the story shows that his journey is difficult because the prize, a physical relationship with Guinevere, is so great. If Lancelot could not fully express his love to her through sex, he would not be able to complete his journey. De Rougemont argues that once love is consummated it becomes real. However he also states that “Whatever turns into a reality is no longer love.” He claims that adulterous love persists because of the rule of courtly love, which does not allow a knight full possession of a lady. While this appears to hold true for Malory’s work, it is certainly not so for de Troyes’ work.

De Troyes’ Depiction of Sex

In de Troyes’ stories, the passionate physical expression of love is what solidifies love as real. In order for their love to be real, it must be expressed physically by both parties. De Troyes writes in The Knight of the Cart,

Now Lancelot had his every wish: the queen willingly sought his company and affection, as he held her in his arms and she held him in hers. Her love-play seemed so gentle and good to him, both her kisses and caresses, that in truth the two of them felt a joy and wonder the equal of which has never been heard or known … Lancelot had great joy and pleasure all that night, but the day’s arrival sorrowed him deeply.

Lancelot and Guinevere express their love physically and both yearn for it. Lancelot receives everything he has desired, including the physical prize for his effort in rescuing the queen. The love that they both feel is said to be greater than anything anyone has felt before. This is because of the passionate nature of their love and also because theirs is a love that they both feel for each other. Without mutual love between the two parties, sex would not be positive and would not be considered an expression of true love. The combination of love and sex is necessary for courtly love to be real. To have one without the other would not truly be love. This tells us that the women who commissioned de Troyes were interested in love and sex together. These women wanted to

81. De Rougemont, Love In The Western World, 126.
82. De Rougemont, Love In The Western World, 34.
physically express love, but only with their lovers. Noble married women would have had sex with their husbands on occasion, although this would have had the more practical purpose of producing heirs. If they did not want to have sex with their husbands, the experience may have been more akin to rape. Because of this, noble women would have wanted a lover they could trust and feel safe with, and one who would obey their commands.

Guinevere feels safe with Lancelot and he will obey her commands. We can see evidence of this in Lancelot’s statement,

My lady … don’t worry! I don’t believe that iron could ever stop me. Nothing but you yourself could keep me from coming in to you. If you grant me your permission, the way will soon be free; but if you are unwilling, then the obstacle is so great that I will never be able to pass.\(^4\)

Lancelot wants to obey the queen’s wishes. He states that nothing could keep him from her except her wishes. This sentiment in a lover would have been rare because women in the twelfth century did not enjoy the same rights as men and men were able to do what they pleased with their wives regardless of what the woman wanted. Mistresses also needed to be careful with lords who took a sexual interest in them because they would not want to alienate the lord and make their own life more difficult. All of this meant that a woman had little control over her own body. Despite this, there was still an interest in sex and the lovers in de Troyes’ stories all physically consummate their love.

In de Troyes’ stories, the lovers are eager to have sex. Erec and Enide grow continually impatient in the time leading up to the first time they have sex. De Troyes writes

They did not come into each other’s arms more eagerly. That night they fully made up for what they had so long deferred. When they were left alone in the room, they paid homage to each member.\(^5\)

Erec and Enide are ready to have sex and both are tired of waiting. Like Lancelot and Guinevere, both lovers are willing and ready to consummate their love. This desire to consummate their love speaks to the physical needs that lovers have. Instead of repressing these feelings, they openly enjoy them and seek to fulfill them. The mentality of the author and consequences that surround the act tell us about the attitude of the time. De Troyes’ stories all end in happiness for the lovers. No tragedy befalls the lovers if they physically express their love. The physical expression of love makes it possible for the lovers to end their story happily. Erec and Lancelot all draw strength from their love, which is solidified by sex. In this, de Troyes is telling us that tragedy would occur

\(^4\) De Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*, 264.
\(^5\) De Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, 63.
if the love was not consummated. Not only would the knights and ladies experience a loss of love, but the knights would have failed on their quests. The knight’s dedication to his lady and his yearning for love is what allowed them to complete their tasks.

*Malory’s Depiction of Sex*

Malory views sex differently. Instead of viewing sex as necessary to fully experience love, he sees it as the cause of tragedy. Tragedy in Malory’s book often occurs as a result of consummating an adulterous love. Tristram’s secret visits with Isolde lead to his banishment from Mark’s court and the loss of Isolde. Likewise, Lancelot’s affair with Guinevere leads to his leaving the Round Table fellowship and the death of his lord and crumbling of the kingdom. This is also seen when Tristram fights for the wife of Sir Segwarides. He sleeps with the wife of Sir Segwarides and when the knight discovers this he confronts Tristram who then defeats him in combat.\(^\text{86}\) This story is similar to de Troyes’ *The Knight of the Lion* where Yvain defeats Laudine’s husband in combat and wins her affection. Tristram does not have the same happy ending.

Tristram meets a rival knight, Sir Bleoberis, while riding with his lady in the forest. He fights the rival knight, but ends the engagement when Sir Bleoberis reveals that he is related to Lancelot. Tristram does not want to jeopardize his relationship with Lancelot by killing Sir Bleoberis. Tristram’s lady is upset that he does not appear to care about their relationship. She tells him,

> Wit ye well, Sir Tristram de Liones, that but late thou was the man in the world that I most loved and trusted, and I weened thou hadst loved me again above all ladies; but when thou sawest this knight lead me away thou mades no cheer to rescue me, but suffered my lord Segwarides ride after me; but until that time I weened thou haddest loved me, and therefore now I will leave thee, and never love thee more.\(^\text{87}\)

Even though he continues to fight for the lady, she leaves him and renounces her love for him. Tristram’s hands are metaphorically tied and he ends up in a situation where he cannot win. The lady is convinced that he does not feel the same for her and therefore that she is better off with a rival knight. This situation could have been avoided, but was brought about by Tristram’s decision to consummate his love with her.

In Malory’s work, events often work out in favor of those who choose to abstain from sex. This is evidenced in the tale of Sir Gareth. On his quest to help the woman Lynet, Gareth falls in love with her sister Lyonesse and the two plan to consummate their newfound love. Malory writes

> They were but young both, and tender of age, and had not used none such crafts tofore. Wherefore the damosel Lynet was a little displeased, and she thought her sister Dame

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Lyonesse was a little over-hasty, that she might not abide the time of her marriage; and for saving their worship she thought to abate their hot lusts. And so she let ordain by her subtle crafts that they had not their intents neither with each other, as in their delights, until they were married.\textsuperscript{88}

The two lovers are young virgins and are eager to consummate their love. They rush into the act, not willing to wait until they are properly married. The reader could interpret this as extreme passion; however, it is referred to as hot lust, which is not as pure or long lasting as true love. The choice not to consummate their love is not ultimately theirs. Lyonesse’s sister Lynet stops the two. She does this to preserve their honor. The fact that the two must be saved from their lust shows that Malory views sex, especially sex outside marriage as unfavorable, even if the love is true. Although it is referred to as lust, other mentions of the two lovers’ feelings for each other resemble passionate love. An outside force, Lynet, must step in to prevent them from having sex. In the end, Gareth and Lyonesse still are able to enjoy the benefits of waiting to have sex. Gareth and Lyonesse would not have hesitated had they been left to themselves, but since they were forced to wait they did not have sex until after they were married. Because of this the two live a happy married life free of tragedy. This tells us that it is the act itself, not the thought or desire which leads to tragedy.

\textbf{Conclusion}

De Troyes presents a very positive view of women influenced by his time spent at the court of Champagne and his experiences with his patron Marie de France, Countess of Champagne and other powerful noble women. He portrays love as a mutual feeling that is shared only by a knight and lady. His works tell us that love is more important than the law of marriage. Ideally true love can be found in a marriage; however, it can also be attained through an adulterous relationship if there is no way to avoid it. Love for de Troyes is passionate and a physical expression of it is necessary for it to be true love. Without this physical expression love would be unsatisfied. In contrast, Malory presents a very negative view of women, likely influenced by his experiences with women and his imprisonment for charges of rape and armed assault. He portrays love as an inconsistent part of life that should not be valued above honor. It is often a one-sided affair and is used as a tool for women to manipulate men. Malory views marriage as an important part of society and love that occurs outside of marriage should not be consummated. If it is, tragedy will befall those involved. The differences between the presentation of women and love in the texts of these two authors suggests

\textsuperscript{88} Malory, \textit{Le Morte D'Arthur: Volume 1}, 272.
that their writings should not be grouped under one all-embracing category or genre of literature. They present different conceptions of right and wrong as well as different outcomes for love stories
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The Armenian Genocide and Modern Memory

Chris Krutilek

In this essay, I examine the current state of memory re: The Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide took place between 1915 and 1917 when the leading political party of the Ottoman Empire, the CUP, called for the mass deportation of their Armenian subjects that resulted in the death of up to 1.5 million Armenians. I argue that although the maintenance of memory of the Armenian Genocide is essential to obtain justice for the Armenian people, the current ways in which Armenians remember are unhealthful, as they are captives of an abhorrent past that is consistently denied retribution, spurring nationalist productions of a history that is fragmenting the Armenian community from within. If Armenians continue to perpetuate, as stated best by Armenian historian Sebouh Aslanian, a “lachrymose conception of history” in which a shared mournful view of the past stands testament to what it means to be Armenian, I contend that Armenians will only be hindered by their memory.

Although one would assume a state of total amnesia to be the most detrimental human mode of being, in his work *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, the Jewish scholar Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi reminds us just how being enraptured with the wrong kind of memory can be pernicious to the welfare of individuals and their respective communities too: “And so it was even difficult for him to read, not because, like the man of Smolensk [the man with amnesia], he had forgotten the meaning of words, but because each time he tried to read, other words and images surged up from the past and strangled the words in the text he held in his hands.” For none perhaps experiences the restrictive capability of memory more truly than the Armenians in their remembering of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide took place between 1915 and 1917 when the leading political party of the Ottoman Empire, the CUP, called for the mass deportation of their Armenian subjects that resulted in the death of

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1. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* – page 106. Yerushalmi was the Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society at Columbia University.
up to 1.5 million Armenians. I will argue that although the maintenance of memory of the Armenian Genocide is essential to obtain justice for the Armenian people, the current ways in which Armenians remember are unhealthful, as they are captives of an abhorrent past that is consistently denied retribution, spurring nationalist productions of a history that is fragmenting the Armenian community from within. If Armenians continue to perpetuate, as stated best by Armenian historian Sebouh Aslanian, a “lachrymose conception of history” in which a shared mournful view of the past stands testament to what it means to be Armenian, I contend that Armenians will be hindered by their memory, just as the mnemonicist above.

To understand the current condition of Armenian memory, one must begin first by understanding how memory of the Armenian Genocide subsists in the mind of the Turkish people. Such a memory, I contend, has been characterized by a wiping of the past – a forced amnesia meant to erase any trace of Ottoman identity – so that Turks, especially those born generations away from the Genocide, maintain a blank slate of identity that is susceptible to a narrative of denial sanctioned by the Turkish government. According to political scientist Jennifer M. Dixon, in her work “Defending the Nation? Maintaining Turkey’s Narrative of the Armenian Genocide,” such administered forgetting of the Armenian Genocide began even before the new Republic of Turkey was formally established in 1923. Despite initial efforts to address the Genocide, whereby the Ottoman government established a military tribunal in 1918 to try and convict those associated with the Genocide’s administering, by 1920 the Ottoman government disassociated itself with any responsibility regarding the Genocide. This happened primarily for two reasons. First, in negotiating peace talks with the Allies following their loss in the First World War, any notion that the Ottoman government committed genocide in Eastern Anatolia would surely subvert their efforts in securing the region for their new republic. Second, the various architects of the Genocide generated invaluable networks in Eastern Anatolia as well, so by admitting to genocide those networks would be jeopardized, outcast as unusable remnants of a malicious policy to eliminate the Empire’s Armenian population. Thus, by 1923, with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, as the Republic of Turkey was officially formed, Dixon asserts that the disassociation with the Ottoman past was confirmed. Following the founding of Turkey, a number of policies in the later 1920s and throughout the 1930s were generated to aid in the forgetting of over 600 years of Ottoman rule. Turkish-born intellectual

2. Jennifer M. Dixon, “Defending the Nation? Maintaining Turkey’s Narrative of the Armenian Genocide” – page 469. Dixon is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Villanova University.
3. Sebouh Aslanian, “The Treason of the Intellectuals” – page 135. Aslanian is Associate Professor & Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA.
Esra Özyürek, in the “Introduction” portion of her work *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey*, provides insight into such policies. In 1925, the Republic of Turkey sponsored a hat reform. Turks were banned from upholding traditional dress of the Ottoman past, as they were now unable to wear fezes and now had to wear hats that were Western European style. Women too were affected; although the new law did not outlaw veils, many began taking them off – and the rest followed suit. A year later, those still adjusting to the new dress policies had to adjust yet again, this time to a new calendar. In 1926, the Republic of Turkey adopted the Western clock and Gregorian calendar - the traditional Ottoman calendar was lunar and thus eleven days shorter. Although a seemingly subtle change, Özyürek mentions that those who are still living who had to conform to the new calendar are still having trouble adjusting today. Özyürek then argues that the next set of reforms – the script reform of 1928 and the language reform of 1932 – were the most amnesic of the various policies. The script reform of 1928 changed the official alphabet from the Arabic to Latin, making any written works that were products of the Ottoman-era largely unreadable. The language reform of 1932 made such written remnants of the Ottoman Empire even more increasingly unrecognizable, as the Turkish language was homogenized to exclude any foreign words adopted by the various minority communities that used to populate the Empire. With the language changed, along with the calendar and dress, lastly, the “law of last names” in 1934 erased any connection to Ottoman relatives, as every Turk was forced drop traditional last names and adopt new ones that were approved by the government. Thus, by the mid 1930s Turkish amnesia seemed complete; a narrative of silence surrounded the Armenian Genocide, and Turkish citizens were forced to abandon their past with a new set of reforms that erased any connection with Ottoman identity.

However, by the 1970s, the Turkish government faced new international pressure regarding its silence surrounding the Genocide. In 1965, Armenians sought to commemorate the fiftieth-anniversary of the Genocide, and Armenians throughout the diaspora sought to gain international recognition of the Genocide from the various respective countries that they resided in. In the 1970s, some Armenian extremists even resorted to terrorism, targeting various Turkish bureaucrats and Genocide deniers. Although the initial response of the Turkish government was, according to Dixon, relatively reactive, by 1980 the new military and bureaucratic elites who had come to power developed a cohesive strategy to battle such attention, generating a narrative of denial that would emanate centrally from the Turkish government and lend itself outward.

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onto the international stage. Specifically, Turkey began by centralizing control of the narrative. In 1981, the Directorate General of Intelligence and Research, or IAGM was formed, producing research and scholarship on the Armenian question and formalizing the narrative. Immediately after, various bureaucrats began to produce scholarship in support of the narrative, with over 21 books being published between 1980 and 1985. Next, evidence was marshalled to support such scholarship, and archives were opened to the public – while the Turkish government truly controlled who was permitted to conduct research. The official narrative was thus thrust onto the Turkish population from the top down – from the government onto the people - especially as it began to seep into the world of education, contaminating the minds of young Turks. The Turkish government established the Council of Higher Education, or YÖK to oversee the various educational institutions in the republic, communicating denial of the Armenian Genocide from the youth all the way up to the university level. Last, with the narrative of denial secured within Turkey itself, various Turkish bureaucrats reached outward. All archives with documents pertaining to the Armenian question were opened by 1989, but just as before, only scholars that sought to publish works in favor of the Turkish position were truly let in. In addition, over three-million U.S. dollars were invested into establishing the Institute of Turkish Studies in Washington, which would, again, only generate scholarship in favor of the Turkish denial. Over one-million U.S. dollars were also invested into various United States public-relations firms, who sought to revitalize the image of Turkey in the West. Such state-sanctioned denial, Dixon contends worked until in the 1990s and early 2000s, Turkish silence again face new international pressure, as well as newfound internal pressure. Turkey petitioned to gain membership as a part of the European Union in 1999, requiring the republic to pass various civil right reforms. Such a position within the EU was also contested as various international members – such as France, in 2001 – recognized the Armenian Genocide.6 In addition, political parties within Turkey itself, such as the Kurdish Democratic Society Party, and the AKP brought attention to the issue of Turkey’s silence, demanding apologies for the Armenian people, and changing the language associated denial; no longer was anyone permitted to say the “so called Armenian Genocide” according to the AKP, who gained control of the political arena in 2002.7 However, despite such new pressures, Dixon argues that the same exact measures of the 1980s were taken to sanction denial in the new millennium. Control was centralized over the narrative, now, however, through the Committee to Coordinate the Struggle with the Baseless Genocide

6. Screammers (2006) Dir. Carla Garabedian. Members of the rock band System of a Down, who are of Armenian descent, joined forces with filmmaker Carla Garapedian to chronicle the history of modern genocide, beginning with the Turkish slaughter of Armenians in 1915 to the 21st-century atrocities in Darfur, Sudan in this film.

Claims, or ASIMKK in 2001. Various works in support of denial were again published by government officials, who supported themselves with cherry-picked evidence from archives that held information regarding the Armenian Question. ASIMKK also asserted that it would “ensure that young people are informed about the past, present and future of unfounded allegations of genocide,” perpetuating the narrative of denial throughout various educational institutions, and also, through lobbying efforts and through various investments in foreign nations, confirmed international support for its narrative.

Thus, memory of the Armenian Genocide for Turks has consisted not only of an erasing of the past, in which the newfound Republic of Turkey administered various policies aimed at eliminating any traces of Ottoman identity; Turkey, with its new amnesiac population, has perpetuated for nearly one-hundred years a narrative of denial to ensure that the nation feels no responsibility for the targeted murder of its former Armenian population in 1915. Today, Armenian historian Richard Hovannisian asserts that, despite some admission on behalf of Turks that indeed mass deportations did take place during the outset of the First World War, efforts to support such a narrative of denial have turned towards rationalization, relativization, and trivialization. That is, current denialists argue that first-hand accounts of Genocide witnesses are nothing more than wartime propaganda; they suggest that the Armenians constituted a fifth-column, who actually posed a real security threat – and that the total number of Armenians who died, such as the 1.5 million often suggested, is hyper-inflated. They claim that the causes of death for the Armenians were no different than that for the Ottoman-Turks fighting in the war, and that there were rather more Ottoman-Turkish deaths than there were Armenian; in fact, they claim that there was no attempt to actually murder Armenians, but rather to relocate them. Denialists assert that the arguments on behalf of Armenians that indeed the events of 1915 constitute a genocide were nothing more than attempts to gain economic and political advantages after the First World War, as well as current efforts to destabilize the NATO ties Turkey has with the West. Even more troubling is that, despite such aforementioned efforts to relativize the Genocide, denialists present themselves as guardians of the truth; brave truth-bearing crusaders that are making a final stand to set the record straight.

Such is the memory of the Armenian Genocide within Turkey; if not outright forgotten and denied, it is rationalized – seen as a necessary policy to ensure the survival of the Ottoman Empire, which was on the brink of collapsing from within as Armenians sought

to help their supposed Russian allies in the North. Such Turkish memory is fundamental to forming what is current memory of the Genocide for the Armenian people.

It is important to understand Turkish memory surrounding the Armenian Genocide because such memory is integral to modern Armenian identity. That is, in the face of such forgetting, denial and relativization, Armenian memory has been focused primarily, especially since the 1960s, in obtaining justice for its happening. Razmik Panossian, prominent Armenian historian, asserts that the Genocide affected modern Armenian memory in six specific ways. First, every Armenian, because of the Genocide, became a victim; what it means to be Armenian, in other words, throughout the latter half of the twentieth century and up unto today, is a feeling that you as an Armenian are a member of a community that was nearly exterminated. Second, Panossian argues that such a feeling of victimization is not exclusive to Armenians living in Armenia; the diasporic community around the globe, he contends, are connected by such a sense of victimization, too. Thus, whether one is an Armenian in Yerevan, or an Armenian born in Los Angeles, one thing is common to their Armenian-ness: victimhood. Third, Panossian argues that memory of the Genocide has galvanized Armenians to seek control of their lost homeland once again. In other words, this community of victims also shares a common desire to gain back Eastern Anatolia that was violently ripped from them. Fourth, Panossian asserts that memory of the Genocide has made both Muslims and especially Turks “others” to Armenians. Such people no longer simply constitute a different community in which there exists a history of hundreds of years of cross-cultural relations; rather, Turks are seen as enemies who stole the Armenian homeland, and killed 1.5 million Armenians in doing so. Fifth, Panossian argues that memory of the Genocide has led to an issue of identity politics, as Armenians have, for decades, squared-off against Turks who seek to spread their narrative of denial internationally. Armenians in response have sought to gain international support that indeed the events of 1915 did constitute a genocide, and most notable of such current efforts is the annual attempt on the twenty-fourth of April to have the U.S. Congress pass legislation to create a Genocide Remembrance Day, in which all genocides – not just the Armenian Genocide – is commemorated. Last, Panossian suggests that memory of the Genocide has been fragmented between Eastern and Western Armenians, as Eastern Armenians who lived within the Soviet Union were disconnected from their past until in 1965, when the Genocide was commemorated in Yerevan for

10. Donald Bloxham, “The Beginning of the Armenian Catastrophe: Comparative and Contextual Considerations,” in Der Voelkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah (The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah) – page 104. Donald Bloxham is a Professor of Modern History, specializing in genocide, war crimes and other mass atrocities studies at the University of Edinburgh.
its fiftieth anniversary.\textsuperscript{12}

The memory of the Armenian Genocide, as illuminated by Razmik Panossian, is the uniting element within modern Armenian identity - Armenians near and far, from Yerevan to the edges of their various diasporic communities, are collectively unified under an umbrella of victimization, or, as stated by Armenian historian Sebouh Aslanian, a “lachrymose conception of history” in which a shared mournful view of the past stands testament to what it means to be Armenian.\textsuperscript{13} Such a strong sense of victimization is a product of a lack of justice, as the Armenian community abroad faces constant denial and relativization of the Genocide sanctioned by the Turkish government itself, who’s spread its agenda onto the international stage. Thus, the massive influence that the memory of the Genocide has on the collective Armenian memory is not a mark of an inability to shake the trauma of the past - it is a necessary activity required to seek justice for a nation, so that it can unfold in a healthful way into the future. As stated by Gerard Libaridian, an Armenian historian: “The Genocide, its exploitation, and its denial by Turkey have paralyzed the collective psyche of the Armenian people […] A nation cannot imagine a future if the only thing it can imagine the future bringing is further victimization.\textsuperscript{14} In an effort to work towards such a future, and finally receive justice for a genocide that took place over one-hundred years ago, many Armenians agree that it is the production of history by contemporary Armenian historians that is most essential; in other words, in order to gain recognition that 1915 did constitute a genocide, Armenians must rely on the construction of the past to justify the efforts of the present. As stated by Armen Aivazian, another Armenian historian: “[Armenian history] contains an amazingly sound foundation for building a durable state and society, that is, the four-thousand-year old Armenian civilization and the mighty and markedly singular identity it produced. In the event that they are correctly appraised and “intensively exploited,” national civilization and identity are truly worth more than oil, natural gas, gold, and other exploitable mineral resources.\textsuperscript{15} Despite the importance placed on Armenian history, some historians – such as Aivazian himself – stand as a symptom of a rising nationalism within the Armenian community, whose members, while seeking the same justice that all Armenians long for, are fragmenting the Armenian community from within, casting out others who do not conform with their strict nationalistic interpretations of the past as traitors and enemies of the nation. More specifically, such nationalists see Armenian history, ac-

\textsuperscript{12} Razmik Panossian, \textit{The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars} – pages 237-241. Panossian is a Canadian-Armenian historian and political scientist.

\textsuperscript{13} Sebouh Aslanian, “The Marble of Armenian History” – page 135

\textsuperscript{14} Cited in Aslanian, “The Treason of the Intellectuals,” – page 2

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.} – page 4
cording to historian Sebouh Aslanian, as an appendage to both national identity and security, and thus alienate other intellectuals that present a picture of the Armenian past that can in anyway be manipulated to assist current Turkish efforts to re-write history in favor of denial. For instance, in his work *Hayastani Patmutian Lusabanume Amerikan Patmagrutian Mej* (1998), Aivazian dedicates his entire book to exploring historical productions over the past forty-years, in an effort to unveil what he calls the “false school of Armenian studies” in which he concludes that many Armenian thinkers, especially those in the diaspora, are nothing more than under-cover agents in favor of Turkish denial. Aivazian goes so far as to condemn Ronald Grigor Suny, a renowned and well-respected Armenian political scientist, for “perverting” and “corrupting” the Armenian past.\(^{16}\) Within Suny’s work, *Looking Towards Ararat*, Suny suggests that “knowledge of Armenian history had been effectively wiped out, except among a small group of monks who copied and recopied the ancient texts.”\(^{17}\) Aivazian responded by asserting that Suny grossly overlooked that between 1512 and 1760, roughly 570 Armenian titles were published in printing houses across Europe and the Middle East.\(^{18}\) However, Sebouh Aslanian, in commenting on Aivazian’s criticism of Suny, illuminates that in his criticism it is Aivazian himself who is relying on Turkish revisionists, such as Kamuran Gürün and Esat Uras, in making such a claim.\(^{19}\) Thus, these nationalist historians, while claiming that other Armenian scholars are rewriting the past in support of Turkish revisionism, are actually relying on Turkish revisionists themselves in doing so, and skewing visions of the past. Unfortunately, Sebouh Aslanian points out that such a nationalistic practice is not some radical wing of historicism that is largely cast-aside; Aivazian’s work was celebrated amongst Yerevan literati for exposing traitors to the Armenian nation, and received praise from the capital’s leading academic institution, Yerevan State University.\(^{20}\) Thus, the nationalist agenda of Aivazian is not, in other words, just the prerogative of a group of strung-out Armenian extremists who are choosing to fragment the Armenian community internally; they represent a rising, popular “new ethos” of remembering the past, dividing a community whose unity is essential for gaining the justice for a future where new generations of Armenians, as stated earlier by Libaridian, can imagine a future without being prisoners of victimization.\(^{21}\) Thus, I conclude that although remembering the Armenian Genocide is essential for the Armenian people to gain the justice they need to unfold into the future in

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\(^{16}\) Ibid. – page 2

\(^{17}\) Ibid. – pages 11-12

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) Ibid. – page 36

\(^{21}\) Ibid. – page 3
a healthful way, the current mode of remembering – a rising nationalist genre of history that skews the past, and casts out respectable Armenian scholars as traitors to the nation – is an unhealthy way to remember the Genocide for the Armenian population. If they continue to allow such a nationalist agenda to unfold, Armenians will not be able to imagine a future freed from the chains of victimization; they will rather be like Yerushalmi’s mnemonist, unable to move forward because they are so enraptured with the past.

Modern Armenian memory, as I have demonstrated, is characterized by memory of the Armenian Genocide. Armenians, from their state capital in Yerevan, to the edges of the diaspora, are connected by a shared sense of victimization, as they still are yet to receive the justice they deserve. Although memory of the Genocide is essential in seeking such a justice, the current, popularizing ways in which the Armenian community is remembering the past is unhealthful, as new tones of nationalism are revising history and fragmenting the Armenian community from within, when unity is needed most. Thus, for Armenians to secure a future in which the un-born generations to come are rid of the victimization of the past, the Armenian community must unite under common critical analysis and scholarly debate of the past – not fragment in the face of state-sanctioned efforts of denial, revisionism, rationalizing and relativization.

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The Grail of Parsifal: The Third Reich and the Occult

Drake Morton

This thesis articulates the fluctuating influence occult societies and practices had upon National Socialist doctrine and policy. The Nazis, and especially the SS, utilized occultism to help define National Socialism. The project addresses the backdrop of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe, where occultism and far-right nationalism first coalesced. I begin with an examination on how the Nazi’s rejection of inconvenient sciences allowed for the espousal of occult doctrines that forwarded their philosophy. With an understanding on why the Nazis adopted occult doctrines, I analyze how the occult Thule society provided the Nazi regime with many notable members, including Adolf Hitler. I examine Ariosophy, esotericism, and the Nazis obsession with acquiring the Holy Grail, which they felt would unlock its magical powers. Additionally, I analyze the Nazis perversion and interpretation of many philosophical/occult texts meant to engineer a pseudo-history that solidified their ideology. The project researches theological documents, diaries, travel monologues, historical literature, the compositional works by composer Richard Wagner, and various other sources. The essay addresses topics ranging from Ariosophy, Volkism, Watanism, neo-paganism, the Schutzstaffel, Hinduism, mysticism, Gnosticism, Catholicism, the Albigensians, Islam, medievalism, Biblical literature, the Holy Grail mythos, nineteenth-century German philosophy, and science. The study between National Socialism and the occult is an extensive study on the potential influence and efficacy esoteric elements can have upon political ideology and state establishment.

The era of the Weimar Republic in German history witnessed one of the world’s most unforgettable political philosophies: National Socialism. National Socialism was an ultra-nationalist pan-German political and mystic ideology that championed the primacy of the Aryan race at the expense of allegedly inferior races. Nazism envisioned a racial utopia that sought the removal of internal and external enemies at whatever cost in order to bring about a Greater Germany. Occultism influenced several socio-political factors within the Nazi regime. The occult is a broad term for collective or individual philosophical doctrines that utilize metaphysical powers to alter the material world.\(^1\) Occultist held the imagination and opportunity to describe a dream world that

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often inspired the sentiments and actions of more important and influential men in positions of authority and responsibility. Therefore, alien doctrines had the opportunity to be institutionalized and disseminated throughout the greater population. As a result, occultism’s mysterious and strange cults anticipated the political doctrines and institutions of the Third Reich.²

The Nazis used various occult and philosophical traditions to help solidify their ideology, which in turn influenced their politics and identity. The National Socialist German Workers Party partly evolved out of an occult society known as the Thule society.³ The Nazis creatively combined Neo-paganism, Ariosophy, Volkism, Gnosticism, metaphysics, philosophy, among other disciplines, to help create their own unique brand of German ultra-nationalism, while demeaning and reconstructing certain scientific disciplines as they saw fit. To help craft their brand of ultra-nationalism, the Nazis also reinterpreted ancient and contemporary texts to construct a pseudo history that suited their ideology. However, this new ideology required a messiah to deliver the Germanic people from the devastations and humiliations of the First World War and the subsequent Diktat, and restore them to prominence.

Adolf Hitler made himself into the Germanic “messiah” of a new age of Nazi ideology with the influence of the occult. The consistency between occult traditions and National Socialism are great, despite Hitler concealing his involvement in the occult. French scholar Jean Angebert maintains Hitler’s racial policies sought to replace the old-world order with a new world order; National Socialism.⁴ Hitler’s ideology espoused spirituality and racial duty as one, which he believed would justify his actions. Hitler was influenced by several Viennese occultists, who held the Germanic or “Aryan race” to be a supreme and esoteric people, worthy of inheriting the earth while subjugating other races.

The Nazis and other racist occult practitioners distorted the term “Aryan” to fit their own political and occult philosophies. It was believed that the nations that spoke European languages, which were thought to have derived from Sanskrit, belonged to the Indo-European or “Aryan” race. It was also believed that the “Aryan” race was morally superior to the “Semitic” one. All original creations of the human spirit, except for religion, were attributed to the “Aryans.” Additionally, many authors in the nineteenth considered that to preserve their special qualities, the Aryan nations must avoid interacting with peoples of “inferior races.” They considered the Germans of being the pu-

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The political and economic success (especially after 1871) of the nations that spoke Germanic languages, and that therefore considered themselves as belonging to the Teutonic race helped to solidify these opinions. This concept continued to be based on the anthropological concept of the nineteenth century, between “races” and languages or cultures. By 1900 the existence of an “Aryan race” was firmly established in the public mind as a scientific truth. Some fanatics worked out elaborate eschatological systems in which the struggle between the Aryan and Semitic races was the equivalent of the final struggle between Good and Evil. Therefore, the concept of Aryan superiority was adopted by Viennese racial occult practitioners to solidify their philosophy. As a result, Hitler sought to accustom Germans to live in a mystical world that betrayed logic and reason. To understand how occultism made its way into Nazi government and politics, it is necessary to comprehend why many Nazis eschewed scientific rationale in preference to occult traditions.

I

The Inconvenience of Science

The 1920s was a time replete with scientific innovation and advancement, which were not wholly compatible with National Socialism. Angebert believes that the scientific momentum of the nineteen twenties sought to align itself with the “enlightenment” mode of thinking; concepts that advanced the prospects of living in a better and more rational world, post-World War I. The advancement of science would consequently discourage occult doctrines, in favor of a more rational and secular mode of thought. Therefore, it is curious that the Nazis eschewed many areas of science in preference to a more antiquated and perverse mode of thinking. Hitler despised intel-


6. Regarding this Nazi mystical world, German author Hermann Rauschning commented on Hitlerism “[e]very German has one foot in Atlantis, where he seeks a better land and a better patrimony. This ability to split oneself into two personalities, which enables them to live in the real world and at the same time to project themselves into an imaginary world, reveals itself most particularly in Hitler and gives us the key to his magic socialism.” Angebert, The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail, 52, 120.

7. This is not to suggest that the Enlightenment was an era or concept that lauded equality for all. The Enlightenment period also brought with it racial classifications, which put Europeans at the top of the racial scale and Africans and others at the very bottom. For example, Voltaire believed that Africans were the intermediaries between Europeans and apes. Poliakov, Encyclopaedia Judaica, 46/ Nicholas Hudson, From Nation to “Race”: The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth Century Thought. Eighteenth-Century Studies 29, no. 3 (1996): 247-264. Accessed March 3, 2017. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/10677/ Angebert, The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail 226-227.
lectuals and advocated intuition (however irrational) over logic. For example, Hitler disdained scientific terms like Weismann’s ‘germ plasm’ or Mendel’s ‘hereditary properties’ in favor of notions such as the ‘maintenance of the purity of the blood’. Moreover, Hitler deemed many current scientists (such as Einstein) and their works as being “degenerative” and “Jewish”, qualities which were not on par with National Socialism. Regardless of how sophisticated and advanced these new “Jewish” doctrines were, ideology trumped scientific advancement. He especially despised sciences that were inconvenient to his ideology, such as the concept that there is only one race (the human race).

Hitler stated that he was aware of the scientific notion of the non-existence of races, but believed himself to be a politician whose duty was to establish order and to destroy inconvenient histories; ideology over science. He believed the use of the term “race” was necessary to establish the superiority of one people over another; the Aryan race was dominant and all others were deemed fit for submission or eradication. He used this concept to justify his racial policies, on the basis of being a member of the superior race of man, the Aryan race. Occult researcher Gavin Baddeley holds that National Socialism retarded many areas of scientific progress and diverted Germany back two hundred years, to a time when spirituality and science were still one. With an understanding of why the Nazis disdained certain areas of science in preference to a more atavistic world view, it becomes evident how this new (or atavistic) world view was influenced by various philosophical and occult practices that were espoused by many occult societies at the time.

II

Ariosophy

The rejection of “inconvenient sciences” allowed the Nazis to adopt occult doctrines in their place. The suspension of thought and reason allowed for the indoctrination of alien beliefs to be manifested. Occultism and secret societies were active in

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8. The Enlightenment mode of thinking is a concept that the Nazis would later whole heartedly eschew, since they preferred collective mentality over individual thinking. Gavin Baddeley, Lucifer Rising (London: Plexus, 1999), 36.
11. This obviously does not suggest that the Nazis eschewed scientific and engineering feats that were to their benefit, such as rearmament and arms spending. Hitler convened with his military advisors as early as 1933 with the goal of rearming the German military and pursuing an aggressive foreign policy. Gerhard Weinberg, The Foreign Policy of Hitler’s Germany Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933–1936 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1970), 26-27
Germany and Austria in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries. Ariosophy and Volkism were somewhat popular occult movements in Austria, which espoused the esoteric nature of the “Aryan race.” While the term “Aryan” originally meant a neutral ethno-linguistic classification, from the late 19th century onwards the term “Aryan” race has been used by people who believed in racial hierarchy. They promoted the idea that the Germanic peoples were descended from an ancient master race, whom they called “Aryan”. As such, Ariosophists told of a prehistoric golden age when wise gnostic priests developed occult and racist doctrines and ruled over a superior and racially pure society. They sought to resurrect this golden age and influence groups of people to adopt their philosophy. The Ariosophists founded their own societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe, dedicated to the revival of the lost Aryan knowledge and racial virtues of the ancient Germanic peoples.

The Nazis espoused many of the political, social, religious, and futuristic views of the Ariosophists. Schutzstaffel (SS for short) leader Heinrich Himmler utilized Ariosophy as a model for his anticipated Nazi religion. The occult laden SS were elite storm troopers, who eventually became a full political apparatus under the Nazi regime. The SS was known as the Black Order with Heinrich Himmler as the Grand Master of the Order. There were two Ariosophists associated with Heinrich Himmler in the 1930’s, who advised him on SS ceremonies, rituals, and politics. Additionally, Ariosophy provided the Third Reich as a whole the ultimate vision of a pure Aryan Race society that eliminated the ills of society. The Nazis adopted the Ariosophist belief that an evil conspiracy existed which sought to sabotage the Germanic peoples and send the world into chaos. The Nazis adopted the Ariosophist contempt for the Catholic Church, modern culture, and globalization, which they felt were elements

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that eroded traditional Germanic values. The Nazis looked to the Ariosophists and sought to rekindle an ancient Germanic past and start a new society based on ancient Germanic traditions. The Nazis espoused the Ariosophist hatred of multinationalism, which became evident through the growing number of “Non-Germanic” Slavic peoples in Vienna toward the end of the nineteenth century. Adolf Hitler himself detested the growing number of Slavic immigrants pouring into Vienna during his miserable stay in the city in the early twentieth century. The Ariosophists main objective was to herald a new Germanic empire in the near future and create an elite society, in much the same way the Nazis sought to create a racially pure Greater Germany.

The Ariosophists are significant because Adolf Hitler embraced several of their tenets. It is already believed that early in his life Hitler was active in many occult and secret societies, including Ariosophist groups. The Ariosophists influenced Hitler’s fascination of a return to a prehistoric Germanic past. In addition, they lead Hitler to believe that there existed an international conspiracy (namely the Jews) against the Germans, who were responsible for every ill in society. For example, Hitler blamed the Jews for the First World War, the subsequent German Revolution, the Stab in the Back Myth, the Weimar Constitution, prostitution, the spread of syphilis, international capitalism, Bolshevism, financial manipulation, and cultural corruption, which were all means to enslave the Germans under international Jewry. To reverse this alleged downward spiral, Hitler reminded himself of Ariosophist ideology and sought to reinvigorate the German people and create a new Greater Germany that espoused racial honor and virtue, much like the Ariosophists.

Hitler also adopted many of the social and religious positions of the Ariosophists. Hitler himself had contempt for the Catholic Church for the same reasons as the Ariosophists, a sentiment he kept private in order not to offend Germany’s Catholics. Hitler also embraced their contempt for modern culture and globalization. For example, Hitler referred to modern art as entartete kunst “degenerative art” and preferred more mythical and romanticized art concerning the ancient Germanic past. Hitler also hated the multinationalism characteristic of the Hapsburg Empire, and often com-

23. Baddeley, Lucifer Rising, 34.
24. Famously known in German as “Die Dolchstoß legende.”
plained of the growing number of Slavs coming into Vienna.26

The Nazi admiration for Ariosophy led some Ariosophist societies to utilize the Third Reich in the hopes of disseminating their occult philosophies and possibly enter politics. Entering politics would have helped the Ariosophists achieve their goal of heralding a new pan-Germanic world empire. In fact, it is believed that Hitler was in contact with a leading Ariosophist in Vienna. Ariosophists were closely involved with the occult obsessed Heinrich Himmler of the SS, and contributed to his research of Germanic prehistory, ceremonies, and consulted him on his plans for a Greater German Reich for the future. In short, Ariosophists offered the Nazis a cultural nostalgia with the prospects of realizing their mutual ambitions.27

One leading Ariosophist attempting to create a Völkish empire was the völkisch occultist Dr. Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, who influenced Hitler’s worldview. Many historians believe that Liebenfels’s writings guided Hitler deeper into occult studies. It is believed that it was in Hitler’s days in Vienna that he experimented with occultism and drugs that helped him believe he had achieved a transcendent state of mind.28 Liebenfels was a defrocked Cistercian monk who founded the New Templars, an occult society that hoisted a swastika in front of its temple (the later insignia of the Nazis.)29 During his time as a monk he studied esoteric and Gnostics texts, which would later influence his racist Christian doctrine. His anti-Semitism gestated during his novice hood at the abbey; his teacher openly disdained the Jews in the Old Testament. Liebenfels felt the Cistercians were abandoning their racial integrity and left the order in 1899 preferring to pursue his own spiritual path.30 After leaving the order, it is believed he found patronage within the Pan-German movement, and wrote articles for several völkisch, anti-Semitic, and Social Darwinist publications.31

Upon leaving the Cistercians, he continued his occult studies and became an Ariosophist, whose views influenced Adolf Hitler. Like his fellow Ariosophists, Liebenfels mourned the loss of what he felt was a pure Germanic past, and longed for a mystical Aryan society modelled after medieval society.32 Liebenfels associated with

29. Ken Anderson, Hitler and the Occult, 42.
30. He offers no explanation as to why the Cistercians had to uphold any concept of “racial purity” in the first place; the Cistercians were a religious, not a racial order. Goodrick–Clarke, The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935, 91.
32. He was particularly fond of medieval society’s religious and military orders. Ibid., 90.
occult groups in Vienna, groups which included, the anti-Semitic Viennese mayor who early on influenced Hitler, Karl Lueger. Liebenfels produced the völkisch/anti-Semitic periodical Ostara, of which the young Hitler was enthusiastic. In 1909, it is believed that Hitler found patronage from Liebenfels, after initially meeting him at an abbey in Austria. It is claimed that Liebenfels educated Hitler as his pupil on the concepts of the sacredness and legacy of Germanic blood and race, nationalism, race wars, and anti-Semitism. It is rumored that Liebenfels initiated Hitler to his völkisch cult movement and trained him to be a great statesman. It is assumed that Dr. Liebenfels sought to make Hitler into a Germanic messiah, which would one day have a profound effect on Hitler’s ideology and policy making. He later told one of his new initiates in 1932 “Hitler is one of our pupils…you will one day experience that he, and through him we, will one day be victorious and develop a movement that will make the world tremble.” Liebenfels would eventually prove to have influenced Hitler politically. For example, Hitler adopted Liebenfels view of the absurdity and uselessness of all parliamentary politics, viewing them as an obstruction to his version of progress.

Dr. Liebenfels’s most famous work Theozoology, or the Account of the Sodomite Apelings and the Divine Electron provides a deeper understanding on how his philosophy influenced Nazi ideology. Liebenfels was the first person to combine zoology, Christianity, and Gnosticism into a unique racist doctrine. The basic premise of his text revolves around the concept that the superior Aryan man was sent from the cosmos to restore order on earth. Lanz justified his esoteric racial ideology by attempting to give it a Biblical foundation, where he often backed up his theories with Holy Scripture and bizarre scientific mumblings. He believed that the root of evil lay in subhuman animal behavior, so he felt that the combined study of zoology and Christianity would.

35. Baddeley, Lucifer Rising, 35.
36. Anderson, Hitler and the Occult, 42.
be the best remedy to rid the world of evil. \(^{40}\) He gave his unique brand of Ariosophosy a Christian/ dualistic element where the Aryan was “good” and the non-Aryan was “evil”, a concept adopted by the Nazis. He viewed the current world as a place of evil and sin, where Jesus Christ was the savior of the Aryan peoples. \(^{41}\) Liebenfels interpreted the Passion of Christ as the work of magical pygmies, who were encouraged by satanic cults to betray Christ. These were the same satanic cults whom Liebenfels believed promoted the interbreeding of racial peoples throughout time, which compromised the purity of the Germanic peoples. \(^{42}\) Liebenfels believed that the Fall of Man was an allegory conceptualizing the “fall” of the Aryan man by his copulation with “lesser races.” \(^{43}\) As a result, the Aryan man must not copulate with the inferior “ape” peoples, in order to restore the Race back to Germania. Germania could also be interpreted as “The Kingdom of Heaven,” which he believed was a terrestrial place on earth that was racially pure and hygienic. \(^{44}\) The Third Reich itself adopted Liebenfels premise of a return to a Greater Germany for the Aryan race, while subduing and eradicating the lower races.

He summarizes his theozoological worldview in a passage in his other book entitled *Regalarium Fratrum Ordinis Novi Templi*:

> The time has come! The old brood of Sodom is degenerate and wretched in the Middle East and all around the Mediterranean… Our bodies are scurfy despite all soaps, they are [profane] The life of man has never been so miserable as today in spite of all technical achievements. Demonic beast-men oppress us from above, slaughtering without conscience millions of people in murderous war waged for their own personal gain. Wild best-men shake the pillars of culture from bellow…. Why do you week a hell in the next world! Is not the hell in which we live and which burn inside us sufficiently dreadful? \(^{45}\)

He explains how the wretchedness of the non-Aryans in the world are attempting to subdue and dominate the Germanic people through their various wars. These “demon-

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41. Which is very odd, since Liebenfels does not offer an explanation as to why the savior of the Aryan people is a Jewish prophet.


43. Liebenfels believed that these mixed-race peoples comprised the satanic cults allegedly operating in secret around the world. Therefore, he offered an explanation as to why evil in the world existed why Europe was experiencing the problems it was facing. Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935*, 93.


ic entities” are also responsible for undermining Aryan mobility and the corruption of Aryan culture. The Germanic peoples are allegedly worn out and defenseless from years of constant abuse and exploitation. He uses Christian symbolism to corroborate his world view with his own theozoological doctrine. The Nazis borrowed Liebenfels idea that the non-Aryans were responsible for world domination, war mongering, exploitation, and cultural decay.

Upon assuming a greater audience, Liebenfels produced the volkish/ anti-Semitic Ostara magazine in 1902, which greatly influenced National Socialist thought. Ostara was named after the pagan goddess of Spring, whose depiction is on the cover of the first magazine. The titles of their publications suggest that they influenced National Socialist thought and rhetoric. For example, the first issue is entitled “The Ostara and the Kingdom of the Blondes.”46 The second issue is titled “The World War as a Racial Struggle of the Dark against the Blondes.”47 The third issue is titled “The World Revolution and the Grave of the Blondes.”48 The fourth issue is titled “World Peace as the Work and Victory of the Blondes,” and the fifth issue is titled “Theozoology or the Natural Law of the Gods; The Old State and the Old God.”49 This is clearly a publication that extolls a future kingdom of the Aryans, where the First World War was viewed as a racial struggle against the Jews (and even the African armies who were fighting for their colonial overlords.) Nevertheless, as the third issue suggests, World War One, and its consequences, could spell the end of Aryans, a people who allegedly want victory and world peace, as the fourth issue suggests. Additionally, the publication portrays non-Aryans as evildoers against peaceful Aryans. These sentiments were undoubtedly espoused by the Nazis, making Ostara an influential publication to the Nazis. It is believed that Hitler himself owned several copies of the publication.50

Ostara sought to address the social and political issues of Europe through völkisch ideology, issues that later influenced the Nazis.51 This publication sought to introduce anthropological and “scientific findings” that proved the superiority of the

50. Baddeley, Lucifer Rising, 35.
European peoples and the inferiority of non-Europeans. Liebenfels based this spiritual distinction between blondes and darker individuals upon the Hindu caste system of Manu. In Hinduism, Manu means “human” in Sanskrit and refers to the archetypal man, who is the creator of mankind. In addition, Ostara discussed topics ranging from anti-feminism to anti-Parliamentarism, issues which the Nazis later espoused.

The influence Hitler absorbed from Liebenfels was vast. Hitler adopted Liebenfels’s position that Europe was in social and cultural disunity, which he believed could be healed by leading a new doctrine meant to revive the Germanic peoples. Hitler also promoted Liebenfels’ belief that it was time for the lesser races in the world to be subdued. Additionally, Hitler advocated in favor of Liebenfels’ claim that the Aryan was a heroic race, while materialism was rampant amongst the darker races. Hitler also championed Liebenfels’ antagonism against the Christian concept of meekness, and both felt that the weak should be dealt with ruthlessly. Hitler appreciated Liebenfels’s stance against socialism, democracy, and feminism, for they believed they weakened the state. Hitler also espoused Liebenfels concept of sending inferior peoples to Madagascar or to work as slaves.

Adolf Hitler also adopted Liebenfels’ glorification of the Aryan race as Gott-menschen (god-men), who should breed with one another and eradicate the lower races. Liebenfels posited the Aryans originated from cosmic deities (Theozoa) who reproduced through electricity, while inferior races were the result of interbreeding between humans and “ape-men” known as Anthropozoa. Liebenfels influenced Hitler’s belief that the races should cease from mixing and only allow the Aryans to breed, which would eventually lead to victory for the Aryan race; the race of Heaven. Liebenfels claimed that it is the job of the Germanic race to subdue and enslave the inferior races, which he says is alluded to in the Koran. The Nazis put the concept of subduing “in-

52. Biological racism was not a new to Liebenfels’ beliefs or to those in European society. Europe already had scientists and scholars since the nineteenth century that professed the biological superiority of European peoples. Charles Darwin himself professed that life was a series of struggles between the species, where the strong would eventually win over the weak. The strongest race, he believed, were the Europeans. Many biological racists like Darwin believed that these theories were self-evident, since the Europeans had the strongest and wealthiest nations in the world, which dominated over several weaker nations.


ferior peoples” during World War Two into action with the creation of labor camps for free slave labor and death camps for annihilation, known collectively as concentration camps. For instance, the Third Reich ordered the enslavement and annihilation of Slavs and Jews in the East, which mirrored Liebenfels’ concept of an alleged “victory” of the Aryan race over inferior peoples. Liebenfels also advocated for sterilization of the sick, a concept that Hitler was notorious for under the T4 program. Under Nazi Germany, the sick, lame, and mentally disabled were generally euthanized, in an attempt to liberate their so called Aryan soul, and to strengthen the coming generations of the Aryan race. The disabled were not allowed to mix with non-disabled Aryans, with the intention of breeding purely healthy Aryans in the future; they were regarded as a biological and degenerative threat to healthy Aryans. The influence Liebenfels had on Nazism also extends to gender roles.

Liebenfels peculiar stance on the role of women within his Ariosophosy belief system influenced National Socialism, specifically in regard to gender roles. He believed that lower races were the result of Eve procreating with a demon, a sin for which women could redeem themselves by copulating strictly with Aryan males. In general, Liebenfels believed that women in society were a problem since they were more prone to bestial lust. He claimed blonde women were attracted primarily to dark men, which had to be stopped at once, so that the “Aryan-Christian master humans” could eradicate the lower races and ultimately achieve divinity. The Nazis adopted Liebenfels belief that the subjugation of Aryan women to Aryan husbands would lead to purifica-


59. The Nazis termed “degenerative Germans” as Lebensunwertes leben (people unworthy of life) and were composed of the physically and mentally disabled, the deaf, the blind, gay, criminals, alcoholics, asocial, and political opponents. The Nazis ensured that these people didn’t breed, since they were defective and prone to degeneration. Nazi Germany promoted eugenics in propaganda, exhibiting how the mentally ill were costing the state money. The disabled were considered a biological and degenerative threat to healthy Aryans. Nazi ideology against the “degenerative threat” of the disabled was put into practice initially through the Sterilization Laws, which had between 350 and 400,000 people sterilized in Nazi Germany. The Nazis went a step further in the summer of 1939 and began euthanizing the disabled in the T4 program. The program was sold to the public as mercy killings, as if they were doing the disabled a favor. The program accelerated after the outbreak of World War Two and shut down in September 1941, because of public protest and resistance from the Catholic Church. The Church’s demand to end the T4 program was the only protest demand they successfully attained in Nazi Germany. In the end, there were 70,273 documented cases of euthanasia, where some of the survivors of the T4 program were sent to concentration camps. Lena Berggren “Race in the Third Reich” (presentation, Fascism in Europe 1918-1945 at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, November 16, 2016).


tion of the Aryan genepool, which would deify the status of the Aryan man. The Nazis believed in conserving the institution of marriage by having only pure-bred Aryans marry one another, where the woman was subordinate to her husband. Liebenfels also stated his stance against the active role of women in society, a stance which effectively influenced the Third Reich. The Nazi’s adopted Liebenfels’ stance on limiting the role of women in society. This concept is expressed in the Nazi slogan: Kinder, Kuche, Kirche! Or children, kitchen, and church, which designated the role for women in German society. Nazi ideology believed that a woman’s job was to bear as many healthy Aryan children as possible. As a result of the expected role of women in society, Liebenfels’s rhetoric also influenced the Nazi view towards marriage and reproduction.

The Nazis adopted Liebenfels’ support for sound marital conduct, proper conception of Aryan babies, and experiments for breeding pure Germans under strict guidelines. Regarding sound marital conduct, Nazi Germany issued marriage licenses only to families who could prove they were of healthy and pure Aryan stock. Experiments for breeding pure Germans were put into action through the Nazi Lebensborn program. Lebensborn was an SS initiated program in Nazi Germany with the goal of increasing the birth rate of Aryan offspring through extramarital relations of healthy Aryan individuals (particularly SS members, given their greater emphasis on racial hygiene and ideology), where the offspring were to be adopted by “racially hygienic couples.” Lanz’s prospect of racially mediated copulation and conception bore fruition through the Lebensborn program. The influence Liebenfels had on National Socialism was vast in terms of the conception of race, subjugation, annihilation, and gender roles.

Ultimately, Liebenfels had a millenarian outlook on the world, and envisioned an apocalyptic battle between the races, which occultists interpreted as an omen to World War 1. Liebenfels said:

But it will not last for much longer, for a new priesthood will arise in the land of the electron and the Holy Grail…. Great princes, doughty warriors, inspired priests, eloquent bards, and visionary sages will arise from the ancient holy soil of Germany and enchain the apes of Sodom, establish the Church of the Holy Spirit and transform the

64. As such, women were discouraged from entering the workforce. Lena Berggren “Race in the Third Reich” (presentation, Fascism in Europe 1918-1945 at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, November 16, 2016).
67. Anderson, Hitler and the Occult, 41, 43.
Liebenfels mixed an apocalyptic rhetoric with the notions of a coming racial fatherland. This is a perversion of the traditional Christian coming of Christ, except that Liebenfels’ apocalypse is followed by a Germanic afterlife. In one aspect, Liebenfels interpreted World War One as a racial Manichean struggle between the blondes and the darks. Regardless, Liebenfels attributed every social, cultural, and political ill to “darker people”, a concept mirrored by the Nazis.

Liebenfels’ astrological findings exhibited the eventual start of a new Aryan golden age, a concept that influenced National Socialism. He reorganized time into different astrologic ages, and put forward the existence of a new calendar, which dictated the characteristics of each time period. Liebenfels believed that the period from 1210 to 1920 was the age of the vulgar masses (including the Jews), who were responsible for weakening Europe through the invention of towns, capitalism, democracy, nationalism, and equality. This was a sentiment the Nazis also adopted from Liebenfels, for he believed the age of the vulgar masses was due to the moon’s position in Pisces. Liebenfels also believed World War One would end the reign of “demonic dominion” and bring about a new age. This new age would bring about a new Church of the Holy Spirit, which would create a supranational Aryan state. This new state and society would be ruled by an eternal priesthood (who were privy to ancient gnostic secrets) in Vienna. Liebenfels predicted this new age would range from 1920 to 2640, since Jupiter would be in Pisces during that time. Liebenfels commented “[n]o longer will parliaments determine the fate of the people, in their place will rule wise priest-kings, genial patricians with an understanding of ariosophical mysticism and leaders of chivalrous and spiritual secret orders.” Liebenfels believed that Spain, Italy, and Hungary were the Jupiter countries, because of the rise of their countries’ dictatorships. These countries would subsequently ally themselves with Hitler once he became Fuhrer. Ariosophy and the doctrines of Lanz von Liebenfels were not the only occult influences on the Nazis; the Nazis would directly participate in far more influential entities in the nineteen twenties.

69. Goodrick-Clarke, The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935, 100.
70. Liebenfels fails to specifically characterize who is considered “dark”. I can only surmise that anyone who is not blonde is considered dark, and thus an antagonistic individual in Liebenfels mind. In addition, it is curious to probe why Hitler found admiration in such literature, if he himself was a non-blonde and possibly considered “dark” in Liebenfels classification of individuals.
Another influence on Hitler and the Nazis came from the Thule Society, which claimed responsibility for Hitler's meteoric rise.\textsuperscript{72} The Thule Society was a völkisch/occult group in Munich named after a mythical island in Greek folklore. It is believed that the Thule Society educated Hitler on the magical Island of Thule, which they believed was the home of the Germanic superman. Like the Ariosophists, the Thule Society taught that the good was Aryan, and evil was Semitic; a concept adopted by National Socialism. The Thule society sought to utilize a symbol that encapsulated all the magic in world religions, a concept that Angebert believes Hitler adopted by utilizing the swastika.\textsuperscript{73} The actions of the Thule Society proved influential to some of the actions of the Nazis themselves. The Thule Society sought to overthrow the Bavarian Soviet in a coup in Munich in 1919, in much the same way that Hitler sought to overthrow the government in Munich during the Beerhall Putsch of 1923.\textsuperscript{74} It is interesting to note that The High Priest of the Thule Society, Dietrich Eckart, also participated in Hitler’s abortive Putsch in 1923.\textsuperscript{75}

Many members of the Thule Society would eventually help create, enter, and sponsor the German Workers Party (DAP for short) in Munich.\textsuperscript{76} The German Workers Party was founded in 1919 by Anton Drexler, and was the precursor to the Nation Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP or Nazi party for short) founded in 1921. The Thule Society was known tentatively to have had among its members Rudolf Hess, Hans Frank, Amman Max (future editor-in-chief of publications of the National Socialist Party), Gottfried Feder (future economic advisor and cadre recruiter to the NSDAP), Julius Lehmann, Karl Fehler (future SS Obergrupppenfuhrer and Reichleiter of the Nazi Party), Dietrich Eckart, Anton Drexler (founder of the DAP), Karl Harrer, Ernst Rohm, Alfred Rosenberg, Heinrich Himmler, and Rudolf von Sebottendorf.\textsuperscript{77} A short resume of these members prove how influential the Thule Society was to the

\textsuperscript{72} Angebert, \textit{The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail}, 22.
\textsuperscript{73} Angebert, \textit{The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail}, 9, 19.
\textsuperscript{74} Goodrick-Clarke, \textit{The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany}, 1890-1935, 148.
\textsuperscript{76} Baddeley, \textit{Lucifer Rising}, 35.
NSDAP, since these members would eventually become major players during the Nazi regime.

Rudolf von Sebottendorf was a leading astrologer, founder of the Thule Society, and future Nazi, who strongly influenced National Socialism. Sebottendorf was one of the leaders of the Germanenorden, an earlier völkisch secret society with a strong sentiment of anti-Semitism. Sebottendorf believed that one could find the secret knowledge of the Aryan Race by studying the texts of the world religions. Sebottendorf claimed the NSDAP borrowed many rites/symbols from his Thule Society, including the infamous “Sieg Heil!” salute and the swastika insignia. Sebottendorf gave an ominous speech on Nov 9, 1918, reflecting the philosophy of the later National Socialists:

…I swear on this swastika, on this sign which for us is sacred, in order that you hear it, O triumphant Sun! And I shall keep my faith with you… Our God is our father of battle and his rune is that of the eagle… which is the symbol of the Aryans. And to call attention to the fiery nature of the eagle, he will be shown in red… Such is our symbol, the red eagle who reminds us that we must pass through death in order to live again.

The influence this speech had on the future NSDAP is indisputable. The Nazis swore by the swastika insignia, strove for triumph, swore by their bellicose nature, and adopted the symbol of the eagle, as mentioned in the quotation. Sebottendorf was not the only Thule Society member to have influenced National Socialism.

Karl Harrer was the Thule Society member who initially infiltrated and controlled the DAP by becoming its first president. The High Priest Dietrich Eckart (to whom Hitler dedicated Mein Kampf to) initially funded Hitler’s first public campaign. Eckart would later make Hitler his own political protégé and coach him on public speaking. Ernst Rohm was an officer of the Reichswehr, who would eventually bring Hitler the support of many military and political personal in Bavaria. Hans Frank was the doctor of laws, lawyer, and counselor of jurisprudence of the Nazi party, who would later become governor general of Occupied Poland in 1940. Alfred Rosenberg (with the help of Rudolf Hess) trained Hitler on the doctrines of the Thule Society, and would eventually become Hitler’s personal spiritualist. Rosenberg would go on to publish books on anti-Semitism and racial conflict, which would further influence Hitler’s anti-Semitic sentiments. Heinrich Himmler would become head of the notorious

82. Baddeley, Lucifer Rising, 37.
occult laden SS. Himmler coalesced his own unique brand of Nazi Neo-Paganism, which would heavily influence the basis of the SS. Evidently, the influence members of the Thule Society had on the NSDAP cannot be contested. Angebert holds that it is no coincidence that that the principles of the Thule Society are nearly identical to those of National Socialism; the Thule Society was the prime motivator and progenitor of National Socialism. The Thule society was also keen on finding the Holy Grail for its mystic powers in the Montsegur region in France.

IV
The Holy Grail

It is believed that the Nazis had an obsession with securing the esoteric Holy Grail, as a means to harness its alleged powers. Certain strands of racist neo-paganism professed that cosmological knowledge was given to the Aryan people in the form of runic writings by the Gods of Thule. Ironically, this cosmological knowledge was believed to be contained in the highly coveted Holy Grail, which was believed by some to be an Aryan pagan device. This cosmological knowledge would be used to justify Nazi ideology and commence the hunt for the true Holy Grail. Traditionally, the Holy Grail is the chalice used by Jesus during the Last Supper, in which Joseph of Arimathea later collected Christ’s blood in the crucifixion.

The Nazi hunt for the Holy Grail began in the Cathar stronghold of Montsegur. The Cathars, also known as the Albigensians, were a medieval Manichean/Christian sect based in the Southern French fortress/ temple of Montsegur. Montsegur is viewed as the Mount Tabor of Southern France, for the mysticism it represents. The Cathars believed themselves to be morally superior and denounced the baseness and corruption of society, a sentiment which mirrored that of the Nazis. They criticized the clergy for its wealth and participation with worldly pleasures. They preached a sophisticated doctrine derived from ancient texts of the high priests of the Sun and of many spiritual leaders from ancient Egypt to ancient Greece. From these sources, they chose the Sun to symbolize their movement. The Cathars used the Grail for mystical pur-

88. The site where Jesus was believed to have transfigured in front of his apostles, according to the gospels. Lee, Dorothy. *Transfiguration*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2005.) Print 21.
poses, and hid it as a means to maintain its mysticism and keep it from corruption. The Cathars were charged with heresy by the Catholic Church and became victims of the Albigensian Crusade. Eventually a Nazi collaborator would go to great lengths to find the highly-coveted Grail.

Otto Rahn was a scholar and expeditionary who made it his life mission to study the Grail mythos, which led him to search for the Grail in the ruins of Montsegur. He provided a disservice to academia by combining medieval troubadour literature, Cathar heresy, and the legend of the Grail into one long narrative to fit his arguments in his most famous work *Crusade Against the Grail* in 1933. Rahn sought to recapture what he felt was an old Germanic past (the Cathars) that was destroyed by the Catholic Church. Prior to the publication of his book, Alfred Rosenberg assigned Rahn in 1931 to verify the theory that Montsegur was the actual site of Montsalvat of the Arthurian legend, wherein supposedly lay the Holy Grail. Following his three-month stint in the Montsegur region, he published *Crusade Against the Grail* in 1933. Rahn completed a few more trips to Montsegur, with the blessing of Hitler himself, and finished a few more books. Rahn was eventually sent by the Nazis to the former Albigensian stronghold, this time with the intention to recover the Grail itself. Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi Minister of Culture, said of the expedition: “[t]oday there awakens a new faith, the myth of blood, the faith, too for defending the blood, the divine essence of man.” Rahn’s preoccupation with the ancient Germanic religion based on convoluted heresy and legends caught the attention of Heinrich Himmler, who eventually sponsored him to conduct SS related research. Otto Rahn later became an SS officer in March 1936 and was promoted a month later. 

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95. Excavations and expeditions were also conducted in Montsegur by other individuals in the years that followed. Geologists, historian, and ethnologists, and others tried their luck to uncover the further secrets that supposedly laid in the mystical fortress. Angebert, *The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail*, 17, 18, 48.
works so much, that they were required readings for principal Nazi dignitaries. Otto Rahn allegedly acquired the Holy Grail from a cave in the Pyrenees and had an elaborate procession to hand it over to Heinrich Himmler, who was obsessed with the occult and medievalism. The SS later sent Rahn on a mission to Iceland to trace the Cathar-Gothic tradition across Europe. Nazi obsession with the Grail recalled a few alleged similarities with the device’s alleged medieval owners.

Regarding Rahn’s research, there existed a few parallels between Catharism and Nazism. Both Nazism and Catharism viewed the world as a struggle between Light and Darkness. Like Catharism, Nazi cosmology had the function as a chief role, because it was identified with the Aryan race. When Hitler acquired a fake Grail (since the real one was never found, if indeed it existed at all), he was viewed as a High Priest, messiah, and restorer of ancient knowledge back to the Aryan people. The parallels between Catharism and Nazism would be commemorated throughout Hitler’s reign.

The Nazis would continue to honor the legend of the Albigensians throughout the war years as well. In March 16 1944, several pilgrims traveled to Montsegur to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the Cathar massacre by the notorious Catholic crusaders. These pilgrims prayed to the Perfects starting at dawn and were given an astounding commemoration at noon inside the fortress. In conjunction, a German plane traced in the sky a gigantic Celtic cross, a symbol adopted by the Cathars. This event is significant because it shows the strong importance key Nazis had for the site. Alfred Rosenberg (regarded as a grand master of mysticism) and the occult obsessed Heinrich Himmler had a profound interest in the history of the esoteric Cathar civilization during the war years. It is believed that Rosenberg went to Montsegur in 1944 to render an official act of homage at the site where the Grail was purportedly found.

99. The procession was orchestrated and financed by Heinrich Himmler himself. Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935*, 46.
102. Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935*, xi-xii, 4, 17
103. Although the Celtic cross is a medieval Christian symbol, it originated in the pre-Christian “sun cross” (which will be discussed in the subsequent section on esotericism) or “wheel cross” in ancient Europe. As a result, the Nazis utilized the Celtic Cross the 1930s and 1940s, and is still used by white supremacist groups to this day. “Celtic Cross,” Anti-Defamation League, accessed March 17, 2017, https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/celtic-cross.
Rosenberg and Himmler owed a huge debt to Otto Rahn for his research and for acquiring the allegedly authentic Grail.\(^{106}\) Regardless, the location of this alleged Grail was unknown to most during World War Two.

There are many theories as to the exact location of the fake grail during the course of World War Two. It is believed that the fake Grail was taken to a secret base in Tierra del Fuego in Argentina, to protect the Grail from the advancing allies during World War Two. Admiral Donitz is said to have initiated a sacred naval base, where the Grail was to be hidden. Donitz proclaimed “the German submarine fleet is proud to have constructed an earthly Paradise, an impregnable fortress for the Fuhrer, somewhere in the world.”\(^{107}\) The fake Grail is also alleged to have been hidden in the Bavarian or Austrian Alps, given their secluded topography. This is significant because it proves the value that Nazis placed upon their alleged Grail, a tool which they believed would help them usher in a new era.

Regardless of the authenticity of the Grail, the device was viewed as a means of restoring ancient Aryan knowledge and powers back the Germanic peoples. The Grail also mirrored a few commonalities between the Nazis and the Cathars, but ultimately it was the Nazis who attempted to distort the Cathar legend in an attempt to align them Nazism. Otto Rahn was eventually ostracized by the SS for engaging in homosexual activities, but that would not hinder the Nazis from finding esoteric knowledge from other sources.

V
Esotericism

Nazi ideology had many of its roots in several ancient, medieval, and modern spiritual/ symbolic doctrines as well. Naturally, Nazi symbolism also had its roots in esotericism. For example, Hitler mentioned that the Reich should be structured with certain elements of the freemasons, such as adopting insignias and symbols.\(^{108}\) Clearly the Third Reich was replete with esoteric insignias, such as the swastika and the solar wheel to name a few. The swastika at times also resembled a solar wheel, which was an ancient Nordic symbol of power.

The SS had a spiritual and occult headquarters at Wewelsburg Castle in Westphalia, attesting to the esoteric nature of the SS. For example, Wewelsburg Castle contains a “black sun” solar wheel stretched across the floor the north tower. This

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The Grail of Parsifal

should come as no surprise, since the “SS” runes are symbolic of the cosmological element of the sun, which embodies victory in Nordic esotericism. Esoteric ceremonies were conducted in the north tower of Wewelsburg Castle, including rituals around the solar wheel to commune with deceased SS members. The castle is also known as the Nazi temple (of doom), where the SS were viewed as knights guarding their sacred sanctuary, just like the Cathars guarded Montsegur. For example, when Himmler had meals, he allowed only twelve superior officers to dine with him, in imitation of the Knights of the Round Table attending the Grail. When Otto Rahn allegedly acquired the Holy Grail, he delivered the Grail with an elaborate procession to Heinrich Himmler at Wewelsburg Castle. The repository of Himmler’s Grail resided in a location underneath the castle, known as the Holy of Holies. It laid on an altar of black marble grafted with two SS runes in silver. Runes are stones or woodchips etched with ancient Germanic alphabets inscribed in them that are believed to hold magical powers. The double SS runes symbolize Nordic esotericism, where two consecutive “S” symbols mean double victory. In addition, the “S” symbol in the runic alphabet symbolizes the sun, which is the element and cosmic force for victory. In other words, the SS sought an esoteric symbol that aligned itself with pure victory. After all, the SS were elite paramilitary personnel, so such a symbol befitted their image. Meditations were conducted at the castle regarding mysticism, the ethics of honor, the spiritual concept of Aryan blood, and other Gnostic themes deemed valuable to the Nazi elite. Additionally, Himmler named segments of the castle (as well as furnishings) after figures within Norse mythology, and hoped to expand the complex one day into an SS Vatican, observing the ancient Nordic religion. Esotericism would also be evident in Nazi ideology.

Nazi ideology was essentially a consolidation of different religious and spiritual traditions, which is reflected in the swastika sigil. The Swastika is originally an ancient Hindu sigil that is also found in many world religions. The Nazi use of the swastika

111. Twelve is also the number of the coven, which is a congregation of witches and magicians. Angebert, The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail, 46.
112. The procession was actually orchestrated and financed by Heinrich Himmler himself. Angebert, The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail, 156.
is often interpreted as an inversion of the Hindu peace sigil. The swastika is also linked with the Hindu mountain of Paradesha, which means “supreme country.” Paradesha can also be understood as “paradise”, which is the root of the word paradise.\textsuperscript{118} Prior to the Nazis, the swastika was used by many occultists in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{119} National Socialism sought a symbol that not only combined different esoteric traditions, but one that would also encapsulate the concept of a supreme Aryan paradise.

Gnosticism was another esoteric philosophy that played a significant role in influencing National Socialist thought. Hitler preferred to view history as a progression of three stages: Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Third Reich, the latter which would act as the closing stage of mankind. Certain gnostic schools held the belief of a third epoch of mankind, which Hitler interpreted himself to be the harbinger of this new third age, or Reich. Hitler was inspired by Manichaean Gnosticism that professed the dualism of Light and Dark, good and evil. This Gnostic doctrine believed in pure ones, which the Nazis further interpreted as the Aryan race. Hitler viewed the sun as a symbol of the Aryan people, allegorical to the concept of the gnostic concept of light and good. This stood in contrast to the moon, which was revered by the Semitic people, that was viewed as the dark or evil counterpart to the sun. Additionally, Hitler conceptualized this notion and viewed the Aryans as being light and blonde like the sun, with the Jews being swarthy and dark haired like the night. This concept further led Hitler to believe that the Jews were members of a satanic creed. As a result, the Holocaust was viewed as a spiritual triumph of light over darkness, which Hitler validated by proclaiming to be the bearer of true and holy knowledge.\textsuperscript{120} Angebert holds that Gnosticism made its journey to National Socialism first through the prophet Mani (founder of Manicheanism), to Catharism, to the Knights Templars, to the Rosicrucians, to the Illuminati of Bavaria (an Enlightenment era society), before finally reaching the Thule Society.\textsuperscript{121} In short, Hitler was fond of “Gnostic racism” and reintroduced it to his Reich with a militaristic sentiment. Some Nazis believed that even geographic regions were esoterically significant to their ideology.

Nineteenth century German esotericism influenced the National Socialist belief that there existed spiritual centers on the earth. For example, many Nazis regarded Asgard as being the center of the world, with Tibet being the source of all wisdom. Tibet was believed to possess sages descended from the lost civilization of Atlantis, which was home to a great race. German racist sects influenced Hitler by reinterpret-

\textsuperscript{120} Angebert, \textit{The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail}, xii–xiii 4, 15, 158.
\textsuperscript{121} Angebert, \textit{The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail}, 53.
ing the legend of Atlantis in a strange way. They professed the fall of this mythical island was due to the mixing of races, where the white Atlantians were breeding with the Asian-Semitic types. This alternative interpretation of the tale of Atlantis purported that the white race has had racial superiority since time immemorial. The need to restore the white race and eliminate the Semites clearly influenced National Socialist policy. The restoration of the white race was viewed as a triumph of spiritual superiority.122

With this ideology in mind, Hitler initiated a branch of the SS known as the Ahnenerbe whose job it was to trace the ancestry of the Aryan race. The Ahnenerbe went on an expedition to Tibet, which was believed to be the home of the Aryan race after their exile from Atlantis. The expedition concluded that the German race was part of the Aryan race, which meant that the Germans were descendants of the great civilization of Atlantis.123 Although the Nazis did not specifically explain how they reached this conclusion, it conveniently asserted their preconceived notions of racial and spiritual superiority. Certain elements of esotericism were also extracted from the philosophies of two influential writers, Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche.

VI
Wagner and Nietzsche

Hitler ranked Richard Wagner at the top of his list of Nazi philosophers and influences.124 Richard Wagner was a famous German composer and essayist, who also happened to be a fervent anti-Semite and proponent of völkisch ideology.125 Hitler viewed Wagner’s operas as representing his own vision of a Greater Germany.126 A day after Hitler saw a performance of Wagner’s Rienzi, he was quoted as saying “[i]t was there that it all began.”127 Hitler later commented:

When I listen to Wagner, I feel as though I am hearing the rhythms of an earlier world. It is my guess that one day science will find, in the wavelengths set in motion by the Rhinegold, secret connections with the order of the world…. The observation of the world perceived by the senses precedes knowledge brought forth by the exact sciences as well as by philosophy. It is to the extent that sensory knowledge approaches truth,
Hitler connected a sacredness to Wagner’s music, which he viewed as a bridge to the ancient Germanic past. Hitler attended his operas frequently, often starving himself for days just to get a good seat at the next Wagner opera in town. Angebert holds that Wagner’s music instilled strong primeval emotions on the young Hitler, which would awaken him to mysterious and destructive forces. Like the character of Rienzi, Hitler began to see himself as a prophet who would one day preach the gospel of Mein Kampf to the masses. One of Hitler’s friends noticed how Hitler saw himself as if he were a character in The Ring: a Germanic hero who would one day be worshipped, as if he had ascended to Valhalla. Hitler would come to view the Germanic world as a religion, and that religion would eventually take the form of National Socialism. Hitler viewed Wagner’s operas as propaganda that preceded his own propaganda.

Wagner’s inspiration helped propel Hitler to political awareness, which would later influence Hitler’s theories and policies. In 1922, Hitler gave a speech and preached how Wagner’s works lionized the heroic Teutonic nature, a concept characteristic of völkisch ideology.” Wagner’s influence on Hitler was so great, that it is believed that Wagner inspired him to adopt the swastika as the Nazi insignia. It is believed that Hitler once stated to his officers that “to understand National Socialism, one must understand Wagner.” It is no coincidence that the Nuremburg rallies bear a resemblance to Wagner’s operas at his Bayreuth Opera House. For example, a French academic, and admirer of Nazism, went to Nuremberg to attend a rally and noted how a Wagnerian orchestra was present in the procession. Angebert believes Hitler chose Nuremberg as the site for Nazi parades and pageantry, since it was the home of the Bayreuth Opera House. This attests the sacralization Hitler had for Wagner, since he was willing to have the Nazi spiritual capitol in Nuremberg, a site dear to Wagner. Moreover, Angebert holds that Wagner’s music produced a catharsis for Hitler, which

135. Hitler commented “The traditions of the Olympic games has gone on for almost a thousand years. That proceeds, it seems to me, from a mystery comparable to that which is at the origin of Bayreuth. Man feels the need to come out of himself, to commune with an idea which is beyond his comprehension. The Party Congress answers the same need; this is why for hundreds of years to come, men will come from everywhere in the world to renew themselves, once a year, in the marvelous atmosphere of Nuremberg.” Angebert, *The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail*, 152-153
is exemplified in his ravenous speeches. Upon paying close attention, his mannerisms during his speeches resembled more of an opera performer than an orator. Hitler also shared Wagner’s hatred of Western decadence. For example, modern art and dance were strictly forbidden under the Nazi regime; they were viewed as degenerative and Jewish. Wagner and Hitler’s mutual hatred of modern decadence found its influence from early Germanic lore. According to one of their shared theories, the Germanic barbarians saved the Aryan race by overthrowing the decadent Romans. Therefore, the expulsion of foreign and modern arts was a racial duty. Hitler’s admiration for Wagner had him trying to link “the great Germanic traditions” to the present. This sentiment of an older Germanic past is embodied in the meaning of the Bayreuth’s Grail.

The Bayreuth’s Grail had a profound meaning to Wagner and Hitler, for it symbolized the idea of pure German blood. Hitler viewed the giant Bayreuth holding the Grail as a symbolic heralding of National Socialism. Moreover, Hitler metaphorically stated in one of his many table talks that Germany should create elite initiates to guard the Holy Grail, the vessel he ironically, and incorrectly, believed contained pure Aryan blood. Hitler believed that this blood needed to be protected, since it was already being compromised by being exposed to certain poisons meant to sabotage the German race. Much like King Amorfatas (a character in Parsifal) who was ill, Hitler believed the Aryan people were also ill, but this time from contaminated blood from other races. Hitler called for the formation a new “Brotherhood” (regime) in order to cleanse the Aryan blood and to exterminate all contaminations (foreign blood.) Hitler mentioned that whenever he faced troubles on how to form this new Brotherhood, he would often refer back to Wagner for inspiration. A contemporary of Wagner, Frederick Nietzsche would also provide an important backbone to National Socialist ideology.

The Nazis interpreted Frederick Nietzsche’s philosophy to fit their own ideology. Hitler admired Nietzsche so much, that he had a bust of Nietzsche in his personal library in Linz. The Nazis reinterpreted Nietzsche’s concept of the Ubermensch, or Superman, as the embodiment of the superior Aryan man. They interpreted the conception of the Superman as embodying a man-god freed from modern conventions while possessing a sense of cynicism; quite the individual Hitler envisioned upon his people. This interpretation sought to utilize cynicism to break free from the old degenerate

order, and usher in a righteous new order. The notion of the Superman was important to Hitler since, after all, he once mentioned that National Socialism was not only a religion, but a means to create a Superman race.\(^{142}\)

Hitler also embraced Nietzsche’s contempt for Christianity. Nietzsche commented in his seminal work *The Antichrist*, that “[c]hristianity is called the religion of pity. Pity stands opposed to the tonic emotions which heighten our vitality: it has a depressing effect. We are deprived of strength when we feel pity. That loss of strength which suffering as such inflicts on life is still further increased and multiplied by pity. Pity makes suffering contagious.”\(^{143}\) Hitler adopted Nietzsche’s sentiment and believed that Christianity, with its emphasis on meekness and humility, was against the natural law of selection, where the strongest were fit in survive. Furthermore, Nietzsche commented that “[c]hristianity was from the beginning, essentially and fundamentally, life’s nausea and disgust with life, merely concealed behind, masked by, dressed up as, faith in ‘another’ or ‘better’ life.”\(^{144}\) Hitler adopted Nietzsche’s stance, and was hostile to Christianity, and worked to suppress the Church and its influence during his reign.\(^{145}\)

The Nazis also applied Nietzsche’s philosophy in both war and politics. Angebert believes when the Freikorps fought on the front lines, they thought of Nietzsche’s philosophy to motivate them through their ordeals.\(^{146}\) In addition, Angebert holds that Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* influenced the concentration camps, for the “evil-doer” goes through a metamorphosis and becomes a saint. In this reinterpretation of Nietzsche, the Nazis became noble individuals by cleansing their empire of enemies; the horrendous acts occurring in the concentration camps were commended and lauded as noble deeds by the Third Reich.\(^{147}\) Historians argue that although Nietzsche would have disapproved of Hitler’s regime, Hitler reinterpreted Nietzsche’s message to suit his own political ideology. It must be noted that Nietzsche’s sister altered his works toward the end of his life (his sister took care of him the last eleven years of his life, since he was mentally unstable due to contracting syphilis) to make them appear to attack Jews. Additionally, she revised his views on the Superman and the will to power to appeal to nationalists, anti-Semites, and other militarists, whom Nietzsche actually despised.\(^{148}\)


Nietzsche’s works were perverted by Nazis and those before them, in an attempt to link his writing with later ideological trends, such as National Socialism.

VII
Conclusion

The influence that the occult had on National Socialism is undeniable. Occultism inspired important and influential men in Europe, who allowed alien doctrines to be established and disseminated throughout the greater population. Therefore, occult doctrines eventually influenced the political doctrines and institutions of Nazi Germany. The occult elements described above are only a handful of elements in the greater pool of occult influences espoused by the Third Reich. The rejection of inconvenient sciences allowed the Nazis to espouse occult doctrines that were more in line with their philosophy. National Socialism was partly born out of the völkisch Thule society, which provided many notable members to the Third Reich, not the least Adolf Hitler. After being influenced by different occult societies and systems of belief in his earlier years, Hitler would later create an amalgam of these philosophical systems to help foster a distinctive political philosophy that became one of the most notorious and impactful ideologies in world history. The Nazis also had an obsession with acquiring the Holy Grail, for they felt that securing the Grail would unlock its magical powers, and thus harness its power. In addition, the Nazis perverted the interpretation of many philosophical/occult texts to engineer a pseudo history to help create and solidify their ideology of National Socialism. The Nazi interpretation of the occult offered many Nazis comfort in the concept of being a member of an ancient superior race, while eradicating an allegedly historic enemy. The study between National Socialism and the occult is a significant study on the leverage and utility spiritual elements could have upon political ideology and state formation. In addition, a study of the occult allows one to develop a better understanding of National Socialist thought.

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Geoffrey Putman’s paper, "Speed, Form, and the Proletariat: How WWI Influenced the Development of Kazimir Malevich’s Suprematism and Pavel Filonov’s Analytical Realism," was presented at the Second Annual UCLA Undergraduate History Conference in April 2017.
Speed, Form, and the Proletariat: How WWI Influenced the Development of Kazimir Malevich’s Suprematism and Pavel Filonov’s Analytical Realism

Geoffrey Putman

This paper analyzes the development of Pavel Filonov’s theory of Analytical Realism and Kazimir Malevich’s theory of Suprematism within the historical context of World War I. It shows how their artistic theories evolved from preceding methods, namely Futurism, lubok, and Neo-primitivism. The paper argues that the artists’ respective experiences during the First World War influenced the progression of their artistic and ideological innovations. We can look at Filonov’s experience as a soldier on the front lines and Malevich’s experience as a civilian on the home front as under emphasized influences on their post-war artistic theories. By comparing these two distinct theories, this paper demonstrates how the Great War influenced Russian abstraction by focusing artistic sentiment toward proletarian socialist utopianism.

The effects of the First World War in Russia have been largely under-examined due, in part, to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which eclipsed the war to some extent; as well as the fact that Russian museums were instructed to remove art relating to the First World War during the Soviet period. The 1917 Revolution and the Russian Civil War succeeded the First World War so quickly, that there was little time to process its impact on artistic developments during the subsequent societal transformations.

The Russian experience in the Great War catalyzed the development and refinement of two of Russia’s most notable artistic theories: Kazimir Malevich’s Suprematism and Pavel Filonov’s Analytical Art. Russian art evolved dramatically during the early twentieth century as artists developed innovative methods in an attempt to
rationalize the extreme societal transformations that occurred around them. Filonov and Malevich are archetypal cases of two different types of artistic innovator, however, while Malevich’s biography and artistic progression are well documented, Filonov is not so fortunate: a number of significant “gaps” remain in our knowledge of his biography and aesthetic development. Most importantly, we still lack a definite chronology of his works and some doubt continues to surround Filonov’s influences because the artist rarely mentions sources and influences in his diary and correspondence. Despite these drawbacks, I believe that an analysis of three of his most notable works from pre-war, mid-war, and post-war can provide us with insight into the progression of his artistic and ideological influences.

We can look at Filonov’s experience as a soldier on the front lines and Malevich’s experience as a civilian on the home front as under emphasized influences on their respective post-war artistic theories. The Great War proved traumatic for both the soldiers on the front line and the civilians on the home front. While Russian soldiers were subjected to the horrors of combat and the associated carnage, the home front experienced its own tribulations as factory workers were increasingly exploited to fulfill the industrial requirements of the Russian war machine and riots erupted due to food and supply shortages. As a result, socialist revolutionary sentiments grew increasingly pronounced with the proletariat, who were close with, and a favorite subject of, Russian abstract artists.

Recognizing the impact that World War I had on both Filonov and Malevich can give us a more systematic understanding of why their careers and art differed in the ways that they did. We can also begin to understand notable factors pertaining to the transformation between their prewar and postwar compositions. It is important to note that these two artists created theories with methods that often contradicted one another, however they both ultimately sought to discover unifying visual analogues for internal experiences and consciousness.

Pre-World War I

We will begin by analyzing Pavel Filonov and Kazimir Malevich’s artistic influences in relation to their early theoretical developments prior to Russia’s entry into WWI in 1914. These influences included Futurism, Neo-primitivism, Cubo-Futurism, and Expressionism.

One of the most obvious and significant driving forces behind these different

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“isms” was the ever-accelerating speed of modern life. Rapid industrialization during the second half of the nineteenth century transformed Russian metropolitan life by the twentieth century. Artists struggled to understand and convey this new and dynamic technological lifestyle defined by automobiles, electricity, airplanes, trains, telegrams, etc., and the resulting shocks of modernization included the alienation of the individual, increased violence and decadence, and a perceived dehumanization of events. According to Harte, certain nineteenth century philosophers feared the negative impacts of this increase in societal speed: “Nietzsche feared modernity’s rapid pace would undermine human civilization, Simmel noted how the mental activity of the urban population was overwhelmed by the multitude of fast-moving, new impressions, and Nordau declared that speed would lead to the mystical degradation of modern culture. A variety of Western society’s critics perceived the sudden acceleration in urban life as depleting the energy, enthusiasm, and attention of artists.”

Despite these fears, the scientific discoveries and advancements that were changing the nature of cognizance in society fascinated Futurists like Malevich and Filonov. The perceptions of distortion, acceleration, light speed, and the theoretical existence of the fourth dimension all represented provocative scientific concepts that could facilitate depictions of reality’s true essence. Technology helped foster an environment of dynamism in Russia’s new industrial society that depended on efficiency and speed. In Futurist art, this speed constituted one of the most crucial representational challenges, for all the facets of modernity that defied conventional expression, fast motion required a highly original, innovative means of artistic illustration. Proletariat workers personified the efficiency and speed of modern society and as a result, artists rapidly developed socialist sentiments.

In contrast, traditional Russian lubok signboard paintings also fulfilled a fundamental role in the development of Neo-Primitivism, which preceded and influenced the Suprematist and Analytical Art theories. Lubok is an inherently Russian, ‘primitive’ style of painting with its own peculiar aesthetics (monoplanar presentation of subject, inverted or “flat” perspective, vulgarization of form) that can be detected in many of Malevich and Filonov’s earlier works. They regarded lubok as a more natural and pristine art and this led to the recognition of spontaneity, fortuity, and intuition as the principle ingredients of artistic creativity.

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3. Ibid., 8.
4. Ibid., 11.
6. Ibid., 213.
In fact, Malevich was a leader of the Russian Neo-primitivist movement, which sought a more natural, more organic conception of reality by applying methods unadulterated by academic conventions. As Malevich later pointed out this was an ‘apparent primitivism’—not a return to an idealized past but the very opposite:

…it is essentially … a breaking down and a dissolution into separate elements of what had been brought together, an attempt to break away from the enslavement of the objective identity of an image, from idealism and pretense to spontaneous creativity.\(^7\)

Malevich strove toward a simplification of reality akin to reaching a singularity, which led him toward the simplified forms of cubo-futurism in 1913.

The Neo-primitivist movement and \textit{lubok} greatly influenced Filonov’s general approaches to form, composition, and his development of “organic aesthetics.” Filonov incorporated primitive oriental forms into his style, but differed from the Neo-primitivists by creating dense, chaotic, complex systems instead of striving toward a simplification of forms, e.g. Malevich. Dr. Nikolai Kulbin, a friend of Filonov and a St. Petersburg painter and theorist himself, provides some clarity to Filonov’s early ideas, which we see detailed in Figure 2:

Apart from the art created by the man-artist and apart from the art in the realms of minerals and plants surrounding him, there exists in nature another art—of animals, of primitive man, of the child and, finally, of the populous as a whole, as an individuum.\(^8\)

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Filonov’s trademark organicism developed from Neo-primitivism and his own ideas of “atomization” of a painting’s surface. He believed that the artist is to depict the whole complex of properties identifiable with any organic thing, knowing that the chemical and biological processes occurring therein influenced its development in time as well as space. Filonov’s organically evolving non-Euclidian geometric structures stand in stark contrast to Malevich’s rational geometric structures.

Figure 1 presents Malevich’s 1913 composition The Knife Grinder, which contains the fragmented forms associated with futurism and cubist abstraction. The painting seems to vibrate and it elicits a sensation of speed as the motions of the knife grinder are rendered simultaneously on the canvas. The depicted scene is inherently proletarian as the worker is presented to be almost machinist in his qualities and the entire painting is structured very geometrically, representing the manner in which humanity was changing with technology. Malevich was interested in simplifying forms, geometric rhythm, and repetition of forms: treating the background or landscape and the human figure in similar manners. This innovative style reflected Malevich’s early theoretical belief that artistic forms should follow rules, while transcending the limitations of tra-

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ditional objective creativity:

In constructing painterly forms it is essential to have a system for their construction, a law for the constructional inter-relationships of forms… Progress in art need not be gradual: in art it is not always a case of evolution, but sometimes also of revolution… I transformed myself in the zero of form and emerged from nothing to creation, that is to Suprematism, to the new realism in painting – to non-objective creation.¹⁰

Pavel Filonov’s *Bourgeois in a Carriage*, (Figure 2) presents an image that also demonstrates a futurist influence, however, he depicts a more macro, organically chaotic scene with expressionist influences. Although the image looks to be in total disarray, this is an example of one of Filonov’s early attempts at creating a structured artistic formula. Each brushstroke was entirely intentional, yet he was able depict the chaos of the modernizing, industrialized proletariat city; the inherently fragmented forms demonstrating the futurist influences. Filonov’s depiction of movement had to do with his conception of time, which he believed, “materialize[d] in the many-layered, vibrating, mobile surface of the canvas.”¹¹ The expressionist influence manifests itself with the overall composition, where the action is brought up to the surface as closely as possible so that it seems about to topple off into our own reality. The portrayal of the bourgeoisie in a carriage in the upper right of the image represents “old” society and traditional artistic symbolism. This progression from left to right would eventually be left behind as he sought less rational, more intuitive methods.


These two paintings serve as excellent depictions of the Malevich and Filonov’s pre-WWI artistic theories. The chaos of modernity’s new technologically driven speed and representation of proletariat social ideas would continue to progress and the theories that they were developing during this time period would continue to be refined and influenced by Russia’s horrific experience during the Great War.
The Russians, Unto the Breach

Fig. 3. Kazimir Malevich. Look Look, Near the Vistula, The German Bellies are Swelling Up. Lithograph. 1914

The Russians entered World War I in August 1914 and Malevich and Filonov initially aided the war effort by creating propaganda and nationalist poetry to entice new recruits. Figure 3 provides an example of Malevich’s propaganda pieces during the early stages of the war. He attempted to trivialize the Germans as demons and present them as undisciplined fools in order to boost morale and garner additional enlistments. “War fever” had overwhelmed the preceding artistic themes of class struggle, however, this effect proved temporary and superficial.

By 1915, their sentiments changed as the ever-increasing industrial demands of WWI threw all of Russia into a state of national crisis. Petrograd was receiving only a quarter of the supply shipments it desperately required. “A third of the city’s bakeries closed for lack of flour and oil. Two-thirds of the butchers had no meat for sale. That winter, women queued for hours in sub-zero temperatures to buy handfuls of food and fuel.”12 Additionally, veterans began returning home wounded and with horrific tales of combat at the front. The battles of 1915 had consumed two and a half million soldiers. To those killed, maimed, or captured was added a rising toll of deserters.13 The Petrograd Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) issued a popular leaflet that emphasized growing public dissent:

13. Ibid., 105.
‘Down with the war!’ ‘War on war!’ must roll powerfully across city and hamlet alike...
Workers must remember that they do not have enemies over the frontier…”

The unsustainable human and industrial costs of war renewed the socialist ideals that had been set aside in favor of Russian nationalism at the beginning of the war, and Filonov and Malevich’s artworks of this period reflect the growing anti-war sentiments and shockingly brutal realities of modern combat. The speed of industrial society was superimposed on the battlefield and introduced unprecedented destruction that the home front was forced to sustain. Malevich’s *The Black Square* (Figure 4) and Filonov’s *The German War* (Figure 5) both serve as the artists’ first culmination of their artistic theories in relation to war and highlights the distinctive differences in their opinions in how to express certain fundamental truths.

![Image](image.png)

**Fig. 4.** Kazimir Malevich. *The Black Square.* Oil on Linen. 79.5 cm x 79.5 cm. 1915

Malevich grew obsessed with the premise that mathematics, and geometry in particular, could serve as the ultimate expression of unity. Individuality, likeness, and character were all of secondary importance to pure geometric abstraction, or Suprematism. *The Black Square* (Figure 4) was the genesis of Suprematism and emphasized ide- alistic truths, which were supposed to point humanity away from capitalistic industrial exploitation and the horrors of the world war and toward the “crossroads of celestial paths.”

14. Ibid., 104.
15. Steven G. Marks, “Russian Avant-Garde” (Russia’s Great War & Revolution) [http://russiasgreatwar.org/media/culture/avantgarde.shtml](http://russiasgreatwar.org/media/culture/avantgarde.shtml)
provided a kind of cerebral “passage into the fourth dimension,” comprehension of which was vital if mankind were to imagine a higher reality and thereby alleviate earthly suffering.\(^{16}\) The images were non-representational, meant to symbolize the nature of everything. Larissa Zhadova explained that Malevich’s Suprematism was intended to symbolize the cosmos, but not to represent it:

> His pictures can be described as images of the world’s cosmic space. But they are not copied from nature; this is not the space one sees by looking at the blue sky above one’s head. They are hypothetical images, conceptual images, plastic formulation images, “factorizations” carried out by the artist’s imagination.\(^{17}\)

Suprematism was based on a radical new idea of absolute equality. Thus Mike O’Mahony described the *Black Square* that initiated Suprematism “not as a culminating point but as a new beginning, a tabula rasa upon which new cultural forms and ideas could be developed.”\(^{18}\) H. H. Arnason also described the *Black Square* as revolutionary, “a new beginning that corresponded to the social transformation occurring around [Malevich] in the years leading up to the Russian Revolution.”\(^{19}\) In this vein we can interpret a certain anti-war element to the *Black Square* as it emphasized a sense of uniformity to the human experience. The communist emphasis on holistic equality also urges people to cease fighting for the tsarist regime, which historically promoted socio-political and economic hierarchies and inequality.

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16. Ibid.
Filonov’s painting, *The German War* (Figure 5), and his 1915 essay, *Propoven’ o prorosli mirovoi* (Song of Universal Flowering) are considered among the most profound responses to the Great War and demonstrate his artistic development from pre-war years. *The German War* features a palate of restrained grey-brown tones and the contours establish a formative precedent for Filonov’s future works. In order to convey the dynamics and chaos of destruction, the organic forms shatter into shrapnel, reuniting in crystalline distortions and new variations. While expressionists were drawn to the metaphysical version of war “within” the human soul, as seen through they eyes of a tortured, suffering individual, Filonov’s works differ in that he intended to avoid any individual, purely psychological accents in chaotic scenes. Filonov rejects the “prose” and “quotidian” realities of war, thereby creating a fascinating amalgam of the traditional and the modern, the universal and the particular. The resulting chaos of the images frustrates our efforts to correlate them and we are led on a journey through a labyrinth of allusions, which never quite reaches conventional levels of reality.

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Expressionist ideals of treating the line as a melodic, connective device were also rejected by Filonov, who was more interested in the disruption of form, and in the “atomization of the surface.” In this manner, Filonov’s unique style blended ideals of Surrealism with Expressionism and aforementioned Neo-primitivism. We see a more refined version of atomization in Figure 4 than in Figure 2. The rationale behind Filonov’s innovative rejection of pictorial conventions is detailed in his 1914-1915 Deklaratsiya:

“Realism” is a scholastic abstraction of only two of the object’s predicates: form and color…. My principle activates all the predicates of the object and of its orbit: its own reality, its own emanation, interfusions, geneses, processes in color and form – in short, life as a whole. My principle presupposes the orbit not as a mere space, but as a biodynamic entity in which the object exists in a continuous emanation and interfusion, in which the reality of the object and its orbit is eternally forming and transforming its coloristic and formal content and its processes…

While the fundamental eschatological concepts of regeneration were shared by Malevich’s ideals detailed in the Black Square, Filonov’s inherently physiological interpretation of perpetual transformation between the organic and inorganic worlds were notably different that Malevich’s pseudo-scientific ideas regarding the “fourth dimension.” In Filonov’s paintings, veins, tendons, and muscles are all revealed; no physiological detail is spared and they fluidly transcend the borders between seemingly disparate realms.

**Filonov on the Front Lines**

While Malevich’s wartime experience was limited to the home front, Pavel Filonov enlisted in the Army in 1916 and served on the Romanian front, although not much is known about his time in the service. The lack of clarity surrounding Filonov’s life is due mainly to the artist himself. “I do not like talking about my life,” he claimed. While he does not oblige the historian with primary accounts of his experiences at the Romanian Front, we can infer two things from his time spent in the army during the Great War: 1) Filonov was, during the war, neither a bloodthirsty

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22. Ibid., 211.
combatant nor pacifist, dedicated, as Paul Eluard put it in 1916, to ‘do [his] duty’; 2) He grew closer to his proletariat comrades as they persevered through the war together and formed an even more emotional attachment to socialism and the Bolshevik cause. What we do know is that just prior to his enlistment into the army, Filonov considered his artistic pursuits a “war” trying to materialize time. Khlebnikov’s 1915 fictional story, “KA” actually portrays Filonov when the writer has an encounter with an artist: I met a certain artist and asked him whether he was going to war. He answered: “I too am waging a war, only it’s not for space, it’s for time. I sit in a trench and take a small scrap of time from the past. My duty is just as difficult as that of the troops [fighting] for space.”

I think it is rather unlikely that Filonov was attempting to trivialize the efforts of the Russian soldiers on the front; rather, he was trying to emphasize his similar struggle at depicting a new concept of time. His service may have been motivated by a sense of paternalism toward Russian community, protecting the public that he sought to enlighten through his art.

Inferences aside, we know that Filonov’s experience in the army increased his affinity for the proletariats who served alongside him and subsequently, the Bolshevik cause. “On his return from duty, Filonov expressed his support for the Revolutionary government, feeling...an emotional attachment to the working-class, as, of course, did many of his colleagues, Malevich and Tatlin among them.” Filonov took his artistic devotion to socialism to the periphery by refusing to sell his paintings and hardly ever signing them, the reason being that he thought of them as universal symbols and hence, public property.

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28. Ibid, 142.
The direct result of Filonov’s experience in the war was a devout proletarian allegiance. The compositions *Entry of Universal Flowering* (1919-1920) and *Formula of the Petrograd Proletariat* (Figure 6) subjectively represent this allegiance. *Formula of the Petrograd Proletariat* is one of Filonov’s most iconic paintings and embodies a culmination of Analytical Realism with proletarian idealism. We see an organic evolution of the painting as atomic splinters combine to portray a living representation of Petrograd that is both chaotic and claustrophobic. The city is somehow a lugubrious background, although in the upper center, it is transfigured by an azure and spiritual light whence emanates the figure of the “ideal” proletarian.29 With this idealized image of the proletariat superimposed upon the schizophrenic metropolitan background, Filonov constructed an icon of the proletariat hero.30

Filonov became a professor at the Academy of Arts in the early nineteen twenties and continued to refine his theory to allow for a more fluid dissemination to his students. By 1925, Pavel Filonov considered his own artistic theory, “Analytical Art,” or “Universal Flowering” to be the “ultimate stage of socialism and the emancipation of

30. Ibid., 126.
the individual…” 31 Despite its emphasis on analysis, the theory was inherently composite and its essential ideas owed much to the various aforementioned tendencies in pre- and post-War art. 32

The artist-proletarian’s obligation is not only to create works that answer the demands of today, but also to open the way to intellect into the distant future.

The artist-proletarian must act on the intellect of his comrade proletarians not only through what they can understand at their present stage of development. 33

This egalitarian method proved extremely popular with communists and Filonov’s popularity grew throughout the twenties. However, Filonov emphasized the importance of the artist’s experience as an individual, which was in many ways paradoxical to proletariat ideals.

Art is the reflection through material or the record in material of the struggle for the formation of man’s higher intellectual condition and of the struggle for existence by this higher psychological condition. Art’s efficacy vis-à-vis the spectator is equal to this; i.e., it both makes him superior and summons him to become superior. 34

In addition, the Bolshevik’s efforts to control artistic production alienated Filonov’s works due Analytical Realism’s constant objection to the superimposition of any form of control or at least the questioning of any dialectical explanation of reality. 35 As a result, by 1930, Analytical Realism was regarded as “the individualistic philosophy of a mystical and intellectual bourgeois” 36 and became widely criticized for its “lack of proletarian pathos.” 37

Pavel Filonov’s experience during World War I with the proletariat on the front lines was a defining characteristic of his artistic development and at least partly responsible for his popularity and success during the 1920s. His revolutionary Analytical Art theory was an amalgamation of tributes to preceding theories and movements and created a style that was unique to the individual, yet inherently proletarian. Although he fell out of favor with the Soviet government, he remained loyal to the proletariat cause until his death in 1941 during the siege of Leningrad. In typical socialist fashion, Filonov donated all of his life works to the Russian State Museum, post-mortem, in

34. Ibid., 286.
37. Ibid., 825.
order to ensure their universality.

Post WWI Suprematism

Fig. 7. Kazimir Malevich. Black Cross. Oil on Canvas. 106 cm x 106 cm. 1923

The culmination of Malevich’s Suprematism proved remarkably similar to its genesis. His non-objective shapes point humanity away from capitalistic industrial exploitation and the horrors of the world war and toward a holistic equilibrium. Depictions of fourth dimensional convergence of time and space also continued to suggest a nonsectarian vision of a heavenly enlightenment, transcending the chaos and suffering that stems from modernity and war. Malevich effectively limited himself to three forms – the square, circle, and cross – when he rejected the forms of objective world in favor of utopic geometric forms that served no symbolic relationship with anything physical.

The square is not a subconscious form. It is the creation of intuitive reason.

The first step of pure creation in art. Before it there were naïve distortions and copies of nature.

Our world of art has become new, nonobjective, pure.38

He sought to use pure geometric forms and colors to elicit intangible emotion and sensation from his audience and many of these superphysical experiences highlighted soviet ideals of equality, atheism, science, and rationality. In Malevich’s words, Under Suprematism I understand the primacy of pure feeling in creative art. To the

Suprematist, the visual phenomena of the objective world are, in themselves, meaningless; the significant thing is feeling, as such, quite apart from the environment in which it is called forth.\footnote{Kazimir Malevich, “Suprematism” in \textit{The Non-Objective World: The Manifesto of Suprematism} (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003), 67.}

Figure 7 embodies all of the ideals mentioned above: holistic equilibrium; fourth dimensional serenity; mathematic rationality; removing religion from traditionally Christian symbols, yet the cross retains some symbolic value as a crossroads for humanity. Will we continue toward the promise of Suprematist enlightenment or revert back to traditional depiction of form and animalistic tendencies?

The freedom Malevich claimed for non-representational art was able to reach beyond the frontiers of communal, regional and national cultures, to cross the barriers of race, class, gender and other markers of difference. Suprematism established the possibility of images that were not culturally specific. Malevich wished to harness the energy from free forms so that humanity’s will might turn transcendental ideas into objects of potential experience. He envisaged art as he did humanity: forever evolving, forever in the process of becoming.

Conclusion

Industrialism and capitalism shoved Russia headlong into twentieth-century modernity. As artists struggled to convey the accelerating speed of life, innovators like Malevich and Filonov began exploring new artistic methods to convey the chaos of the world around them. They drew inspiration from symbolism, futurism, cubism, Neo-primitivism, and \textit{lubok}, among others, while simultaneously rejecting tsarist-era artistic traditions. Socialism and democracy emerged as unifying societal ideals that brought artists together with the proletariat.

The industrialized horrors of World War I demonstrated the hellish consequences of modernization and as a result, Filonov and Malevich’s artistic theories took on a new significance. Filonov’s Analytical Art emerged from the front lines of World War I with a focus on glorifying the proletariat and Bolshevism as Russia’s hope for a bright future. His post-war commitment to socialist ideals was profound as he rarely sold his works in favor of donating them to the Russian Museum for the sake of universality. His refined theory portrayed a chaotic organicism that exposed the madness of life, yet it also reflected proletarian ideals of inclusivity by incorporating characteristics of many different artistic movements. However, his emphasis on the artist’s individual psychological perceptions ultimately proved to be his downfall as the importance of the indi-
individual was decidedly bourgeois.

Malevich’s home front perspective provided him with an opportunity to develop anti-war sentiments that played a factor in Suprematism’s allusions to fourth-dimensional serenity, celestial truths, and non-objective forms intuiting a united human experience. Rather than incorporate preceding artistic movements, Malevich rejected all prior objective theories and asserted Suprematism as the sole true art form. Creation of new, nonobjective forms in equilibrium was his effort to transcend the chaos of industrial modernity and the horrors of war and experience an artistic egalitarian utopia.

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Speed, Form, and the Proletariat


ALEX RUPPERT is a third year history major, pursuing minors in anthropology and civic engagement. Throughout his first two years at UCLA, he has focused many of his studies in World History, with a particular interest in South Asia. This stems primarily from a fascination with the Mughal Empire, and how it was able to create one of the largest and most powerful empires the Indian Sub-Continent has ever seen. This prompted him to take a course on Iran and the Persianate World taught by Professor Nile Green, and the course resulted in the writing of this paper. Alex is always looking for new perspectives into writing and studying history, hence his interest in the study of anthropology and archaeology. Currently, he is studying abroad in Accra, Ghana for the Fall 2017 term and is working on a historical archaeology research project on the Christiansborg Castle, under the direction of the Archaeology Department at the University of Ghana, Legon. When Alex returns to UCLA in the Winter of 2018, he will resume being a tour guide for UCLA Cub Tours and a member of the Club Soccer Team. He is deeply honored by his paper’s selection for Quaestio.
The Contraction of the Persianate World 1700–2000

Alex Ruppert

The decline of Persian across South Asia following the fall of the Safavid and Mughal Empires has been a process long debated by historians who argue myriad different reasons for being the most important influence. Some of these factors include the rise of vernacular languages, the introduction of higher education, new technology, colonialism, and nationalism. In this paper, I will provide a chronological survey of all of these different factors and attempt to discern their relative significance. Through this relative investigation, I will argue that it was not one of these processes that took absolute precedent over the others, but rather the increased influence of Europeans which ultimately had the largest influence on the decline of Persian language and culture throughout South Asia. Many processes that took place in South Asia during these three hundred years could be traced back to the heightened presence of European people, technology, and ideas in the region. The European influence on the decline of Persian throughout this time period can be deemed important not only for its consequences during its time but also because it set the precedent for the Persian diaspora of the 21st Century.

The Persianate World after the end of the 17th Century started to reach the limit of its expansion, and a long process of contraction through the 21st Century began as a result of the increased influence of Europeans. Strengthened ties through different fields such as war, trade, and education disseminated new ideas across the Persianate world, spurring its contraction. The Safavid and Mughal Empires, which had both once held a dominating presence in South Asia and in the patronage of the Persian language, both fell victim to internal rebellions and European wars. The South Asia that ensued consisted of a Mughal Empire under the clutches of British Imperialism and a Qajar Dynasty to the east in modern day Iran constantly at war with Russia. This expanded influence of Europeans eventually led to an influx of new ideas into South Asia, such as higher education, industrialization and nationalism, which caused the rise of vernacular languages and introduction of new institutions and technologies, resulting in the decline of the Persianate world.
The first and most direct impact of Europeans on the Persianate world was Britain’s colonization of India. Britain began their indirect rule of the Indian subcontinent after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, after which the British East India Company gained the complete submission of the Mughal emperor. This had many consequences for the prominence of Persian as the language of the bureaucracy, as Persian was soon replaced by English as the language of the courts, and by Urdu among the lower classes. This was a result of Urdu’s use as a colonial lingua franca between the British and Indian commoners. British colonialism also led to myriad successor states to the Mughal Empire, which began to patronize their own vernaculars as they no longer had to adhere to the restrictions of the Mughal Court. The first of such were the Sikhs who declared Khalsa in 1699, deeming themselves independent of Mughal Rule. Persian was still used at their court, but the Sikhs began to shift their patronage more and more towards Sikh poets and gurus, resulting in the increased use of Punjabi. As a result, Punjabi began to be favored over Persian in Sikh literature. Influential texts were written in Punjabi throughout the years of British colonialism, such as a few of the Janamsakhis on the births of Guru Sanak and the Jangnama (1862) written by Shah Muhammad on the first Anglo Sikh War. These Punjabi texts took the spot of influential literature previously held by Persian and began to proliferate out of the small state.

Maratha was another successor state in the South renowned for leading successful raids on the Mughal army, and with the leadership of Shivaji Bhonsle (d. 1680) were also able to render themselves independent of Mughal rule. Just like the Sikhs, they began to favor their own vernacular language of Marathi in the place of Persian following their independence. They also produced their own literature in Marathi, including the Bakhar history texts which were to take the place of the Persian style of akhbar texts, as they were similar in style but Marathi was the favored language in the region.

The rise of Urdu, however, was the most marked vernacular language to flourish as a result of British colonialism, and it became the language of many successor states as well as eventually the language of colonial India itself. Urdu began gaining ground in Delhi during the late 18th century as a fashionable vernacular language, as a result of many poets who began to write in Urdu. One such writer was Mir Dard (d. 1785), who wrote the Ilm al-Kitab encyclopedia in Persian but also wrote many mystic poems in Urdu. Through his works written in both Persian and Urdu, it becomes evident that Urdu was establishing itself more and more into the Indian court culture, a place

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s previously dominated by Persian. This is also reflective of changing attitudes in India during that time, as vernacular languages were looked down upon less and less.

Urdu also began to rise in the northern successor state of Awadh, as the patronage of Persian subsided with the collapse of the Mughal Empire. This Shi’ite state proliferated Urdu poetry out of its capital in Lucknow, and it had many similarities with the Persian poetry of the past. Urdu poetry had state patronage and was produced by famous court poets like Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810), author of many famous works, including the *Mu‘amlat-e ‘Ishq*, a collection of love poems. Yet the Urdu spoken at these courts was not completely Urdu, as at almost every court in British India the Urdu spoken had highly Persianized elements. In order to be successful in the bureaucracy therefore, one had to have a large vocabulary of Urdu and Persian. Yet given heavy support from the British, Urdu was eventually to overtake Persian, “the British continued to emphasize Urdu and by the twentieth century the public had come to accept it as a substitute for Persian”. This was largely a result of the British controlling and reforming education systems in India, since they emphasized only on the teaching of Urdu and English, as Urdu had become the new colonial lingua franca in India.

European influences on reformed education can be seen in India as well as all throughout South Asia during this time, as the Qajar Dynasty in present day Iran had many educational reforms which were influenced heavily by Europeans. The increasing relations between Iran and Europe from which these new ideas of education stemmed, can first be seen with Abu al-Hasan Khan Ilchi, an ambassador to Britain and Russia in the early 19th century. He was particularly important for the history of Iran, as he was one of the first men to initiate formal diplomatic relations between The Qajar Dynasty and Europe. This establishment of relationships between Iran and Europe led to the export of Persian students from the Qajar Dynasty to pursue higher education in Europe during the 1810s. Two such students were Mirza Salih, who left Iran to study English and become a translator for the Qajar government, and Muhammad ‘Ali who worked on gun technology with James Wilkinson in England. There were many other Iranian students who embarked to pursue a western college education in Europe, and these students brought back many benefits to Iran. They became a new class of intellectual Iranian officials, and they brought back groundbreaking European technology. The Qajar dynasts received military medicine, maps, and telescopes from their students returning from abroad, and these new intellectuals and their technology motivated them to create their own Western-style university on the domestic front.

One result was the founding of the Dar al-Funun by Amir Kabir in Tehran in

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4. Ibid., 54.
1851, which was noted as “Iran’s first modern European-style institution of higher learning”⁵. The European influence of this institution can be seen through the incorporation of European professors and institutions, like the lecture theater and medical school. It can also be seen through its architecture, as it was stylistically modern for the time and shared many similarities to buildings in Eastern Europe and Russia. Yet this institution can also be seen as analogous to the decline of Persian, as the institution’s perceived high status began to dwindle in the second half of the 19th century. Following financial hardship, enrollment was no longer restricted to the elite classes beginning in the late 1880s. This had troubling consequences for Iran, as its graduates were more liberally minded, leading to internal political problems. Ekhtiar argues that the Dar al-Funun “…had eroded centralized power, fueled opposition, and shaken the very foundations of the regime it was designed to bolster”⁶. So even though the Dar al-Funun was designed to strengthen Iran by training young Persian officials, it actually weakened the state by introducing these students to liberal and revolutionary European ideas.

British colonial India also established its own institutions of higher learning during this time as well, with the formations of the Delhi College and Fort William College in India, as well as Haileybury College in England. As mentioned earlier, the British emphasized only the teaching of Urdu in these schools, as it had become the colonial lingua franca for interactions with Indians. Yet Persian was still taught at all three of these schools, although it was becoming less and less a necessity to learn for students as Urdu was gaining prominence. Haileybury College in England featured some Persian teachers from India, yet these teachers were always subservient to their English colleagues, which meant they could do little to prevent the decline of the language across the Indian subcontinent. Persian teachers had to adhere to restrictions set by these English professors and in order to even be hired, Persian teacher Mirza Ibrahim had to be highly Anglicized as his English colleagues noted, “He has adopted the European Costume for the avowed purpose of acquiring knowledge…”⁷. Mirza Ibrahim also received extra pay if he translated Biblical works into Persian. Thus, Mirza Ibrahim was incentivized to produce biblical works in Persian rather than classical Persian poetry, and this deviation from what was once celebrated in Persian elucidates how much the prestige of Persian had declined.

In addition, Mirza Ibrahim was the last native Persian Professor at Haileybury,

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⁶. Ibid., 163
⁷. Fisher, Michael, “Teaching Persian as an Imperial Language in India and in England during the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries,” Literacy in the Persianate World, 346.
which was problematic for the education of formal Persian. The need for a native Persian professor at the University for proper instruction of the language was a necessity, as some English professors noted, “the attachment of some learned Asiatics to the college is... essential to one of its declared objects, the attainment of a high degree of proficiency in a few of the languages of the east.” With the lack of native Persian teachers at Haileybury following the departure of Mirza Ibrahim in 1844, the quality of the Persian education significantly declined as non-native Persian speaking professors were not nearly as knowledgeable in the intricacies of court spoken Persian.

One other result of this increased intellectual interaction between Europe and the world of the Persian language was the introduction of industrialized products into South Asia, the most significant of which being the printing press. Although printing was introduced to Europeans with the invention of the Gutenberg press in 1439, printing did not expand into South Asia until the early 19th century as the original Gutenberg press was much too bulky to transport over seas into South Asia. With the invention of the Stanhope press in 1800, the increased British imperial presence in India allowed this technology to disseminate throughout India and later on throughout all of South Asia. Persian printing soon began to flourish, but what was being printed differed greatly from what upheld the prestige of Persian in the past. Many religious organizations took control over printing presses, and began printing Christian works in Persian. Two such groups were the British and Foreign Bible Society (ff.1804) and the Serampore Baptist Mission (ff. 1800), which combined to print many different copies of the Bible and other Christian works in Persian, Urdu, and other vernacular languages. Persians themselves also began to print works on their own, and their prints included classical poetry and Sufi Hagiographies. These printed works which patronized the classical Persian of the past, did little to stop the decline of Persian in India however, as they were overshadowed by printing in Urdu.

The introduction of lithographic allowed printing in Urdu and Persian to flourish, as it enabled the mass printing of manuscripts and illustrations which were features of many literary works in the vernacular languages. Lithographic printing spread to Bombay in 1815, and spread across South Asia to Tehran in 1831. This type of stone printing was soon to be more common than the Stanhope printing press, as the supplies that it required were cheaper and books printed through lithography were more familiar and easier to read for native Urdu speakers. In addition, more and more Urdu manuscripts or works containing illustrations were now able to be mass printed.

Urdu was also the favored language of newspapers, as it could be understood by a greater population rather than just the elite scholars who understood court spoken Persian.

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8. Ibid., 344.
Persian. Thus, newspapers like *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* founded in 1836 began to disseminate the language of Urdu to the masses of India. In addition to newspapers, many other works were printed in Urdu including modernist works, popular history, and fiction. Some of these notable authors of Urdu include Abdulhalim Sharar who wrote the *Guzishta Lucknow*, a history of the city of Lucknow, and Mirza Hadi Ruswa who wrote the first novel in Urdu in 1899, titled *Umrao Jan Ada*, which romanticized the world of *tawa’if*, or courtesans.

Newspapers also spread across Iran, and some proved to be increasingly influential to its modernization, as is apparent with the publication of the Qanun. The editor of this newspaper, Mirza Malkum Khan (d.1908), was a graduate of the Dar al-Fanun, and was among the liberal graduates who took note of the European ideas of nationalism and revolution and began to spread them into Iran. The Qanun was noted for the difference in its use of Persian as it used much simpler language and was much more accessible to the masses as opposed to the other state sponsored newspapers which “were full of heavy, abstruse and portentous words written in the old style”\(^9\). So even though this newspaper was written in Persian, it deviated from the sophisticated Persian that was previously spoken at the courts of major empires, and alienated many speakers of the bureaucratic style of Persian. Although this newspaper was banned in Iran, it was still read by the Shah and his ministers and was most notable for modernizing political thought in Iran. This new form of political language present in the Qanun was “not only adopted by the intellectuals but also by ordinary people”\(^10\). The Qanun spread many ideas of European law and order into Iran, and greatly influenced the rise of Iranian nationalism and the Constitutional Revolution which was to come in the early 20th Century.

Modernization and nationalization were also themes present in the works of Islamic and Intellectual reformers in India during the late 19th century who wrote in Urdu. The first of such was Altaf Husayn Hali (d.1914), who was a renowned poet in Urdu. His most famous work was the *Musaddas e-Madd o-Jazr e-Islam*, which was a literary criticism advocating the writing of poetry in Urdu. This piece also set the trend for literary criticism to be a defining part of Urdu literature. The ideas present in this work were also heavily influenced by the man Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d.1898), who was an Islamic reformer and writer of Urdu in the late 19th Century. He constantly promoted the use of Urdu over Hindi and Persian, as he thought it to be the true colonial lingua franca between Muslims. The language of these two reformers was also seen to be the first seed of a Pakistani nationalism which was to take shape half a century later.

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10. Ibid., 3.
Nationalism in Iran however, grew during the early 19th century, and it was to be a huge cause of the contraction of Persian use throughout South Asia. The idea of nationalism came into Iran through Iranian students’ domestic and abroad who came into contact with European texts on nationalism and revolution. Nationalism as an idea easily spread through Iran as Iranian nationalism was based on a common opposition to the Qajar dynasty and Czarist Russia who was constantly at war with Iran. One of the most prominent Iranian nationalists was Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh (d.1878), who became aware of the idea of nationalism after reading works from the French enlightenment. He also sympathized with many European ideals of the Aryan race, as he wrote of the Iranians being a part of once great Aryan kingdom in the days of Ancient Persia which was ruined by the coming of the Arabs. Thus, the influence of European ideologies behind the birth of Iranian nationalism can easily be discerned, and this newfound nationalism was to have great consequences for the use of Persian across South Asia.

The idea of nationalism began to separate language use based on nationality, with the idea of a national language. The Constitutional Revolution in Iran, which was based on nationalist ideology, took place in 1905-1911 and paved the way for the formation of the Pahlavi Dynasty in the place of the Qajar Dynasty, which allowed for the formation of an Iranian parliament. The Pahlavi Dynasty was also noted for rigorous language reform, and reconfigured Persian as the national language of Iran. The Iranian National Language Academy was formed in 1935, and sought to “hyper-persianize” the Persian spoken in Iran, in order to make it strictly Iranian. The academy increasingly sought to standardize Persian, and they achieved this by replacing over 1600 Arabic and European loanwords with new Persian words. One influential man behind creating this national language was Ali Akbar Dihkoda (d.1956), who wrote the *Lughatnama* in 1931, which was a dictionary for the new “hyper-persianized” Persian. In addition to this dictionary, there was much more nationalist literature that was produced during this time. One influential author was Muhammad-Taqi Bahar (d.1951), who wrote the *Sabkshinasi*, a historical account of the evolution of Persian poetry and prose. This somewhat revived patronage within Iran for the classical Persian poetry and prose which had once dominated the literary world of South Asia, but all of these processes of nationalizing language in fact contributed to Persian’s decline across South Asia.

The rise of nationalism didn’t occur just in Iran, but rather all over South Asia,

12. Ibid., 165.
and languages began to be divided based on national borders. This is first apparent in Afghanistan, as Pashto was promoted as the national language throughout the 1930s as Afghan Officials realized it was the one true authentically Afghani language. This came after attempts to nationalize an Afghan promoted variant of Persian, which was called “Dari.” Yet as author Nile Green notes “no amount of rebranding of Persian as ‘Dari’ could hide the fact that Persian was also the national language of Iran”\(^\text{13}\) (Green 18). Thus, Pashto was chosen as the language of the nation of Afghanistan, and there were also attempts to differentiate “Afghan” from “Pakistani” Pashto and attempts to standardize Pashto grammar\(^\text{14}\) (Green 18). This came at a huge consequence to the knowledge of Persian, or “Dari,” in the region, as many Afghani scholars who were well versed in Persian saw little reason to continue their studies and patronage of Persian. Through this example of the nationalizing of Pashto in Afghanistan, it is easy to see how nationalism was a huge threat to the knowledge of Persian in South Asia.

It was not just Afghanistan, however who also went through this process of nationalizing a language. The use of Persian all across Asia declined as a result of nationalizing language policies. In Soviet Russia, there were policies to ‘Russianize’ Persian loanwords as well as a complete reform of the Russian script by the 1930s. In Uzbekistan, Persian began to constantly be derided and demoted as non-national language. One literary contributor to this process, was Sadriddin Ayni (d.1954), who promoted Tajik nationalism in many of his literary works. His most famous work was the \textit{Dokhunda}, which was published in 1927 and was the first novel ever published in the Tajik language. This process could also be seen in the Ottoman Empire, as the use of Persian declined when Turkish, Arabic, and Greek were promoted as national languages. Of course, in India as well Persian use also declined as Hindi and Urdu were promoted as national languages in its place. Therefore, this new European idea of nationalism caused the decline in the use of Persian across South Asia through a long process of nationalizing language campaigns which divided language use across national borders. As a result, Persian use became more and more isolated into the modern-day state of Iran.

In the years following the growth of Nationalism in Asia, Persian users experienced a diaspora following the turmoil during the independence of India in 1947 and the Iranian Revolution in 1979. This diaspora came after the rapid contraction of the Persianate world, and only sought to further isolate speakers of Persian from one another. This contraction in the use of Persian came as a result of increased contact with Europeans, which led to the downfall of Persian speaking empires and an influx Eu-

\(^{13}\) Green, Nile, “Afghanistan in Ink; Afghan Literature Between Diaspora and Nation,” \textit{Asian Affairs} 45, no. 2 (2014), 18.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 18.
European ideas on higher education, modernization, and nationalism, all three of which undermined Persian's place as a language of bureaucracy across South Asia. British colonialism in India led to the rise of multiple vernacular languages, particularly Urdu which overtook Persian use throughout the 19th Century. New forms of higher education in Iran and India sought to expand the use of Urdu, and introduced many students to European works on the Enlightenment and Nationalism, which was to complete the contraction of Persian. With the spread of Nationalism across Asia, countries began claiming their own vernaculars to be their national language, leading to the decline of Persian in these countries and the isolation of Persian use within the modern-day state of Iran and diaspora communities across the globe.

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Revolution or Nationalism? The Problem of Social Democracy in Germany during the First World War

Stephanie Truskowski

The German Socialist Party was the largest in Europe in 1914, but they remained the radical fringe of politics despite union support. The outbreak of the First World War forced a crisis of conscience among German Socialists, which resulted in a fracturing of political peace. This paper focuses on the divisions within the Socialist party on the question of revolution in Germany during the first World War. It argues that the integration of moderate Socialists into the political center stabilized Germany by allowing the Socialist party to address the needs of the working class. The failure of the Spartacus League was due to the success of the moderate Socialists in creating conditions that were not conducive to revolution. Much of the historiography of the First World War focuses on privation as the reason for the revolution that broke out in 1918, but this paper seeks to suggest that the ideological position of the far left, which remained consistent throughout the war, and the influence of the Russian Revolution as the reasons for revolution. It also suggests that the view of the formation of the Weimar Republic as revolutionary is flawed, and the true revolutionary movement was the Spartacus movement. This paper uses the political statements, speeches, declarations, and manifestos of the SPD and the USPD to trace the ideological divisions within Socialism and to explain the actions that followed therefrom. It also uses the propaganda programs of the German government to analyze the threat of Socialism.

Germany at the dawning of the 20th century was, in many ways, a fragile country; it was a newly created country wracked by internal disagreements and growing radicalism on both the right and the left. At the change of the century, Socialism had spread across the European continent, but it was at its strongest in Germany. As was true in most of Europe, with the exception of Russia, parliamentary democracy and the emergence of popular politics created a divide in the socialist ideology. In Germany, there was only one Socialist Party, but it did not have a uniform ideology. The German Socialists and Marxists had an uneasy union based on the idea that they were closer to each other than either was to the imperial government, but both were critical of the other’s methods. The moderates within the SPD were the majority. They rejected the Marxist position of violent revolution being necessary. They viewed the emergence of
mass politics and representative institutions as fundamentally changing the paradigm of Marxism. It allowed them to create socialist reform from within the system, thus negating the necessity of violent revolution. Their objective was to enact change that benefited the working class through legislative reforms. However, radical Socialists like Rosa Luxembourg rejected this idea. They subscribed to the view that Marx’s call for the complete dismantling of the system was still necessary. They were more akin to their Russian counterparts than to their fellow German Socialists. The primary difference between the two ideologies was the method of creating change that benefited the working class. Despite these divisions, nationalism from the unification of the country reached a fever pitch on the eve of the first World War, superseding the political differences. With a declaration of war, Wilhelm II appealed to a shared sense of nationalism to establish a truce between the political parties. The *Burgfrieden,* a political truce between all of the German parties, was an uneasy necessity of war, vulnerable to fracturing on both the left and the right and it was held together by state sponsored view of the war as one of defense of the nation. The *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) and its eventual schism serves as the most accessible case study of the way in which a political peace became a revolution during the course of the war due to its cost and its unclear aims; the moderate parts of the party supported the war, were integrated further into the center, and became part of the Weimar coalition, while the radical elements of the party favored international socialism and led a failed revolution at the end of the war.

It is necessary to establish the state of German politics before the war to understand why the *Burgfrieden* was necessary and possible. The system in place in the German empire was very much a product of the recent unification and the predominance of Prussian influence. Though the system was parliamentary in theory, the power was shared unevenly between the Kaiser and the Reichstag. In some matters, like the military, the Kaiser retained complete control. Domestic policy, however, was largely in the hands of the Reichstag. Though this system of constitutional monarchy was generally effective under previous German emperors, Wilhelm’s reign strained relations between the Reichstag and the crown because Wilhelm sought to strengthen the power of his individual rule. He sought an older form of rule that allowed him to rule

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1. Literally translated *Burgfrieden* means “castle peace.” The metaphor is that in times of war people of all social classes came together within the walls of the castle. Thus, under the threat of foreign aggression, the political parties should come together as people did in a castle. In the political context of the first world war, it should be understood as a political truce between all parties.


3. Ibid, 290.
personally instead of relying on the Reichstag, which led him to avoid the parliamentary process when possible. Thus, by the beginning of the war, there was a distinct friction between the Reichstag and the crown, which could only be bridged by nationalist sentiment.

The political climate of Germany before the war was remarkably unstable due to political extremes; the Reichstag faced challenges from both the right and the left. The threat on the right came from anti-parliamentary conservatives who defended the Prussian three tier voting system and very limited suffrage.4 This group was not as much of a threat as the far left for two reasons. First, their ideological position was not as antagonistic to the state. The conservatives had effectively abandoned the idea of eliminating the Reichstag and instead intended to limit the franchise in order to limit the influence of populism in politics.5 They favored political power remaining in the hands of the traditional elite. They most strongly supported the monarchy and defended the power of the monarchy over the Reichstag.6 Unlike the radical left, they supported part of the state without questioning the viability of the whole. Second, they were easily placated because of the political leanings of Wilhelm II. His reign was the zenith of conservative power, because influence with the Kaiser was given to those he personally enjoyed, rather than to a consistent ideology. As Wolfgang Momsen argues, Kaiser Wilhelm II was not a true conservative, but many of his closest advisors were.7 He followed the current of public opinion. Through direct influence on the Kaiser and the strengthening of monarchical power, conservatives hoped to steer politics.

The left was a stronger challenge to monarchical power because its power was built on the strength of trade unions. Before the war, the SPD was the political parish of the German polity, but it also had considerable influence.8 Many of the leaders of the Party had roots in the sizable German Labor Unions.9 As Bergstein notes in his writing on “The Immediate Tasks of Socialist Democracy”, the SPD had gained considerable influence through the labor movements and official channels. He writes, “Today, there is a lot of talk about the conquest of political power by Social Democracy, and it is at least not impossible, given the strength it has attained in Germany, that

4. Ibid, 296.
5. Ibid, 299.
6. Ibid, 298.
7. Ibid, 300.
some political event in the near future will assign it a crucial role.” As Industry grew after the unification of the German state, like in other rapidly industrializing countries, the Socialist party grew in influence. Fear of Socialists in German politics came primarily from Socialist denunciation of imperialism. Because Socialism was built off the principles of the right of the worker who had no fatherland, it opposed the ability of any country to intrude on the rights of conquered people. This point is consistent in both the works of Bergstein, the author of the majority socialist position, and Rosa Luxemburg, the prolific firebrand of the far left whose writings were critical of any concessions to a capitalist regime by the moderates, indicating that this issue was a central part of Socialist dogma that did not differ based on readings of Marx.

Wilhelm interpreted this position as hostile because his ambition lay in expansion and conquest. In seeking to create an empire, Wilhelm, or the Wilhelmine government, was aware of the threat of growing socialist influence. The public relations office established in the Navy provides an example of this awareness. Its stated purpose was to build up public support for the development of a larger German Navy, and to counteract the Socialist claims that a Navy was unnecessary. This action must be placed in the context of imperialism; a Navy was a vector of conquest. The arms race in naval technology was both a challenge to British sea hegemony and a sign of increasing imperial ambition. In that regard, the decision to actively publish propaganda in favor of shipbuilding should be seen as an attempt to publicly defend the Kaiser’s imperial policy.

Thus, at the dawning of the first world war, there existed two political divisions in German society that could fracture with the slightest stress. The Kaiser and the Reichstag were at odds about the political powers of the Kaiser and the role of personal rule in the empire. The Reichstag itself was bitterly divided between the moderates and the growing influence of the SPD. Though the Entente propaganda portrays Germany as united and fully imperialistic; the truth was far from it. The German political situation was fragile at best.

The nationalistic enthusiasm that came from the onset of the war was enough

11. Ibid.
to cement a political truce based on the idea the Germany needed to be unified against the external enemies. Wilhelm II’s speech from the balcony of the Reichstag is a prime example of the rhetoric that forged the Burgfrieden. He says, addressing the people, “One party or another has opposed me. That was in peace time. I forgive it with all my heart! I know no political parties...today we are all German brothers and nothing but German brothers. If our neighbors want it no other way, if they will not allow us peace, then I hope to God that our German sword will emerge triumphant from this hard fight.”

Two themes appear in the speech that are important to the concept of the Burgfrieden; first is the appeal to the common German identity. Wilhelm is using this idea to make all political differences unimportant. Though the people may differ politically, they are tied together by their German identity. He appeals to this to minimize the political opposition, especially against his personal rule, in the face of a higher goal. But, there is a second facet to his speech that is vital to the Burgfrieden. Wilhelm emphasizes that Germany’s neighbors will not allow them peace. This is important because it provides a reason for German unity; if they are not unified then they will face the hostility of the neighboring states. The Burgfrieden was grounded in the idea, perpetuated by the Kaiser, that the war was necessary and defensive. This was contingent on the tenuous conclusion of the military that France would strike against Germany if Austria and Russia went to war. Based on this assumption, failure to unify despite political differences would result in the destruction of the German homeland.

Though this appeal does not name any given party, the intention of the call to unity was to silence the far left. The Burgfrieden never specifically named the SPD as its target, but it was understood that they were the primary object of the appeal. Their platform was the only one that was directly opposed to the war effort. Bernstein’s “The Immediate Tasks of Social Democracy” states that “in cases where conflicts arise with other nations and direct resolution is not possible, it will advocate that these differences be settled through arbitration.” This relatively ambiguous language, nevertheless, indicates that even moderate socialists were opposed to war and favored diplomatic arbitration of conflict. The far left was even harsher in its renunciation of war.

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They rejected the idea of the capitalist system entirely and believed that the only true war that between classes.\textsuperscript{20} The Erfurter Program, formulated in 1891 by the Congress of the SPD, served as the official statement of the principles of the Party. In this document, the Party calls for the replacement of the standing army with a people’s army and, “The resolution of disputes between nations through diplomatic means.”\textsuperscript{21} Thus, they had the strongest ideological position from which to oppose the war. Based on their own stated goals, they should push for the peaceful resolution of the international situation. So, in speaking of the parties that had opposed him in the past, Wilhelm addresses the SPD without directly alienating them.

Despite the potential for political disunity, all of the major parties officially endorsed the war effort and thus established the \textit{Burgfrieden}. On the vote for war loans, every major party approved the expenditure. On the right, the decision to support the war was not surprising. The conservatives supported Imperialism and military expansion. A state of war also strengthened the position of traditional authorities, like the officer corps and the monarchy. At the same time, the left also supported the war. It is difficult to say why any given member of the SPD would support armed conflict. On the whole, however, they likely were swept up in the wave of nationalism that accompanied the outbreak of the war.\textsuperscript{22} It is also possible that the party’s reliance on trade unions and the patriotism of the working class were determining factors.\textsuperscript{23} However, Socialists did issue a statement for support of the war, seeking to justify the choice based on the ideology of the party. As they explain, “The victory of Russian despotism…. would put much – indeed, everything – at stake for our nation and its future development toward liberty….we must protect our civilization and the independence of our own country. Thus….in the hour of danger, we are not deserting the Fatherland.”\textsuperscript{24} The explanation of socialist support shows an important logic to fit the idea of war into a perspective that did not conflict with their ideology. They frame the war in terms of class, with Russia in the role of ultimate autocracy and threatening the working class of Germany. This denies that the war is the same kind of imperialism that

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\textsuperscript{22} Matthew Stibbe, \textit{Germany, 1914-1933: Politics, Society, and Culture} (Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), 13-14.


\end{footnotesize}
Socialists had earlier lambasted as “An unscrupulous robbery and policy of conquest”25 Instead, this was a patriotic defense of the German working class against the greater evil of Russian repression and autocracy. Although, importantly, the party abandons the idea of internationalism.

The SPD’s choice to support the war through war loans was contingent on the war being defensive. To this end, they demanded that once “aim of security has been achieved and our opponents are inclined to make peace, this war shall be brought to an end by a peace treaty that makes friendship with our neighbors possible.”26 The Socialists assumed that war was inevitable and there was no other course of action than war. It is difficult to fault the party in this assumption, because it was consistent with the consensus of the German High Command.27 Wilhelm II claimed that he had no choice, going so far as to lament that war had to happen.28 The military reports indicated that if Germany did not start the war, the French would attack first.29 Thus the German populace on the whole believed that this would be a defensive war. In such a climate of consensus and duty, the decision is logical. The most influential leaders of the Socialist Party met the day before they issued their declaration of support and reached the conclusion that they should support the war because of its inevitability.30 Pushing for negotiations with the other belligerents would have seemed pointless with the threat of impending war. In this regard, Socialists did not abandon their ideology in supporting the war; rather, they chose the most pragmatic solution that did not alienate the working class.

It is important to note that support of the war was not unanimous in the Socialist Party; the far left still maintained its internationalist stance. The part of the party that had agitated against the consolatory tone of the party in the pre-war years, most vocally embodied in Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, remained staunchly opposed to war. But, this had little baring on actual war loans and popular support. The Socialist opposition consisted mostly of intellectuals who were both disconnected from

the political process and the working class. Unlike the moderate faction of the party, traditional Marxists did not come from or have the support of trade unions. Their appeal to resist war remained largely within their own circles and did not attract much support. With the perception of war as something glorious and defensive that would be over within a few months, as was the military opinion, the Marxist minority was drowned out by the cheers for the fatherland.

However, the assumptions that the armed conflict was defensive and would protect the working class were challenged by the prolonged war and the privations it brought, forcing the socialist party to question its own declaration of support, and ultimately break into two parties. The Burgfrieden could be declared a failure by the first year of the conflict because of the problem of war aims and socialist support. The disunity came gradually, but the breaks indicated a larger shattering of German morale.

The issue of war aims became problematic within the first year of the war; the question of annexations strained the relations between Socialists and the other centrist parties. After the first offensive into France and victories on the eastern front, the threat of invasion that had initially forged the Burgfrieden disappeared. German forces had advanced into France and the Russian offensive had been met with a spectacular failure, which caused dissent from the Socialists. As the Order of the Day issued on June, 19, 1915 by Eduad Bernstein, Karl Katusky, and Hugo Haase states, the continuation despite victories showed, “The stamp of a war of conquest on the present war.” This is a marked difference from the socialist rhetoric of even a year earlier, and it shows one of the first divisions in the SPD. In this order, Bernstein, Katusky, and Haase specifically quoted the speech of Wedel-Piesdorf, who demanded that Germany continue in the war until it could gain colonial and European annexations. He argued, that a peace that did not include annexations would bring shame to Germany and not guarantee the safety of the German people.

The conservative argument being that the goal of annexation was still defensive in nature, because it would serve as a deterrent to neighboring countries. This course of action was supported by the Chancellor of Germany and the King of Bavaria, thus indicating that the conservative

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35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
authorities supported the idea of continuing the war. But, the argument that annexation was defensive in itself seems to be a continued attempt to maintain the basis of the *Burgfrieden*. Keeping the war aims intentionally vague maintained Socialist support through the first year of the war. However, as even Wedel-Piesdorf conceded, “If we desired nothing more than to repel the attack by our enemies, I believe that it would not be at all difficult to obtain peace quickly.” In essence, the Socialist goal for the war had already been met within the first year of the war. The Order raises the question if the continued support of the war betrays the central founding principles of the party. As it states, “When it comes to continuing the war, [the party] can stand on the side of those whose views are in sharpest contradiction to the principles that our parliamentary group enunciated on August 4, 1914, when, citing the Socialist International, it condemned all wars of conquest.” This makes it clear that the dissent among the Socialist Party was growing as it became increasingly clear that the war was, in fact, not defensive.

Another factor that drew scorn from all but the most conservative and military elements of the government was the use of expanded submarine warfare. Submarines had been included in the navy program that proved to be a public relations problem before the war; they were likely to be objects of criticism by Socialists. However, submarine warfare presented another degree of moral problems due to the nature of submarine warfare. In ship to ship warfare, it was ethical to give warning before the ship was sunk in order to give the crew time to evacuate the ship. In the case of the submarine warfare, that sort of warning that would allow sailors to safely abandon ship would give away the element of surprise on which submarine warfare relied. Thus, the use of submarines drew criticism from the Reichstag. However, the unrestricted use of submarine warfare facilitated a breach between the Reichstag and the Crown. Wilhelm sided with military authorities who argued for greater use of submarines. The Reichstag opposed it on the ground that it would put civilians at risk and would further escalate the war. This was the first significant fissure in the *Burgfrieden* between the Reichstag and the Kaiser—a rift that would never be healed. It was clear that military

37. Ibid.
38. Ibid, 46.
39. Ibid.
40. “Excerpt from the memorandum by the Frigate Captain August von Heeringen regarding the tasks and working methods of the News Office”, (September 24, 1900).
43. Ibid, 46.
powers had a much greater influence on the crown than the Reichstag did.

Privation on the Homefront also meant that those whom the SPD represented, namely the working class, were suffering most from the war. The British blockade kept the German population from receiving agricultural goods from outside of the country.\textsuperscript{44} Germany did not have the agricultural production to support its population; it relied heavily on imports of grain before the war. Urban areas especially were reliant on imports and production from the countryside.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, the blockade cut Germany off from much needed food supplies, to the point that there was a deficit of food. The government had drafted plans for rationing of provisions before the war with the assumption that the conflict would strain the German economy. However, the plans only accounted for the first year of the war, and the continuation of the conflict beyond the first year put a strain on the working class.\textsuperscript{46} Because the food deficit was only planned to last for a year, no one had anticipated the need to ration for longer. Thus, rations decreased and became more difficult to procure. In theory, the burden of rationing would fall equally on all members of the population. Propaganda about rationing stressed that people on the home front were practicing discipline and denying themselves for the good of the country and even drew parallels between the citizen and the soldier.\textsuperscript{47} But, the reality of provisioning was that it exacerbated the preexisting class divides. The urban working class turned their suspicions on both the countryside and the urban bourgeoisie. The farmers became the enemy of the working class because they were suspected of withholding provisions from the cities.\textsuperscript{48} The agrarian areas were accused of profiteering instead of doing their patriotic duty to the fatherland.\textsuperscript{49} However, the privation also turned suspicion against the bourgeois. It was assumed that the upper classes received favorable treatment by the rationing authorities. For example, a working-class woman commented that the lines for the rations in affluent areas were far shorter than those in working class areas of the city.\textsuperscript{50} The strain of the war drained the patriotic fervor of the working class and reawakened class conflicts. The rhetoric of self-sacrifice became less convincing as the inequities of society made it seem that the burden of the war effort fell on the working class.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 372.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 374.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 376.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 378.
For the SPD, this frustration at the state of rationing translated to a further doubt of the war effort. Because the SPD’s support was grounded in urban labor unions, privation threatened the practical basis of the party. Thus, the Party was confronting its own support of the war on two fronts: on the ideological front, they were faced with the problem of the war becoming a war of expansion that violated their ideals. On the practical front, the problem of shortages and blockades made the burden of the war fall heavily on the working class. Continuing to support the war (as they did in the beginning) meant questioning both the moral and practical fundament of the party. The Marxist elements of the party became all the more vocal in their opposition to the primary party and in their own strong antiwar sentiment. Though they were primarily Marxist intellectuals, they began to gain support from the growing disillusionment of the working class.

The formal separation of the far left Marxist party from the Socialist Party marked the end of the *Burgfrieden*, and was representative of a separation between moderates, who still favored supporting the war despite its costs, and those who believed peace was a better avenue. This split would be vital in the formation of the Weimar Republic as well as the outbreak of labor strikes, including the Spartacus Movement. The far-left would further radicalize after the outbreak of the Russian Revolution, drawing from its example. The tactics of the two parties and the support that each was able to draw in large part determined the future of German polity.

The question of whether they should continue to support the war even when it was imperialist pushed the moderate SPD closer to the center; as the war continued they defended their position that the war served a purpose that strengthened Socialism. On August 14, 1915, the Party Committee responded to the aims of the war articulated by conservatives and the opposition to the war by convening a party Congress to discuss the problem of the socialist war aims. The Committee decided to affirm moderate support of the war on the grounds that, “The frightful suffering and destruction that this war has brought to humanity have won the hearts of millions over to the ideal of a peace.” This logic, in comparison to that used in the first statement of support, has inverted the claims about war. Instead of claiming that the war is in accordance with socialist principles, they argued that it clarifies the folly of industrial war

52. Ibid, 25.
53. Ibid, 15.
55. Ibid
and expansionist politics. This logic allowed the moderate Socialists to justify the evidence that it was indeed a war of imperialist expansion. They counter the conservative demands for annexation by stating that both Belgium and Alsace Loraine should be allowed to govern themselves.\textsuperscript{56} In declaring this as the condition of their support for a peace settlement, Socialists remained committed to the idea of self-determination.

This position can be explained by the integration of the SPD into the apparatus of rationing, which allowed the SPD to retain their ties with the working class and alleviate the problems facing the unions that supported it. As Allens explains, the SPD was excluded from politics in the pre-war years, however, as they understood the working class far better than traditional elites, they were brought in to help regulate rationing.\textsuperscript{57} This moderate choice to draw the SPD further towards the political center probably staved off the whole of the Socialist Party siding with the Marxists and thereby opposing the government. In this position, the Socialists were able to alleviate the suffering of the working class from privation. This effort allowed for the collaboration between local authorities, socialist politicians, and union leaders, which allowed for the development of a more effective system of rationing that was able to react to local need.\textsuperscript{58} For moderate Socialists, this was the beginning of what they had envisioned as an ideal solution. They were able to use the apparatus of government as it already existed to further their goals and influence society in favor of the working class.

From the government’s point of view, this neutralized the threat of the radicalization of the Socialist Party and thereby turned the working class against the war. By integrating Socialists into the process of rationing, the moderates effectively made the SPD part of the system, and therefore dependent on the continuation of the system. Instead of being outsiders, they were integrated into the government in the capacity that allowed them to be of use.\textsuperscript{59} In Russia, privation on the home front and rapid inflation led to the fomenting of popular socialism that eventually resulted in a rebellion against the government.\textsuperscript{60} By contrast, the German government was able to normalize the moderate socialist position through an acknowledgement that those directly in contact with the working class were most well placed to deal with the problems of the working class. In so doing, they also temporarily lessened the threat of an uprising of the working class. Because the rationing became far more effective and efficient, it

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 382.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 381.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 379.
\end{itemize}
quelled much of the popular resistance to rationing.\(^{61}\) Thus the strategy of allowing the SPD to interact with the populace through the government secured the position of the SPD and ensured that they did not side with their radical brethren.

The expulsion of several far-left deputies from the Party created a permanent split between the radicalized section of the Party and the moderate majority. The far-left faction of the Party had spoken harshly against the position of the moderates since before the war, but they had largely been tolerated within the party because their criticism was not a direct threat to the moderate party’s position. In April 1917, however, several far-left deputies were expelled, ostensibly for their refusal to accept the party line.\(^{62}\) The response of the exiled deputies was to establish a new party, called the *Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (USPD), or the Independent Social Democratic Party, and to publish a manifesto of their intentions. The deputies used the opportunity to express their ideological differences with the main body of the party; they claimed that they were the defenders of the “interest of the working class” and that they were presenting their program as the one truly in line with the true working class.\(^{63}\) They state that, “[They] stand in fundamental opposition to the existing system of government, to the war policy of the federal government, and to the policy that the executive committee of the nominal [Social Democratic] party has pursued in the tow of the government.”\(^{64}\) In this, they conflate the war policy with the stance of the moderate wing of the Socialist Party, thereby rejecting the socialist position that they still support peace. In this, the USPD indicts the position of the SPD as falling in line with the official government position and, thus, abandoning the real basis of a Socialist Party. Their position harkened to the original socialist position of opposition to war, regardless of the reason for the war. They were also reviving the idea of internationalism, which had been formerly only been the area of intellectuals like Luxemburg and Liebknecht. The creation of a separate party created two faces of socialism instead of a single one, which split the support of the workers and unionists.

The fear of the growing USPD influence is clear in government efforts to stifle their calls for peace through censorship and propaganda; if the anti-war feeling wasn’t strong, then the radical left would not have warranted such caution. Censorship laws were passed in 1917 along with the support of the SPD and allowed for the repression of anti-war sentiment. Though they were not mentioned explicitly, the newly formed USPD were the law’s target because of their internationalism. The call for an immedi-

61. Ibid, 382.
63. Ibid, 266.
64. Ibid, 266.
ate general peace threatened the continued belligerence of the German government; the right to assembly and strikes were both targeted by the new laws.\textsuperscript{65} They also included restrictions of the press which outlawed USPD pamphlets and anti-war opinion pieces.\textsuperscript{66} In addition, the government began a program, which was euphemistically termed, “Patriotic Enlightenment,” on May 10, 1917, which had the stated goal, “[To] disseminate clarification about the causes and the purpose of this war, to successfully counteract the incitement and disenchantment that exists in many sectors of society, in order to strengthen the confidence and self-sacrifice of the population.”\textsuperscript{67} This reflects the fact that the USPD were able to gain support on a platform of immediately ending the war. In response, the government sought to reaffirm the principles that had formed the Burgfrieden. In so doing, they sought to remind the German people of the danger of invasion, and that the war was fought for the defense of the German people. They also state that they were acting to counteract the “disenchantment” of the people, which indicates that anti-war sentiment was growing, the cause largely being, “The length of the war, the unprecedented demands that the war has made on each and every one, especially the difficulties concerning the food situation, which have been imposed on us by the English blockade, mean a very severe psychological test.”\textsuperscript{68} This program of Enlightenment laid out a series of steps and propagandistic strategies to counteract each of these problems; these steps reflect a growing popularity of USPD and the threat of the party as an entity outside of and in opposition to the government.

The Russian Revolution further strained this divide between the two socialist parties and placed the government in a precarious position. On the surface, the outbreak of riots in Petrograd was beneficial for the German war effort; it removed the most significant threat on the Eastern front, which simplified German war plans.\textsuperscript{69} However, peace with Russia in the wake of the revolution brought a series of complications to every part of the German government.\textsuperscript{70} For conservatives and moderates, accepting peace negotiations with the Bolsheviks meant recognizing and legitimizing a government that came to power through a populist, socialist revolution. For conser-


\textsuperscript{67} “Richtlinien für die Aufklärungs- und Propagandatätigkeit im Bereich des stellv. Generalkommandos des X. AK.” (Hanover, 1917) http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/819_Patriotic_Enlightenment_158.pdf

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid


vatives this was especially problematic, because their stance stringently opposed revolution. However, many of the leaders of the conservative movement, like Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the generals in command of the Eastern Front, were military strategists who benefited from the overthrow of the Tsar and a favorable peace with Russia.\footnote{Ibid, 341.}

For the SPD, the fall of the autocracy also presented a problem. Fear of Imperial Russia had been an important foundation of their ideology in the early stages of the war, and it was removed by the Russian revolution.\footnote{Ibid, 339.} Thus, their complaint that they were supporting the war to protect the German working class from threats of Russian autocracy were hollowed. They also faced the idea that the Bolsheviks were able to overturn society through a socialist revolution, which contradicted their stance of cooperation with the other political parties, which was based on the assumption that socialist change can only occur inside the government instead of through extra-governmental revolution. Thus, by accepting the Bolsheviks, they also bent to the logic of the USPD and revolutionary socialists.\footnote{Ibid, 341.} Only the USPD could truly celebrate the Russian Revolution, and it emboldened their calls for radical revolution.

The SPD faced the contradictions of Leninism by separating themselves from the ideology of Leninism. They denounced the Bolshevik Revolution as a perversion of socialist ideology\footnote{Ibid, 343.} because of the violence and the disorder. This affirmed their own position that only a true Socialism could be reached through governmental means. On the subject of peace, they followed their own earlier stated peace goals and demanded that the peace be made “without annexations”\footnote{Ibid, 377.} If peace was made with territory gains, the SPD would have concrete evidence that the war was one of conquest. They attempted to apply pressure from inside of the government for the peace with Russia to respect the self determination of the people in Eastern Europe. They demanded a peace with no gain for Germany.\footnote{Ibid} However, despite the influence of the SPD, the ultimate peace with Russia did involve significant territorial gains. The peace constituted a blow to the SPD’s insistence that they were able to influence politics most effectively from within and drew criticism from the USPD as being support for imperialism.

For the USPD, the Russian Revolution provided an example which they sought to immediately emulate through workers’ strikes. January 1918 was a turning point for German Socialism as a large portion of the working class embraced the cause of the USPD and participated in strikes. The Russian Revolution of 1917 served as the model
for USPD’s vision, as one of their many illegal flyers declares, they seek to create an, “elected representative body on the Russian and Austrian model, whose function will be to lead this and future struggle.”\(^{77}\) Their demands were modeled after the *Communist Manifesto* and on the experience of the Russian Revolution.\(^{78}\) The flyer uses the language of class warfare trumping national identity, stating that workers in Austria-Hungary and Russia were both brothers as much as fellow workers.\(^{79}\) In contrast to this expression of solidarity, the USPD also indicts the SPD; they claim, “Let us not allow ourselves to be beguiled by empty phrases about peace and by those who don the mask of sympathy with our struggle.”\(^{80}\) In the eyes of the radical left, the SPD were little more than puppets to quell the legitimate grievances of the working class. They even go so far as to claim that these “wolves in sheep’s clothing” are far more dangerous to the working class than the police because they, unlike the openly hostile police, claim to represent the working class while working to confuse them. This constitutes the complete polarization of the socialist sects because of the war. The strikes that broke out in the major industrial centers in Berlin and other cities speak to the appeal of peace.

The strikes of 1918 failed, but the strikes were still vitally important to understanding the fragmentation of German politics during the period of the war. They marked the moment that the radicalization of the far-left and the moderation of the center turned the Socialist Party completely against itself. Both sides repudiated each other both in word and deed. The government, which the USPD sought to eliminate, included the SPD, and in turn the SPD supported the repression of the protests.\(^{81}\) The support of the brutal suppression of strikes was the moment when the SPD severed the direct ties that had connected them to the working class. In supporting the suppression of a worker’s protest, they chose the side of government over the people that had supported them.\(^{82}\) Instead of creating political unity, the war had exacerbated the divisions that already existed between different parts of the socialist movement.

The legacy of this split in the political party, and the split between the working class and the government, can be seen in the uncertainty that followed the collapse of the Second Reich in 1919. The abdication of the Kaiser, which was forced by the gen-


\(^{78}\). Ibid.

\(^{79}\). Ibid.

\(^{80}\). Ibid.


erals and the Reichstag, forced the issue of the political future of Germany.\textsuperscript{83} Wilhelm had brought about his own demise because he presented many of the war decisions as his own. Rather than making his rule more secure, his insistence on personal rule made him a scapegoat, even once real authority had passed to Hindenburg and Ludendorff.\textsuperscript{84} The removal of the King created an opportunity to reshape the system of government; to which the SPD and USPD offered very different solutions. The Weimar Coalition, which declared a republic in 1919 after the abdication of the Kaiser, presented itself as a revolution for the sake of the people.\textsuperscript{85} But, to a very large extent, the movement was conservative. There were very slight changes made in the actual parliamentary procedures from those that had existed in the Wilhelmine Reichstag.\textsuperscript{86} The establishment of the Weimar Republic followed the familiar model of the Prussian “Revolution from Above” where those already in power dictated the changes in the political system.\textsuperscript{87} This form of reform from those in power to avert revolution from below had been a staple of the Prussian model of governance since 1848. In this way, there was little novel about the formation of the Weimar. By the end of the war, every party that made up the Weimar Coalition was already influential in German politics. With the removal of the Kaiser, the Reichstag became the strongest political body, no longer subordinate to the kaiser, but this was not accompanied by a drastic shift in domestic policy. The workers’ uprisings, such as the one in Kiel, were still suppressed under the new Weimar government.

The \textit{Spartakus} Movement was the true revolutionary movement because it actually sought a completely new system. The Spartacus League, which was the most radical wing of the USPD founded in 1918, called for the immediate revolution of German society on a Marxist model: they reacted to the establishment of a Republic with calls for revolution. In the explanation of their program, Rosa Luxemburg wrote that, “It has been shown that the union ….under the banner of “socialism” serves merely as a fig leaf for the veiling of a counter-revolutionary policy.”\textsuperscript{88} The “union” that Luxembour referred to was the coalition that formed the Weimar Republic and suppressed revolutionary actions in 1918. The party maintained that moderate Socialism had abandoned the truth of Socialism and been used by centrist conservatives as a guise under which to continue repressing the working class. The fiery rhetoric of the Sparta-

\textsuperscript{83} Wolfgang J. Momsen, “Kaiser Wilhelm II and German Politics” \textit{Journal of Contemporary History} Vol. 25 No. 2/3, 311.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 70.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, 190.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 192.
cists found the most traction in areas outside of Berlin. The revolution never gained the same momentum as their Russian counterparts, though they did have success in the South and the East. The reason for this lies, according to Allens, in the success of the SPD during the war in provisioning. He argues that the integration of the SPD and the success of the rationing program meant that the people were not desperate enough to turn to revolution. The extremity of the Spartacus program was unappealing in comparison to a representative government along the old model. Therefore, popular support never grew sufficiently to create a revolution. Eventually, Weimar authorities were able to suppress all Spartacus uprisings and arrest its leaders. The assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who had been the most vocal of the far left and the leaders of the Spartacists, effectively ended the Spartacus movement and the USPD, though now separate from the SPD, became one of the many parties vying for influence in the Weimar Reichstag.

Though the far-left attempts at revolution failed, the violence of the far left created an impression in German politics far into the inter-war period. Memory of the violence of the communist uprisings created a pervasive red scare, which led to a strengthening of the right. Communists would not be able to gain significant traction in German politics until the early 1930s, when the inability of the Weimar government to deal with the swift economic depression caused both sides of the political spectrum to radicalize. Socialist moderates lost support as the authority of a democratically elected legislature were increasingly seen as weak; anti-democratic ideologies, notably National Socialism and Communism gained influence and were eventually able to overthrow the Republic.

The Burgfrieden was intended to unify the German people and reduce the political fragmentation of Germany; however, the idea of a defensive war was easily called into question. The Burgfrieden fractured under the pressure of the war, especially as socialist support was questioned by radical elements of the party. The problems of both imperialism and privation tested the support of the SPD and led to a split between radical communists and Socialists who continued to support the war, despite its contradictions with socialist principles. The war, far from unifying the German cause, caused every pre-war tension to shatter into dissent and revolution. The shattering of the political landscape would persevere into the Weimar Republic.

90. Ibid, 385.
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The Blue, the Gray, and the Silver Screen: American Film as the Final Reckoning for Civil War Memory

Isabella Welch

Possibly the most contentious event in the history of the United States, the American Civil War embodies an array of social, cultural, and political issues—many of which still plague the nation today. The varying memory traditions used to study and commemorate this war shed light on the changing needs and mindset of the country, spanning from the war’s culmination to present day. In this paper, I aim to detail the changing popularity of the four prevalent memory traditions, those being The Lost Cause, the Union Cause, the Reconciliation Cause, and the Emancipationist Cause through film. I will put the narrative of popular films in context with the state of American society and politics, thus highlighting the changing manner in which the Civil War is remembered based on the moral maturity and civil activism occurring in the U.S. at each time period. American society has invested itself in different causes at different times, the trends of which I note in this paper. I will focus on a handful of films that run the gamut of each memory tradition, starting with The Birth of a Nation in 1915, then discussing Gone With the Wind, Glory, Lincoln, The Keeping Room, and ending with the 2016 version of The Birth of Nation, which brings the discussion of memory through film and power of film in regard to the Civil War full circle.

The memory traditions of the Civil War have ebbed and flowed since the war’s conclusion. From the “Lost Cause” to the “Emancipationist Cause,” and everything in between, films have served as a kind of reckoning for the memory of the Civil War. Though the war ended in 1865, the battle for the memorialization of this American War has been one hard-fought for over a century, the timeline of which can be directly observed through the trends in Civil War films. Rather than portraying accurate historical events or figures, films have instead taught audiences more about what society chooses to remember about the Civil War, and what aspects of it they continue to sweep under the proverbial rug. In this paper, I aim to detail the changing popularity of the four prevalent memory traditions, which are the “Lost Cause,” the “Union Cause,”
the “Reconciliation Cause”, and the “Emancipationist Cause.” American society has invested itself in different causes at different times, the trends of which can be seen by popular Civil War movies. I will focus on a handful of films that run the gamut of memory traditions, starting with *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, then discussing *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *Glory* (1989), *Cold Mountain* (2003), *Lincoln* (2012), *The Keeping Room* (2015), and ending with the 2016 version of *The Birth of Nation*, which brings the discussion of memory through film and power of film in regard to the Civil War full circle.

The Lost Cause film tradition began most dramatically with *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915. The first feature-length film, this silent movie caught the attention of audiences with its blatant white nationalism. Then-President Woodrow Wilson even allegedly responded to the film by saying, “It is like writing history with lightning.”\(^2\) What with him being a Southerner, and historians such as Douglas Southall Freeman and Jubal Early\(^3\) of the past decades fortifying Lost Cause literature, it is not surprising that the film did well with white audiences. *The Birth of a Nation* director D. W. Griffith made a concerted attempt to portray *Birth* as a historically accurate film,\(^4\) an effort that is visible in the battle scenes and the focus on political events of the time period. That is not to say, however, that Griffith’s film is unbiased. *Birth* paints African Americans as “renegades” or “faithful servants,” leaving no room for agency or complexity whatsoever.\(^5\) The Union and its political leaders scorn the white Southerners in the film, seeming to only hold the aim of Confederate degradation. During the early 20\(^{th}\) century, the Lost Cause was gaining prevalence and much of white society held African Americans in extremely poor esteem while they glorified the genteel Southern way of life that effectively died after the Civil War. In his book *Gone with the Glory*, Brian Steel Wills addresses the overall sentiment of white society at the time, arguing that “Griffith’s story of the South in the crucible of war and reconstruction represents the

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1. *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by. D.W. Griffith. (1915; Los Angeles: David W. Griffith Corp), DVD.
3. Both Freeman and Early, as well as Southern education warrior Mildred L. Rutherford falsified numbers, promoted blatant lies, and exaggerated facts about the Confederacy through their literature and curriculum, ultimately taking a loss and molding it into something they could foster a sense of pride in, as a noble, defining moment of their history. Despite the fact that many claims and histories used to create this enshrined vision of the South were completely false, they still served their greater purpose of inciting Southerners to pass on a martyred, exemplary Southern tradition to future generations. [Gary W. Gallagher, “Shaping Public Memory of the Civil War: Robert E. Lee, Jubal A. Early, and Douglas Southall Freeman,” and James M. McPherson, “Long-Legged Yankee Lies’: The Southern Textbook Crusade” in Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh eds. *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*” (2004).]
5. *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by. D.W. Griffith. (1915; Los Angeles: David W. Griffith Corp), DVD.
popular version for white conservatives in the period in which he produced the film.”

Furthermore, the film not only romanticized Southern society, but it outright glorified the Ku Klux Klan, portraying the bed sheet-clad cross-burners not as racist terrorists, but rather as brave, upstanding men whose coalition was founded upon the premise of protection. Wills argues,

Thus the formation of the Ku Klux Klan is born as a protective and defensive organization of former Confederates embroiled in a struggle with the Radical Republicans, and the former slaves who assist them, for the survival of Southern whites... It is the Klan that rides to the rescue of a beset white population, and its triumph is the Klan's as well. The Confederates States of America may have lost the war, but with Griffith in the director's chair, the battered and broken South emerges from it on its way to winning peace.

Films such as Birth of a Nation cannot be completely indicative of early 20th century American society. I would argue, however, that films are not made with the mindset of being displeasing to the masses. On the contrary, the entertainment industry thrives on popularity. Therefore, I argue it is logical to ascertain that the United States in 1915 was not only plagued by severe racial demarcation, but it also was largely accepting of the Lost Cause as truth. The Confederate Soldier had, to a noticeable extent, become an American martyr. His cause was valid; his story was beloved.

The Lost Cause’s lure did not quickly die off, but rather grew over the decades. It reached its peak with the success of Margaret Mitchell’s novel, Gone With the Wind, in 1936. The film based upon her work was released three years later, immediately met with widespread acclaim. Films are, in so many ways, the keepers of our collective memory of society. They define matters of culture and immortalize the ideals that society holds dear. Whether or not films are always factual or even rooted in truth often proves to be beside the point; what truly matters is the emotion films elicit from the audience, and how much staying power said film has in popular culture. In regard to the Civil War, films such as Gone With the Wind have woven a near-unshakable image of the war—one that lovers of film have perpetuated since release. In his book The Reel Civil War, Historian Bruce Chadwick notes the various inaccuracies of the film, from the exaggeration of the wealth and elitism of slave-owning Southerners to

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6. Wills, Gone With the Glory, 14.
7. Wills, Gone With the Glory, 13.
8. Mitchell, Margaret, Gone With the Wind. (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall, 1936.), 1.
9. Gone with the Wind, directed by Victor Fleming. (1939; Los Angeles: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), DVD.
the fabricated architectural design of the iconic Tara plantation. Despite these obvious divergences from fact, Chadwick highlights that the filmmakers made poignant decisions in the movie rendering of Margaret Mitchell’s novel, clearly displaying an understanding of the affect a movie revering the Old South may cause disruption in a still-mending society. At first glance, *Gone With the Wind* appears to be the perfect embodiment of Lost Cause propaganda. I believed this myself until I read Chadwick’s film history of the classic feature. Upon learning of the various ways that Selznick altered scenes, strategically chose anti-inflammatory actors (i.e. the already-beloved Clark Gable, and British actors Vivien Leigh and Leslie Howard), and expertly avoided allusions to the KKK and overzealous Yankee-hating, it became clear to me that there was a much larger agenda behind *Gone With the Wind* than I originally understood. It appears that though Margaret Mitchell’s novel was deeply rooted in pro-Southern histrionics, the film had a goal less centered around Lost Cause perpetuation, and more so on a new wave reconciliation of North and South. The reception of the film proved to be just that: something truly beloved by so many, despite the complex (and at times stifled) implications of race, war, history, and memory.

As society and its interpretation of the Civil War changed with the decades, new films continued to be made about the event. By the 1980s, new Lost Cause literature and film were no longer as prevalent. I believe the growing diversity of the nation as well as the extreme affect of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s led to a different narrative arising from the wreckage of the American Civil War. The Emancipationist Cause was often eradicated from Civil War storytelling because it focused on the moral wrong of slavery. A story of freedom cannot be told without first explaining who was in chains. After the Civil War, the nation’s push for Reconciliation bypassed emancipation because it was a dividing factor for many Americans. Subsequent African American figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X shed light on the continued struggle for black equality, thus inspiring film to mirror the sentiment. *Glory* was released in 1989 and has since become one of the most famous Civil War films, telling a previously silenced story of the first all-black regiment in the Union Army. In 2012, Steven Spielberg’s *Lincoln* continued in the vein of enlightened

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12. To this day, *GWTW* is the most successful film at the box office. Adjusted for inflation, its ticket sales averaged about $1.64 billion. The classic tale has remained a cornerstone of American film culture since its release, and Mitchell’s novel has never been out of print, thus proving the extreme staying power of the plight of Scarlett O’Hara. [Schwartzel, Erich. “Scarlett O’Hara Keeps ‘Jurassic World’ at Bay.” *Wall Street Journal* [New York City] 15 June 2015. Print.]

storytelling by depicting a very honest Abraham Lincoln grappling with the struggles of war and emancipation.¹⁴ Both *Glory* and *Lincoln* are deeply rooted in a theme of strength, suffering, and ultimate liberation at the hands of the Civil War. Interestingly, however, neither of the aforementioned films largely embodies the Union Cause, but rather focus on emancipation specifically. The Union Cause, though vastly important in history, barely has its own legs to stand on in popular culture or memory today. Rather, it has been eclipsed by the Emancipationist Cause. This may be due to the fact that once the Union proved to be victorious in 1865, its previous struggle of separation became a non-issue. Once its fearless leaders such as U.S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman died in the decades following the war, the Union Cause was all but forgotten—something society could not see or romanticize.

I believe that the Emancipationist Cause outlived the Union Cause because it transcends the war itself; it serves as a platform for racial equality and freedom from oppression—topics that plague societies time and time again. With both *Glory* and *Lincoln*, however, the presence of a white savior is extremely evident. Particularly in *Glory*, all is made possible because of the leadership of a white man. In this way, the strategic planning of films illuminates much of society’s interests and sentiments at the time. While clearly excited about telling the story of the Massachusetts 54th, filmmakers understood that writing the film with the black soldiers as the driving force of the narrative would be too progressive (even in 1989) for the majority of audiences to appreciate. Therefore, Colonel Shaw is elevated to the rank of white savior in the film, a perfect martyr sent to lead the powerless, immobile black regiment. The mistake in creating a movie with this angle is that it further reified the “white savior, black victim” image. *Glory* played into a condescending, contrived display of racial tension that honestly did not need further support. Actors in *Glory* admitted to the unbalanced narrative that favored whites rather than honest African American storytelling. Denzel Washington noted that, “I did express my concern to Ed (Zwick) and Freddie (Fields) that the movie not be about whites...” and Morgan Freeman acknowledged that “...it might be unfortunate that a black writer didn’t write it...”¹⁵ It is sadly telling that the creation of a movie about the most famous black regiment of the Civil War was primarily produced by white filmmakers. It is further saddening that the black actors in the film had to be accepting of that fact. It would be a mistake to judge films too harshly when, after all, they are meant to inspire and entertain—beholden to no true sense of historical accuracy. They do hold such power, however, and therefore are re-

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¹⁴ *Lincoln*, directed by Steven Spielberg. (2012; Los Angeles: DreamWorks Studios), DVD.
sponsible for the various narratives they spin for their audiences. By injecting films with their own biases, filmmakers tweak the collective memory of common society, and that can be a dangerous thing.

*Lincoln* deserves much less scorn, in my opinion, because the film did not pretend to be a story of liberation, but rather *deliberation* as the President struggles with the decisions and strategies he must face.\(^\text{16}\) The character of Lincoln is one easily elevated to godly status, as his balanced temper and unyielding dedication have left many Americans bound to his goodness. Merrill D. Peterson’s essay, “Apotheosis,” also centers on the admiration of Lincoln and affect he had on the nation. Peterson focuses much of her narrative on the death of Lincoln, and his memorialization by Americans since his assassination. The title of Peterson’s analysis itself perfectly sums up the identity of Lincoln. “Apotheosis” was a process by which something was lifted to god-like holiness or importance in ancient Greece. Today, it also can mean the best form of something, or the making of someone into a hero. That is precisely the legacy of Lincoln, at least amongst those who sympathize with the Union over the Confederacy. Peterson draws examples from both white Americans and African Americans to distinguish the importance of Lincoln to masses of people. Both whites and blacks alike revered this man as akin to Jesus Christ, even drawing comparisons between he and Jesus both dying on Black Friday.\(^\text{17}\) As much as Lincoln may have been celebrated in life, it was not until death that the true apotheosis occurred. His funeral procession set a precedent for how a legend is to be established, how legacy is to be forged and cemented by death. (Jackie Kennedy knew this some one hundred years later when she modeled JFK’s funeral after Lincoln’s). Like so many other details and truths of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln came to hold a synergistic sort of power after his death, a figure so much more than mere man. Perhaps the fact and fiction enshrouding him are indistinguishable from each other now, for the legacy is even more well known than the individual after all this time. Spielberg’s *Lincoln* reifies the titanic identity of the sixteenth American President, but does so without excessive fuss or histrionics. I believe that over the decades, filmmakers have challenged themselves to inject a greater sense of reality and humanity into their works. Though the end result is never precisely accurate, the multidimensional analyses, when viewed as a collective study, illustrate the warring ideologies, memories, and understanding of America’s most personal war.

The stark differences between films such as *Gone With the Wind* and *Glory* are instantly noticeable. The characters and their walks of life prove to be extremely contrastive throughout the narrative, yet strength and the defiance of insurmountable odds are themes that both films (and the countless others) employ. Scarlett O’Hara is

\(^{16}\) *Lincoln*, directed by Steven Spielberg. (2012; Los Angeles: DreamWorks Studios), DVD.

not beloved because of her hoop skirts and seventeen-inch waist (the smallest in three counties!), nor is *Glory's Trip* so astutely recalled in historical cinematic memory only because he was an angry former slave. The characters are beloved and remembered and inspiring because they appeal to humanity; I would argue their stories and gumption call upon “the better angels of our nature” and make a very painful memory stain on America’s conscience seem to mean something far greater than 700,000 men dead on a battlefield.

Characters with idealistic and inspiring traits are recycled and made new with each generation, tailored to embody the racial and political tensions of each time period. In the past fifteen years, Civil War films have come to encapsulate not one singular cause, but rather many causes. Some even defy all four established memory traditions and instead seek to communicate greater overarching themes of war. *Cold Mountain* (2003) and *The Keeping Room* (2014), which both employ the setting of the Confederate South as a platform, build upon a darker, arguably more realistic image of war. By focusing on the ugliness of war in general, the films make a comment on the all-devastating power of violence. In both films, the issue of slavery is largely avoided. Rather than this being a purposeful omission, however, I would argue *Cold Mountain* and *The Keeping Room* aim to make an evident anti-war statement, rather than focus on the causes that bring said wars about. Furthermore, I argue these films are valid in the sense that they highlight a truth of the Confederacy that should not be forgotten. As journalist William C. Davis noted in 2015, certain aspects of the Confederate experiment “must be preserved, not expunged. They must be understood, not whitewashed.”

The Reconciliation Cause, I believe, has long been the most powerful memory tradition of the American Civil War. While at first the purpose of it was to reunite and console a broken nation, it seems evident that America’s changing ideals have transformed said cause into something quite different over the years. Initially, the Reconciliation Cause excluded African Americans and tactfully ignored the most contentious, moral wrongs of the four-year war. Evidence of this behavior can be viewed in the handling of Memorial Day. The holiday was first celebrated in 1865 by thousands of African Americans as they decorated the graves of “the Martyrs of the Race Course,” a burial ground that lay upon a Prisoner of War camp where over

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two hundred Union Soldiers perished. The desire for the entire country to mourn their dead and find closure from the long war, however, led to the commandeering of Memorial Day by the white population. Many Americans in both the North and South used the Memorial Day concept to blur the true implications and causes of the Civil War in order to pave a smoother road into the nation’s future. Struggling to stay apart of that narrative, however, was the “Emancipationist Cause” and the true politics of the violent war in general.

Early Civil War films mirror this practice by either focusing on the Lost Cause or the Reconciliation Cause. Likewise, statues, museums, and memorials featured Yankees and Confederates alike, but rarely ever a black soldier or freed slave. While these art forms served as an admirable catalyst for white reconciliation, the majority of them did little in the aim of actual atonement for what came before. After the Civil Rights movement, however, narratives slowly changed both on and off screen. As I argued earlier, Glory, at the very least, made a step in the right direction of diverse storytelling, making room for future films to inspire even more African American agency. Thus, the 2016 film The Birth of a Nation serves as the ultimate example of reconciliation through film. The first grand-scale Civil War film from 1915 that started riots and promoted the KKK openly, has been equaled one hundred years later with a film of the same name—only this time the focus is on Nat Turner’s slave rebellion in the Antebellum South. The allusion to the 1915 film is undoubtedly intentional, responding to the comment D.W. Griffith’s film made over a century ago. One hundred years ago, a film focusing on the uprising of slaves would not have been tolerated by society. With the maturity that comes with a century, however, in addition to the heightened voices calling for African American justice and, quite possibly, the election of an African American man as President of the United States, American society proved capable of an all-black narrative of the Antebellum South. Therefore, I believe America has reached a new era of Reconciliation, one that does not ask each memory of the Civil War to bleed together, but instead provides a platform for each story to be told with conviction and respect. Perhaps film proves that America itself is too large and complex to adopt

25. The Birth of a Nation, directed by Nate Parker. (2016; Los Angles: Fox Searchlight Pictures), DVD.
26. In the past decade, justice and equality for African Americans has taken on a new face. The “Black Lives Matter” movement has started a broader conversation. Furthermore, the removal of the Confederate Flag from the South Carolina State House galvanized a movement calling for removal of other Confederate memorials and statues—some students even have called for the renaming of Southern Confederate-dedicated university buildings. [Davis, William C., “The Right Way to Remember the Confederacy.” Wall Street Journal (New York City) 7 July 2015. Print.]
just one memory tradition and use it as a blanket interpretation of an inconsolable war. Perhaps film itself has been the embodiment of the American people’s reckoning of one of its most profound sins.

Historian James McPherson asked, “Can movies teach history?” I would argue no on most accounts, but they can teach us how society interacts with history. They can teach us what themes and human ideals matter most to us, enough for society to resurrect them and employ their help to live our lives today. In countless ways, films have served as the final reckoning of the legacy and memory of the American Civil War. Analyzing and evaluating the many voices vying for commemoration of the war provides students of history with a framework of America’s memory timeline—perhaps even displaying how the nation’s ideals and prejudices have been altered. Certain narratives speak louder than others, but all contribute to some vague reconciliation—a shared final battlefield for memory, one I would argue never ends. In Pablo’s Larrain’s biopic Jackie (2016), the leading role and former First Lady (played by Natalie Portman) says, “I believe the characters we read on the page become more real than the men who stand beside us.”

The irony that this is a quote taken from a historically based film is noted, but the sentiment is nonetheless legitimate. Filmmakers and storytellers alike perpetuate a myth long enough that it does not matter whether it is wholly true—or even partially true. All that matters is that the myth withstands the test of time, the test of memory.

**Works Cited**

*The Keeping Room.* Directed by Daniel Barber. 2014. Los Angeles: Gilbert Films. DVD.


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