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Dear Readers,

2017 was saturated with events that political and cultural commentators have rushed to characterize as ‘historical.’ The election of multiple transgender candidates to political office throughout the United States in November earned its ‘historical’ designation as a watershed moment for gender equality stateside. At the same time, a global trend towards xenophobic nationalism earned its embodiment in the ‘Age of Trump.’ These appeals to history-in-the-making resonated through discussions of events that continued to unfold; they also articulated subtle claims as to what properly constitutes the ‘historical.’

Given this popular association of the historical with the earth-shattering, one might plausibly expect for the essays in this journal, written by undergraduate historians, to grapple with the grandiose, even the hyperbolic. Yet the pieces that we’ve published in this issue seem to defy this particular vision of history, and their authors have chosen to understand a varied collection of unexpected individuals, institutions, and things as historical subjects in their own right.

Magdalene Klassen’s “Ulrikab Abroad: ‘Authentic’ Inuit-German Encounters in Labrador and Germany” traces the journey of a little-known Inuit Moravian, remembered as Abraham Ulrikab, from Labrador to the human zoos of late nineteenth-century Germany. In subverting our expectations of colonized voice and agency during a triumphalist moment in imperial Europe when race biology thrived, Klassen’s piece is an astute reading of the margins of a burgeoning empire.

In “University in Exile,” Tianyi Dong closely analyzes the oft-overlooked writings of intellectuals at a prominent Chinese university in the midst of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Her sensitive depiction of students’ and professors’ academic and political lives opens onto broader questions about the contestations and constraints that emerged within a university beset by the exigencies of national conflict.

While opium in the British Empire is relatively well-trodden ground, Naomi Elliot’s “Illicit Consumption” returns the gaze to the metropole—an analytical move that has been more popular in literary studies than in historical ones—to discuss how opium use is subtly inflected by race, class, and gender. Elliot’s work brings nuance to the field by laying bare the colonial anxieties that attend the increasingly pervasive consumption of a commodity that was indispensable for the Empire’s economic success.

In “‘Egypt’ and Emancipation: An Exploration of Political Partisanship in Wartime Illinois,” Ian Iverson moves away from the staggering bloodshed of the American Civil War and towards the intricate political drama that unfolded in Republican President Abraham Lincoln’s home state during the midterm elections of 1862. By moving slightly afield from the military events that continue to capture popular historical imagination, Iverson’s detailed study adds crucial nuance to the history of party formation in the United States.

The theoretical exploits of quantum physicists and the minute experiments of biologists seem so hyper-specialized and erudite as to defy lay comprehension. The final piece of our Winter 2018 issue, Ari Feldman’s “Coherence,” engages both. In a tone both clarifying and cheeky, Feldman narrates their surprising confluence in research on purple bacteria, and provocatively suggests the stakes of ‘quantum biology’ for competing conceptions of life itself.

This issue would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our featured authors; the Chicago Journal of History editorial board; and the CJH editor who pulled double duty as the journal’s designer, Sarah Larson. In the early autumn of 2017, Chicago Journal of History collaborated with UChicago PaleoClub to sponsor a lecture by historian Michael Rossi titled “An Ignorance of Mammoths.” We’d like to use this space to formally thank Dr. Rossi and Alexander Okamoto, President of PaleoClub, for their time and talents as well.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Sincerely,

Colin Garon and Darren Wan
Editors-in-Chief

University in Exile: The Limit of Academic Freedom in Chinese Wartime Higher Education

BY TIANYI DONG, University of California, Berkeley

As the Japanese army launched its comprehensive attack on China in July 1937 and invaded the cities of Beijing (then Beiping) and Tianjin, it made particular efforts to destroy or control their cultural centers: the universities. In Tianjin, it bombarded to ruins Nankai University (henceforth Nankai), which for them was “the base of insurgent activities” of the city, whereas in Beiping, although Peking University (*Beijing daxue*, henceforth Beida) and Tsinghua University (henceforth Tsinghua) were fortunate enough to escape bombardment, they saw their home campuses occupied and academic buildings seized and repurposed as military headquarters. These three of Republican China’s best universities, under the order of the Ministry of Education of the Nationalist (Kuomintang, KMT) government, united to become the National Southwest Associated University (*Guoli xinan lianhe daxue*, henceforth Lianda) and migrated to the hinterland to “preserve the essence of national culture”—first to Changsha, the capital of Hunan province on the southern bank of Yangtze River, then further to Kunming in Yunnan province of the southwest, safe from immediate Japanese incursion.¹

Lianda was not alone in its migration to the interior during the war. In Yunnan, there we also Tongji University from Shanghai, Sun Yat-sen University from Canton, and the Engineering College of Tangshan from Hebei, all of which moved from war zones in occupied

eastern provinces.² Still, Lianda was considered exceptional among them. It was widely acclaimed as the “bastion of democracy” in Nationalist China, convening the country’s best scholars and enjoying an international reputation for free inquiry, liberal education, and cutting-edge research. Lianda is often romanticized in historical scholarship as upholding its liberal ideals despite the hostile environment and the hardship of war, as well as for its unyielding resistance to an authoritarian and corrupt government. In this paper, however, I aim to argue that neither liberal democracy nor liberal arts education became the university’s fundamental policy. The core of Lianda’s intellectual identity was—and only was—academic freedom, which its professors were not able to defend against the ruling party because of their dependency on the government to sustain their privilege as a distinct social group. The loss of academic freedom for Lianda would not only signify the final demise of a liberal vision for modern China, but also symbolize one of the last stages of the growing irrelevance of intellectuals in defining the future of the nation.³

In the following pages, I will first briefly review

1 John Israel, *Lianda: a Chinese University in War and Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 12–15.

2 *Xu Yunnan tong zhi chang bian* [Continued Long Compilation of Yunnan Gazetteer] (1945, reprint, Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 2010), vol. 2.49, 823.

3 My argument here engages several rather broad terms, so I try to use the very narrow and literal sense of the words: “liberal democracy” refers to government by election and constitution; “liberal-arts education” refers to a broad exposure to science and humanities, as opposed to strict vocational training; ‘academic freedom’ refers to the ability for faculty to teach and discuss ideas without restriction.

the representative literature on Lianda, then establish a chronological narrative of the status of academic freedom at the university throughout the war, and finally, by examining individual professors' writings—which have largely been mythicized and glossed over—show how Lianda's relationship with the Kuomintang led to the encroachment on its academic freedom over time. The primary sources I use include the wartime journals (primarily *Jinri pinglun* [Today's Review]) published by Lianda professors and their diaries and later memoirs, in addition to archives of Lianda and the Ministry of Education.⁴ By looking closely at the transformation of Lianda through eight years of war and its changing relationship with the ruling party, this paper aims to present a more complex picture of Lianda's wartime experience. The constant negotiation between a totalitarian government and supposedly autonomous university administration on whether academia was more an independent profession or one irresistibly attached to a national community shaped Lianda's destiny throughout the war. In the second half of this paper, I will delve deeper into the concept of academic freedom in the context of the quest for China's modernity by a throng of rivaling, conflicting forces. In this way, Lianda's singular wartime experience can shed light on the sociopolitical phenomenon of intellectual alienation, in the process of which Lianda professors lost their autonomy to the totalitarian political powers.

Literature Review: “A Bastion of Democracy”?

Narratives about the Lianda experience are abundant in Chinese scholarship, as it has long been established as the pinnacle of higher education in China. Historical studies have mostly focused on its academic achievement, practices of self-governance, and patriotic or revolutionary contributions.⁵ Xie Yong coined the term “Lianda Intellectual Group (聯大知識分子群 *Lianda Zhishi Fenzi Qun*),” including not only Lianda professors but also individuals associated with Lianda only indirectly, such as Hu Shi and Fu Sinian.⁶ This loose group of intellectuals, as characterized by Xie, collectively represented the crown jewel of Chinese academia and were bound together by their shared experience of American education and affinity for the tenets of political liberalism: constitutional democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, and international cooperation. In Xie's idealized picture, Lianda professors enjoyed the freedom to publicize their opinions, choose their institutional affiliation, and disregard instructions from the government at will, bargaining with their high social status and economic autonomy.⁷ In general, studies on various aspects of the experience and significance of Lianda stick, like Xie's, to a liberal characterization that highlights its democracy and freedom. This includes John Israel's *Lianda: A Chinese University in*

5 Xie, *Xian zheng yun dong*, 5–8.

6 Hu Shi, although not physically present in Yunnan, was heavily involved in Lianda's initial planning and maintained correspondence with Lianda throughout the war. Fu Sinian, the founder of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, spent his war years with the Institute instead of Lianda, but was still present in Yunnan for a period of time, kept close contact with the professors, was a major contributor to *Jinri Pinglun*, and was eventually appointed to the Lianda's standing committee in 1945 after Beida president Jiang Menglin left.

7 Xie, *Lianda and Modern Chinese Intellectuals*, 13–17, 40–41.

4 *Jinri Pinglun* (今日評論) was a journal published in Yunnan between 1939 and 1941, and the majority of its editors and contributors came from Lianda. For an overview of the journal, see Xie Hui, *Xi nan lian da yu Kangzhan shi qi de xian zheng yun dong* [The National Southwest Associated University and the Constitutional Movement during the War of Resistance] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010), 26–51. Quotations from the journal cited in the paper are the author's own translation.

War and Revolution, which brought the university to the attention of English readers. The central question he explores is the historical conditions that allowed a liberal education like Lianda to flourish in wartime China, and he concludes that it was a result of the legacy Lianda inherited from the faculty members of Beida, Tsinghua, and Nankai, the vast majority if not all of whom were educated in the Anglo-American academic tradition through undergraduate or doctoral studies. They formed the basis of Lianda's vision and practices of freedom.⁸

By looking at Lianda and its professors at the center of opposing forces, this paper hopes to transcend previous narratives and show that Lianda could initially enjoy certain freedoms because the KMT was still willing to preserve its intellectual and social prestige at the beginning of war. Left on its own, Lianda in fact had no power of its own to defend such freedom. In other words, freedom was a privilege that remained in the hands of the powerful in wartime China.

Higher Education under the Kuomintang before 1937: In the Shadow of War

Fighting in northern China started even before the Marco Polo Bridge incident broke out in the suburb of Beiping in 1937. In fact, the possibility of war with Japan had been looming over Beiping and Tianjin ever since the Mukden Incident in 1931.⁹ A full-scale war was only a matter of time, and the universities knew

it. In 1933, Japanese incursion was directly felt on the Beida campus as police forces came calling and helicopters droned overhead. The Tanggu Truce did not alleviate the threat, as Japan continued to push for an "autonomous government" in northern China, and exchanges of gunfire continued through the early months of 1937.¹⁰ Therefore, war was at the center of the Kuomintang's considerations as it devised its education policy in the 1930s.

Chiang Kai-shek justified his government's totalitarianism by appealing to the necessity of an education system that would fuse the nation and the party together, an idea fundamental to the party's nation-building vision. Chiang Kai-shek and his party ideologues demanded that education should act as the powerhouse for the nation's economic growth and military strength by training youth to be morally self-sufficient technical experts. Ideological uniformity under the Three People's Principles would allow students to turn their attention to the study of practical skills in science and engineering, so that they could serve the material improvement of the country under the leadership of the party.¹¹ As Wen-hsin Yeh aptly put it, for KMT, "education would buttress rather than threaten the existing sociopolitical power." Measures of "partyized education" that were detested at Lianda, such as mandatory flag-raising ceremonies and military training, had in fact been long in

8 John Israel, *Lianda*, 381–82.

9 The Mukden Incident was the engineered explosion on September 18, 1931 that served as a pretext for Japan's invasion and subsequent annexation of Manchuria. The Marco Polo Bridge Incident refers to the fighting between Japanese and Chinese troops on July 7, 1937 in the outskirts of Beiping, which marked the beginning of Japan's full-scale aggression in China proper. See Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* (Boston: Houghton Miller Harcourt, 2013), 56, 79-81.

10 Chiang Monlin (Jiang Menglin), *Tides from the West* (Taipei: World Book Co., 1963), 202–6. On the Tanggu Truce, which led to Chiang Kai-shek's *de facto* recognition of Manchukuo and the establishment of a demilitarized zone between its southern border and Tianjin, see Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 66.

11 The Three People's Principles (三民主義) were Nationalism, Democracy, and People's Livelihood, proposed by Sun Yat-sen in 1919 and later canonized as the Kuomintang's official ideology. On Sun Yat-sen, see Julie Lee Wei, Ramon Myers and Donald Gillin eds., *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-sen* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1994).

place at institutions more directly managed by the party, including Sun Yat-sen University in Canton, Central University in Nanjing, and Zhejiang University in Hangzhou.¹² The ability of northern universities such as Beida, Tsinghua and Nankai to keep their laissez-faire practices before 1937 was largely a result of political anarchy in the region during the 1930s. The Kuomintang was never able to fully extend its reach to the old capital. Students at Beida indulged in post-revolution loneliness in the old hermit-literati style, while Tsinghua enjoyed the security afforded by the American Boxer Fund and an enclosed suburban campus.¹³ The libertarianism at Beida and Tsinghua has indeed always been an anomaly and represented a gap in the Kuomintang's span of power.

1937-1941: The Initial Honeymoon

The Kuomintang's Extraordinary National Congress in April 1938 marked the regime's transition into wartime operation, and along with it every aspect of national life, including education. The Congress adopted the Program of Armed Resistance and National Construction, outlining the party's strategy to victory: the tasks of war efforts and nation-building should support each other and had to be carried out at the same time. This position shows that the party saw the war as an opportunity to enlarge and consolidate its control over the country's political, economic and social organizations under the pretense of war. The Program established the Three People's Principles and the "National Father" Sun Yat-sen's teaching as the highest creeds for all matters related to the resistance and national construction, and the Nationalist Party and Chiang Kai-

shek as the highest commanders of all resistance forces. In other words, the Congress accorded the party's ideology with absolute legitimacy, unchallengeable by any other competing forces. Armed with such a mandate, Chiang Kai-shek and his party were now entrusted with the authority to implement the totalitarian program that would allow him to marshal all the resources necessary for war. The goal for education would be to improve people's moral caliber, the quality of scientific research, and the training of technical experts, youth, and women through the reformation of educational institutions and textbooks.¹⁴

The war thus gave the KMT the chance to finally enforce the implementation of its long-planned "partyized education" policies. Reforming college curriculum for wartime needs had already been the ministry's policy before the war was in full swing in 1937. Chiang Kai-shek complained at the Third National Education Conference in February 1939 that he had always asked the country to "view peacetime as wartime," and when it came to war, to view wartime as peacetime. This aphorism followed the logic that on one hand, if a country were not organized at the high level of efficiency as though it were fighting a war, it would soon be left behind and wiped out by others that were. On the other hand, if the nation-building process was allowed to be hijacked by the war, resistance itself would lose its meaning.¹⁵ The legitimacy lent by the war retroactively justified the party's dictatorial practices in the Nanjing decade and normalized the extraordinary demand on education the party was about to lay out, while at the

12 Wen-hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 175-79.

13 Yeh, *The Alienated Academy*, 199-218.

14 "Program of Armed Resistance and National Construction," in Ministry of Education, *Di er ci Zhongguo jiaoyu nian jian* [The Second Education Yearbook of China] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1948), 10-11.

15 "Program of Armed Resistance and National Construction," 81.

same time limiting the possibility that patriotic fervor aroused by the war would lead to excessive radicalism.

Kuomintang's wartime education policy in the first half of the war was intended to enhance control over education in general but refrain from completely reforming it to serve the war effort—in other words, to take the lead while keeping it in check. Therefore, the government focused on reforming curriculum for wartime needs by adding subjects such as national literature, Japanese studies, defense chemistry, and military engineering to their curricula, instead of drafting students and professors into the armed forces.¹⁶ A September order also asked that the “Three People's Principles” be made a mandatory two-credit course during the first year of study.¹⁷

Lianda leadership was not as committed to liberal arts principles as scholars like John Israel would like to believe. Even before 1938, the leadership agreed to reevaluate Lianda's original curriculum to fulfill the double demands of academia and the national wartime during Lianda's brief sojourn in Hunan before Wuhan's fall.¹⁸ It appeared that Lianda's curriculum did conform to the party's expectations. In 1938, the ministry issued standardized curricula for each college: all students were required to take general courses on the Three People's

Principles, languages, philosophy, Chinese history and world history. Students were also to choose one course each in math, social sciences, and physical sciences.¹⁹ Records of Lianda's curricula show it acquiesced to this scheme. History and languages were incorporated into the general education requirement in the academic year 1939-1940. Cross-college course enrollment was also offered. In terms of war-related materials, Professor Zeng Zhaolun had been teaching Defense Chemistry all along, and Professor Wang Xinzong taught courses on the history of Sino-Japanese relations.²⁰ The ministry's requirements were at least not blatantly flouted, with the exception of a course on the Three People's Principles, which was not offered until 1943.

Intellectuals had reason to support the government's decisions at this stage of the war. Trust in Chiang Kai-shek was still high despite the presence of obstructions and setbacks, and the exuberance among intellectuals in 1939 was multifaceted. At this point, the war was considered a historic moment for Chinese patriotism and going positively. Professors at Lianda wrote about the fortification of national confidence and the improvement of military strength, especially in the Battle of Taierzhuang.²¹ They attributed the Chinese victory to Chiang Kai-shek, which bolstered his reputation.²² Professors felt that their national pride could fi-

16 Order from Ministry of Education, No. 14459, June 23, 1939. *Compilation of Higher Education Statutes*. Chinese Second Historical Archive, 5. 1947.

17 Ministry of Education (Republic of China), *Jiao yu fa ling* [Education Statutes] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shu ju, 1947), 181.

18 “Changsha linshi daxue choubei weiyuanhui gongzuo baogao shu [Work Report of the Preparatory Committee, Changsha Temporary University],” (Nov. 17, 1937) in Wang et al., *Guo li xi nan lian he daxue shi liao* [Historical Materials of the National Southwest Associated University] (Kunming: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998), vol. 1, 5. “Mei Yiqi shou ni linshi daxue Chouweihui di yi ci hui yi bao gao ti gang [Mei Yiqi's Manuscript of the Outline, First Meeting of CTU Preparatory Committee],” (Sep. 13, 1937), *ibid.*, 56-7.

19 Ministry of Education, “Second Education Yearbook,” 481-88.

20 List of course offerings by colleges, 1938-1945 in Wang et al., *Shi liao*, vol. 3, 177-85.

21 The Battle of Taierzhuang in March 1938 was the first major victory for Chinese troops during the war. Under the command of Generals Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi, KMT successfully defended the strategic town in Shandong in an extraordinarily brutal fight. The victory also won international acclaim for China and Chiang Kai-shek. See Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 151-54.

22 Qian Duansheng, “Kangzhan zhi sheng de tujing [The Approach to Victory in the War],” *Jinri Pinglun* (JRPL) 1, no. 11 (Mar. 20, 1939): 3-4.

nally be legitimized in a situation where China's valiant resistance contrasted and condemned Europe's failure in Czechoslovakia.²³ Optimism was on the rise for intellectuals throughout 1938, as they finally saw the nation find its purpose and center of gravity, namely, to unite to fight a war of national survival. Pan Guangdan, professor of Sociology, saw it as China's initiation into adulthood, with the opportunity to finally try out its strength.²⁴ Fu Sinian, head of Academia Sinica and later member of Lianda's Standing Committee, argued that the enthusiasm for enlistment among the youth and patriotism among the general public was the fruit of education modernization, from late Qing to the Enlightenment of May Fourth to the national education standardization of the recent years.²⁵ Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist party were the embodiment of nationalism and the champion of hope in the early stage of the war.

Lianda professors also had something to gain from KMT's wartime education policy. Because the party stated that wartime should be treated as peacetime, university students and faculty were essentially exempted from conscription. That Lianda was able to continue its regular activities of teaching and research as a university during a total war was exceptional. The U.S.-educated professors familiar with the total war experience of World War I expected the whole country to be drafted or made to join war production—"just like in European or American modern countries." However, when the government appeared not to intend to enlist them for war, Lianda professors followed the government's lead, subscribed to the slogan that "the best way

to support the war is to study," and retreated to their ivory tower.²⁶

1941-1945: Restriction and Explosion

The situation turned sour after change in the tide of war in 1941. The outbreak of war in Europe and the Nonaggression Pact signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 had already made the prospect of receiving outside assistance slim. The fall of French Indochina to Japan and the closure of British Burma Road under Japanese pressure in the summer of 1940 further isolated Chongqing and Yunnan. The United States held onto its neutrality—at least before Pearl Harbor—and Free China now had to rely on internal resources alone. On November 30th, Wang Jingwei's collaborationist regime was officially established in Nanjing and recognized by Tokyo.²⁷ All of these came as blows to Nationalist resistance, in addition to setbacks on the battlegrounds and intensified air raids on Chongqing and Kunming. It was also at this time that the Communist forces made advancements, despite the direction of Chiang to retreat. As the New Fourth Army reached Anhui, Chiang ordered all Communist troops to retreat to the north of the Yangtze before the New Year of 1941. The Communists did not comply, and fight between the two allies of the United Front broke out. The lukewarm but consistent good will accumulated in the past four years expired with a KMT victory. Although the internal fight did not continue after the incident, further alliance between the parties

26 *Lian da ba nian* [Eight years at Lianda] (Beijing: New Star Press, 2009), 6–7.

27 Wang Jingwei was Chiang's longtime rival within KMT and believed that China needed to negotiate for peace with Japan instead of resisting. He fled from Chongqing, established a separate government in Nanjing, and negotiated a "peace treaty" with Japan in 1940. It was largely unrecognized. See Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 197–210.

23 Feng Youlan, "Zhongguo bijing hai shi Zhongguo [China Is, After All, China]," JRPL 1, no. 14 (Apr. 2, 1939): 7–8.

24 Pan Guangdan, "Kangzhan de minzu yiyi [The National Significance of the War]," JRPL 1, no. 2 (Jan. 8, 1939): 4–5.

25 Fu Sinian, "Kangzhan liang nian zhi huigu [Reflection on Two Years of War]," JRPL 2, no.3 (July 9, 1939): 2–3

became impossible.²⁸

Chiang was bound to reorganize the KMT's internal regime to consolidate its control under such circumstances. Negotiation with Lianda on education policy became more like a burden for the government, and the KMT had less intention to make accommodation for Lianda's complaints, seen as injurious for war efforts. The ministry became much less lenient in terms of the implementation of its regulations. From 1941 onward, the Standing Committee of Lianda frequently received instructions from the ministry or even the Executive Yuan that ordered rules be enforced on campus, an exercise of control unseen in previous years. For instance, the standard and procedure for faculty appointment by the ministry were first issued in September 1940, prescribing degree and experience qualifications for each rank of professorship and demanding universities to submit its faculty record for inspection and accreditation.²⁹ The Ministry urged the Standing Committee to submit faculty records again 1941, but Lianda did not implement it on the pretext of understaffing. It was in 1942 under the pressure of withheld research funding that Lianda adopted the procedure and created a separate rank of associate professorship, following the ministry's arrangements.³⁰ The ministry's takeover of faculty accreditation represented a significant penetration into Lianda's autonomy, as the ability to recruit professors from a broad range of academic orientations and across the political spectrum had always been the foundation of Lianda's academic freedom.

The party's tighter grip on Lianda also encroached upon the university's control of student activ-

ities. Associations at Lianda were effectively monopolized by the Three People's Principles Youth Corps after communist students went underground in 1941.³¹ In 1943, the ministry gave university presidents the power to monitor and dismiss students' self-governing associations; the only associations allowed would be the authorized student groups.³² The Lianda administration did become stricter in its enforcement of disciplinary actions in line with these regulations. For example, a student newspaper was unprecedentedly terminated and the editors sanctioned by the Standing Committee for their "inappropriate remarks." Another student was sanctioned simply for leaving in the middle of a morning flag-raising ceremony.³³

Graduation accreditation for students had much more serious ramifications in 1941. As the Standing Committee itself was pressured to follow the ministry's instruction to organize general examination for graduating seniors, students protested in response. Beida president Jiang Menglin received confidential reports from the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (Jun-tong, the KMT's spy agency) that some "illegal elements" on campus were planning to instigate student movement against the general examination and was ordered to exercise precaution. The Standing Committee became more stringent as the semester end drew closer and threatened, per the ministry's order, to withhold diploma and job recommendations from students who refused to take the general examination and to dismiss those who prevented others from taking the exam.³⁴ Meeting minutes of the Faculty Senate do not show any student barred from graduation for not taking the exam,

28 Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 212–26.

29 *Jiao yu fa ling*, 156–7, 160.

30 174th Standing Committee meeting (Apr. 16, 1941), 232nd SC meeting (Sep. 16, 1942), 3rd Faculty Senate meeting, 1942, *ibid.*, 173, 251, 532.

31 *Lian da ba nian*, 52–54.

32 *Jiao yu fa ling*, 82.

33 215th SC meeting (May 6, 1942), 245th SC meeting (Dec. 30, 1942) in Wang et al., *Shi liao*, vol. 3, 229, 267.

34 179th to 182nd SC meeting, *ibid.*, 178–83.

but a student memoir recounts that two student leaders who protested the exam were betrayed by their classmates and committed suicide.³⁵

The government's power came from its control of university funding. Lianda's funding came from its three divisions, all of which became increasingly dependent upon the government financially. Beida had always been a public university. Nankai was originally privately funded, but it also had to rely on government subsidies during the war. After the Boxer Indemnity Fund for Tsinghua was terminated in 1940, Lianda became completely dependent on money from the Kuomintang government to operate. The close of the Burma Road also cut off Lianda's access to any external source of supply. The situation worsened as Lianda's new campus was bombed and destroyed twice in 1940 and 1941, and additional income became necessary for reconstruction.³⁶ The lack of funding was in fact crippling for Lianda during the second half of the war. The strenuous situation once pushed Lianda to the brink of disintegration, as Mei Yiqi and Jiang Menglin pondered the unequal financial contributions of the three universities to the union.³⁷

American historian John King Fairbank provided a third-party perspective on the government's leverage over Lianda through finance. While working for the Office of Strategic Services in Chongqing, Fairbank sent a letter in September 1942 to Alger Hiss, an assistant in the U.S. Office of Far Eastern Affairs, recounting the material, political, and intellectuals pressure that faced

professors at Lianda. Frequent airstrikes and inflation took their toll. Food and housing were sparse, let alone books and equipment. According to Fairbank, professors were forced to sell their books and clothes because the Kuomintang had been actively withholding funding for the university—or more precisely, not increasing funding in proportion to the rate of hyperinflation in Kunming. He concluded that the lack of funding at Lianda was a tactic that the party used to coerce Lianda into compliance, as he compared the threadbare situation of “the most convinced and determined” Tsinghua professors who opposed Chen Li-fu's tightening control over Lianda with the much more favorable condition of faculty members who showed interest in joining the party and those at the neighboring Yunnan University. Fairbank urged Washington to consider the situation on the ground in China and increase its support for Chinese intellectuals, as “Tsinghua University in particular represents an American interest in China.”³⁸ Having arrived in China only three days prior, Fairbank probably did not know at this point that if Chiang Kai-shek were to see this letter, it would only further convince him that Lianda, as an intellectual slave to the Americans, was more in want of training and indoctrination in Chinese nationalism.

The years between 1941 and 1943 also represented the darkest time on Lianda campus. Student memoirs produced by a progressive student organization *Chuxi fukan* after Lianda moved back to the north described Lianda in those years as “a wasteland with no

35 First FS meeting, 1941, *ibid.*, 528; *Lian da ba nian*, 51.

36 “Kang zhan qi zhong zhi qing hua er xu [Tsinghua during the War, Second Volume],” (1941) in Mei Yiqi, *Mei Yiqi zi shu* [Accounts of Mei Yiqi], ed. Wen Mingguo (Hefei: Anhui wenyi chuban she, 2013), 68–70.

37 Mei Yiqi, *Mei Yiqi ri ji, 1941-1946* [Mei Yiqi's Diary, 1941-1946], ed. Huang Yanfu, Wang Xiaoming (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chuban she, 2001), 18–19.

38 John K. Fairbank, *Chinabound: A Fifty Year Memoir* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 192–200. Lianda maintained a parallel structure throughout the war, meaning there was a fully functioning administration for Lianda as a whole as well as one for each of the three universities. Students who migrated to Yunnan in 1938 kept both their original enrollment and enrollment at Lianda, while new students admitted in Yunnan from 1939 onwards only had Lianda status.

water or greeneries.” Members or sympathizers of the Communist party either left for Yan’an or were forced underground after the New Fourth Army Incident. According to a memoir author, any book remotely related to “philosophy” could be confiscated and the owner interrogated. Wall newspapers, seminars, reading groups, street theaters that had been the hallmarks of Lianda student life all disappeared. Students retreated into isolation, burying themselves in study, part-time jobs, speculative profiteering, bridge, or romantic relationships. Freshmen arriving on campus were disappointed by the prevalence of coterie and the general lack of interest in study. The atmosphere at Lianda was bereft of its usual optimism and camaraderie.³⁹ Even some professors indulged in gambling.⁴⁰

At the same time, discontent was brewing under the surface. Lianda’s atmosphere evolved from sterility to politicization and polarization after 1943, when disappointment with the KMT government finally exploded. Numerous professors, Wen Yiduo in particular, were radicalized by the increasing disappointment with the Kuomintang in light of the military failure during Japan’s Ichigo Offensive and exacerbated economic destitution created by both inflation and corruption. The spirit of unity in which Lianda took so much pride during its early years had become harder and harder to maintain, especially after the December 1st Movement in 1945.

The Movement arose as Kunming’s political situation worsened and the opposition to civil war intensified in the months after Japanese capitulation on August 15th, 1945. Once Chiang Kai-shek had a free moment to deal with the dissidents in Yunnan, he started by deposing Lung Yun, the governor of Yunnan and protector

of Lianda professors, replacing him with KMT loyalist General Lu Han.⁴¹ On the night of November 25th, four universities in Kunming held a joint conference on Lianda’s campus demanding peace and gathered more than five thousand attendees. Lu’s troops invaded the campus and disrupted the event by force, prompting a general student strike and demonstration on December 1st. Four demonstrators, including two Lianda students, were killed in the police action, with thirty more injured, among them five Lianda professors.⁴²

Lianda was left riven in the aftermath of the event. Students continued the strike, demanding the investigation and punishment of the military commander responsible for the massacre. Professors initially stood in solidarity with the students, drafting petitions and negotiating with the provincial government on their behalf. Faculty members of the Departments of Law and Political Science also formed a committee that prepared to challenge the regulations against assembly and demonstration on legal grounds, and this committee even included KMT members such as Qian Duansheng, Zhou Binglin, and Yan Shutang. However, an impasse arose when the government threatened further force, while students refused to go back to class until all culprits were arrested and convicted. Divisions emerged among the faculty as they were pressured from both sides. One group tried in vain to convince students to compromise, even by threatening to resign, while the other more radical group, led by Wen Yiduo, defended students’ decision to continue the strike.⁴³

On December 11th, Mei Yiqi finally arrived in

39 *Lian da ba nian*, 3, 57, 109.

40 Mei, *Mei Yiqi ri ji*, 16.

41 Lloyd Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 37–38.

42 *Lian da ba nian*, 42–44.

43 2nd – 7th FS meeting, 1945 (Nov. 29 – Dec. 19, 1945) in Wang et al., *Shi liao*, vol.3, 550–59.

Chongqing to meet with Zhu Jiahua, who had by then switched place with Chen Li-fu and became the Minister of Education. In view of the chaotic scene on campus, Mei promised Zhu that if he could not restore normal order by the end of the week, he would rather “terminate the university himself than let the government disband it.” Back in Kunming, the usually moderate and restrained President Mei could not help but voice his dissatisfaction with the “radical and incendiary speech” of Wen Yiduo. Facing equally unremitting and harsh demands from students and the government exacerbated by the incapability of professors to negotiate a peaceful compromise but adding on to the trouble with their threat to resign, Mei himself felt the urge to quit.⁴⁴ Lianda was on the verge of falling apart.

Eventually students returned to classes after the army leader promised to respect the students’ right to assemble, but the wounds at Lianda were not easily healed. Students were also disappointed by their professors and president, who had promised them freedom but ended up pressuring the students to compromise and almost dismissed the student leaders who had defied the administration’s decision to resume classes before the students’ demands were met. Students viewed the end of strike as submission to the power of the government. Mei himself was deeply disappointed by the students’ as well as Wen’s excessive provocation and vilification—it was not the kind of “freedom” and “democracy” he wanted to see with his three decades of dedication to education.⁴⁵ Pessimism again drowned the campus; student activists left, and groups disappeared.⁴⁶ Lianda was no longer a “bastion of democracy.”

Intellectuals Embedded in the Party Establishment

To really understand Lianda’s wartime experience vis-à-vis its loss of academic freedom and democracy, we have to go back to the basic question: how did Lianda understand freedom and democracy? We have already seen that significant tension indeed existed between Lianda and the ruling party. However, instead of classifying the university and the party-government in ideological terms of liberalism versus authoritarianism, it is helpful to look at the professors’ actual rhetoric regarding the government and their relationship with the KMT party in order to see how they aligned themselves with the powerholders. Most of Lianda’s professors were in fact figures of the political establishment, rather than independent critics as many have portrayed them. Their limitation was rooted in the fact that their economic survival, social privilege, and political and cultural ideology during the war all derived from the party.

In his treatises on higher education in 1941, Mei Yiqi argued that academic freedom would be key to the ability of Chinese universities to fulfill their mission to enlighten the populace and renew their citizenship, invoking the concept of “Great Learning” in Confucian classics in its defense but reinterpreting it in the context of Republican China. His argument, echoed by many Lianda professors in various publications, distinguished academic freedom from “liberalism” and described it as the vehicle that would allow students to explore China’s pathway towards modernization with their knowledge and lead the nation through quality of character, informed reasoning, and civic discussion. Mei envisioned higher education in China as a blend of a broad foundation in the liberal arts and ethical cultivation.⁴⁷ Such a vision was in fact very much shared by

⁴⁴ Mei, *Mei Yiqi ri ji*, 189–91.

⁴⁵ Mei, *Mei Yiqi ri ji*, 206–8.

⁴⁶ *Lian da ba nian*, 45, 62.

⁴⁷ Mei Yiqi, “An Interpretation of University,” *Mei Yiqi ri ji*,

the KMT, as evidenced by their standardized curricula; Mei himself also subscribed to the KMT's ideology that education, including academic freedom, should be in the service of the nation. Thus, the conformity between curricula proposed by the government and Lianda's own curricula is unsurprising. Their only conflict lay in the specific role of such freedom, as will be discussed later.

Lianda leadership also kept close contact with key functionaries in the KMT government on a personal level or were even officials themselves. Jiang Menglin, the president of Beida, was one of the chief architects of the party's new education system. He was first appointed Zhejiang Province's Commissioner of Education by Chiang Kai-shek, and later organized and presided over the National Zhejiang University, an exemplar of the KMT's partyized provincial education model. He became the Minister of Education himself a year later. In his memoir published in 1942, he still spoke approvingly of the party's reforms, including standardized school curricula and improved science teaching and physical training.⁴⁸ In fact, he promoted and enforced the party's education policies in the strictest sense while he was in Zhejiang, advocating for training students with revolutionary ideology and practices. "To manage education in the same spirit as managing the party," he wrote in the outline for partyized education in Zhejiang in 1927, "... means that those who disobey the party's discipline are counter-revolutionaries ... There is only freedom for the Party, but not for party members."⁴⁹

Such a viewpoint directly contradicted the image of a liberal intellectual, but it was in fact only natu-

ral for him to welcome and trust the Nationalists who inherited the revolutionary ideals of Sun Yat-sen, with whom he had been acquainted since his college years at Berkeley, and represented the last hope for a stable, competent government that finally unified the country after a decade of violence and chaos under warlords. When the Nationalist army marched into Hangzhou, he described himself "watching in the crowd with heart thumping against [his] ribs in ecstasy."⁵⁰ A strong identification with the emerging Chinese nation, and along with it the Nationalist party, was a much more prevalent ideology at the time.

Apart from the administrative leadership, there were also professors at Lianda closely connected with the KMT. Qian Duansheng, professor of Political Science, started as a scholar of parliamentary politics when he graduated with a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1924 but gradually shifted his academic interest to public administration—in other words, from a field of study that would challenge the Three People's Principles to one that would serve its interest. In fact, Qian made his career along with that of the party, both co-authoring *Comparative Constitutions* with Wang Shijie, the Minister of Education between 1933 and 1938, and penning his own masterpiece *Minguo zhengzhi shi* [Political History of the Republic of China] aided by the official Party History Compilation Committee, a systematic study of the KMT's political institutions.⁵¹ During the war, he was in charge of the journal *Jinri Pinglun*, which provided a forum for a variety of political opinions often at odds with those of the government. However, Qian himself only focused on functional measures that aimed at improving the effectiveness of

250-8.

48 Chiang, *Tides from the West*, 147–56.

49 *Jin dai Zhongguo jiao yu shi liao* [Historical Materials on Education in Modern China], ed. Shu Xincheng (1933, reprint, Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian, 1990) vol. 5, 24–25.

50 Chiang, *Tides from the West*, 146.

51 Boorman, Howard, and Cheng, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), vol. 1, 377.

government, such as eliminating overlapping jurisdiction among central authorities and appointing designated personnel to improve efficiency and accountability in the government.⁵² Qian did strengthen state power in higher education as Chiang had prescribed.

Lianda professors' own political interests in the government organs were also reflected in the KMT's active organization on campus. Wang Qisheng's pioneering work on the Kuomintang's party history revealed the supportive and collaborative attitude of Lianda intellectuals towards the party by drawing on the files of Zhu Jiahua, the party's Minister of Organization during the war, available at the Academia Sinica. Wang argued that Zhu enjoyed considerable trust of intellectuals as a former university administrator and renowned geologist educated in Germany, trust unimaginable for party hacks such as Chen Li-fu. Professors joined the party to establish direct connection with Zhu so that their political agenda could receive attention in the party's inner circle, or to seek greater possibility for political advancement in general. Indeed, Lianda's crisis would come much earlier and more severely without channels within the party to secure its budget and relief from the government. Yao was able to secure additional party funding for professors who spoke at seminars and lectures sponsored by the branch, which provided a significant source of supplementary income during the precarious years of hyperinflation. Party-member professors such as Zhou Binglin (Political Science), Chen Xueping (Psychology), and Luo Changpei (Philology) also acted as mediators between the government and the university, particularly in times of crisis, by petitioning the government to increase stipend for their colleagues and students or defusing confrontation between

student groups.⁵³

Lianda professors were also part of the social establishment in terms of class composition. Intellectuals, and literate persons in general, had always been the privileged class in the landscape of Chinese social tradition. Living conditions were still considerably better for professors than for students, even though professors were also reduced to refugees and some faced significant financial pressure during the war. The fact that they were not enlisted further solidified their privilege over peasant soldiers. In Mei Yiqi's diary between 1941 and 1945, accounts of banquets with government officials, foreign guests, and other professors appear frequently during those years of hyperinflation. In 1941, on his way to Chongqing, he sympathetically describes his encounter with ailing soldiers on the same boat, but also shows his ignorance of the wartime social condition. The contrast in their food conditions was striking: Mei still had three meals each day that included rice and four dishes of vegetables with a few meat slices—much simpler than his usual diet—while the soldiers could only have two bowls of rice a day with hot pepper for seasoning. In 1943, at a weekly meeting of the Standing Committee, a dinner cost 800-900 *fabi* per table, while as late as 1945 the students' meal stipend was only 500 per month. Mei expressed his shame when he compared the extravagance common in his elite rank of the KMT with an austere war-standard dinner to which he was invited at the British embassy.⁵⁴ Given the KMT's exploitation of the peasantry to provide its soldiers with supplies, even though Lianda professors and students

52 Qian Duansheng, "Kangzhan zhi sheng de zhengzhi [Politics for Victory in the War of Resistance]," JRPL 1, no. 12 (Mar. 19, 1939): 5-7.

53 Wang Qisheng, *Ge ming yu fan ge ming: shehui wenhua shiye xia de Mingguo zhengzhi* [Revolution and Counter-revolution: Republican Politics in the Social and Cultural Sphere], (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010), 244-58.

54 Mei, *Mei Yiqi ri ji*, 44, 126, 138.

would harshly criticize party leaders such as H.H. Kong for self-aggrandizement while they were starving, the fact was that they themselves were part of the elite exempt from service on the battlefield.⁵⁵

Lianda was exceptional in its exclusion from wartime stringency regulations, even within the field of education. Their confrontation with the Kuomintang was at least partly due to the conflict between the perception of exceptionalism among Chinese universities and the government's effort to use wartime migration to equalize higher education. For Chen Li-fu, the minister of education, combining the three universities and moving them to Yunnan was a political necessity, but was also an initiative on the part of the government to re-organize and redistribute educational resources over-concentrated in Beiping and Tianjin to improve quality and efficiency of education in previously marginalized regions in the southwest, where in fact education was the most needed.⁵⁶ In contrast, the mentality of Lianda was that of an elite institution "preserving the nation's treasure" and carrying on education and research despite adversity. Thus, Pan Guangdan, professor of Sociology, criticized the low general admission criteria set by the government in order to simplify the procedure and provide relief for refugee students, arguing that the university's job was to cultivate talent for the nation, not provide student relief, and that the university's standard of instruction should not be sacrificed just because teenage students from the warzone could not study well for exams.⁵⁷ The sense of entitlement at Lianda among

both professors and students that came from the remnants of intellectual privilege would become the major source of their discontent with the party, which afforded them this privilege in the first place.

Space for Freedom Within the Establishment

Intellectuals of the Republican era did predominantly advocate for individual liberty. The defining figure of Beida, Cai Yuanpei, promulgated the principle of academic freedom. In fact, although Beida won its fame for the progressivism and patriotism propagated out of its campus during the May Fourth Movement, it was "freedom of thought, inclusiveness, and toleration"—as Cai described the idea of academic freedom—that took precedence. Not only did the iconoclastic Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu coexist with the culturally conservative National Essence group of Liu Shipai, the campus also honored the staunchly Confucian scholar Gu Hongming.⁵⁸

Cai's advocacy for academic freedom in fact came from the context of party politics in the 1930s, when Cai himself was a leading party ideologue. After Chiang Kai-shek took hold of Nanjing and purged communists from its ranks, the party had come to a critical point for deciding its attitude towards the student radicalism that it had incited and then disappointed during the Northern Expedition. Cai Yuanpei and the CC Clique led by the brothers Chen Guo-fu and Chen Li-fu, the would-be Minister of Education during the war, represented two competing factions within the party. The motivation for Cai's support for education's independence from politics was in fact to confront Chen Guo-fu's advocacy for continuous student-led social revolution under the guidance of the Kuomintang,

55 On the condition of the peasantry during the war, see Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction*, 45–70, 130–57.

56 Chen, *Chinese Education during the War (1937-1942)* (1942, reprint, Washington D.C.: Center for Chinese Research Materials, Association of Research Libraries, 1969), 3.

57 Pan Guangdan, "Du ershiqi nian du tongyi zhaosheng baogao [On the Report of General Admission in 1938]," JRPL 2, no. 9 (Aug. 20, 1939): 136-7.

58 Jerome Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China: A Narrative History* (New York: Free Press, 1981), 220.

and his Committee for Training the Masses in particular. Therefore, Cai argued not for resisting the party's ideological control of college campuses, but rather for leaving students to their studies as party doctrine was already embedded in textbooks. Moreover, there would be no more need for student politics as long as there were party organizations on campus to guide students. His idea of educational autonomy, the most idealized legacy of Beida and Lianda, in fact solidified rather than challenged the Kuomintang's policies of "party-ized education."⁵⁹

It would be more precise to describe Lianda's practice as seeking space for academic freedom within the political establishment, of which they were an integral component. Academic freedom of this fashion would advance instead of compromise nationalism, the preoccupation in both political and intellectual spheres. For example, in the inaugural issue of *Jinri Pinglun* on January 1st, 1939, Qian Duansheng implicitly criticized the party's totalitarianism by trying to distinguish "unity" (*tongyi* 統一) from "uniformity" (*yizhi* 一致). He argued that unity might be critical to national independence, but attempt to achieve uniformity in the nation could not bring actual unity. Qian reasoned that uniformity was impossible even under the tyrannical rule of Nazi Germany, let alone in China, a country which he claimed to "have traditionally favored freedom and [been] capable of exerting intellect." The "tendency, habit, and capability" of the majority of intellectuals to voice their opinions, such as the customary practices of intellectuals petitioning the government and the more recent instances of student activism, were all the result of the freedom of expression, and thus they were able to preserve the "most special and honest tradition" of loyal opposition in China. Qian's identification with Con-

fucian scholar-officials in the imperial period showed how much his cultural nationalism was sustained by the privilege of the literate in traditional China's social structure. "It is impossible, as a matter of fact, to ask Chinese, especially learned persons (*dushuren*), to be yes-men, and not grant them freedom of thought and expression."⁶⁰ His criticism of totalitarian uniformity was not a defense of freedom per se, but rather an attempt to preserve the intellectual prerogative that was quickly disappearing.

It is therefore understandable why Qian would invoke the tradition of loyal opposition instead of rely on independent criticism as he defined his relationship with the government. Academic freedom blended into nationalism, and both virtues were the shared commitment of intellectuals at Lianda, as well as of intellectuals of the Republican era in general. This is not to say that their understanding of freedom was insincere, but rather, as Qian eloquently contended, that freedom of thought was the most important among all freedoms and manifestation of the highest level of development of both individual personality and long-term progress of thought and culture in a nation. We cannot remove Lianda intellectuals and their arguments from their historical context, which was a prolonged intellectual search for reasons to be proud of their own people and culture, and for reasons to assert that modern China could be strong and free at the same time.

Space for Freedom outside the Establishment

The intellectuals at Lianda were doomed as their demands became increasingly incompatible with the intensification of war. The irreconcilable conflict between their ideology and the ruling ideology still led them to seek freedom beyond the party's maximum

59 On KMT's policy towards student activism in the 1930s, see John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China*, 23–28.

60 Qian Duansheng, "Unity and Uniformity," JRPL 1, no.3 (Jan. 5, 1939): 4-6.

tolerance. Above all, Lianda professors were first and foremost scholars and educators, inheriting the May Fourth tradition of enlightenment that had no place in the Three People's Principles. Arguing against the government propaganda that simplified and distorted facts, Pan Guangdan articulated his belief in the possibility of approaching objective truth, humanity's innate capacity to know that truth, and the role of educators to inspire that capacity. He argued that education was on the side of science, while propaganda was for zealots and ideologues.⁶¹ By distinguishing education from propaganda, Pan denied the value of any prescribed information not derived from original reasoning, and argued that universities should be an environment reserved for pure academic research, free from propaganda and political factionalism. In other words, there must be space for freedom to teach the method of searching truth outside of the party's ideological indoctrination.⁶²

The reason that academic freedom took such primacy in Lianda's understanding of freedom had to do with the context of intellectuals' overall marginalization from political power. The process by which scholars ceased to be officials in the Republic era was irreversible despite their eloquence. Intellectuals themselves increasingly identified with professional scholars instead of political maneuverers. Even the activities of Lianda's KMT branch, under the charge of Yao Congwu, were centered around scholarship rather than politics, sponsoring lecture series, political commentary journals, and academic publications. Yao himself confessed that he would not have accepted the position of branch secretary had Zhu Jiahua not been his former

teacher, and he would rather have focused on his "pure historical research." Even so, he declared to Zhu that he would not seek any personal advancement in high-level politics.⁶³

For scholars, the freedom to devote their time and energy to academic research was essential to their livelihood. How much this scholarly professionalism was ingrained in their consciousness is striking, even while facing the threat of war. The primacy of pure scholarly research is prominent in Beida historian Zheng Tianting's account of life in Kunming. He takes consolation in the fact that he managed to carry on with his research and teaching of Tang history and even break new grounds in the study of the Qing amid the isolation of exile, with the help of local materials in Yunnan. He also deeply appreciated the opportunity to associate with Tsinghua professors such as Wen Yiduo and Chen Yinque in the scenic Mengzi (branch campus of Lianda for the College of Letters in 1938) and the support they gave him for his research on Tibetan philology in Tang dynasty, something which would not have been available to him had the three universities not been merged. For Zheng, the spirit of collaboration, friendship, and dedication to serious scientific research was Lianda's most significant legacy and contribution to the war effort.⁶⁴

Zheng's preference for undisturbed free academic inquiry was exactly what Chiang Kai-shek criticized as unsuitable for wartime education. In Chiang's opening speech at the Third National Education Conference, he admonished the educators to stop championing "the much-misunderstood slogan of education independence in the past," and considering professorship as personal

61 Pan Guangdan, "Xuanchuan bu shi jiaoyu [Propaganda is not education]," JRPL 3, no. 8 (Feb. 25, 1940): 105-7.

62 Pan Guangdan, "Zai lun xuanchuan bu shi jiaoyu [Propaganda is not education, reply]," JRPL 3, no. 14 (Apr. 6, 1940): 213-6 [microfilm].

63 Wang, *Ge ming yu fan ge ming*, 243, 254.

64 Zheng, Tianting, "Dian xing ji [Account of the Journey to Yunnan]," in Wang et al., *Shi liao*, vol. 1, 82-83.

life choice or private profession outside of the nation's jurisdiction and responsibility. The time for leisurely teaching and reading behind closed doors was over, he declared, and education must be connected with the country's military, social, political and economic life. Chiang also appealed to China's age-old intellectual tradition, but in his conception, teachers and scholars were the kind of political stalwarts well versed in statecraft that he desired for his regime, as opposed to the independent but patriotic critics.⁶⁵

We can now see that academic freedom was the real point of contention between Lianda and the KMT government. The professors were willing to serve the government by carrying out social survey, defense research, or military interpreter trainings, but when it came to academic instruction, their freedom was not to be violated. The faculty senate's main objection to the ministry's order for curriculum standardization was that it would erode their independence from the ministry, the core of their collective dignity in a society where the political machine was widely stigmatized. "If the ministry gave such detailed instruction on every matter related to higher education, it would equate the universities to an office under the Ministry's Division of Higher Education ... if even the curricula taught by professors have to be designated and the content approved by the Ministry, professors would appear to students as if we were no more than ministerial clerks, and faculty would certainly be unable to wield their talent at ease."

The professors' ability to defend the scholarly autonomy so essential to their intellectual world was in fact limited. Their objections went unheard, and the

senate presumably never received a response even from the presidents. Discussion of faculty's concern with the curriculum change never came up in the meeting minutes of the Standing Committee's meeting the next day or even in the following month. The adjustment commenced nonetheless, as was shown earlier.

The irony was that the intellectuals' inability to stage an effective opposition partly came from their reorientation towards professional scholars, as circumscribed participants in society's political order instead of arbiters of it. In Feng Youlan's characterization of his role as a professor, because of the specialization of knowledge and the increasing complexity of political and social issues in contemporary society, he could only claim expertise in his own highly specialized field, and was therefore unqualified to provide overall guidance in the students' moral development, especially without such authoritative guidelines as the sacred classics or sage biographies (*shengjing xianzhuan*).⁶⁶ It was in a professional and restrained voice that Feng explained his objection by demarcating modernity from tradition, as he was an expert in the latter. Here, Feng's understanding of a professorial intellectual ran counter to that of the party. He implicitly denounced the near religious authority that the party had assigned to Sun Yat-sen's texts and teaching, and rejected the party's attempt to define, for them, what being an intellectual in order to preserve national culture was supposed to mean. In doing so, Feng did not realize that the inherent contradiction in claiming the privileges of traditional scholar-officials and modern professionals at the same time.

The relationship between Lianda and the Kuomintang finally reached the breaking point in the aftermath of the December 1st Movement of 1945. Tsinghua's future was particularly endangered as the

65 Ministry of Education, "Second Education Yearbook," 82–83. On the role of the educated elite in traditional China, or "*shi*," see Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3.

66 Feng Youlan, "On Tutorial System," *Jinri Pinglun* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1, 1939): 9–10. 1.1.1939.

home campus of radicalized professors, including sociologists Pan Guangdan and Fei Xiaotong, political scientist Zhang Xiruo, and poet Wen Yiduo, who were the most vocal in their defiance during the negotiation with the government.⁶⁷ According to Mei Yiqi's diary, Chiang Kai-shek had personally instructed Tsinghua to "restore its academic atmosphere" and pressured Mei to fire these four professors as the condition for funding its return to the north.⁶⁸ In the end, Wen Yiduo was assassinated by a KMT agent on July 15, 1946, after he publicly denounced the party for its violation of democracy and freedom at the funeral of his colleague Li Gongpu. Two months later, Lianda moved back to Beijing, but passed away along with Wen, the last major defender of academic freedom in higher education in China.

Making Sense: The Unfulfilled Project

The intellectuals eventually lost in the battle for academic freedom, just like they did on other grounds from democracy to peace. An assortment of studies in English have told this story of failure. Lloyd Eastman starts his analysis of the failures of Kuomintang's Nanjing decade with the unfulfillment of the promises of revolutions in 1911 and again in 1927.⁶⁹ Vera Schwarcz describes how the May Fourth youth, unburdened by the baggage of Confucian tradition and with boundless faith in individual capacity for knowing, yet again failed to effect meaningful social change with their popular enlightenment projects.⁷⁰ Israel has lamented

67 There was also the Democratic League, the major wartime "third force" party that challenged the Kuomintang's monopoly on governance. See Roger Jeans ed., *Roads Not Taken*.

68 Mei, *Mei Yiqi ri ji*, 293–97.

69 Lloyd Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1937-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 1-4.

70 Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 232-5.

the loss of Lianda's liberal character after the December 1st Movement, as professors took sides and the students' democratic movement allowed them to be coopted by communists' organization.⁷¹ These narratives, invariably written from an American perspective, espouse an immense faith in the virtue of freedom and democracy. Despite the amount of respect these authors paid to the intellectuals' effort in putting up a fight, they were portrayed to be politically naïve as well as intellectually susceptible. In these retellings, academics were unable to live up to the democratic and liberal ideals they had studied in Europe and the United States, and thus failed to make modern China into a democratic country.

Even Wen-hsin Yeh, writing as an insider, herself born in Republican China, cannot help but characterize the liberal intellectuals as "the ultimate tragedy" because of their inability to change the reality that "individual worth and collective goals" were incompatible in politically troubled times. However, she also points to structural reasons that could account for the political alienation and ineffectiveness of intellectuals. The elevation of new kinds of talents, including science, technology, and commerce, and the relentless assaults on Confucian morality led to new and different types of educational institutions, but also left the country without a coherent moral framework.⁷² The struggle between Lianda professors' defense of academic freedom and educational autonomy and the party's attempt to gain full control of higher education was one of the last between two competing visions for the re-establishment of the basis of a unified national community: one based on the immense belief in individual conscience and rationality to understand and transform the country and its society, and the other that purposefully aimed for the collective

71 Israel, *Lianda*, 373–74; John Israel, "Overview," in Jeans, *Roads Not Taken*, 334-5.

72 Yeh, *The Alienated Academy*, 276–78.

material and spiritual strength that would allow China to survive in the competition of the fittest.⁷³

Within China, recent work on intellectuals in the Republican period has started to explore other dimensions of the so-called liberalism of Chinese intellectuals. Previously, Lianda's liberal orientation had been put in opposition to nationalism, because of the apparent Western roots of concepts such as constitutional democracy and individual freedom, which were often associated with imperialism. However, this is not necessarily the case. Princeton-trained historian Luo Zhitian has shown that Hu Shi, teacher and mentor of many of Lianda's professors and a May Fourth standard-bearer, had in fact carefully nested his nationalism in his thoughts on cosmopolitanism. His struggle represented the broader dilemma of intellectuals at the intersection of the Chinese nation and a Euro-American conception of modernity. Hu's support for cosmopolitan solidarity, Luo argued, was on one hand an extension of his strengthening connection with the "imagined community" of the nation, and on the other hand the vestige of cosmopolitan responsibility that traditional intellectuals (*shi*) would take upon themselves. The intellectuals' intense interest in the search for the best scenario where China could become an independent and unified nation, regardless of the solutions they proposed, and the amount of effort they put into the debate on China's nation-building strategy, were all revelations of their underlying nationalism.⁷⁴

Luo's argument demonstrates the necessity of understanding the intellectuals of Republican China outside of the binary frameworks of democracy versus dictatorship, liberalism versus nationalism, or westernization (or Americanization, in the case of Lianda) versus Confucian tradition, especially when it came to the

critical stage of the War of Resistance. These competing ideologies all exerted significant influence on Chinese intellectuals in the first part of the twentieth century, but they did not necessarily exist as dichotomies. As previous analysis has demonstrated, both sides could appeal to some aspects of a historical heritage, while neither was fully committed to democracy or a comprehensive dictatorship. The best way to understand this opposition was probably Joseph Levenson's characterization of Chinese modern intellectuals, namely, by their quest for a reconciliation that would allow one to be modern and Chinese at the same time.⁷⁵

Then how did the intellectuals eventually lose to the government? Previous studies of democratic forces in Republican China have proposed reasons such as the intellectuals' inability to mobilize military forces and to connect with the masses, their unwillingness to fully engage in the political maneuvering of government, and the fundamental irrelevance of elite values such as cosmopolitanism.⁷⁶ This paper, through the analysis of Lianda professors' experience and the changing fate of academic freedom during the war, seek to propose another reason. Failure was programmed into the intellectuals' self-contradictory relationship with the government.

From Lianda's experience, we can see that the intellectuals' interests were fundamentally aligned with that of Kuomintang during the war. Ideologically, they shared the commitment to nationalism—both in the sense of resistance against Japan and the building of national community. Politically, they could hardly sever themselves from the age-old tradition of serving the government, particularly at a time of national crisis when it was almost impossible to justify the dis-

73 Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China*, 248.

74 Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China*, 1–2.

75 Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), xviii.

76 Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China*, 283; Jeans, *Roads Not Taken*.

tance between the Nationalist government and the nation. Economically, their livelihood, as well as ability to continue with their research during the war, relied almost entirely on provisions from the government. In fact, Lianda had already tied its destiny to that of the government the moment when it accepted the Ministry of Education's arrangement to unite and migrate to Yunnan. They could only argue for space for freedom within its established regulations, institutions, and ideology at best. When it did seek freedom outside of such establishment, it did not have any leverage against the party's power. Lianda's experience might indeed be a tragedy, and the project of seeking reconciliation between competing claims to freedom in China remained unfinished. What this paper has aimed to point to is the structural contradiction in intellectuals' role in modern Chinese society and the ways in which understanding such a contradiction can shed light on the trajectory of China's political transformation.

Putting the events surrounding academic freedom in Chinese wartime higher education in context, we could imagine that actors within and without Lianda would well understand that this war would determine the fate of a century-long project: China would either welcome its rebirth out of the final resolution of all the forces—the long list of “isms” pouring into the country since the end of 19th century—that had been pushing or driving it in so many directions, or sink into permanent demise. At the same time, it would also determine intellectuals' own position as a group after the great metamorphosis in the entire nation's social fabric. Lianda's struggle can lead us further towards the following questions: what were intellectuals' relationships with politics as well as with political power holders? What use, if any, did their knowledge have for the nation that they cared so deeply about? Did they represent a distinctive social class, or could they have blended in to the masses as a mere “element” of the society?

‘Egypt’ and Emancipation: An Exploration of Political Partisanship in Wartime Illinois

BY IAN IVERSON, Princeton University

Traditionally, the midterm elections of 1862 have served as little more than a footnote in histories of the Civil War era. The dramatic presidential elections of 1860 and 1864 have understandably garnered significant scholarly attention, given the centrality of Abraham Lincoln in both the popular and academic imagination. Nevertheless, the congressional and statewide races of 1862 offer valuable insights into the political mindset of Northerners after a year and a half of war.¹ This period marked a profound change in the nature of the Union cause. Having begun the war with the intent to restore the Union to the antebellum status quo, President Lincoln chose to dramatically raise the stakes of the conflict in September 1862 by embracing the abolition of slavery in the rebelling Confederate States. Labeling emancipation a matter of military necessity, Lincoln justified this radical action through his powers as Commander-in-Chief granted in Article II, section two of the United States Constitution. However, this action was not without controversy. Indeed, the Republican Party’s fragile coalition of radical, moderate, and conservative elements faltered, and in places collapsed completely, as a result. Lincoln’s home state of Illinois provides keen insights into the political convulsion that followed the release of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

This paper seeks to offer a comprehensive review of the politics of Illinois in this critical election year. Specifically, I will examine why the Republican

Party, triumphant in Illinois in 1860, failed to carry the critical battleground districts of central Illinois in 1862. Building on the work of other scholars, I will argue that the Republican Party misconstrued the priorities and predilections of Illinois’ “swing” voters in 1862, producing an electoral catastrophe that energized the anti-war Democrats, or Copperheads. This mischaracterization centered around a shift in the state’s racial politics as the Lincoln administration flirted with, and finally committed to, a policy of emancipation.

While the Republicans successfully campaigned against the adoption of a pro-Democratic state constitution in June 1862, the evolution of Republican war aims in the summer and fall of that same year outpaced alterations to the party’s message. When the Republican government committed to a policy of emancipation in September, Illinois’s Democrats pounced and exploited the deeply rooted racial animosity of “moderate” voters to their advantage.

Although the rhetoric of white supremacy had served as a tool for the Democratic Party throughout the 1850s, the radical and untested policy of emancipation offered legitimacy to their critique of “Black Republicanism” in the minds of many voters. Republicans had previously attracted moderate voters by framing their anti-slavery positions as an essential counter to the aristocratic and disloyal Southern “Slave Power,” which sought to subvert the Constitution and undermine opportunities for the white yeomanry. However, in 1862 Republican organs throughout the state failed to offer a convincing conservative argument for eman-

¹ See James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 591-611.

cipation.² As a result, in conjunction with the Union military setbacks in the summer and fall of 1862, these agitated racial prejudices of “swing” voters delivered the Democrats a convincing victory.

Literature Review

Within the narrow topic of the elections of 1862 in Illinois, Bruce Tap and Bruce S. Allardice each offer comprehensive explanations for the Republican defeat in these midterms.³ Both scholars conclude that the Democrats benefited from widespread dissatisfaction with Republican war policies, especially those that voters perceived as “racially subversive.” Relying on the more distant scholarship of Jacques Voegeli, both authors advance the argument that, in addition to military setbacks, the lower Midwest’s racist response to the Second Confiscation Act and the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation propelled Democrats to victory in 1862.⁴ Tap attributes the Democratic congressional pickups in Illinois to an ill-timed order by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton issued on September 18, 1862, which temporarily resettled hundreds of ex-slave “contrabands” in southern and central Illinois. Analyzed in conjunction with Lincoln’s preliminary Emancipation Proclamation issued four days later, the swing voters of central Illinois believed that the Republicans intended

to “Africanize” Illinois while waging a radical war of emancipation rather than a conservative war to preserve the Federal Union.⁵ Allardice concurs with Tap but also emphasizes that the disenfranchisement, via military service, of large numbers of Republican voters and activists contributed equally to the Republican defeat. The following analysis will focus primarily on the political messages broadcast by Illinois Republicans leading up to the elections of 1862. To what extent did the Republican leadership recognize the political damage done by the administration’s emancipation policy? What measures, if any, did they take to retain the support of moderate voters?

The Republican Coalition and Partisan Realignment in Illinois

Two of the most notable accounts of the rise of the Republican Party, Eric Foner’s *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* and Richard H. Sewell’s *Ballots for Freedom*, reveal that the Republican coalition built in the wake of the Kansas-Nebraska Act united disparate interest groups under the broad banner of antislavery.⁶ Ranging in outlook from the moralizing Conscience Whig Charles Sumner of Massachusetts to the fierce Jacksonian Democrat Francis P. Blair of Maryland, the new party rallied around their shared opposition to the Southern “Slave Power,” which limited opportunity for Western settlers and degraded the labor of white working men. Drawn from the anti-slavery elements within the old Second Party System, as well as former Free-Soilers and Independent Democrats, the Republicans

2 This return to the “Founders” argument is articulated in Abraham Lincoln’s “Cooper Union” speech, delivered on February 27, 1860. Plank 8 of the 1860 Republican National Platform, adopted May 17 in Chicago, echoes this perspective. See [abrahamlincolnonline.org](http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org). See also Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, “Republican Party Platform of 1860,” *The American Presidency Project*, The University of California, Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29620>.

3 Bruce Tap, “Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation: The Election of 1862 in Illinois,” *Civil War History* 39, no. 2 (1993), pp. 101-125; Bruce S. Allardice, “‘Illinois is Rotten with Traitors:’ The Republican Defeat in the 1862 State Election,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 104, no. 1/2 (2011), pp. 97-114.

4 See Jacques Voegeli, “The Northwest and the Race Issue, 1861-1862,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 50, no. 2 (1963), pp. 235-251.

5 Tap, “Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation,” 102.

6 Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Richard H. Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom: Antislavery Politics in the United States 1837-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). William Lloyd Garrison, best known as the editor for the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, was a leader of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which demanded immediate universal emancipation and denounced the U.S. Constitution as an immoral compact with the sin of slavery.

established themselves as a viable opposition to the Democratic Party by the Presidential Election of 1856. While divisions remained within the Party as to the role of the Federal Government in finance and commerce, as neither the ex-Whigs nor the anti-slavery Jacksonians fully abandoned their former identities within this new alliance, both factions prioritized anti-slavery policies over other domestic issues. As Sewell convincingly argues, the Republican Party viewed itself in moral terms. Although not as radical as Garrisonian abolitionists, the coalition saw slavery as an evil that violated the natural rights of both blacks and whites.⁷ Confident that their Northern system of free labor offered the best path forward for civilization, the new party framed “their anti-slavery program as one part of a world-wide movement from absolutism to democracy, aristocracy to equality, backwardness to modernity.”⁸

However, this common opposition to the extension and expansion of chattel slavery by no means equated to universal support for black rights. While many, perhaps a majority, of Republicans in New England supported the principle of racial coexistence and extended political and social rights to African Americans, many Midwesterners embraced the free-soil platform of the Republican Party because they hoped to exclude all black people, both enslaved and free, from the rapidly developing Western frontier.⁹ No state outside of the Northeast allowed black men to vote and most free states actively discriminated against African Americans: barring them from militia service and the public schools. Four states (Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Oregon) went so far as to bar all black people from their territory.¹⁰ While not crafted by Republicans, these laws remained on the books even when the Republicans took control of statehouses and governor’s

mansions.¹¹ While most of these western Republicans, such as Abraham Lincoln, hoped that slavery, would eventually die a natural death where it was already established, they also believed that colonization would work hand-in-hand with gradual emancipation, ridding the country of the dual “burdens” of slavery and racial heterogeneity.¹²

The Democratic Party had dominated Illinois since its inception in the 1820s. While the Whigs maintained a respectable presence in central Illinois, both the statehouse and the congressional delegation remained firmly Democratic until after the Compromise of 1850.¹³ The first hints of a political realignment came in 1852 when an *ad hoc* coalition of political abolitionists, Free Soilers, and anti-slavery Democrats backed liberal Whigs in northern Illinois, winning several new congressional districts granted to the North following the 1850 Census.¹⁴ After the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, this alliance became permanent and gave birth to the Republican Party in Illinois. In its first major electoral contest, the Presidential Election of 1856, the Republican John C. Fremont won only 40% of the vote in Illinois, defeated by Democrat James C. Buchanan’s plurality of 44% thanks to the spoiler Know-Nothing Millard Fillmore, who drew 15% of the vote.¹⁵ Over the next four years, the Republicans aggressively courted these conservative but anti-Democratic Fillmore voters while remaining committed to their anti-slavery platform.¹⁶

7 Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom*, 293-294.

8 Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 72.

9 Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom*, 322.

10 Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 261.

11 For a discussion of Republican attempts to dismantle racist statutes see Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 286-287. See also Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom*, 330-330.

12 Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 268-269.

13 Matthew Pinsker, “Not Always Such a Whig: Abraham Lincoln’s Partisan Realignment in the 1850s,” *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 29, no. 2 (2008), 31.

14 Pinsker, “Not Always Such a Whig,” 31.

15 Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, The University of California, Santa Barbara. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1856>.

16 Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 202-204.

By 1860, the state had divided itself between a Republican-leaning North, settled mainly by New England Yankees and anti-slavery Germans, and a Democratic-leaning South, nicknamed “Little Egypt,” populated by settlers from the slave states of Kentucky and Virginia. Central Illinois contained mixes of both sentiments, as well blocks of the conservative ex-Whigs who had voted for Fillmore in 1856. As a result, this area, especially the east central counties of Champaign, Iroquois, Ford, Douglas and Vermilion, remained hotly contested by both parties.¹⁷ In the presidential election that same year, Abraham Lincoln, facing off against fellow Illinoisan Stephen Douglas, secured his home state’s support in the Electoral College by a narrow margin of just under 12,000 votes.¹⁸ Republicans also achieved a majority in the state legislature and elected the anti-slavery statesman Richard Yates to the governorship.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the state returned a split congressional delegation, favoring the Democrats 5-4. Despite this partisan divide, Douglas’s endorsement of Lincoln’s call for volunteers following the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter signaled bipartisan support for the war against secession.²⁰

Prelude to Partisanship: The Local Elections of 1861

Douglas’s unexpected death on June 3, 1861 and the Union defeat at First Bull Run in July began to erode the political consensus that had prevailed in April. In November, Illinois voters selected representatives for a convention to revise the Illinois State Constitution. While both parties agreed that the state’s 1848

Constitution required alterations, the Democrats viewed the convention as a partisan vehicle to reestablish dominance in the once solidly Democratic state.²¹ The *Urbana Weekly Democrat* called its readers to action, reminding them that “this question [of constitutional reform] is one of great magnitude, and the Democrats of the whole state should not be caught napping... for the issues are to them of the great local importance.”²² As a result, prospective Democratic delegates campaigned fiercely on economic issues, such as bank reform and railroad regulation, which the Republicans neglected in their war-centered appeals to the public.²³ Swept up in the excitement and terror of civil war, the Republicans naively assumed that the public’s dedication to the Union cause would overcome partisan divisions. Indeed, many of the state’s Republican newspapers gave only minimal coverage to the constitutional convention campaign.²⁴ Those which did devote full columns to the election, such as the state’s leading publication, the *Chicago Tribune* and *The Alton Telegraph*, Madison County’s Republican organ, focused their attention on races for their local offices and a statewide banking referendum rather than the selection of delegates.²⁵ Perhaps the best example of Republican complacency is recorded in *The Belvidere Standard*, which printed the following reflection on November 5, Election Day:

“The Election of to-day will, without question, pass off with little or no excitement, unless it prevail among the candidates themselves... The all engrossing issue of the war, sprung

17 Drew E. VandeCreek, “Politics in Illinois and the Union During the Civil War,” *Illinois During the Civil War*. Northern Illinois University Libraries: Digital Collections and Collaborative Projects.

18 Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, The University of California, Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1860>.

19 Allardice, “Illinois is Rotten with Traitors,” 97.

20 “Senator Douglas’s Speech,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1861.

21 Allardice, “Illinois is Rotten with Traitors,” 99.

22 Quoted in Oliver M. Dickerson, “The Illinois Constitutional Convention of 1862,” *University of Illinois: The University Studies* 1, no. 9 (1905), 6.

23 Tap, “Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation,” 103.

24 See late October and early November issues of *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield, Ill.), *Bloomington Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington, Ill.), *Mattoon Independent Gazette* (Mattoon, Ill.), and *Woodstock Sentinel* (Woodstock, Ill.)

25 “Vote Against It,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1861; “The Banking Law,” *The Alton Telegraph*, November 1, 1861.

upon us by the slave power, has had the effect to cause party lines to disappear as if by common consent, as things of no present use.”²⁶

Republican eyes were instead turned towards national affairs, such as President Lincoln’s decision to relieve former Republican presidential candidate John C. Frémont of his command in Missouri. Major General Frémont had defied the Lincoln administration’s policy towards slavery and had unilaterally issued an edict of emancipation in a key border state.²⁷ Fremont’s downfall amid this scuffle over emancipation policy on the eve of the local elections of 1861 proved grimly prophetic of the Republican Party’s own emancipation debacle the following year.

The Proposed Illinois State Constitution of 1862

Republicans recognized the folly of their political negligence as soon as the State Constitutional Convention gathered at Springfield on January 7, 1862. The final tally of delegates produced by this low-turnout election included 45 Democrats, 20 Republicans, and 10 Union Democrats.²⁸ Within hours of convening, the Democratic majority elected voted a group of vocal conservatives from “Little Egypt” to serve as the convention’s officers.²⁹ Before even beginning their official business, delegates to the convention clashed

over the oath that would swear them in as representatives of the people of Illinois. The Democrats refused to pledge loyalty to the Illinois State Constitution of 1848, insisting that they had come to Springfield to alter this document and as such had no obligation to maintain its provisions.³⁰ However, the Republicans realized that by claiming sovereign authority as a convention, beholden to neither the State Constitution nor the State Legislature, the Democrats could potentially subvert the constitutional process and adopt a new constitution unilaterally, given that the provision that required a popular referendum for such a document resided in the Constitution of 1848.³¹ Ultimately, the Democrats succeeded in adopting their oath but also accepted a resolution promising to submit the work of their convention to a popular vote by the citizens of Illinois. This inauspicious start triggered alarm bells among Republican partisans. On its front page *The Chicago Tribune* denounced the scheming of Democratic delegates under the headline “A Grave Public Danger” and warned its readers that the Democratic takeover was “Lecompton over again.”³²

In its final draft, the text of the proposed constitution advanced much of the longstanding agenda of the Democratic Party in Illinois. First, the constitution shortened the governor’s term to two years, meaning that if the constitution was approved by the voters in June, Republican Governor Richard Yates would be up for reelection in November, rather than serving the full four year term mandated by the 1848 constitution.³³ The document also reapportioned Illinois’ congressio-

26 “The Election,” *The Belvidere Standard*, November 5, 1861.

27 “General Fremont Removed! Great Excitement,” *Bloomington Daily Pantagraph*, November 6, 1861.

28 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 7-8; Throughout the Civil War, the Republican Party officially ran as the “Union Party” in hopes of securing the support of pro-war Democrats. Thus the 10 delegates who identified as Union Democrats identified with the war policies of the administration but for the most part retained their Jacksonian ideals in matters of domestic policy.

29 President: William A. Hacker of Union County, Secretary: William M. Springer of Logan County, Assistant Secretary: John Merritt of Marion County. See Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 9-10.

30 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 10.

31 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 11.

32 “A Grave Public Danger,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 9, 1862; The Lecompton Constitution was a proposed state constitution adopted by a pro-slavery convention in Kansas in 1857.

33 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 28.

nal districts in a manner that increased the influence of solidly Democratic “Little Egypt” at the expense of the Republican-leaning northern counties.³⁴ In addition to this partisan gerrymandering, the proposed constitution prohibited the distribution of paper money in the state, invalidated all existing bank charters, and prohibited the further establishment of banks in Illinois. Echoing Andrew Jackson’s suspicions of banks and concentrated wealth, one Democratic delegate, Julius Manning of Peoria, denounced banking as “the great labyrinth of inequity” and banks as “soulless corporations” intent on corrupting men through the temptation of wealth.³⁵ Viewed as consistent with classical Jacksonian Democracy, the measure would also monetarily weaken the many Republicans invested in financial institutions.³⁶

Over the course of the convention itself, the Democrats had also become increasingly critical of Governor Yates, claiming that he had asserted powers beyond those ascribed to him by law. Like President Lincoln, Yates was born in Kentucky and migrated to Illinois in his youth where he became involved in politics as a Whig. Elected to Congress for the first time in 1850, Yates was the only Illinois Representative to oppose the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Losing his seat as a result of this controversial vote, Yates threw his support behind the emerging Republican Party, securing him a spot at the top of the state ticket in 1860.³⁷ Partisan jabs made during the general meetings of the convention insinuated that Yates had misdirected funds designated for the Illinois volunteers from the state’s war fund.³⁸ These attacks culminated in a resolution that

“instructed” the governor to suspend his activities as chief executive until the convention could fully investigate his actions. Yates summarily rejected this power grab and the incident propelled an outcry in the Republican press.³⁹ *The Chicago Tribune* called the order “an act of gross usurpation on the part of the Egyptian majority,” linking the Democrats to their antebellum political allies in the Confederate South: “Such conduct partakes too much of the swagger and assumption of the slaveholder... Similar consequential airs were put on by conventions in Secessia.”⁴⁰

Democratic delegates also sought to capitalize on white Illinoisans’ racial anxieties, increased since the beginning of the War, by adopting three distinct racial provisions. The first barred African Americans and those of mixed racial backgrounds from settling in the state, the second denied these same groups the suffrage and the right to hold public office, and the third granted the state legislature all necessary powers to enforce the first two provisions.⁴¹ These anti-black measures served as a sort of appendix to the new constitution and were to be voted on separately.⁴² In addition, the convention determined it possessed the authority to take up the proposed “Corwin Amendment” to the U.S. Constitution, which explicitly shielded slavery from congressional interference, and ratified it despite Republican outrage.⁴³ Passed by Congress in March 1861 in the hopes of wooing seceded states back into the Union, the measure now only interfered with the Federal Government’s ability to conduct war against the secessionists. These actions further galvanized the Republican press and offered them a clear strategy to combat the pro-

34 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 17.

35 “Proceedings of the State Constitutional Convention,” *Illinois State Journal*, February 5, 1862.

36 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 26-27.

37 Logan Uriah Revis, *The Life and Public Services of Richard Yates* (St. Louis: J.H. Chambers & Company, 1881) 7-17.

38 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 12.

39 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 13.

40 *Chicago Tribune*, February 13, 1862.

41 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 13.

42 Allardice, “Illinois is Rotten with Traitors,” 101.

43 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 14.

posed constitution at the ballot box. By framing the referendum on the proposed constitution as a test of loyalty to the Union, the Republicans hoped to convince even conservative Democrats to vote “no.”

The Constitutional Referendum of June 1862

While Republicans had overlooked the 1861 election as a formality rendered inconsequential by the ongoing war, the referendum on the proposed state constitution, set for June 17, 1862, received the full attention of party activists who sought to portray Democrats as duplicitous regionalists. Quickly labeling the constitution the “Egyptian Swindle,” Republicans appealed to regional as well as partisan sensibilities in the areas of northern and central Illinois where they drew most of their support. Eager to point to the thinly veiled Democratic gerrymandering, one Republican editor in Bloomington asked his readership explicitly: “Do you wish to avoid the yoke of Egyptian domination? . . . Do you wish to prevent this northern portion of the State [sic.] having the minority of representatives in the legislature, in consequence of unjust apportionment? Then vote against the bogus constitution.”⁴⁴

The questionable loyalties of the Democratic authors also emerged as a key selling point for anti-constitution advocates. As the Democratic Party split between pro-war and anti-war factions, the Republicans actively courted “War Democrats” by framing the Democratic leadership as pro-Confederate. Receiving an update from their “correspondent in Egypt,” the *Chicago Tribune* reported that “the men in Southern [sic.] Illinois who are most pre-eminently [sic.] active in working for the success of the constitution are traitors at heart— as hostile to the government as Jeff Davis or

Beauregard.”⁴⁵ Such claims were not entirely unfounded; several of the Democrats who helped to draft the constitution, including John A. Logan and William A. Richardson, had expressed sympathy for the cause of secession in the winter of 1860-1861, before the firing on Fort Sumter made such a position politically untenable.⁴⁶ Rumors swirled that the Knights of the Golden Circle had directed this “secessionist document” and intended to withdraw Illinois from the Union once the Democrats secured their gerrymandered majority in the state legislature. While such provocative claims exaggerated the intentions of the Democrats, the party had become increasingly fierce in its opposition to the Lincoln administration’s war policies throughout the first months of 1862. The Democrats framed themselves as patriotic conservatives, battling against both secessionists and abolitionists, who posed equally serious threats to the U.S. Constitution and the future of the republic.⁴⁷ Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus and his confiscation of Confederate property— especially Southerners’ human property—struck committed Democrats as radical if not tyrannical.

In the midst of an increasingly bloody war, Republicans labeled these charges treasonous, as the line between loyal dissent and treacherous subversion blurred. Those most opposed to the Lincoln administration were also the most ardent supporters of the proposed Constitution, a correlation which compelled the Republican *Mattoon Independent Gazette* to remark: “Why is it that every rebel sympathizer in Illinois is open mouthed for the adoption of the new constitution? Show us a secessionist, and we will show you an advocate of the infamous thing.”⁴⁸ If the document appealed

44 “Turn Out! Turn Out!,” *Bloomington Daily Pantagraph*, June 10, 1862.

45 *Chicago Tribune*, June 2, 1862.

46 Tap, “Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation,” 103.

47 “Negromania,” *The Ottawa Free Trader*, June 14, 1862.

48 *Mattoon Independent Gazette*, June 14, 1862.

to traitors, was it not in and of itself treasonous? In Republican eyes, in the midst of a rebellion against the Federal Government, the country no longer divided itself between Republicans and Democrats, but between loyal men and those who would betray the Union. As one Union officer from Madison County wrote in a letter to Senator Lyman Trumbull, throughout his travels in downstate Illinois he was “disgusted with the signs of secession proclivities,” and noted that “all the traitors are Democrats.” Nevertheless, not all Democrats were traitors as seen by the many serving “in the army, or serving [the] blessed cause in some useful way.”⁴⁹ These sentiments echoed the fanciful desire expressed by some Republicans that loyal Democrats drop their political opposition for the duration of the conflict. Embracing their temporary name as the “Union Party,” Republicans called on all loyal Democrats to vote against the Constitution as part of their united effort to defeat the secessionists.⁵⁰

As Democrats emphasized the racial threats posed by radical abolitionists, Republicans in highly competitive central Illinois distanced themselves from such rhetoric. While the *Chicago Tribune* dismissed the separate anti-black ballot provisions as a partisan ploy, part of the Democratic effort to compel working men to vote against their own interests, the Republican *Illinois State Journal* of Springfield urged voters to support these measures.⁵¹ On the surface this position seems contradictory. The separate provisions would not become the law of the land without the adoption of the proposed constitution, and the *State Journal* cam-

paigned fiercely against the new constitution as a whole, citing the dubious loyalty of its advocates. However, by announcing support for the anti-black provisions, the local Republicans sought to bolster their credentials among racist swing voters. While such voters had little sympathy for the “Slave Power” and even less for the secessionists, they balked at the idea that people of color should live side by side with them as social and political equals. This sentiment is best captured in the editorial penned the week after the election in the *State Journal*:

“According to their [the Democrats’] talk they were the only white man’s party... The vote shows, as the Republican despise the persistent efforts of slavery secession Democracy to trample the unoffending and innocent negro into still lower degradation, that when a vote is made upon the question of placing him upon a political and social level with white men, there are no two opinions about it.”⁵²

Yet there were two opinions about the issue. Further north, many Republicans identified with more radical leaders, including Congressman Owen Lovejoy, who rejected the premise of the provisions, a stance gleefully exploited by Democratic organs.⁵³ While the breadth of their coalition had brought the Republican Party to power in the first place, these contrary positions revealed the palpable differences between Republicans on issues of race, and they also sowed doubt into the minds of independent voters: which position reflected the “real” Republican agenda?

In the final vote on June 16, out of the 266,000 ballots cast, the Republicans and their Unionist allies

49 George T. Allen to Trumbull, *Lyman Trumbull Papers, 1855-1894*. [Washington, D. C.: Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress, 1968.]

50 *The Alton Telegraph*, June 13, 1862.

51 “The Nigger Hobby,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 1862; “Union Ticket,” *Illinois State Journal*, June 17, 1862.

52 “The Way it Runs,” *Illinois State Journal*, June 24, 1862.

53 “Republicanism Unadulterated,” *The Ottawa Free Trader*, June 14, 1862.

defeated the proposed constitution by a comfortable margin of 16,000 votes (a margin of 6%).⁵⁴ The controversial congressional apportionment and bank propositions of the document, which received separate position on the ballot, were also defeated, though only by 7,000 and 4,000 votes respectively (margins of 2.6% and 1.5%). Ominously for progressive Republicans, the three “negro” provisions of the constitution each passed by more than 100,000 votes (a margin of more than 38%).⁵⁵ Despite the defeat of the proposed constitution, the Democrats employed the divided Republican position on race to castigate those “tender-footed democrats who voted against the New Constitution... [and ask them] how they like[d] their new associates, who by their most solemn pledge... declared the negro entitled to the same privileges and as good as a white man.”⁵⁶ Republicans, meanwhile, believed that they had convinced the electorate of the Democratic leadership’s treachery. In the midst of a war to save the Union, the country now divided itself between those loyal to the Constitution and the lackeys of secession. Confident that this referendum served as a prelude to the upcoming midterms, *The Alton Telegraph* promised its readers that just as the Republican Party “buried the secession constitution on Tuesday she will bury the secession party in November. [The referendum] was truly a victory of gigantic proportions.”⁵⁷ Unfortunately for the Republicans, the military setbacks of the Union

Army throughout the summer and early autumn of 1862 in conjunction with the Lincoln administration’s embrace of emancipation drove scores of conservative voters back into the Democratic fold by November of that year.

Military Misfortunes and the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation

While successful campaigns throughout the first half of 1862 suggested that Federal forces were within one major victory of restoring the Union to the antebellum status quo, the setbacks of the summer and early fall revealed that war was far from over. In the West, Ulysses S. Grant’s February victories at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson boosted Northern morale to a level not seen since the previous summer’s disaster at Bull Run. In the East, George B. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac entered their spring campaign on the Virginia Peninsula well trained and in high spirits. While the engagement at Pittsburgh Landing proved costly for Grant’s forces, the death of Albert Sidney Johnston and the Confederate retreat to Corinth hinted to that the Confederacy would soon be cut in half, a suspicion further substantiated by David Farragut’s capture of New Orleans at the end of April.

However, a score of setbacks followed when McClellan’s forces on the Virginia Peninsula and were pushed back from the outskirts of Richmond in the Seven Days Battles. Confederate General Robert E. Lee took advantage of the Union retreat to launch his own campaign northward, humiliating the Union Army of Virginia at the Battle of Second Bull Run just as Confederate Braxton Bragg invaded the key border state of Kentucky. The once promising year of 1862 devolved into a panicked frenzy as Confederates advanced into the Union territory in Maryland and Kentucky. While both invasions were stymied at the Battles of Antietam and Chaplin Hills respectively, both strategic victories

54 This turnout slightly exceeds that of the subsequent midterm (266,155 vs. 256,076 total ballots). This drop in turnout can be explained, at least in part by the fact that Illinois raised 58 volunteer infantry regiments between June and November. Soldiers serving outside of their home districts were ineligible to vote in Illinois. For a detailed analysis of the effects of enlistment on the midterm’s outcome see Allardice, “Illinois is Rotten with Traitors,” 110.

55 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 24.

56 *Salem Weekly Advocate*, June 19, 1862.

57 “The New Constitution,” *The Alton Telegraph*, June 27, 1862.

came at a high cost for Union forces and did little to boost the morale of an increasingly war-weary Northern citizenry. Although far from decisive, the repulse of Confederate forces at Antietam gave President Lincoln a chance to implement the emancipation policy he had considered since July. Born in the wake of McClellan's retreat from Richmond, the drafting of the Emancipation Proclamation marked a concrete shift in Lincoln's war aims. While Lincoln had ignored calls for emancipation by abolitionists and radical Republicans throughout the first year of the war out of deference to the border states, the threat of foreign intervention on behalf of the Confederacy loomed large in the President's mind as spring turned to summer in 1862. Unable to secure a military victory, which would restore the Union to the antebellum status quo, Lincoln employed his power as Commander-in-Chief to turn the war for the Union into a war for emancipation.

Building on the legal foundation of the Second Confiscation Act, a law which gave Union officials the power to free the slaves of disloyal citizens should they come into contact with the Union Army, the Emancipation Proclamation legally freed all slaves in the rebeling states. While the proclamation excluded the border states and some select territories already under Union control, the policy would legally, though not practically, free millions of slaves throughout the Confederacy. Lincoln chose to issue the Preliminary Proclamation, first presented to his cabinet after the collapse of the Peninsula Campaign, in the aftermath of Antietam, the single deadliest day of the War, to demonstrate the Government's willingness to raise the stakes of the conflict and subjugate the South in order to preserve the Union.⁵⁸ Many conservative Unionists, however, were horrified by the prospect of military emancipation. In

addition to numerous questions of Constitutional authority, the measure killed any chance of a negotiated settlement with the South.⁵⁹ From this perspective, Lincoln had therefore done as much to kill the antebellum Union—the Union they were fighting to maintain—as had the secessionists. In Illinois, a state still fuming with racial anxiety from its constitutional debate, the announcement of these new emancipation war goals put Republicans on the defensive with conservative voters. Indeed, this development allowed Democrats to propagate racial hysteria as never before.

Emancipation and the 1862 Midterms

The release of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation also coincided with two local political events, which primed conservatives for an anti-emancipation backlash in Illinois. On September 10, the Democratic Party held its statewide convention in Springfield. After the decisive defeat of the proposed state constitution, few prominent Democrats expected a favorable result in the November midterms.⁶⁰ The convention debated whether to adopt a more explicitly pro-war stance as it selected its nominee for Illinois's newly created "at-large" congressional seat, but ultimately chose James C. Allen of the party's "peace" faction over the more militant Colonel T. Lyle Dickey of the 4th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry.⁶¹ Frustrated by the summer's military setbacks, the Democrats committed themselves explicitly to opposing the Lincoln administration's war policies at the ballot box. Taking aim at the Second Confiscation Act, Congressman William A. Richardson offered the convention a rousing closing address full of bitterly racist rhetoric. The Republicans,

59 McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 558.

60 Allardice, "Illinois is Rotten with Traitors," 102.

61 Tap, "Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation," 108.

58 McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 558.

according to Richardson, were fundamentally radical and “no radical man ever improved in anything” because “radicalism on upon a single idea is a distraction.” Richardson claimed that the Republicans fought the war with “but one idea and but one friend and that is the nigger.”⁶² Rather than caring for Union troops or providing relief for bereaved Northern families, the Federal Government under Lincoln offered shelter, provisions, and work to black contrabands.

This anti-black rhetoric gained legitimacy in eyes of many voters as Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ordered hundreds of black refugees northward into Illinois on September 18, 1862.⁶³ These contrabands had been camped at Cairo, Illinois and had become a logistical liability for the Union commander, Brigadier General James M. Tuttle. Stanton had hoped that the contrabands could assist shorthanded farmers with the fall harvest throughout Southern Illinois, however, such a strategy did not sit well with racial conservatives. The *Joliet Signal* warned that as a result, the “State will soon be crowded with negroes who will be compelled to work for half price or starve; and thus white men and women will have to work for the same reduced pay or find work elsewhere.”⁶⁴ Leading Democrats also objected to the Federal Government’s flagrant violation of the Illinois statute, which prohibited blacks from entering the State. The subsequent announcement of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22 galvanized the Democrats who continued to emphasize the dangerous radicalism of the “Black Republicans.” Leading Democratic organs quickly incorporated Lincoln’s executive action on emancipation into a narrative

of federal overreach, which subverted the same Constitution for which Union soldiers had fought and died for the past year and a half. According to the *Ottawa Free Trader*, the Emancipation Proclamation was a betrayal of those men fighting to preserve the Union because “The Union as it was, if this proclamation is enforced is gone forever... This [proclamation] involves the annihilation of the south, and is the converse proposition to the restoration of the Union.”⁶⁵ Combined with Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus and the Government’s suppression of dissent throughout the North, the Proclamation played into the Democratic narrative that the Republicans were moving the country towards despotism. The vicious Republican attacks on Congressman Clement Vallandigham of Ohio particularly troubled Democrats.⁶⁶

Furthermore, the emancipation of the slaves throughout all Confederate territories would further subvert the social order of white supremacy already threatened by Stanton’s executive order. Downstate or “Egyptian” publications such as the *Salem Weekly Advocate* warned its readers that “Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands [of contrabands] are crowding up the border free states... disturbing all our social relations and treating the complete overthrow of white labor.”⁶⁷ The social and political threats posed by the administration matched, if not outweighed, the threat posed by secession in the eyes of conservatives.⁶⁸ Employing the

62 “Patriotic Democratic Speech,” *Quincy Herald*, September 16, 1862.

63 Tap, “Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation,” 109.

64 “More Negroes Coming,” *Joliet Signal*. September 30, 1862.

65 “The Emancipation Proclamation,” *Ottawa Free Trader*, Sept. 27, 1862

66 “Which is the Traitor,” *The Quincy Herald*, September 18, 1862. Vallandigham, perhaps the fiercest Peace Democrat or “Copperhead” in public office during the Civil War, unilaterally called for an unconditional armistice with Confederate forces. He was deported by a military tribunal in 1863 and spent time behind Confederate lines and in Canada before secretly returning to the Ohio in mid-1864.

67 *Salem Weekly Advocate*, October 2, 1862.

68 “Which is the Traitor,” *The Quincy Herald*, September 18, 1862.

populist language of their hero Andrew Jackson, the Democratic Party leadership called on “the people [to rise] in their might, and proclaim at the ballot box, in November, their condemnation of the unconstitutional acts of the administration.”⁶⁹

As the Democrats united around a unified message of Federal overreach and white supremacy heading into the midterms, the Republicans of Illinois sought to explain the necessity of emancipation to voters. Throughout fiercely racist central Illinois, Republican publications focused on the practical and punitive aspects of emancipation for Southerners rather than the liberation of human chattels. In Bloomington, the local Republican press emphasized the geopolitical implications of the Proclamation, noting that it nullified all “talk of foreign intervention, for not a nation in Christendom will interfere to save slavery from its doom.”⁷⁰ *The Alton Telegraph* described slaves as the “great support” of the Confederacy, which when brought down would topple the rebellion. The publication was also quick to label opponents of the Emancipation Proclamation as treacherous, denouncing those weak-willed Democrats who “cry out against all measures calculated to cripple the enemy.”⁷¹ Countering the Democrats’ fear that emancipation would topple the social hierarchy and potentially trigger a bloody uprising, these Republicans pointed to the fact that nearly all slaves remained deep in the South and thus the consequences and “the responsibility in such an event [a slave uprising] will be placed at the door of the sufferers themselves—the real abolitionists—the authors of the rebellion—the slave aristocrats themselves.”⁷²

In the Republican account, black empowerment was an unfortunate side effect of emancipation but a development more than compensated for by the collapse of the dreaded “Slave Power” and the defeat of the rebellion. In Springfield, Republicans reminded their compatriots, “A people waging a causeless and unholy war against a mild and just Government have forfeited the right to protection by that Government.”⁷³ Those committed to the Union cause should feel no sympathy for the Confederate traitors. No fate, not even a bloody slave rebellion, was too terrible for them. As such, the editor of the *Illinois State Journal* called on “[T]rue patriots of every name [to] rally around the President” and support his proclamation as they remained steadfast in their determination that “the Union shall be preserved and the laws enforced.”⁷⁴ This rhetoric, while decidedly in favor of the Emancipation Proclamation, barely touched on the humanitarian consequences of freeing slaves throughout the Confederacy. Indeed, the *State Journal* warned its readers against those “extremists” who would complain that the proclamation did not do enough “immediately” to remedy the condition of the slave.⁷⁵

Farther north, by contrast, radical Republicans devoted more attention to this human element, engaging in the emancipationist rhetoric denounced by Democrats. Indeed, the *Chicago Tribune* viewed the event with religious reverence:

“So splendid a vision has hardly shone upon the world since the day of the Messiah. From the date of this proclamation begins to the history

69 *Salem Weekly Advocate*, October 2, 1862.

70 *The Bloomington Pantagraph*, September 26, 1862.

71 “Why They Don’t Like It,” *The Alton Telegraph*, October 3, 1862.

72 “Why They Don’t Like It,” *The Alton Telegraph*, October 3, 1862.

73 “The Bolt Fallen,” *Illinois State Journal*, September 24, 1862.

74 “The Bolt Fallen,” *Illinois State Journal*, September 24, 1862.

75 “The Bolt Fallen,” *Illinois State Journal*, September 24, 1862.

of the republic as our fathers designed to have it—the home of freedom, the asylum of the oppressed, the seat of justice, the land of equal rights under the law...⁷⁶

To those, like Representative Owen Lovejoy, who were long committed to the abolition of slavery, the nation faced not only a rebellious army but in slavery a “divine Nemesis who has woven the threads of retribution into the web of national life.”⁷⁷ As such, the nation needed seek divine assistance by fulfilling the will of God because so long as slavery existed the Union would remain unworthy of God’s help. Divine assistance, in Lovejoy’s eyes, would only come when the nation repented and “proclaimed liberty to the enslaved of the land.”⁷⁸ In another solidly Republican region, the *Woodstock Sentinel* published a poem titled “The Negro on the Fence,” which berated their opponents for illogical racism.⁷⁹ The verse offered a fable: a distressed wagoner stuck at the bottom of a hill is offered help by a passing black man, but the wagoner refuses on the basis of the man’s color. Subsequently, as his homestead is plundered and his family killed, the wagoner remains “conserved” at the bottom of the hill while the Good Samaritan remains sitting on a nearby fence. The story reflected favorably on black efforts to assist the Union cause and warned racial conservatives not to scorn ex-slaves’ help in subduing the rebellion.

While authentic to each region’s racial outlook, these mixed messages complicated the Republican effort to rebuild the coalition of radicals, moderates, and

conservatives that had secured the state for Lincoln in 1860. Although swing voters had supported the Republican-backed anti-constitution campaign in June, the new racial questions raised by prolonged war and the policy of emancipation alarmed many conservatives. Even in June less than one third of voters had opposed the proposition excluding blacks from the State, and less than 15% opposed the proposition depriving blacks of political rights.⁸⁰ The heightened tensions produced by Stanton’s executive order and the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation put even the *Chicago Tribune* on the defensive as it reminded its readership that once the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect in the South, any recently arrived blacks would “return to their homes and take with them nine tenths of the free colored population of the North.”⁸¹ Republicans throughout the State faced the difficult challenge of defending the Lincoln administration’s radical social policy while assuring voters that this policy would not upset the status quo in Illinois. While previous calls to limit the growth of slavery or gradually phase out the institution could be clothed in the language of conservatism and hearken back to the founders via the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, military emancipation had no such precedent.⁸²

Recognizing the Republican predicament, Democrats drove towards the center to pick up conservative Republican voters. Hopelessly outnumbered in the Fifth Congressional District, Democratic Party leaders

76 *Chicago Tribune*, September 23, 1862

77 Quoted in William F. Moore and Jane Ann Moore, *Collaborators for Emancipation: Abraham Lincoln and Owen Lovejoy* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 126.

78 Moore and Moore, *Collaborators for Emancipation*, 127.

79 “The Negro on the Fence,” *Woodstock Sentinel*, October 1, 1862.

80 Dickerson, “Illinois Constitutional Convention,” 24.

81 *Chicago Tribune*, September 23, 1862

82 One of the most important acts of the Confederation Congress, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 organized the territory for the future states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and (northeastern) Minnesota. The legislation, built on an early proposal penned by Thomas Jefferson, expressly prohibited the expansion of slavery into the territory. This precedent became a key Republican talking point in their antebellum efforts to block the expansion of slavery westward into Federal Territories.

recruited a conservative Republican, Colonel Thomas J. Henderson, to run against abolitionist Owen Lovejoy. Widely respected throughout the district and as an opponent of emancipation, Henderson was formally nominated by both the Democrats and the conservative wing of the District's Republican Party. Although the district's major Republican publications stood by Lovejoy, Democrats hoped to draw enough conservative Republican votes at the general election to defeat Lovejoy.⁸³ Democrats in key central Illinois districts, such as Peoria and Springfield, rebranded themselves as "no-party men," or "anti-abolitionists" to draw the votes of conservative ex-Whigs still hostile to the Democratic Party.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, Republicans continued to vacillate between radical and conservative endorsements of the Emancipation Proclamation, allowing the Democratic press the unpopular question of black rights.⁸⁵

As the national anti-emancipation backlash swept Democrats to power in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana in those states' October elections, Illinois Republicans frantically campaigned on a loyalty platform. Republican partisans resurrected the Revolutionary-era epithet of "Tory" to associate their opponents with the aristocratic "Slave Power."⁸⁶ The Democratic nominee for State Treasurer, Alexander Starne, came under particular scrutiny when a neighbor testified, under oath, that Starne had expressed a willingness to fight for Confederate forces.⁸⁷ Republican editors hoped to

prevent a racist backlash to emancipation by rallying around the flag. Headlines such as "Union for the sake of the Union" and "Down with Traitors" pitched the election as a battle as real as Antietam with the forces of a "traitorous conspiracy" plotting against the Union facing off against loyal men.⁸⁸ Rather than directly refuting the constitutional arguments made against the Emancipation Proclamation, Republicans questioned: "What manner of men are those so clamorous for traitors' rights?" They ultimately concluded that such men "must either be the friends and allies of traitors, bound to them by natural affinities and affections, or they must be their hired advocates and attorneys."⁸⁹ Democrats who defended the rights of Confederate traitors must either themselves be closet secessionists, or even worse, the mercenaries of secession: defending treason to turn a profit. In their attempt to frame the election as a contest between patriots and traitors, the Republican press went even so far as to eulogize the late Stephen Douglas, claiming him as an example of propriety and loyalty in the face of rebellion and quoting extensively from his final calls for unity in an effort to secure Democratic votes for the *Union* ticket.⁹⁰

Despite these fierce attempts to frame the contest under these terms of loyalty, in the final days preceding the November 4 election, hints of desperation escaped leading Republican organs. With clear Democratic triumphs throughout neighboring states in the lower Midwest, Republican editors in both northern and central Illinois attempted to minimize the impact of emancipation on their state. On October 29, the *Chi-*

83 William F. Moore and Jane Ann Moore, eds., *His Brother's Blood: Speeches and Writings of Owen Lovejoy 1838-1864* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 351-352.

84 "Danger Ahead," *Woodstock Sentinel*, October 22, 1862.

85 "Ask the Question" and "Vote the White Man's Ticket," *The Quincy Herald*, October 31, 1862.

86 "The Elections," *Woodstock Sentinel*, October 22, 1862; "Another War Democrat Proscribed," *Chicago Tribune*, November 1, 1862.

87 "Starne Endorses the Witness Against Him," *Illinois State Journal*, October 30, 1862; "Beauties of the Tory Candidate for State Treasurer," *Chicago Tribune*, October 31, 1862.

88 *Illinois State Journal*, October 28, 1862.

89 "The Constitution and the Proclamation—Traitors' Rights," *Illinois State Journal*, October 28, 1862.

90 "Shall the Government be Sustained," *The Alton Telegraph*, October 31, 1862; "The Democratic Doctrine: Senator Douglas on the Suppression of the Rebellion," *Illinois State Journal*, October 28, 1862.

Chicago Tribune printed a letter from the national superintendent of contrabands who claimed that “not one in a hundred [ex-slaves] can be persuaded to go North.” Far from seeking new lives in the North, the commissioner claimed that newly freed slaves were eager to offer “diligent and laborious toil in all the servile departments of the government” as Union forces occupied the South.⁹¹ In essence, this letter argued that emancipation merely transferred the service of African-American laborers from the Confederate enemy to the U.S. Government. The policy would not result in any meaningful shift in northern demographics or social dynamics. Springfield’s *State Journal* also sought to minimize the social impacts of emancipation and argued that any real “negro immigration” to Illinois was in fact a result of the Democrats, who like their Southern brethren would prefer to employ black servants rather than perform their own labor.⁹² Yet these same daily editors recognized that these emphases might prove too little too late, and in the days before the election also warned that a Democratic victory might well occur on account of fraud, or due to the absence of so many loyal men under arms.⁹³

The November 4 vote proved a stinging rebuke for the Republicans in Illinois. The Democrats won 9 of the 14 congressional seats, including the at-large contest, as well as a decisive majority in the state legislature.⁹⁴ As expected, the Republicans performed well

in the northern portion of the state, and Owen Lovejoy defeated his conservative challenger. However, the results throughout central Illinois were discouraging. When comparing the votes for congressman at-large in 1862 to the results of the 1860 presidential election, the Republicans lost 13 counties they had won in 1860.⁹⁵ Democratic candidates secured the key seventh and eighth districts of central Illinois by 6.4% and 3.7% respectively. Democrat James C. Allen defeated Republican Ebon C. Ingersoll for the at-large congressional seat by a margin of 6.5%.⁹⁶ Despite improving upon their 1860 performance in June’s referendum, the Republicans of Illinois were devastated by the midterm results.⁹⁷ While the Republicans may have suffered from the lack of absentee balloting by soldiers, as contemporaries indicated and Allardice convincingly argues, the decisive Democratic victory in the at-large race indicates that Republicans lost the conservative support they had garnered in 1860, when Lincoln won by 3%.

Effects of the 1862 Midterms

To the delight of some and the horror of others, the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation redefined the Civil War. President Lincoln’s decision to free slaves in all of the rebelling states altered the nature of the conflict, instead of fighting for the restoration of the antebellum status quo, Union soldiers now fought a war of liberation. The radical nature of this action altered political dynamics throughout the Northern states, but especially in lower Midwestern states such as Illinois. While in 1860 and indeed even in June of 1862, Republicans cobbled together a coalition of radical abolitionists, moderate free-soilers, and conservative ex-Whigs

91 “The Contrabands Not a Burden on the Government,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 29, 1862.

92 “Negro Immigration,” *Illinois State Journal*, November 3, 1862.

93 “An Infamous Attempt to Promote Fraudulent Voting,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 3, 1862; “Look Out for Fraudulent Tickets,” *Illinois State Journal*, November 3, 1862; “Watch against Fraud,” *Bloomington Pantagraph*, November 4, 1862; “Beware of Split and Spurious Tickets,” *Bloomington Pantagraph*, November 4, 1862; “Loyal Citizens and the Loyal Army,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 3, 1862.

94 Tap, “Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation,” 120.

95 “The Illinois Election,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 22, 1862. See also Appendix 2.

96 Tap, “Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation,” Appendix B.

97 See Appendix for breakdown by county.

to defeat their Democratic opponents, the bloody summer of 1862 and the racial implications of confiscation and emancipation alienated conservative voters. This paper has shown that while the Republicans sought to frame the contest in terms of loyalty, of Unionists versus Secessionists, the party's divided reactions to emancipation—more radical in northern Illinois and more moderate in central Illinois—offered Democrats the political ammunition they lacked in June. Claiming the political center for themselves, Illinois Democrats framed abolitionists like Owen Lovejoy as the real face of the Republican Party. According to these Democrats, by issuing the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, the Republicans had destroyed any hope for restoration of the Union “as it was” in order to advance their radical social agenda. Such sentiments did not sit well with conservative voters already concerned by perceived executive overreach. Furthermore, the social implications of freedom for millions of African American slaves alarmed these same, deeply racist, voters.

This defeat in Illinois, taken together with the military rout at Fredericksburg in December, marked a dark moment for the Lincoln administration and the redefined Union cause. Although the Republicans retained control of the House of Representatives thanks to their coalition with the independent “Unionists,” the Democrats had made significant gains in the lower Midwest and Mid-Atlantic.⁹⁸ While the national repercussions of these congressional races remain contested, these outcomes undoubtedly strengthened the resolve of “Peace” Democrats in several states, emboldening the so-called “Copperheads” in the first half of 1863.⁹⁹

In fact, in Illinois, some anti-war agitators even turned to violence, forming armed mobs and “bushwhacking” pro-Union men and their families in February, March, and April of 1863.¹⁰⁰ President Lincoln, deeply troubled by these developments in his home state, referred to this anti-war resistance as “the fire in the rear” and feared the consequences of such protests as much as the progress of the Confederate Army.

Indeed, until the major Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July 1863, it seemed possible that Peace Democrats throughout the North might persuade the public to abandon the fight. All too often, at least in popular memory, the contingent moments of the Civil War are reduced to actions on the battlefield: General Stonewall Jackson's death as a result of friendly fire, Colonel Chamberlain's defense of Little Round Top, or Admiral Farragut's tenacity at Mobile Bay. But the winter and spring of 1863 was a period of political contingency—a moment when the Union war effort nearly crumpled in on itself. Examining the political dynamics that proceeded such moments, especially in the most volatile localities, provides context for what often seems alien to both the scholars and citizens of our own time.

98 These results were especially significant in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.

99 James McPherson nevertheless notes the Republicans had actually experienced the smallest net loss of congressional seats in an off-year election since 1842. Furthermore, McPherson argues that the Lincoln

administration did not adjust its policy position following the elections. See McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 561-562. For a concise account detailing the activity of anti-war Democrats during the Civil War see Jennifer L. Weber, “Lincoln's Critics: The Copperheads,” *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 32, no. 1, (2011), 33-47.

100 James T. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes, “Was Illinois Governor Richard Yates Intimidated by the Copperheads During the Civil War?” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 107, no. 3-4, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 321-345.

Ulrikab Abroad: ‘Authentic’ Inuit-German Encounters in Labrador and Germany

BY MAGDALENE KLASSEN, McGill University

On September 24, 1880, Abraham Ulrikab arrived in Hamburg, having traveled 29 seasick days from Labrador.¹ He was accompanied by his wife Ulrike, their two young daughters Maria and Sara, his wife’s nephew Tobias, and another Inuit family. Organized by Johan A. Jacobsen, the voyage of the two families to Europe conveyed them to a *Völkerschau*, or human exhibition, put on by Hamburg zookeeper Carl Hagenbeck. They traveled through Germany, stopped in Prague, and ended their journey in Paris. All the while, Ulrikab kept a diary.

Although these families were not the first Indigenous people, or the first Inuit, to be put on display in Europe, they were some of the earliest people to be exhibited in the context of a zoo.² In Germany, Carl Hagenbeck was the main purveyor of what he called “anthropozoological exhibitions,” and these families were the fourth group of “savage aboriginals from exotic lands” that he displayed.³ Though Hagenbeck’s zoo had begun as an exclusively animal affair, he soon realized that the exhibitions could be more successful

if the unfamiliar animals were accompanied by people from the same regions. In 1874 he exhibited reindeer and a group of six Sami.⁴ Exhibitions of Nubians and Kalaallit (Greenland Inuit) followed in 1876 and 1877. Hagenbeck’s *Völkerschau* did not have precise itineraries, but they did follow predictable schedules. Every afternoon, Ulrikab and the others would demonstrate their traditional skills: they kayaked, butchered seals and “made [themselves] look fierce,” in an enclosure that was meant to replicate their homeland.⁵ But Ulrikab and his family were not necessarily the “savages” that audiences came to see: they were devout Christians, and active members of the Moravian mission at Hebron. In addition to staging his “otherness,” Ulrikab also signed autographs, played violin, and sang Moravian hymns renowned for their musical complexity. Many newspapers remarked on Ulrikab’s intelligence and musical abilities.⁶

Ulrikab does not describe what the other family—Terraniak, his wife Paingu, and their daughter Nuggasak—did while his family sang hymns, but they were the “heathen Eskimoes” that Jacobsen had hoped to find.⁷ They practiced “magic,” refused to be mea-

1 Abraham’s last name is variously recorded as Ulrikab (derived from his wife’s name) or Paulus (of unknown origin). I have chosen to refer to him by the former name, since he signs off as such in his letters to Brüder Elsner.

2 Hilke Thode-Arora, “Hagenbeck’s European Tours: The Development of the Human Zoo,” in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, eds. Pascal Blanchard et al. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 169.

3 Carl Hagenbeck, *Von Tieren Und Menschen: Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen von Carl Hagenbeck* (Berlin: Vita Deutsches Vlg., 1909), 83; “Trapped in a Human Zoo: Based on Abraham’s Diary,” *The Nature of Things* (CBC Television, February 2016).

4 Hagenbeck, *Von Tieren Und Menschen*, 83.

5 Hermann Lutz and Abraham Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2005), 41.

6 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 36.

7 M. Hoffmann, *Beiträge über Leben und Treiben der Eskimos in Labrador und Grönland: Aus dem Tagebuche des Herrn Carl Hagenbecks in Hamburg mit dem Schiffe, Eisbär’ nach Grönland Entsandten Herrn J.A. Jacobsen* (Berlin: M. Hoffmann, 1880), 13.

sured for “scientific” purposes, and were “distraught” by steam trains.⁸ One newspaper explained that they were “more interesting” than the Ulrikab family, “in so far as culture [had] not smudged too much of their naturalness.”⁹ Although Ulrikab wrote little about this non-Christian family, their presence complicated his own European experience. As Ulrikab explained in a letter to a Moravian missionary, his family did not “like their habits [because] they practice magic,” and were pleased when each family had a different house to live in.¹⁰ Nevertheless, as the trip continued, Ulrikab and Terrianiak came to depend increasingly on one another in this strange land. These two families were eight of the estimated 35,000 Indigenous people from across the world who were exhibited in Europe, where “by far the most sustained use of performers was to be found in Germany,” thanks to Hagenbeck, who prided himself on providing such an entertaining and educational experience for the German public.¹¹

Jacobsen, a Norwegian, had been sent to the Labrador Sea by Hagenbeck in order to replicate the success of an earlier exhibition of Kalaallit, or Greenland Inuit.¹² When he arrived in Labrador, he faced strong opposition to his attempt: the Moravians were firmly against the exhibition of their converts “like wild beasts,” but eventually acknowledged that they were “free people and [the Moravians could not] hold them” if they wanted to go.¹³ Still, Jacobsen complained in

his diary that the Inuit were “suppressed so slavishly” by the Moravians, and despaired until Ulrikab finally agreed to go. Ulrikab justified his participation twofold: as a means to repay his debts to the Moravian mission store, and as a chance to fulfill his longstanding desire to see Europe.¹⁴ The missionaries admitted that they could not deny him this chance, and Jacobsen promised a visit to Herrnhut, the core of the Moravian Brethren.¹⁵

The Moravian Brethren (also the *Unitas Fratrum* or *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde*), which emphasized ecumenism and pietism, had its origins in the early fifteenth-century Moravian Reformation and the Hussite movement. Its heart, however, lay in Saxony, on the former estate of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, who in 1722 offered a section of his estate as sanctuary for Bohemian and Moravian members of the *Unitas Fratrum* fleeing Catholic persecution.¹⁶ Inspired by their devotion, he joined the denomination and came to have a significant influence on the Brethren’s theology. Yet to call the Brethren a denomination may be a misnomer, given their vision of a universal church, in which the various Protestant churches were only parts in the larger body of Christ: Brethren were encouraged to associate with and even participate in other congregations.¹⁷ This desire to form a worldwide community also found them at the forefront of missionary work, which they began in 1732, only twenty years after the congregation was established.¹⁸

Over the next century, the Brethren would de-

8 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 35.

9 “The Eskimos in the ‘Zoologischer Garten,’” *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, Dec. 3, 1880, quoted in Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 51.

10 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 7.

11 Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 261.

12 Hoffmann, *Beiträge über Leben und Treiben der Eskimos*, 12. Initially Jacobsen was sent to Greenland but the Danish inspector refused to allow him to take any Inuit to Europe, so he continued on to Labrador.

13 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 9.

14 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 5.

15 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 5.

16 Robert L. Gallagher, “The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice: Zinzendorf and the Early Moravians,” *Mission Studies* 25, no. 2 (2008): 185.

17 Robert Beachy, “Manuscript Missions in the Age of Print: Moravian Community in the Atlantic World,” in *Pious Pursuits: German Moravians in the Atlantic World*, eds. Michele Gillespie and Robert Beachy (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 37.

18 David A Schattschneider, “Pioneers in Mission: Zinzendorf and the Moravians,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8, no. 2 (1984): 64.

velop a vast global network of missions, spanning the Danish, Dutch, Spanish, French, and British empires.¹⁹ In doing so, they did not organize a distinct mission society within the church, instead “conceiving of the mission enterprise as an obligation for the Church as such,” and had one of the highest ratios of missionaries to parishioners.²⁰ Across the continents, Moravians sought to preach the Gospel and “civilize” Indigenous social structures while placing a strong, if conflicted, emphasis on preserving their traditional modes of life. Their ecumenism and the “Christian diaspora” they cultivated allowed for a degree of cultural difference within the Church, yet questions of how to accommodate or repudiate the utterly foreign cultures they encountered in the mission field proved difficult to resolve.²¹ In Labrador, the Moravian missions were, from their founding in 1771, virtually the only European presence in the area. Though missionaries attempted to exert a great deal of control over the lives of their congregants, the particularities of Labrador’s environment, inhospitable to a sedentary European lifestyle, meant that even Christianized Inuit continued to practice long-established lifeways.

Still, to European visitors, it was particularly exciting that the other Inuit family, found further north at Nachvak, were still “wild”: Terrianiak was an *Angkok* or spiritual leader, and neither he nor his wife Paingu (spiritually powerful herself) or daughter Nuggasak had any relationship with the missions. No ob-

jection to their participation, by Moravians or their own community, has been preserved. Satisfied with the group, Jacobsen arranged to pay the Inuit a daily wage of three shillings per man, two per woman, and one per child, and together they set sail for Hamburg.²² However, Jacobsen neglected one crucial—in fact, legally required—element of the journey: inoculation.²³ In Darmstadt, the fifth stop on the tour, Nuggasak contracted smallpox and died on December 14.²⁴ Her mother and Ulrikab’s daughter Sara followed soon after. In his grief, Ulrikab abandoned his diary. Although Jacobsen and Hagenbeck tried to protect the remaining Inuit by having them inoculated twice over the next month, Ulrikab and the rest of the group died as well.

Ulrikab’s story is undeniably tragic, and the wider practice of human zoos a horrifying stain on Europe’s history. Yet as one scholar has suggested, the goal of studying Ulrikab’s story ought to be to “interpret as much as indict.”²⁵ Although Hagenbeck and Jacobsen expressed shock and grief over the death of these families—Hagenbeck even swore to give up the *Völkerschauen*—both continued to exhibit many more people from around the world, until after the First World War when it ceased to be profitable.²⁶ In his memoir *Of Beasts and Men*, Hagenbeck skipped neatly over the events of 1880–1881.

The Moravian Brethren’s response to the deaths was also ambiguous: although they were sorrowful

19 Felicity Jensz, “Colonial Agents: German Moravian Missionaries in the English-Speaking World,” in *Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples, and Cultural Exchange*, eds. Patricia Grimshaw and Andrew May (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 139.

20 Anne Folke Henningsen, “On Difference, Sameness and Double Binds. Ambiguous Discourses, Failed Aspirations,” in *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Unto the Ends of the World*, edited by Hilde Nielsen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 133.

21 Beachy, “Manuscript Missions,” 37.

22 Georg Kretschmer, “Letter to Brother Connor,” August 20, 1880, quoted in Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 6–7. Given that Ulrikab’s debts were only 100 shillings, he would have been able to pay them off after about two weeks in Europe.

23 “Trapped in a Human Zoo.”

24 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, xxiii.

25 Corey Coates, “The First Inuit Autobiography: Text and Context(s) (Extended Review),” *The Northern Review* 28 (2008): 267.

26 Nigel Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 143–144; France Rivet, *In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab: The Events of 1880-1881* (Gatineau: Polar Horizons, 2014), 195.

(even two years later, one missionary mentioned in a letter how much they all missed Ulrikab's violin playing), they also suggested the deaths were the result of divine will, punishing the Inuit for not following the advice of their missionaries.²⁷ In 1882, the Hebron missionaries ended a letter published in the *Missionsblatt* (the main German-language Moravian periodical) by saying that they had been "vindicated: The Lord has punished Abraham for his disobedience, and providence has shown that 'the outside' was indeed full of lurking dangers."²⁸ Though Ulrikab had gone to Europe out of Moravian devotion, his was not a religiously sanctioned voyage.

In January of 1881, Ulrikab was inclined to agree with missionaries' judgment of the voyage: in his final letter to former missionary Augustus Elsner, written five days before his death, Ulrikab described how he and the remaining others prayed daily, asking Jesus to "forgive our aberration...all day we cry together... that our sins will be taken away by Jesus Christ."²⁹ Yet the significance of this diary does not lie only in the emotion invoked by the text; Ulrikab's reflections on the exhibition and on his Christian faith that was being tested by the experience reveal a careful evaluation of his self-conception and of the new setting he was encountering.

In tracing Ulrikab's journey, several intersecting lines of questioning emerge. His experiences in German zoos and Moravian churches invite reflection on the nature of authentic experience and feeling. As Raibmon has argued in her work on authenticity in the lives of Indigenous people of the North West Coast, "authenticity was a structure of power that enabled, even as it

constrained, [Indigenous peoples'] interaction with the colonial world."³⁰ Ulrikab's experiences were similarly enabled and constrained by European expectations, but in light of his personal Moravian faith, we might also consider the conflicting ways that this journey was at once an exploitative spectacle and a religious pilgrimage. Furthermore, that Ulrikab kept a diary encourages us to think about how different modes of writing may complicate our expectations of what constitutes authenticity.

This diary seems to be lost. We do not know whether he wrote in a notebook or on scraps of paper, with what implement he wrote, or how many people knew about the diary. But we do know that it returned to Labrador—along with Ulrikab and his family's pay and the last of their belongings—on August 17, 1881, seven months after all the Inuit who had traveled to Europe had died.³¹ Today, all that remains is a German translation of the Inuttitut original by missionary Georg Kretschmer, which was discovered in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, by J. Garth Taylor in 1980.³² In recent years, Ulrikab's story has been taken up by German Canadianist Helmut Lutz, who published *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab: Text and Context*, an English translation of the diary and of German newspaper articles related to the Inuit visit; and by France Rivet, who compiled further documents about the conditions that led to their visit and the aftermath of their deaths in her book *In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab*. Rivet is also working with the Nunatsiavut government to repatriate the bodies from the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle in Paris, where they have been held since 1886.³³

27 Marie Kretschmer, Letter, August 23, 1882, quoted in Rivet, *In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab*, 227.

28 "Hebron," *Missionsblatt aus der Brüdergemeinde*, no. 1 (1882): 10.

29 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 64.

30 Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 11.

31 A. Dewitz, "Bei Den Eskimo Im Zoologischen Garten," *Missionsblatt aus der Brüdergemeinde* 12 (1880): 224–6.

32 J. Garth Taylor, "An Eskimo Abroad, 1880: His Diary and Death," *Canadian Geographic* October–November (1981): 38–43.

33 Rivet, *In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab*, 251. They were

Ulrikab seems to have begun writing the diary on October 22, 1880, five days after the group arrived in Berlin, and nearly a month after they had arrived in Europe. Ulrikab gives no clear indication as to his motivations for keeping a diary, but his first entry offers some possibilities: he begins by explaining that “in Berlin it is not very nice...the air is constantly buzzing from the sound of the walking and driving.”³⁴ Indigenous visitors were often overwhelmed by the European metropolis, a reaction that often filled their hosts with pride as they watched civilization awe their primitive guests.³⁵ However, October 22 was also the day that two members of the Moravian Brethren came to visit their enclosure, “and they were so happy when they saw us that they knew us immediately and called our names, told us to sing...and invited us to their house and their church. We really want to...but are not able to, as there are too many people [visiting the zoo].”³⁶ The relief of seeing someone, if not familiar, at least sympathetic, must have greatly comforted Ulrikab, who would soon write to Brüder Elsner (whom he had known in Labrador): “I remember to have wished to see Europe and some of the [Moravian] communities over there for a long time. But here I wait in vain for someone to talk about Jesus.”³⁷ As much as Ulrikab had come to Europe to pay off his debts, he had also come on a kind of pilgrimage.

Whether he was writing out of homesickness or spiritual hunger, we might understand the diary as a kind of comfort: for the most part, he wrote about his regret for leaving his homeland, and the joy he felt when

initially buried in the St-Ouen cemetery, and exhumed on the request of the museum.

34 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 12.

35 Coll Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 115.

36 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 12–13.

37 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 5.

encountering fellow Moravians. Yet the Moravians had also furnished him with this specific medium for expressing regret: though we know little of how he learned to write, we know that he wrote in Inuttitut, which the Moravians had rendered in a Latin script. Of course, since a missionary’s translation of the diary is all we have, there is no way of knowing exactly what Ulrikab wrote. Even if he had reflected deeply on the nature of the ethnographic exhibit, Kretschmer may have omitted some of the original content from his translation. Though there is no way to verify these speculations, the translation’s unusual syntax and vocabulary, which are grounded in the Labrador environment, suggest that something of Ulrikab’s voice remains in the text. As such, it would seem that the details of the exhibit, including his family’s living conditions, and his interactions with Europeans such as Jacobsen, Hagenbeck, the anthropologist Rudolf Virchow, or the general public, did not, to Ulrikab, merit much reflection.

In the Exhibit: the European Gaze

Ulrikab did, however, describe some of their daily activities in the exhibition. In each new enclosure, the families kayaked in ponds, and Tobias would dress up as the seal, “wrapped in furs,” while Terrianiak and Ulrikab pretended to hunt him.³⁸ Ulrikab looked forward to the occasions when a real seal would be brought in from Holland, and the Inuit would eat it after the mock hunt, a welcome respite from the European food that was “not very good”: fish, potatoes, dry bread, and beer.³⁹ The crowds were enormous: on the exhibit’s first day in Berlin, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reported an audience of almost 7,000.⁴⁰ The intensity of these crowds—in size and excitement—made Terrianiak’s family increasingly cheerless, but Ulrikab ex-

38 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 14.

39 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 30.

40 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 14.

plained that his family had “been very patient, although we have also been greatly tired. Constantly in the evenings we pray, wanting to be helped. [Praying] seems to achieve something within us.”⁴¹ Being exhibited clearly overwhelmed and took a toll on all of the Inuit. Ulrikab wrote, somewhat puzzled, of how he was “constantly told to write my name...there were many voices, one always took it away from the other, to please them all was impossible, there were too many.”⁴² Yet those who visited seem to have been pleased with the show, and besides obtaining Ulrikab’s autograph, many bought souvenir cards printed with portraits of the individual Inuit, or the 28-page “Report on the Lives and Undertakings of the Eskimos in Labrador and Greenland,” an illustrated brochure based on Jacobsen’s diary of his trip to the Labrador Sea.⁴³

The scale of Hagenbeck’s promotional efforts and the German public’s interest in the exhibit were not without precedent. Historians of the “red Atlantic” have extensively documented the intensity of the European gaze on indigenous visitors, “the maelstrom of publicity, [the] hungry, pressing public,” as have Indigenous visitors themselves.⁴⁴ Peter Jones, an Ojibwa Methodist minister who undertook several fundraising and diplomatic trips to England, noted that in London his presence “created no little excitement.”⁴⁵ He resented the British fascination with his “odious [and inaccurate] Indian costume,” which he was regularly asked

to wear while he spoke.⁴⁶ Jones’ cousin Maungwudaus, who toured with George Catlin’s show in the 1840s, compared London crowds to “musketoos in America in the summer season, in their number and in biting one another to get a living.”⁴⁷ Although Jones and Maungwudaus both originated from territory that England claimed to control, and had specifically English experiences of Europe, it is likely that they would have been similarly unimpressed by Germans.

Perhaps because Germany had no formal colonies in the Americas (though individual Germans were certainly involved), Germans have long understood their fascination with the Indigenous peoples of North America as one of “mutual recognition.”⁴⁸ Some have argued that this formulation is a manifestation of the Romantic obsession with the wild.⁴⁹ Others have pointed to German self-conceptions as “the Indians of the Romans,” and the importance of the “Volk” in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German nationalism.⁵⁰ In both cosmologies, a “self-delusive concept of a ‘special affinity’” between Germans and Indigenous people is active, by which *Indianer* are supposedly able to distinguish Germans from other Europeans, and have a special respect for them.⁵¹ While this German fascination with *Indianer*, which persists to this day, is widely known, their constructions of the “Eskimo” are less well-documented.

41 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 26.

42 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 31.

43 Hilke Thode-Arora, “Abraham’s Diary - A European Ethnic Show from an Inuk Participant’s Viewpoint,” *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe* 2, no. 2 (2002): 5. (Jacobsen’s diary was published in French and English by Rivet and Lutz in 2014.)

44 Thrush, *Indigenous London*, 163; Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenous and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

45 Peter Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-Ke-Wa-Quo-Na-By: Rev. Peter Jones, Wesleyan Missionary* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1860), 300.

46 Jones quoted in Kyle Carsten Wyatt, “Rejoicing in This Unpronounceable Name’: Peter Jones’s Authorial Identity,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 47, no. 2: 170.

47 Maungwudaus quoted in Kate Flint, *The Transatlantic Indian, 1776-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 82.

48 Susanne Zantop, “Close Encounters: Deutsche and Indianer,” in *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, and Projections*, eds. Colin Calloway et al. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 4.

49 Zantop, “Close Encounters: Deutsche and Indianer,” 10.

50 Christian F. Feest, “Germany’s Indians in a European Perspective,” in *Germans and Indians*, 28.

51 Hartmut Lutz, “German Indianthusiasm: A Socially Constructed German National(ist) Myth,” in *Germans and Indians*, 168, 172.

Germans often described the Inuit in admiring terms, even as “First among the Savages.”⁵² The earliest European depictions of Inuit people are German woodcuts from 1567, and, as several scholars have noted, many Inuit have traveled across the Atlantic since European ships first arrived.⁵³ The first Inuit known to have visited the states that would become Germany were a man and woman who traveled with Capt. Samuel Hadlock in 1824.⁵⁴ Many Kalaallit and Sami, a people indigenous to Sápmi, or the arctic regions of Fennoscandia, also toured Germany, especially in the 1870s.⁵⁵

Germans also learned a great deal about the Inuit through Moravian missionaries, who sent home accounts of the “peculiarly childlike and childish” disposition of the Inuit in Greenland and Labrador.⁵⁶ These reports circulated in general Protestant missionary periodicals in addition to specifically Moravian networks. During Ulrikab’s visit, one newspaper wrote that “the Eskimos present here do in general live up to the expectations we are used to having of them.... a picture bringing together ugliness, good nature, and comic aspects in the most pleasant way.”⁵⁷ The “Eskimo” was construed

as kind-hearted and simple-minded: rather than a noble savage, we might call this trope the “comical savage.” However, the Inuit’s actions were not always as benign as this trope would suggest: on the Moravians’ first attempt to establish a mission in Labrador in 1752, some Inuit killed the missionaries. This hint of danger heightened the allure of “Eskimo” stereotypes.

Ulrikab in this gaze

Philip J. Deloria has argued that, “in the smothering omnipresence of a white racial gaze, show Indians were, in fact, *always* performing Indianness, whether they wanted to or not, twenty-four hours a day.”⁵⁸ Though Deloria was writing specifically about the American context of Wild West shows, his observations resonate with the expectations of authenticity that Ulrikab described in his diary. Although Ulrikab did not explicitly reflect on his role in the exhibit, he continually presented the dissonance between the act in the German zoo and his daily life in Labrador. For Deloria, “playing Indian, as always, [had] a tendency to lead one into, rather than out of, contradiction and irony.”⁵⁹ Whether Ulrikab reflected on this irony or not, his performance in the exhibition suggests a subtle and sophisticated method of engaging with the contradictions. Ulrikab performed more than a clichéd “Eskimeness,” instead choosing to demonstrate his dual Inuit and Moravian *Bildung*. His skill with the harpoon and the violin displayed these two educations separately, but he also demonstrated their harmony, which was best exemplified by the maps of Labrador and Nain that he drew for spectators.⁶⁰ Although none of these maps survive, modern scholars and bygone explorers alike

52 David Thomas Murphy, “‘First among the Savages’: The German Romance of the Eskimo from the Enlightenment to National Socialism,” *German Studies Review* 25, no. 3 (2002): 533.

53 William C. Sturtevant and David Beers Quinn, “This New Prey: Eskimos in Europe in 1567, 1576, and 1577,” *Indians and Europe*, ed. Christian F. Feest (Aachen: Rader Vlg., 1987), 62.

54 Robin K. Wright, “The Traveling Exhibition of Captain Samuel Hadlock, Jr: Eskimos in Europe, 1822-1826,” in *Indians and Europe*, ed. Christian F. Feest (Aachen: Rader Vlg., 1987), 220. Although Hadlock had brought the couple from Baffin Island, by the time they visited Germany, he had substituted a Roma woman for the Inuit woman, who had died in England.

55 Rainer Baehre, “Early Anthropological Discourse on the Inuit and the Influence of Virchow on Boas,” *Études/Inuit/Studies* 32, no. 2 (2008): 19.

56 Br. Hieronim, “Letter from New Herrnhut, June 20th, 1867,” *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen* 25 (1868): 376.

57 “The Eskimos in the ‘Zoologischer Garten,’” quoted in Lutz

and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 46.

58 Philip Joseph Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 67.

59 Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 180.

60 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 27.

have remarked upon the “phenomenal amount of accurate spatial representation and locational awareness” of Inuit maps.⁶¹ Ulrikab’s skill with a pen, whether signing autographs or writing in his diary, but especially in drawing maps, was a clear representation of his talent, which combined Inuit cartographic knowledge and European methods of representing land on paper.

Deloria’s irony thus reflects back onto the crowd: they came to gape at “savages,” yet they left carrying proof of Ulrikab’s intelligence and ability. As Sami scholar Velli-Pekka Lehtola argues in his work on exhibitions of Sami in Germany, human exhibitions could be spaces of agency and even dissent for those who participated.⁶² Of course, rather than ending with tales told back at home, Ulrikab’s trip—like many others—ended in death, and he and his family were deeply homesick throughout their trip. Still, Ulrikab was able to resist aspects of the savage persona imposed on him, for his “wild” and “civilized” skills blurred and complemented each other, challenging the European presumption that these were mutually exclusive categories. In light of his map-making, singing, and violin-playing, Ulrikab’s performance in Hagenbeck’s zoo can be understood as an attempt to authentically articulate his Moravian-inflected Inuit identity, an effort in direct opposition to the reductive demands of the *Völkerschau*.

Moravian contexts

Labrador’s relative isolation meant that Ulrikab was likely very unfamiliar with European constructions of savagery and with the more violent aspects of European colonialism. While the late nineteenth century was perhaps “the most traumatic and turbulent period in the history of western North American Aboriginal

people,” in Labrador the long missionary presence and otherwise sparse European settlement meant that Ulrikab and his family were not very well acquainted with the horrors visited upon groups like the Mi’kmaq of New Brunswick or the Beothuk in Newfoundland.⁶³ Although the Moravian mission was often a site of tension between Inuit and missionaries, these conditions afforded the Inuit relative freedom compared with Indigenous nations further south.

In general, the Moravian missionaries permitted outward signs of traditional Indigenous culture: language, some clothing (such as Inuit parkas), and those customs that they felt did not interfere with Christian duty or belief.⁶⁴ They did, however, take great pains to unite this religious diaspora, and many converts traveled to the Brethren’s capital, Herrnhut, where “it was not an uncommon sight to find former Negro slaves, Eskimos, and representatives of other heathen congregations sitting among the German brothers and sisters.”⁶⁵ However, such travel was difficult, and the Moravians primarily communicated through their such journals as the quarterly *Periodical Accounts* and *Missionsblatt aus der Brüdergemeinde*, which featured yearly reports from around the globe.⁶⁶ These journals, distributed to all Moravian communities, contributed to their strong sense that the Brethren were part of a universal church, and cultivated a “tremendous community solidarity” at both local and global levels.⁶⁷

In keeping with their efforts to be a ecumenical force, Moravians cooperated closely with colonial

61 John Spink, *Eskimo Maps from the Canadian Eastern Arctic* (Toronto: B.V. Gutsell, 1972), 22.

62 Veli-Pekka Lehtola, “Sami on the Stages and in the Zoos of Europe,” in *L’Image Du Sápmi II. Études Comparées*, ed. Kasja Andersson (Örebro: Örebro University Press, 2013), 326.

63 Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 5.

64 Henningsen, “On Difference, Sameness, and Double Binds,” 135.

65 Bayreuther quoted in Rudolf Conrad, “Mutual Fascination: Indians in Dresden and Leipzig,” in *Indians and Europe*, ed. Christian F. Feest (Aachen: Rader Vlg., 1987), 460.

66 Beachy, “Manuscript Missions,” 41.

67 Beachy, “Manuscript Missions,” 41.

governments. Yet, in their status as a minority denomination within Germany, which held no colonies until after its unification in 1871, Moravian missions often had a particularly tenuous relationship with imperial states.⁶⁸ Colonial governments such as the Danish or British were often suspicious of the Moravians' motives. When, in 1765, they petitioned the British House of Lords for a land grant in Labrador, the Brethren emphasized the ways in which their mission would be "so useful to the English Nation" in its imperial and economic interests.⁶⁹ The year before, the Brethren had approached the governor of Newfoundland, Hugh Palliser, at an auspicious time: France had recently ceded the Labrador coast to the British in the Treaty of 1763, and Inuit raids were threatening the fledgling English fishing industry.⁷⁰

Palliser agreed to allow Moravian evangelism so long as the Brethren stopped the Inuit from visiting the southern coast of Labrador, where the English fisheries were located. In 1771, Jens Haven and two other missionaries established the mission Nain. Hebron, where Ulrikab and his family lived, was established in 1818.⁷¹ Because of Haven's knowledge of Greenlandic Inuktitut, which overlaps significantly with the Labrador dialect Inuktitut, communication between the missionaries and the Inuit was swifter and easier than in many other missionary contexts.⁷²

Moravian missions chose to preach and educate

in Indigenous languages. In Labrador, missionaries underwent intensive language learning, and held all sermons, hymns, and classes in Inuktitut. The Brethren further translated a vast array of texts into Inuktitut: from bibles and hymnals to booklets of German folk songs and children's stories about masquerades. These translations taught the Inuit as much about European culture (albeit through a Pietist lens) as they did about Christian theology. Given that Ulrikab could write fluently in Inuktitut, we can surmise that he had also learned about German mores and Moravian missions around the globe. Jacobsen wrote that Ulrikab "has as much talent for music as he does for drawing, and has an impressive knowledge of geography and natural science."⁷³ Yet he would have known little of the dispossession, massacre, and forced assimilation of other Indigenous groups: for the most part, Inuit Moravians continued to lead traditional lives. From October to April, they lived in traditional multi-family *iyluqsuaq* around the mission, but remained nomadic in the summer months.⁷⁴ Although Moravians encouraged converts to help with fur trading, basket weaving, or collecting eider feathers (the Labrador mission was almost self-sufficient), much of their livelihood depended on seasonal hunting.⁷⁵

It is not clear when Abraham and Ulrike became affiliated with the Moravian Church. In a letter to Brother Elsner, Ulrikab mentioned a time when he "did not believe in my Lord and Saviour yet."⁷⁶ He began to appear in the Hebron mission store's records in

68 Jenz, "Colonial Agents," 140.

69 "Extract from the Petition of the Society of the Unitas Fratrum to the Lords of Trade, 23 February 1765," in *In the Matter of the Boundary between the Dominion of Canada and the Colony of Newfoundland in the Labrador Peninsula, between the Dominion of Canada of the One Part and the Colony of Newfoundland of the Other Part*, vol. 3 (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1927), 1313.

70 W. H. Whiteley, "The Establishment of the Moravian Mission in Labrador and British Policy, 1763–83." *The Canadian Historical Review* 45, no. 1 (1964): 30.

71 A. C. Thompson, *Moravian Missions: Twelve Lectures* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1882), 225. Today Nain is the northernmost permanent settlement in Labrador.

72 Thompson, *Moravian Missions*, 225.

73 Hoffmann, *Beiträge über Leben und Treiben der Eskimos in Labrador*, 18.

74 J. Garth Taylor, "Historical Ethnography of the Labrador Coast," in *Handbook of the North American Indians*, ed. David Damas, vol. 5 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1984), 512.

75 J. F. W. Kuehn, W. F. Bechler, and T. Eug. Reichel, "Our Financial Position," *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen* 31, no. 326 (1880): 271–74.

76 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 4.

1875, when he would have been about thirty.⁷⁷ Given that he knew enough of the Nain area to map it, he may have lived there earlier. However, there were also some elusive mentions of Ulrikab's parents and other relatives living in the Hebron area. By the time they left Labrador, both he and Ulrike were tightly woven into the Hebron mission: he as a musician, she as a helper around the mission house. Both were considered model converts.

Abraham and Ulrike's longstanding connection to their mission suggests that they would not have been well acquainted with the practice of playing Indian, or "Eskimo." As Deloria has observed, "some Native people may well have been duped or bribed into some performances...but not for very long."⁷⁸ Ulrikab and his family quickly learned how to manage what was expected of them in the German zoos. In one instance, Ulrikab described how "Our enclosure was often broken by the throng...They all came into our enclosure to see the kayak but immediately everything was filled with people and it was impossible to move anymore."⁷⁹ Upon realizing that Jacobsen and the zoo manager were unable to keep the crowd under control, Ulrikab stepped in. Of the incident, he wrote: "so I did what I could. Taking my whip and the Greenland seal harpoon, I made myself terrible. One of the gentlemen was like a crier. Others quickly shook hands with me when I chased them out. Others went and jumped over the fence because there were so many."⁸⁰ That Ulrikab could induce such a reaction from so large a crowd speaks volumes about Europeans' expectations of these Inuit visitors, and Ulrikab's awareness thereof. Ulrikab stepped into a role that the spectators imposed upon

him: he noted that "some of them were even horrified by our Northlanders often," and in his quick thinking he exploited this fear.⁸¹ In specifying that he used a harpoon from Greenland (Jacobsen had picked up some artifacts there before arriving in Labrador), Ulrikab noted the dissonance between this scene—using an unfamiliar tool to frighten humans—and his real life, where he would have used a familiar harpoon, perhaps one that he had made himself, with great care, sneaking up on a seal to strike at exactly the right moment. However, in the context of the zoo, it did not really matter whether he tried to demonstrate his education or frighten people away; both delighted the spectators, who reached out to shake his hand as he chased them away.

Hagenbeck's Exhibitions

Although they did not deny the exhibitions' entertainment value, Hagenbeck and his contemporaries also understood them as scientific endeavors, and these *Völkerschau* were among the most significant contributors to German knowledge of Indigenous peoples. By professionalizing the display of Indigenous peoples, Hagenbeck transformed the industry from one that exhibited exoticness with little concern for accuracy into one that intended to demonstrate, with scientific rigour, the "underlying ethnic difference" between Europeans and the rest of the world.⁸² Scholars such as Jace Weaver and Kate Flint have carefully documented the extent to which Indigenous people travelled to Europe, and have noted that many, like Peter Jones, came with diplomatic intentions to represent their people, only to find themselves put on display.⁸³ Most of these diplo-

77 "Einkauf von Pelzwaaren bis zur Schiffszeit," 1863–1903, Labrador Inuit through Moravian Eyes, Memorial University of Newfoundland Library Archives, 68.

78 Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 54.

79 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 41.

80 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 41.

81 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 27.

82 Pascal Blanchard et al., eds., *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 7; Thode-Arora, "Hagenbeck's European Tours," 167.

83 See Weaver, *The Red Atlantic*; Kate Flint, *The Transatlantic Indian, 1776-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Emma Anderson, *The Betrayal of Faith: The Tragic*

matic visits, in which Indigenous people insisted that treaties be honored and land rights recognized, occurred in the major colonial powers of England and France, but reports of exotic visitors travelled throughout Europe. When he opened his first *Völkerschau* in Hamburg, Hagenbeck was capitalizing on a hungry market.

By hosting them in the open air rather than on stage, Hagenbeck expanded the accessibility of these shows, which he advertised as the chance to “travel ‘round the world for fifty pfennig.”⁸⁴ Instead of thrilling displays of strange skills or reenactments of sensational historical scenes, Hagenbeck purported to present “primitive” daily life: his exhibitions were widely praised “because the performers were not ‘acting’ but, in a sense, were leading their ordinary lives.”⁸⁵ They were seen as an educational resource for the public and academics alike, and toured Europe extensively.

Hagenbeck’s exhibitions were a boon to the emerging discipline of anthropology, which was developing new ways of putting Indigenous bodies and cultures on display. Dr. Rudolf Virchow, an influential physical anthropologist, is said to have “never missed a *Völkerschau*.”⁸⁶ Virchow and Hagenbeck were acquainted, and Virchow was often given special access to the people on display, so as to take detailed physical measurements. Beyond his visits to the *Völkerschau*, the archetypal armchair anthropologist depended on an “army” of contacts around the world to supply him with skulls and skeletons for analysis.⁸⁷ Although today this project seems to be a quintessentially racist nine-

teenth-century effort, under Virchow’s influence, German anthropology remained committed to a humanist project “centered on efforts to document the plurality and specificity of cultures.”⁸⁸ With his measurements, Virchow sought to prove that environment and culture, rather than innate racial characteristics, shaped people’s bodies.⁸⁹ Virchow was a firm monogenist, believing that all humans were descended from the same couple, though he did subscribe to an evolutionary model of human development in which some peoples were more advanced than others. It was only after his death that German physical anthropology became oriented toward a “narrowly nationalistic and increasingly racist” approach to the discipline.⁹⁰

While Virchow wrote a lengthy article on his meeting with Ulrikab and the other Inuit, and though Jacobsen also remarked on the visit in his diary, Ulrikab did not write about this Berlin visit. But it was quite an event when Paingu, the wife of the Angekok Terrianiak, objected to Virchow’s invasive measuring. As he explained in an article that year,

while I was spreading her arms horizontally, because I wanted to take her fathom length... she suddenly had the fit: she slipped underneath my arm and started “carrying on all over” the room with such a fury and in such a way as I had never seen before.... She jumped from one corner into the other and was screaming with a crying voice, her ugly face looked dark red, her eyes were glowing, and there was a bit of foam at her mouth; to sum it up, it was a highly disgusting sight.... I had the impression that this “psychic cramp” must be ex-

Journey of a Colonial Native Convert (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

84 Hilke Thode-Arora, *Für Fünfzig Pfennig Um Die Welt: Die Hagenbeckschen Völkerschauen* (Frankfurt: Campus Vlg, 1989).

85 Lehtola, “Sami on the Stages and in the Zoos of Europe,” 329.

86 Broberg quoted in Lehtola, “Sami on the Stages and in the zoos of Europe,” 329.

87 Thomas F. Glick, “The Anthropology of Race across the Darwinian Revolution,” in *A New History of Anthropology*, ed. Henrika Kuklick (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 240.

88 H. Glenn Penny, “Traditions in the German Language,” in *A New History of Anthropology*, ed. Henrika Kuklick (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 79.

89 Baehre, “Early Anthropological Discourse,” 22.

90 Penny, “Traditions in the German Language,” 79.

actly the same form of appearance that the shamans perform in their dances.⁹¹

Virchow did not complete the measurements. Whether or not she was practicing some rite, as he suggested, her actions constituted a literal ethnographic refusal, in the words of Audra Simpson, because she refused to “stay in an ethnological grid of apprehension and governance.”⁹² Although we know little else about her behavior on the trip, Paingu here revealed herself as someone possessing power and agency, refusing to submit to Virchow’s pseudoscientific demands. Although Virchow ostensibly worked toward an increased understanding of Indigenous subjects, he clearly had little interest in the culture or comfort of the Inuit. Ulrikab’s decision not to write about Paingu’s actions, whether out of disapproval or respect, resonates with Simpson’s own refusal to “practice the type of ethnography that claims to tell the whole story and have all the answers.”⁹³ In electing not to record the invasive measurement, Ulrikab refused to explain how he may have understood it, and refused to give importance to the data-driven gaze of the anthropologist. As underscored by Virchow’s reliance on the *Völkerschauen*, human zoos functioned at once as a demonstration of European racial and cultural superiority to the general public, and as the basis for scientific claims to the same end. Their entertainment factor can almost be seen as secondary to this exercise of European supremacy.

Ulrikab’s Faith

While they were in Berlin, Ulrikab and his family visited the *Gemeinhaus der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde* (the parish hall) twice. For Ulrikab, this seems to have been the highlight of the trip. As he explained

the day after one visit,

yesterday...we went to church, and prayed and sang together. We were all very greatly cheered, also all our Kablunats [non-Inuit], very greatly we have been inspired. We people sang together in the church, “Jesu ging voran” [“Jesus led the way”], we also spoke the Lord’s Prayer. The assembled were greatly inspired by our voices....Then we were at a loss because of all the blessings....When we had finished we were given an enthusiastic welcome, our hands were shaken greatly.⁹⁴

In contrast to the people trying to shake his hand as he chased them out of the enclosure, we can imagine that Ulrikab would have welcomed this attention. Of the same church visit, he wrote to Brother Elsner:

Once we have been to church, in a big community in Berlin. [Because of that] we have been feeling happy until late night, yes indeed, we didn’t want to go to sleep. The Lord seemed to be with us for a long time. Even as we went through the streets we sang praises and were astonished. And it became clear to us how well we were taken care of in our country, yes indeed, long and great are the blessings we receive.⁹⁵

These visits lifted the spirits of Ulrikab and his family immensely. His writing on the convivial church gatherings also clarifies the nature of his faith: his lists of the hymns they sang confirms the oft-noted “Esquimaux delight in singing and music,” as well as its deep connection to Labrador, as he thanked the Lord for the blessings of a place often called “the Land of Cain.”⁹⁶

91 Virchow quoted in Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 60.

92 Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 31.

93 Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 34.

94 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 68-20.

96 Kohlmeister quoted in Tom Gordon, “Found in Translation: The Inuit Voice in Moravian Music,” *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 22, no. 1 (2007): 307; Lynne D Fitzhugh, *The Labradorians: Voices from the Land of Cain* (St. John’s, Nfld.: Breakwater, 1999).

Although we know little about Abraham and Ulrike's experience of conversion, this effusive kind of emotional sensibility was central to Moravian theology, which was intensely sensual. Anne Folke Henningsen argues that with "the Blood and Wounds-theology and the emphasis on the suffering Christ", "this emotional Christianity was exactly what paved the way for the successes the Moravians would celebrate in their early global missionary endeavours."⁹⁷ Conversion was not simply a process of learning the catechism, but rather a cultivation of authentic feeling. As Jacqueline Van Gent has detailed, Moravian conversion depended on specific bodily conduct and imagery.⁹⁸ The heart "played a central role" in this theology, as did tears, which were understood to flow from the heart.⁹⁹ Passionate testimony was integral to proving and nourishing one's devotion.

Yet this emotional faith may have also conflicted with Inuit mores. Jean Briggs' ethnography, *Never in Anger*, documents the emotional restraint of Inuit life in the area of Chantrey Inlet. Briggs attributes this to the core Inuit value *ihuma* or *isuma*, which she explains as "all the functions we think of as cerebral: mind, thought, memory, reason, sense, ideas, will...it is the possession of *ihuma* that makes it possible for a person to respond to his surroundings, physical and social, and to conform to social expectations."¹⁰⁰ Coll Thrush, considering *isuma* with regard to Inuit visits to London, describes it as "a studied withholding of affect that allowed for clear-headed apprehension."¹⁰¹ *Isuma* enabled the Inuit to make careful decisions in their of-

ten dangerous homeland, controlling impulses and taming ardor.

Isuma seems at odds with the core tenets of Moravian faith, but Ulrikab's diary demonstrates how they might be reconciled. Though he wrote generously about his visits to the Churches, and described singing hymns well into the night, his descriptions of the exhibition were sparse. Although he acknowledged that all of the Inuit were very homesick and tired of the crowds, he did not dwell on these difficulties. Thrush also argues that "thinking about *isuma*... dislodges racist notions of docility and primitiveness and replaces them with a specifically Inuit rationality."¹⁰² *Isuma* could confuse missionaries, and many reports from Labrador were tinged with the missionaries' uncertainty over the authenticity of their converts' beliefs. As missionaries reported from the Okak station in 1867, "attendance at church and school has been good, and if we were to judge from the language alone, without looking for the fruits of the Spirit, we might easily conclude that most of them were devoted followers of our Saviour."¹⁰³ What missionaries understood as "true feeling" proved elusive, likely because the Inuit looked poorly on the expression of passionate feeling.

Ulrikab's description of his efforts to convert Terrianiak reveals further intricacies of Inuit emotional responses to Moravian theology. After Paingu, Nugasak, and Sara's deaths, Ulrikab wrote to Elsner that "all day we cry mutually, that our sins be taken away by Jesus Christ. Even Terrianiak, who is now alone, when I say to him that he should convert, desires to become a property of Jesus, sincerely, as it seems. He constantly takes part in our prayers."¹⁰⁴ That Ulrikab noted Terrianiak's tears as seemingly sincere suggests

97 Henningsen, "On Difference, Sameness, and Double Binds," 134.

98 Jacqueline Van Gent, "The Burden of Love: Moravian Conversions and Emotions in Eighteenth-Century Labrador," *Journal of Religion History* 30, no. 4 (2005): 567, 563.

99 *Journal of Religion History* 30, no. 4 (2005): 567, 563.

100 Jean L. Briggs, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

101 Coll Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral: Encounter, Entanglement, and *Isuma* in Inuit London," *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 1 (2014): 69.

102 Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral," 69.
103 Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral," August 10th, 1867, "Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen 26 (1867): 322.

104 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 64.

an awareness of the difference between Moravian and Inuit valuations of sincerity, especially as contrasted with his assertion that they cried all day. Yet Ulrikab stopped keeping a diary after his daughter's death; expressing his emotions was no longer a comfort. Whether he made this decision due to the emotional restraint of *isuma* or out of plain despair, it is clear that for Ulrikab, a passionate faith and rational observation of his circumstances could often coincide, but writing was only part of this.

Ulrikab as explorer

Despite the myriad ways in which this exhibition was an objectifying experience—the uncontrollable crowds, Virchow's pseudoscientific rigor—we might understand Ulrikab, with his careful observations and his determined spirit in mind, not as an ossifying artifact but as an intrepid explorer. We might see his travels to Europe as a journey that fits into an extensive tradition of Inuit exploration that has spread across Inuit Nunaat, “the entire area of lands and waters that make up the four Inuit homelands across the circum-polar Arctic, stretching from Chukotka to Greenland,” since time immemorial.¹⁰⁵ Several scholars have commented that the impressive accuracy of Inuit maps, the extensive network of trails extending across the Arctic, and the degree of linguistic and folkloric cohesion of the Inuit across the Arctic are testaments to the achievements of a people of “inveterate travelers.”¹⁰⁶

Moravian reports on their educational activities also suggest a particular Inuit interest in geography. In 1873, the missionaries at Zoar reported that “the children appeared to have taken peculiar pleasure in studying...geography.”¹⁰⁷ Jacobson's comments on Ulrikab's

impressive knowledge of the world, and his map-making abilities, also suggest a strong interest in the physical environment. But his longstanding desire to see Europe was not simply a curiosity about the unknown, but also a pilgrimage to the heart of the Moravian world. Although the Inuit did not survive to visit Herrnhut, their joy in meeting members of the Brethren in each city they visited, their delight in the musical and social experience of visiting the church in Berlin, and Ulrikab's effusive writing on these subjects demonstrate the importance of the religious side of their journey.

Conclusions

Ulrikab and his family did not return home. Sara died in a hospital in Krefeld, the rest of her family in the Hôpital Saint-Louis in Paris. They were buried in the Saint-Ouen cemetery, but five years later, when the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle's request to have them exhumed was granted, they were put on display in the “Comparative Anatomy gallery,” with over 20,000 other now nameless human remains.¹⁰⁸ This ending seems to be the most dehumanizing part of their tour. Today, the Nunatsiavut, Canadian, and French governments are working to repatriate the bodies, but first the Labradormiut must prove a relation between living descendants and the travelers to Europe.¹⁰⁹

To understand the diverse motivations that led Ulrikab across the Atlantic Ocean, the question of authenticity provides a helpful frame. Hagenbeck, Ulrikab, the Moravians, and other Inuit all constructed different expectations of what authentic experience and identity meant. Hagenbeck and Jacobsen literally trafficked in “authenticity,” for the interest of European public and development of anthropology. Rainer Baehre has shown that Virchow's studies of Inuit bodies had

105 Mary Simon, “Canadian Inuit: Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going,” *International Journal* 66, no. 4 (2011): 879.

106 Rundstrom, “Inuit Map Accuracy,” 162.

107 A. F. Elsner and C. A. Hirt, “Letter from Zoar, July 14th, 1873,” *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church*

of the United Brethren, *Established Among the Heathen* 29, no. 302 (1873): 5.
108 “Trapped in a Human Zoo.”

109 “Trapped in a Human Zoo.”

a significant influence on Franz Boas' decision to study in the Arctic, and it was Jacobsen's next exhibition of nine Nuxalk, which Boas visited several times, that inspired him to pursue ethnography.¹¹⁰ Yet, as Gareth Griffiths has argued, claims to authenticity can "[over-write] the actual complexity of difference," making it into something static, something singular, and something that has never actually existed.¹¹¹ Ulrikab's diary depicted European efforts to control authenticity and his own struggle to navigate these constraints.

Missionaries to Labrador regularly reported to the rest of the Moravian world that they truly did not know what their converts believed. As one missionary wrote of an Inuit family, "the man seldom speaks of his inner life, the wife is less reticent on the subject; but the Lord alone knows their hearts."¹¹² The importance of *isuma* to the Inuit challenged European notions of sincerity and selfhood. At the same time, they worried that their converts were being corrupted by the wrong kind of Europeans on the southern coast of Labrador, and strove to keep the Inuit isolated from much of European culture. Henningsen has argued that Moravian expectations constituted a double bind of authenticity, revolving around "racial categories linked to notions of difference and sameness: the Moravian mission theories involve an emphasis on racial authenticity simultaneous with an insistence on 'civilising practices.'"¹¹³ Within this framework, converts could never be authentic enough. Ethnic exhibitions could also present a similar double bind, demanding primitiveness and efforts toward civilization at once.

110 Rainer Baehre, "Early Anthropological Discourse," 23.

111 Gareth Griffiths, "The Myth of Authenticity," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (New York: Routledge, 2006), 237.

112 P. Dam, "Letter from Hebron, August, 1873," *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen* 29 (March 1874): 69.

113 Anne Folke Henningsen, "On Difference, Sameness and Double Binds," 131.

And what did Ulrikab believe was authentic? He certainly valued music, his relations, his faith, and the land he came from. He was disappointed to find that European society was not as pious as the Moravians had made it out to be, and he was shocked by European spectators' hunger for the exotic. One of the few things that we know for certain is that Ulrikab, his family, Terrianiak, Paingu, and Nuggasak were deeply homesick. In his final letter to Brother Elsner, Ulrikab wrote that "I do not long for earthly possessions but this is what I long for: to see my relatives again, who are over there, to talk to them of the name of God as long as I live."¹¹⁴ As Paige Raibmon has argued, "Whites imagined what the authentic Indian was, and Aboriginal people engaged and shaped those imaginings in return. They were collaborators—albeit unequally—in authenticity."¹¹⁵ Raibmon points out that authenticity was not irrelevant to Indigenous groups: they cared about their traditions, their livelihoods, and their ability to lead self-determined lives. But when authenticity (whether in the form of Moravian emotion or ethnographic spectacle) was the only framework through which Indigenous people could participate in conversations on these subjects, and with the definition thereof in European hands, discourses of authenticity were fraught with misunderstandings and impossible demands. Even today, the requirement that Nunatsiavut prove a living connection to Ulrikab's family shows that the idea of authenticity continues to carry powerful influence.

In 1893, over 60 Inuit who would have certainly known of Ulrikab's story (Elsner's account of the Inuit visit to Europe was distributed to all mission stations) participated in an exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair.¹¹⁶ As many have noted about Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, these kinds of spectacles provided oppor-

114 Lutz and Ulrikab, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, 65.

115 Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 3.

116 Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 39.

tunities to travel, earn money, and even practice traditional skills, that were otherwise not afforded to Indigenous people.¹¹⁷ All of these possibilities had powerful appeal, but participation in these exhibitions meant navigating impossible contradictions and unreasonable expectations. In 2016, Johannes Lampe, Nain’s chief elder and now President of Nunatsiavut, traveled to Europe in Ulrikab’s footsteps as part of the documentary “Trapped in a Human Zoo.” While visiting the Berlin Zoo, Lampe remarked that “Abraham and his family felt a hunger and a thirst and a homesickness,” much of which Ulrikab recorded in his diary.¹¹⁸ The ways in which Ulrikab wrote about his experiences in the zoos and churches of Europe suggest that even in the realm of double binds and fake authenticity, real feeling—as rational emotional restraint or pious outpourings of faith—remained a vital method of survival for those who were exhibited.

117 In addition to Raibmon, see Linda Scarangella McNenly, *Native Performers in Wild West Shows* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 2012); Lisa Blee, “‘I came voluntarily to work, sing and dance’: Stories from the Eskimo Village at the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 101, no. 3 (2010): 126–139, among others.

118 “Trapped in a Human Zoo.”

Illicit Consumption: The Meanings and Public Perception of ‘Everyday’ Opium Use in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-century London

BY NAOMI ELLIOTT, McGill University

George H. Duckworth’s journey into London’s East End began unremarkably. Wandering through the neighborhood, Duckworth was greeted by children playing in the streets, alleyways, and churches: a poor area, certainly, but not too noteworthy.

Not too noteworthy, that is, until Duckworth entered the home of Mr. Khodonobasch. An Indian national, “Mr. K” had allegedly come to London as a curry chef for the Indian Exhibition at Earl’s Court. Rather than return home, Khodonobasch instead took up residence with a white English woman, “Mrs K.,” and together the couple had carved out a unique way of life: selling and smoking opium. It was a strange state of affairs, especially for Mrs. K, who had once lived the life of a genteel lady. Now, she told Duckworth, she had fallen from grace, married to an Asian opium seller and unable herself to even clean the house without a hit from the opium pipe. Dressed in men’s clothes, Mrs. K fit in well with the overall dishevelment of the den, recalled by Duckworth as dark and cramped, as if their deviant pastime were cut off from London proper, and perpetually filled with sweet smoke that the homeowners had long ago ceased to notice. Business, too, was bad, Mrs. Khodonobasch tells Duckworth, but their abode was open to serve anyone the drug: Chinese, Lascars, whoever. Indeed, Mr. Khodonobasch was something of a connoisseur when it came to procuring opium. Prussian opium was the best, he assures Duckworth and Persian the worst, although he himself preferred to buy his opium from a local chemist, before utilizing it at home for reasons of pleasure, rather than

pain prevention. Conversation continues, but with much of the neighborhood left to investigate, Duckworth departs when the couple begin to smoke. As Duckworth reemerged into the street, the dark, pungent opium den returned to the shadows again. It had been, Duckworth recalls, a “most interesting” evening.¹

This story, recounted in an 1897 journal, is not among the more conventional pictures of late Victorian London. With Britain immersed in trade and imperial expansion, the country’s capital—the “heart of the Empire”—was a powerful global city, heralded by residents as the “political, moral, physical, intellectual, artistic, literary, commercial and social center of the world.”² Stories like Duckworth’s may seem at odds with such dynamism. Yet on closer inspection, these two images are not so far removed; indeed, Duckworth’s narrative points to several key themes associated with late nineteenth-century London. These include the prominence of empire and the cultural significance of commerce, embodied in the figures of the displaced opium trader and his Asian clientele, as well as more implicit con-

1 George H. Duckworth, George H Duckworth’s Notebook, personal record, London, 1897, BOOTH/B/346, London School of Economics and Political Science, Charles Booth’s London: Poverty Maps and Police Records, accessed February 13, 2017, <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/notebooks/b346#?cv=65&c=0&m=0&s=0&z=1583.097%2C199148%2C520.1503%2C309.3751>.

2 Richard Dennis, “Modern London,” in *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. 3, 1840-1950, ed. Martin Daunt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 96, 125-31.

cerns about race, gender, and the subversion of norms placed on oppressed groups. All these dynamics met in the shape of the infamous “opium den,” the purchasing of the drug, and its consumption. Viewed this way, Duckworth’s story is not at the margins of the imperial splendor of late Victorian London; it is, in a distorted way, its mirror image.

Much has been written about the development of British “consumer culture,” when commodities began to assume a more central role within the nation’s cultural life.³ It is only recently, however, that historians have begun examining the influence of mass consumption in shaping Britons’ subjectivities. According to Joanna de Groot, while acts of consumption have some tangible aspects, they also “express values, identities, and the contests around them.”⁴ Within this framework, historians have begun looking at this boom in mass consumption—particularly of goods associated with empire—to assess the values and meanings behind consumptive acts at the intersection of Britain’s material, political, and cultural life.⁵ British imperialism was experienced domestically primarily in the form of commodities, from museum exhibits to soap packages. Using this analytical framework to bring together consumption and empire has prompted historians to consider what numerous imperial commodities meant to Britons and how these meanings subsequently shaped

daily life in London.⁶

Opium was one such imperial good. Procured through trade networks and associated with the Far East, opium was empire incarnate in the metropole.⁷ Widely available in the form of patent medicine, and consumed by multiple segments of society for alternative ends, opium occupied a distinct position in late Victorian London and was naturally tied up with a range of values and meanings. In line with historians like de Groot, this paper will examine the impact and influence of non-medical opium on late Victorian and early Edwardian London society from the perspective of consumption. For the purposes of this paper, I define non-medical opiate use as the consumption of opium for purposes outside those promoted by mainstream professional medicine, covering uses that today might be deemed recreational, self-medicating, and so on. While this distinction comes with its gray areas, I utilize it as a way of bracketing off professional and institutional discourse surrounding opium, allowing me to analyze how opium consumption was understood as part of the fabric of everyday urban life and as a social practice bound up in wider value judgements and public discourses.

Up to this point, the scholarly literature on this topic has been surprisingly patchy. The majority of the work here has come not from historians, but from literary scholars, dissecting portrayals of opium use in fiction.⁸ Historical scholarship on London and opium

3 Howard Padwa, *Social Poison: the Culture and Politics of Opium Control in Britain and France, 1821-1926* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2012), 5-60; Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London’s West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 11-12.

4 Joanna de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections: Reflections on Consumption and Empire,” in *At Home With the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, eds. Catherine Hall and Sonya O Rose (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 169.

5 de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections,” 166-167, 169; Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 12.

6 de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections,” 167-171.

7 de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections,” 171; Barry Milligan, *Pleasures and Pains: Opium and the Orient in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 20-1.

8 See: Milligan, *Pleasures and Pains*; Alethea Hayter, *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

has been led by Virginia Berridge through her 1981 book *Opium and the People: Opium Use in Nineteenth-Century England*. The only comprehensive work on the subject to date, Berridge's book charts opium's changing fortunes within England as a whole. As instrumental as Berridge's work has been in shaping the historiography, much of her interest lies in opium's changing legal status, its position in medical discourse and practice, and the germinating concept of "opium addiction" and of the "opium addict" in the latter part of the century.⁹

Less has been written about consumption of opium and its cultural impact from the bottom up—that is, consumption which lay outside the realm of medical doctrine and, at times, the boundaries of social acceptability. The major work in this broad area is *Pleasures and Pains: Opium and the Orient in Nineteenth-Century Britain* by cultural studies scholar Barry Milligan, one of many works focused on literary sources relating London's opium consumption. While fictional portrayals of London's opium usage no doubt shaped public perceptions of the commodity and its consumption during this period, there were, by Milligan's own admission, other factors involved.¹⁰ With this in mind, this paper will analyze opium in a way that bridges some of the aforementioned gaps in the literature. Building on Milligan, I will analyze the social meanings embedded in non-medical opium consumption as it was performed by London residents across race, class, and gender lines; unlike Milligan, however, I will also discuss the portrayals of opium consumption in London's everyday public discourse, specifically in non-fictional accounts. By analyzing perceptions of opium through a 'consumptive' lens, I aim to build upon the medical and political issues explored by Berridge, while pointing to the broader social impact that opium, as an impe-

rial commodity, had on day-to-day life in the Empire's capital city.

After providing an overview of opium's concrete presence in the city, particularly as an imperial and medical product, I will compare and contrast opium consumption in two of its most common iterations: within the opium den on the one hand, and non-medical consumption of opium originally intended for medicinal use on the other. My analysis will draw on a range of primary sources describing opium's presence in the city, particularly newspapers, magazines, and journal articles, as well as a number of court case records. Though often sensational in their descriptions, these sources were all written as non-fictional accounts, unlike those works analyzed by Milligan. I will utilize these sources to examine how London's opium consumption was understood in public discourse, and thereby grasp the various meanings that Londoners attached to opium consumption at this time. Much, though not all, of my analysis will focus on meanings attached to opium specifically as an imperial commodity, how Londoners made sense of this presence of empire in urban life, and how the drug shaped views of London as the heart of the empire. Through all this, I will illustrate the significant overlap in Londoners' views of these seemingly disparate forms of opium use within a city defined by segregation and difference.

From East to West(minster): Opium's Journey to Victorian London

Before discussing non-medical opium consumption in London, I will first attempt to sketch out how opium arrived to Britain's shores in the late nineteenth century, in the context of Britain's broader involvement with the commodity, as well as the changing official—that is, legal and medicinal—framework surrounding the drug's use. Before going further, it is vital to situate British opiate consumption within the wider international movement of opium in the era. For much

⁹ Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 62-87, 113-173, xxxi-xxxiii.

¹⁰ Milligan, *Pleasures and Pains*, 9-10.

of the nineteenth century, Britain was involved in orchestrating the international Indo-Chinese opium trade, in which opium grown in British India was sold to Chinese merchants for profit. This lucrative trade famously culminated in the mid-nineteenth-century Opium Wars between Britain and China and, with Britain's victory, the formation of treaty ports and China's entrenchment in Britain's informal imperial network.¹¹ This international opium trade was an important project for the British Empire, and as a result the topic has remained prominent in popular memory as well as historical literature.¹² It is important for the purposes of this paper, however, to note that this international opium trade was *not* intended to supply British citizens with supplies of opium for domestic consumption. Rather, the opium bought and sold within England was procured in the nineteenth century by way of Britain's informal dominance of raw opium from the Ottoman Empire via British firms. Indian opium, in contrast, was purely a cash crop for consumption within Asia.¹³

British companies would transport Ottoman opium to Britain, where the drug would pass through the hands of wholesaling houses and brokers before appearing on store shelves up and down the country, ready for consumers to satisfy their hunger for poppy.¹⁴ This trade of opium within Britain grew more important

over the course of the nineteenth century as domestic demand began to rise. Opium had of course been present in Britain for centuries, used as a medicine (and, one assumes, for alternate ends too); however, the drug entered a 'boom period' in Britain during the early to mid-nineteenth century as its medicinal uses expanded. In the 1830s, doctors prescribed opium for treating pain and restlessness; as the century progressed, the drug would also be recommended by medical professionals for bronchial infections and diabetes, as well as for the epidemics of cholera and dysentery that threatened Britain's urban centers throughout the period.¹⁵ With the help of the country's informal imperial trading connections, British firms were able to meet the growing domestic demand for opium as it, and opium-derived patent medicines, became commonplace in British pharmacies and throughout British society.¹⁶

But commercial arrangements were not the only factors involved in structuring opiate use and in making opium the ubiquitous product that it was in nineteenth-century Britain. Prior to the 1868 Pharmacy Act, opium use in Britain was essentially unregulated.¹⁷ More importantly, the drug itself was cheap and accessible; chemists and corner-store owners alike could and did sell opium in raw and processed forms at affordable prices.¹⁸ Admittedly, this commercial freedom would not last indefinitely. Under the guise of "medical professionalization" and pressure from pharmacists, Parliament passed an act in 1868 which for the first time restricted the sale of opium and other potent drugs to

11 J. B. Brown, "Politics of the Poppy: the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, 1874-1916," *Journal of Contemporary History* 8, no. 3 (1973): 98-101; Berridge Virginia, *Opium and the People: Opiate Use in Nineteenth-Century England*, rev. ed. (London: Free Association Books, 1999), 173-4.

12 Brown, "Politics of the Poppy," 97-101; Joyce A. Madancy, "Smoke and Mirrors: Gender, Colonialism, and the Royal Commission on Opium, 1893-95," *The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 27, no. 1 (2013): 37-61.

13 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 3-7; de Groot, "Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections," 3-4; 171.

14 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 8-10, 21-7.

15 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 64-8; Madancy, "Smoke and Mirrors," 39-40.

16 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 72, 123-4.

17 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 3.

18 Virginia Berridge, "Opium Over the Counter in Nineteenth-Century England," *Pharmacy in History* 2, no. 3 (1978): 91-5.

qualified chemists.¹⁹ For some Britons, however, these restrictions were not enough. Soon after the act passed, the country saw the rise of an organized “Anti-Opium Movement,” lobbying for an end to the international opium trade. While these activists focused exclusively on the Asian opium trade, rhetoric about opium’s destructive impact on China no doubt shaped how the drug was perceived at home, as suggested by the further drug restrictions put in place in the 1880s and 1890s.²⁰ These legal changes made opium even less accessible not only to consumers but to medical practitioners as well, and chemists began turning towards other drugs as alternatives. As a result, opium became less prevalent in Britain throughout the nineteenth century, rendering Victorian opium policy irrelevant by the First World War.²¹

As can be seen, opium had a complex institutional status in Victorian Britain: for a time, its medicinal justification and relatively unrestricted legal status allowed it to be widely used for numerous conditions. Additionally, its prominence and importance in imperial trade dictated relations between the West and the East. Of course, with opium becoming so ubiquitous in British society under the umbrella of the medical establishment, this shift also made it possible for consumers to use the drugs for a wider range of purposes than those originally intended by medical professionals. It is to these uses—non-medical and, as I suggest, illicit—to which I now turn.

Venture into the Opium Den

The opium den became a fixture in Londoners’

imaginings during the nineteenth century, enshrined in a new genre of writing: the opium underworld exposé. Taking their cues from contemporary British travel writing in the imperial hinterlands, these works portrayed grand tales of individualistic exploration into the city’s uncharted territory.²² Although these pieces were officially factual, their theatricality blurred the boundaries between anthropological reports and sensational stories, allowing their narratives to spread widely in newspapers, magazines, journals, and even non-fiction collections.

As I will discuss, these sources shared a number of tropes that have direct bearing on how we should understand contemporary perceptions of opium consumption in London. Yet it is worth noting that the sources I discuss were produced by and for a particular subsection of London society, and so the views depicted should not be taken as representative of all Londoners. Rather, they should be seen as a window into dominant (white, middle-class) British culture. Often, these exploratory narratives appeared in society magazines appealing to a highly respectable and learned clientele. These included James Platt’s “Chinese London and Its Opium Dens,” featured in an 1895 edition of *Gentleman’s Magazine*. This journal was typical in its content, with articles across as wide a range of intellectual interests as possible, such that Platt’s quasi-ethnographic piece was featured among articles about biology, history, law, and much more. Accordingly, opium den pieces like Platt’s were often times framed as stories of niche intellectual interest, and appealed to middle-class notions of self-improvement and edification. One should also note the gendered nature of the journal in which Platt’s writing appeared. It is no coincidence that every writer I discuss here is male; it is easy enough to

19 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 113–20; Elizabeth Lomax, “The Uses and Abuses of Opiates in Nineteenth-Century England,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 47, no. 2 (1973): 173–5.

20 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 176–93; Lomax, “Uses and Abuses,” 73–80.

21 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 235–42, 225.

22 See Laura E. Franey, *Victorian Travel Writing and Imperial Violence: British Writing on Africa, 1855-1922* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2003), 10.

see how these tales of subterranean travel may have appealed to masculine ideals of exploration and adventure that were enshrined in colonial travel writing.

While learned magazines were a common source of opium den accounts, similar narratives were present in other forms of print media. One such work is a book by “J” Salter entitled *Works Among the Asiatics and Africans in London*. Published by W. Partridge & Co. Publishing in 1896 in London, Salter’s book consistently appealed to the exploratory, ethnographic gaze, Platt’s piece did. While less heavy-handed in its scholarly bent than *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, Salter’s book was again directed towards and presumably acceptable to a particular subsection of London society that was largely white, literate, and middle class, with both an avid interest in self-education and a disposable income to spend on these written works. At the opposite end of the spectrum, opium den narratives also appeared in London’s daily presses. Short and brief, these pieces would have allowed for a quick consumption of these adventure tales, perhaps intended for readers with less wealth or who were less invested in educational self-edification; in my analysis, this perspective is represented by the anonymous piece “Opium Smoking at the East End of London,” published in the capital’s *Daily News* in 1864.

Because of their prevalence, works like these will direct my analysis towards what I term the illicit consumption of opium. Here, opium was consumed in different ways and for different ends than those ordained by the medical establishment which considered itself responsible for prescribing how opium *should* be used. As a result, non-medical opium consumption can be seen as an illicit activity as well as a trope for expressing generic anxieties of late Victorian London. Drug use within opium dens was viewed as consumption of a foreign experience, one challenging Londoners’ identities as imperialists, producers, and consumers, identities that were considered the foundations of

the city’s social order.

With the posthumous publication of Dickens’ *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* in 1870, the opium den exposé gathered momentum in British literature.²³ Within this novel, nineteenth-century readers were introduced the character of John Jasper, a loyal customer of a local opium den. Dickens’ colorful description of the den in the novel’s opening pages forged a powerful image of a seedy underworld that would resonate in British opium den literature for decades to come, a world where men and women lie, dishevelled and stuporous, in the dank half-light. Although Dickens’ vision of the opium den proved tenacious, the imagery it evoked, in fiction and sensationalized non-fiction alike, was focused overwhelmingly on London’s Asian population. It associated opium dens with Chinatown, and later the East End ‘Limehouse’ district, a far cry from the quaint, small-town world portrayed in *Edwin Drood*.²⁴ These pieces would tell of one experienced gentleman-journalist’s visit to the opium den, that most hidden part of London with which people have “strange yearning[s] to make more intimate acquaintance.”²⁵ After strolling through Chinatown’s dank and squalor, the writer would meet an ‘opium den master’ who prepared pipes and weighed opium for smokers, processes sometimes described in minute detail.²⁶ The space in which this occurred was not, writers emphasized, a salubrious one. Opium dens were dark, cramped, and decaying,

23 Louise Penner and Tabitha Sparks, *Victorian Medicine and Popular Culture* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2015), 114.

24 John Seed, “Limehouse Blues: Looking for ‘Chinatown’ in the London Docks, 1900-1940,” *History Workshop Journal* 62 (2006): 69.

25 “East London Opium Smokers,” *London Society: an Illustrated Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature For the Hours of Relaxation*, July 1868, 68.

26 “East London Opium Smokers,” 69–74; James Platt, “Chinese London and Its Opium Dens,” *Gentlemen’s Magazine*, 1895, 275–8.

places where respectability emerged “minus its watch and coat.”²⁷ Descriptive flair aside, the dens’ actual opium commerce was, for observers, almost humorously simple. For variable prices—a guinea, several pence—the smoker could buy a quantity of raw opium.²⁸ The scene set, writers were thus free to recount the dens’ most titillating side: the perverse process that was opium consumption, opium smoking.

It was, for white onlookers, a fantastically grotesque process. Because the majority of opium-den clients were Asian, these spaces were configured as the Orient writ small, spaces where writers could express their generic anti-Chinese prejudices. Smokers were described in animalistic terms, as, for instance, their eyes “gleam like a satisfied pig’s” at the sight of opium, a portrayal in keeping with late Victorian Sinophobia.²⁹ Sometimes, the apparently horrific act of opium smoking infuriated writers, inspiring recollections of “wretched rooms in the most wretched of all the houses, where yellow Chinese sit in the midst of filth... and stupefy themselves with opium.”³⁰ Yet, true to London’s imperialist zeal at the time, repulsion at the act of smoking opium was intermingled with fascination for experiencing—or consuming—this exotic, Oriental drama. One writer, for instance, half expected smok-

ers to include “eastern grandees” who “recline on sofas and indulge”; even the more mundane reality included smokers who were “picture[s] of happiness and ease.”³¹ These cartoonish, patronizing portrayals suggest how much white Londoners viewed Asians as others within the city, and the foreignness of opium smoking within these displaced, Eastern corners seemed to confirm the Occident/Orient divide. Seen as portals into the East or the Empire, opium dens became the sites upon which Londoners could project their crude, simplistic thinking about Asian peoples and their ill-fitting positions in the Occidental city.

This perspective is not particularly surprising. As historians have noted, the late nineteenth century saw rising anxiety about racial health in “darkest England.”³² With race and purity on Londoners’ minds, it is no wonder that London’s Asian peoples, with their ‘exotic’ opium smoking in secret Oriental spaces, became points of public interest and repulsion. This sense of racial health anxiety has been the primary lens through which historians have analyzed this public ill-feeling. Berridge, for instance, argued that opium den exposés “illustrated the structural tensions of late-Victorian society,” particularly on the lines of race and class.³³ While Berridge’s argument may be blunt, it is not inaccurate. Opium den exposés often portrayed these spaces as sites which brought depravity to the British people; James Greenwood, for instance, describes opium den regulars getting into fights with Londoners.³⁴ While not overtly racialized, these accounts, centered on the idea that opium dens lured white slum

27 Ritchie J. Ewing, *Days and Nights in London: or Studies in Black and Gray* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1880), 173; “East London Opium Smokers,” 69–70; J. Salter, *The East in the West or Work Among the Asiatics and Africans in London* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1896), 26.

28 Maurice Vernon, “The Opium Dens of London,” *The Graphic* (London), November 30, 1907; Duckworth, George H Duckworth’s Notebook, 127; “East London Opium Smokers,” 71.

29 “East London Opium Smokers,” 70–1; Padwa, *Social Poison*, 57; Daniel Renshaw, “Prejudice and Paranoia: a Comparative Study of Antisemitism and Sinophobia in Turn-of-the-century Britain,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 1 (2016): 49–53.

30 Thomas Archer, *The Pauper, the Thief, and the Convict*, 1865, quoted in Seed, “Limehouse Blues,” 62.

31 “East London Opium Smokers,” 68; Ritchie, *Days and Nights in London*, 177.

32 Berridge, *Opium and the People*; Renshaw, “Prejudice and Paranoia,” 35–42.

33 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, xxx, 198–205.

34 Seed, “Limehouse Blues,” 76–7; “East London Opium Smokers,” 88–9.

residents into the midst of dangerous foreigners, do suggest concern for London's population decline. Other writers followed the Social Darwinist line more closely. J. Salter even noted how one smoker "had become so deformed" that he verified "the popular idea of the Darwinian theory!"³⁵ Such accounts leave little doubt that the popular image of the opium den and perverse fascination for opium consumption within voiced more general concerns about national health in London slums.

The sheer scale of the paranoia driving these accounts becomes more apparent when one considers what the broader record beyond opium den public discourse indicates about London's late Victorian Chinatown. Despite what the volume of opium den exposés might suggest, London's Chinatown was a small place made up of a transient population of sailors, estimated at five to six hundred at any time, and serviced by restaurants and boarding houses.³⁶ Though these authors might have framed Limehouse as swarming with sinister opium dens, in reality this was likely not the case. In fact, some have estimated that writers were visiting just two dens, casual places where sailors smoked and socialized; even a contemporary observer conceded that Chinatown's dens probably only totaled a dozen.³⁷ While many factors went into imaginatively constructing these racially degenerate opium den worlds, the general state of Limehouse likely helped whip up public anxiety. Chinatown was a slum area with record high mortality rates, but was also one which was quite multicultural.³⁸ A place where death and decay intersected with racial exchange, Limehouse surely featured

in popular discourse about degeneration in "darkest England." Given all of this, it seems very plausible that, as Berridge suggests, opium den anxieties largely reflected more diffuse concerns about London at the time.

Yet, contrary to Berridge's argument, opium dens did not *only* reflect social anxieties. Viewing opium concretely as a commodity in London's economy, a commodity with specific qualities, it is evident that *acts* of opium consumption—purchasing and smoking—sparked views particular to this good. One such view concerned what Milligan calls the "reversal of Anglo-Oriental colonization," where the metropole became invaded by Asian others, destabilizing British identity.³⁹ This abstract process did materialize in nonfiction accounts of the day. Writers often suggested there to be a racial basis to Chinese opium-smoking—unlike the Chinese, white smokers "succumb" after one hit.⁴⁰ The unnerving corollary was that Londoners who smoked opium became more Chinese. Going further, Howard Padwa argues that these concerns arose from the way nineteenth-century Britons conflated a sense of Britishness with economic power: by rendering English smokers sedate and passive, opium made British people less industrious and therefore less imperiously British.⁴¹ Again, there is truth to this; for instance, Maurice Vernon claimed there to be an opium den in a defunct but "world-famous shipping company" building, indicative of how Britishness, as defined by economic prowess, and Chineseness became unnervingly blurred via the opium den business.⁴² Opium dens and the literal opium consumption they housed were not only a vehicle for expressing Londoners' general anxieties—they also

35 Salter, *The East in the West*, 44.

36 Ross G. Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Intertwined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 193–5; Seed, "Limehouse Blues," 68.

37 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 200–1; Forman, "China and the Victorian Imagination," 198.

38 Seed, "Limehouse Blues," 63–8.

39 Milligan, *Pleasures and Pains*, 13, 113.

40 "Life in London's Chinese Quarter," *The Tatler*, August 5, 1908, 148.

41 Padwa, *Social Poison*, 53–6.

42 Vernon, "The Opium Dens of London."

created unique concerns for Londoners' imperial national identity.

What Padwa overlooks is that these ideas about imperialism and identity, and opium's threat to them, were also deeply gendered.⁴³ In these exposés, white men rarely make an appearance, yet white women are frequently described. Often in relationships with Chinese opium masters, these women are portrayed as pale, gracious, and thin, possessing an exaggeratedly English physicality.⁴⁴ Such caricatures may reflect honest fascination for cross-racial relationships; however, this was not first in observers' minds. Female smokers, through the act of consuming opium, were themselves 'consumed' by Asian men and Orientalized. By, in one writer's euphemistic words, "long consorting with Chinamen" these women had "acquired their habits."⁴⁵ This veiled tying of opium den women to cross-racial sex voiced concerns for London's racial degeneration, as discourse about Chinatown's "slit-eyed mongrels" can testify.⁴⁶ Viewed through a consumer lens, it is noteworthy that opium dens themselves commodified these women; associations between opium dens and prostitutes were rampant.⁴⁷ The commodification of respectable women, turning consumers into the consumed, again upset London's imperial identity. By allegedly luring English ladies into their (commercial) grasp, opium dens challenged male Londoners' identities as imperial hegemony, controlling the Empire's economic exchanges and stopping its subjects from infiltrating the heart of the Empire via London's women.

Indeed, opium eroded Londoners' faith in the hierarchical relationship between metropole and colony that was so crucial to their self-identity. It is no surprise that commerce was essential here, yet the actual dynamics were twofold. Sometimes, the opium den was a place of commercial trickery, challenging London's genteel consumer society. Despite gently mocking the informality of their economy, the opium den was also a place where Chinese business trickery was on full display. Despite having "no books, no wages... John [the master] was not a fool," Vernon notes darkly. Even smokers were privy to China's less-than-respectable commercial practices, as customers gleefully divulged how China secretly sent subpar tea to Britain.⁴⁸ Of course, such descriptions echo prevailing anti-Chinese racisms.⁴⁹ Yet they also reveal concern for how opium subverted Britain's imperial hegemony. Joseph Charles Parkinson describes another opium master, Yahee, making 'slaves' of British smokers, thanks to the opium knowledge that allowed him to monopolize the trade.⁵⁰ This notion that a Chinese man held a monopoly on the British, reversing power relations that governed the Asian opium trade, again demonstrates doubts about Britain's stronghold on the relationship between metropole and colony, in which London was at the very center. These dens, as commercial spaces, thus opened up unique concerns for the very foundations of the "heart of the Empire."

Not all parts of Londoners' identity, or the social order it supported, were shaped solely by empire. Yet opium and the threat of its exoticism were promi-

43 Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 4–7.

44 Harold Begbie, "The Pipe That Brings Peace: Inside a London Opium Den," *Answers*, May 27, 1905, 53; "East London Opium Smokers," 68–70.

45 "Opium Smoking at the East End of London," *Daily News*, 1864, quoted in Padwa, *Social Poison*, 56.

46 Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination*, 193.

47 Padwa, *Social Poison*, 56–8.

48 Platt, "Chinese London and Its Opium Dens," 277; Vernon, "The Opium Dens of London."

49 Renshaw, "Prejudice and Paranoia," 41–2.

50 Sascha Auerbach, "Margaret Tart, Lao She, and the Opium-Master's Wife: Race and Class among Chinese Commercial Immigrants in London and Australia, 1866-1929," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 1 (2013): 39.

ment in the metropolitan imaginary. For one, the dens challenged notions of economic freedom, especially relating to the place of women. The idea that decent women were squandering money in these places, and so degrading themselves, entailed a fear of women acting as economic agents—as consumers, as men. However, men were not spared this gendered discourse. Joyce Madancy argues that opium was seen to make male smokers feminine, passive and no longer valuable to British society.⁵¹ This thinking runs through many exposés. One writer describes male smokers lying “in blank indifference,” as women argue in the kitchen.⁵² Embroiled in chaos, this scene speaks towards the potential of opium consumption to upend the foundations of decent society. Though these men were Chinese, not British, the writer’s tone still suggests that opium could hurt London by instilling a culture of “unproductive” men, anathema to both the British economy and British masculine identity. Indeed, such thinking becomes clearer in accounts which deem male opium smoking acceptable—if one’s work was done first.⁵³ These ideas only emphasize how much opium dens triggered fear of the loss of a proper, economically dynamic, and powerful London.

These concerns merged with prevailing ideas about urban space too. Sadly, work on this topic has been minimal. Yet, as de Groot notes in her analysis of tea rooms, spaces of consumption carried substantial meaning in nineteenth-century London.⁵⁴ Opium dens were similar as places where clients smoked upon sofas and mattresses and where commerce in the drug blurred the (gendered) public/private divide. Natural-

ly, concerns for English opium den women reflected the dens’ inability to conform to ideas about women’s space. However, the opium den space also touched more general nerves about white Britons’ commercial liberties. Maurice Vernon, for instance, discusses how some opium dens barred white people from entry.⁵⁵ This was regarded as an encroachment on liberal Britons’ cherished freedom to engage in commerce. Moreover, exposés also suggest that opium dens encroached on ‘licit,’ middle-class commerce, the sort these writers valued; Vernon, again, describes an opium den being secretly situated behind a respectable Chinese restaurant.⁵⁶ While these ideas did not constitute moral panics, they do underscore how opium dens unsettled Londoners’ entrenched ideas about how the city’s respectable, consumer-driven society should be oriented.

Such themes—consumption of the East and the subsequent destabilization of London’s social order—became tropes in opium den literature. However, writers were not always so scathing. By the century’s end, many noted how opium dens were cleaned up, harmless, even friendly.⁵⁷ Yet despite this shift, fundamental ideas behind the den—particularly consumption and imperial power—remained. Instead of merely frequenting opium dens, writers now incorporated them within Chinatown day trips. Opium was but one more exotic Asian ware to be browsed; writers often discussed local food, or the ever-present tea, as well as opium.⁵⁸ Here, opium dens were acceptable because Londoners could sample this good among others, exercising consumer freedom in consuming China rather than having the substance forcibly imposed London society—leav-

51 Madancy, “Smoke and Mirrors,” 37–40.

52 Archer, *The Pauper, the Thief, and the Convict*, 134.

53 Ewing, *Days and Nights in London*, 180.

54 de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections,” 175–6.

55 Vernon, “The Opium Dens of London.”

56 Vernon, “The Opium Dens of London.”

57 “Life in London’s Chinese Quarter,” 148; Platt, “Chinese London and its Opium Dens,” 277.

58 Begbie, “The Pipe That Brings Peace,” 53; “Life in London’s Chinese Quarter,” 148.

ing the capital's imperial hegemony intact. Even the opium dens themselves catered to Londoners' luxury consumer eye. Writers assessed the market value of opium pipes; Vernon even describes opium arriving via servants, on ivory platters.⁵⁹ By portraying the opium den as an Asian experience for British consumption, these writers made clear their own pseudo-imperial pretensions as cosmopolitan, middle-class consumers, an identity the opium dens bolstered, rather than challenged. Evidently, though the genre's rhetoric had shifted, the meanings behind it persisted.

It is worth noting that the Chinese were not the only Asians incorporated into this racialized imaginary. What is interesting is how neatly these alternate others fit within larger opium den discourse—testimony to how robust these views were. According to Salter, places throughout London sold opium to “Malays, and East Indians,” who then fell to gambling.⁶⁰ This generalizing of all degenerate others as vectors for moving opium into London echoes the fear of London's Orientalization via opium. Other writers were subtler; for instance, Ritchie Ewing recalled an opium den being “oppressive as... a Turkish bath.”⁶¹ Given opium's Turkish origins, it is possible that Ewing was consciously framing the den as a conduit to the sensual East and its consumption. And, so far as Londoners' associations with opium, consumption, and imperial stature were concerned, we need look no further than Mr. Khodonobasch, depicted as a businessman peddling opium to sailors, and his ‘fallen’ English wife.⁶² All this highlights how complex Londoners' understanding of opium dens was. When seen as commercial spaces, especially to “consume the East,” opium dens challenged Londoners' identities as

consumers and imperialists, identities that were shot through with gender, race, and middle-class propriety.

Venture into the ‘Medicine’ Cabinet

There is another, very different side to the city, however, where the influence of opium was also felt. Escaping the underground space of the opium den, light, cleanliness, and prosperity enter the picture. This is the face of respectable London, the physical manifestation of imperial and commercial prosperity projected loudly to the world. Ironically, illicit opium here appears not in raw form for smoking, but dressed up with the veneer of professional medicine and the legal drug trade: in medicine bottles labelled “Chlorodyne,” “Godfrey's Cordial,” “Laudanum,” and many more. In some senses, non-medical consumption of these drugs—that is, consumption for reasons other than those which medical experts intended—encouraged very different public perceptions compared to smoking in opium dens. A normalized, at times even glamorized, part of respectable London life, medicinal opium largely lacked the veneer of foreignness that made opium dens at once so unnerving and so fascinating. Yet the difference between the two opium scenes should not be overstated, for in white London as in Chinatown, opium consumption was still in many senses illicit, and deeply tied to concerns about the precariousness of the capital's social order.

In contrast to the subaltern opium den, this world of illicit opium use was populated by white Londoners integrated, at least partially, into mainstream London society. This side of the city was not one so spatialized as the opium den, constituted as it was by diffuse spaces throughout the city read as visible, white, and British. This was a sphere that lay within London's dominant cultural world. This arena existed in Londoners' imagination within particular sites: the middle-class home, the pub, the (white) slum, and so on. In these more socially acceptable spaces, opium usage resided at the mainstream intersection of commerce and

59 Vernon, “The Opium Dens of London.”

60 Salter, *The East in the West*, 25.

61 Ewing, *Days and Nights in London*, 178.

62 Duckworth, *George H Duckworth's Notebook*, 124–30.

institutional medicine. Before the 1868 Pharmacy Act, opium-containing drugs could be bought in London as easily as Advil today. Yet, the 1868 Act was not particularly strict, and so commercial opium was still acquired with relative ease.⁶³ Through these years, medical opium was, as Terry Parsinnen puts it, “the Victorian’s aspirin, Lomotil, Valium, and Nyquil,” commonly used to treat ailments like diarrhea, consumption (TB), even ‘fatigue,’ hallmarks of nineteenth-century urban life for many.⁶⁴ Opium’s wide usage likely grew from pharmaceutical firms’ aggressive advertising. JT Davenport’s Chlorodyne advertisement, splashed across late Victorian London newspapers, was typical in claiming to treat everything from teething pains to diphtheria.⁶⁵ These campaigns, coupled with the drug’s affordability—cheap enough to be “within the reach of everybody,” one domestic manual noted—made opium a standard fixture in Londoners’ medical cabinets.⁶⁶

But how did London’s consumers—not doctors, pharmacists, or drug companies—understand their opium usage? Evidence suggests that Londoners of all stripes responded to the drug’s all-purpose branding, while stretching its strictly ‘medical’ status. One writer for *Spinning in Town* magazine remarked that “we have all heard of, and many of us have tried” chlorodyne, yet she continually received letters about what the drug should be used for.⁶⁷ This may point to the rather cava-

lier consumption of the drug; but, more importantly, it also suggests that such consumption, some of which we may call recreational, was an unremarkable subject of genteel (and female) public discourse. Indeed, that this article was primarily a review of domestic products, opium sandwiched between sewing machines and toys, speaks volumes about the drug’s normalized status when consumed in official, medicinal form. Even overt opium abuse was not particularly taboo. One article in *Women’s Beauty and Health* discusses the struggles of “the opium habit” besides those of weight loss. Mrs. Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* advised readers to drink coffee, tea, or walk around should they overdo the opium.⁶⁸ Responding to opium’s “magic-bullet” marketing, nineteenth-century Londoners thus largely viewed the medical prescription of opium as an unremarkable facet of daily life, even when it was then consumed in non-medical ways.

Unremarkable meant British. Compared to opium dens, medical opium’s perceived links to empire or foreignness appear tenuous. However, this is not to say no such ties were made in consumers’ minds. Pharmaceutical firms, for one, often flaunted their imperial colors. J. T. Davenport decorated his chlorodyne bottles with Indian elephants, and advertised how the drug had been used by doctors around the world.⁶⁹ However, many late Victorian commodities were decorated with imperial motifs, even commodities with few imperial links.⁷⁰ And the odd elephant seems tame compared to the aggressively Asian imagery which, for instance, tea

63 Elizabeth Lomax, “The Uses and Abuses of Opiates in Nineteenth-Century England,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 47, no. 2 (1973): 173-6.

64 Terry M. Parsin, *Secret Passions, Secret Remedies: Narcotic Drugs in British Society 1820-1930* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1983), 36; Lomax, “Uses and Abuses,” 168; Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 31.

65 J. T. Davenport, “Chlorodyne” advertisement, *Peter Parley’s Annual*, 19th Century UK Periodicals.

66 J. H. Walsh, *Manual of Domestic Economy*, rev. ed. (London: G. Routledge, 1874), 705.

67 “Spinnings in Town,” *The Englishwoman’s Domestic*

Magazine, March 1, 1873, 146.

68 “Question Department,” *Women’s Beauty and Health*, April, 1902, 21-2; Lomax, “Uses and Abuses,” 167.

69 Freeman’s, “Freeman’s Chlorodyne” advertisement, *The Illustrated Missionary News*, July 1, 1882, xxvii.

70 de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections,” 187-90.

was plastered with.⁷¹ All this suggests that, while drug manufacturers capitalized on public fascination for imperial consumption, opium, despite its imperial origins, may not have had such a strong association among consumers. However, London's public was not totally oblivious to the drug's Oriental side; as one writer noted, "from the east it would appear that we have derived, with many nobler gifts and secrets, our knowledge of the powers and virtues and abuses, as well as our supplies, of opium."⁷² All told, Londoners might have seen this form of opium consumer as a way of "consuming the East," like in the dens—but such thinking was not universal.

Yet this did not prevent public concerns over how opium-based medicines were consumed, or by whom. As with opium dens, these tensions were gendered. One recurring controversy in London's papers concerned mothers feeding their babies opium-based 'cordials' to quiet them.⁷³ In contrast to the opium dens, where respectable ladies were in the spotlight, these concerns targeted working-class women. True, 'baby-doping' was likely more common among this group, for "factory women," as one writer called them, could sedate their children for discount babysitting prices.⁷⁴ However, the way this public debate was formulated echoed concerns about women, especially urban women, improperly raising their children—namely, by violating the middle-class 'separate spheres' norm, where women were expected to remain at home. Thus, as with the dens, this consumption unnerved white Britons pre-

cisely because it seemed to undermine gendered bases of social propriety, especially within fast-changing urban societies. Moreover, these fears also voiced concern about women enacting agency as consumers, as women were accessing, likely purchasing, these drugs and bringing them into the household. By purchasing cutting-edge drugs for anti-maternal purposes, those women worried Londoners precisely because this form of opium consumption challenged gendered ideas about respectability and consumption in an unstable London society.

Middle-class women also spoke out. One writer for *Englishwoman's Journal* decried how "few but those who have been much among the poor" are aware of the danger of baby-doping.⁷⁵ Fearing that the risky baby-doping of the poor was silently encroaching on middle-class families, the author underscores how, for all its gendered facades, these concerns involved deeper fears about middle-class propriety and, so, social order. Gendered ideas about proper *consumption* did not go amiss, either. Mrs. Beeton rallied against "nefarious" nurses who gave children opium for a good night's sleep.⁷⁶ Beeton's concerns about poorer women's sly opium-peddling entailed fear that such children would become implicated in a world where women are no longer 'maternal,' thus removing the child from decent society. Moreover, this account also suggests an awareness that by not employing these opium-takers, one could stymie their nefarious practices. Knowing the threat opium consumption posed to middle-class propriety, London's ladies, acting in their private sphere, were vigilant about spending their wealth in ways that halted London's illicit opium economy, stemming this risk. While the appearance of these opium-laced fears,

71 de Groot, "Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections," 184.

72 W. A. F. Browne, "Opiophagism or the Psychology of Opium Eating" (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1875), 2–17.

73 *The Family Treasury*, vol. 1 (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1854), 180.

74 Lomax, "Uses and Abuses," 169–72; *The Family Treasury*, 180.

75 "The details of women's work in sanitary reform," *Englishwoman's Journal* 3 (1859): 223, in Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 100.

76 Lomax, "Uses and Abuses," 170.

and the gender of their spokespeople, was different than that of the opium dens, their driving beliefs—propriety, consumption, the erosion of London’s social order—remained.

Not all public discourse about non-medical opium consumption and its dangers was so abstract. Again paralleling opium den exposés, concerns circulated about how this form of the drug could spark national decline. Such concerns entered the realm of adult abuse of patent medicine. One letter to the *Daily Mail* implored the government to strengthen drug regulation, lest more of Britain’s “brightest intellects and most promising careers” be ruined by this “terrible evil”. More sinisterly, a court record from an alleged murder, for instance, notes an empty laudanum bottle on the crime scene, thereby hypothesizing a link to the crime.⁷⁷ Despite the many differences between these accounts, both draw a connection between opium taking and decline into undesirable behavior. Reckless consumption, moreover, could breed reckless consumption—authors would note, for instance, overlap in London’s populations of opium takers and drinkers.⁷⁸ This perception of opium pushing users to gin, or vice versa, frames the substances in a web of destructive behavior with the potential to snowball out of control—rendering Britons unproductive and poor consumers, anathema, again, to Victorian Britons’ self-identity and perceived social order. Indeed, that cutting-edge medicine becomes itself pathogenic in these accounts speaks volumes for how uncertain London’s respectability then appeared. With opium’s face as a modern, magic-bullet cure dissolving, and with London’s consumers becoming consumed, it was feared that opium overuse might drag the

city down.

As with the opium dens, Londoners’ perceptions of medical opium use was shot through with concerns for the use of the city’s space. “Degenerate” consumption of opium-based medicine was often associated with slum areas; in court records, laudanum was frequently discussed in connection to malnourishment and want.⁷⁹ This association of opium with London’s decrepit spaces alone made opium troubling for middle-class observers. But this was amplified when opium usage shifted from London’s periphery to its center. An 1897 *Daily Mail* report describes a woman found dead in a London hotel, laudanum by her side. For the writer, the “most startling fact” of the event was someone dying by poison “in the very center of London” inconspicuously.⁸⁰ This drama unnerved precisely because it blurred the prosperous, ‘public’ space of central London with the city’s hidden, ‘private’ slums—an illicit consumption which challenged London’s self-image as respectable consumer capital. Indeed, medical opium’s unsettling place within the public/private divide ran deep. In a court record of one Ellen Moore charged with baby-doping, witnesses wonder whether Moore fed her child opium in the living room.⁸¹ Paralleling the women in London’s hidden opium dens, concern here lies in whether Moore undertook such deplorable behavior within the feminine, private sphere of the home. Blurring slum and center, private and public, domestic angels and murderers, medical opium use can be said to challenge how Londoners understood the spatial divisions grounding the city.

77 “The Drug Habit,” *The Daily Mail*, February 3, 1913; Trial of John Frank Fyfield, May 23, 1887, Old Bailey Proceedings Online.

78 “The Doctor’s Opinion,” *The Family Economist*, 1857, 77; Trial of Frank Fyfield.

79 Trial of Margaret Waters and Sarah Ellis, September 19, 1870, Old Bailey Proceedings Online; Trial of Jane Palethorpe, 8 July, 1861, Old Bailey Proceedings Online.

80 “Woman Three Days Dead in an Hotel,” *The Daily Mail*, September 4, 1897.

81 Trial of Ellen Moore, May 3, 1875, Old Bailey Proceedings Online.

Pervasive though all these beliefs were, it must be conceded that medical opium did have another, more positive image: as a side effect of modernity. Like with much about opium, such discourse was classed. Parallels were drawn between contemporary opium use and that of “eminent literary celebrit[ies]” like Thomas de Quincy, known users of the drug some decades prior.⁸² This paradox—opium being “degenerative” for working classes, prestigious for elites—is testimony to, again, how the drug’s meanings hinged on the circumstances of its consumption and consumers. Yet these were ideas probably quite particular to London, the ‘modern’ capital. Evoking the hustle and bustle of a prosperous middle class, commentator Thomas Crothers noted how narcotics were used by “active brain-workers, professionals, and businessmen... for greater productivity or to dull the effects of mental over-stimulation.”⁸³ Opium may not have been desirable, but it encouraged desirable things: modernity, productivity, perhaps even the consumption of other goods that London’s middle classes so cherished. When framed as a respectable, middle-class commodity for countering anomie, medical opium and its imperial, modern facade bolstered rather than challenged Londoners’ self-identity.

But, as with opium dens, positive meanings came with strings attached. While opium medicines could be glamorous, they became, by the century’s end, a symbol of decadence. A 1902 letter to the *Daily Mail* discusses how residents in the “fashionable part of London” inject themselves with morphia; in one case of an overdose which the writer heard about, “scarcely an

inch of skin... was left unmarked by the punctures.”⁸⁴ Here, opium is not about “getting by”; it is an exclusive consumer good, a shameful one. The ‘elite opium injector’ was a popular trope. Seymour Starkey, writing for *Nineteenth Century*, recalled “most elegant” women hiding opium behind jewelry on their person, and injecting discreetly in theatres.⁸⁵ As such, opium is embroiled in luxury and decadence, linked to theatre and jewelry; even hypodermic needles, relatively new to medicine, may have had this veneer.⁸⁶ Clearly, opium had changed. While it was still a luxury product, it could also, as it did for the poor, spark degeneracy and ‘consume’ consumers. Having reached their *reductio ad absurdum*, late Victorian beliefs about medical opium, with their linkages to propriety, consumption, and degeneration, had bled into each other. Opium being the symbolically weighty good that it was, such beliefs could never be simple.

Two Nations, One Drug

Late nineteenth-century London was a city with many sides. At its center, London was a self-styled global city, defined by its economic prowess, imperial grandeur, and gentility; at its slummy peripheries, it was ground zero for Britain’s social decline and racial degeneration. Yet these two images overlapped and intertwined in complex ways. Opium, and particularly opium consumption, tapped into these dynamics. In this paper, I explored how the consumption of opium for non-medical ends was understood in two very different contexts in London discourse: the ostensibly seedy East End opium den and the more socially acceptable spaces frequented by white Londoners. Both imagined arenas housed opium usage that was coded as illicit, be it the

82 Browne, “Opiophagism,” 2–10.

83 Quoted in Penner Meredith Conti, “Ungentlemanly Habits: The Dramaturgy of Drug Addiction in Fin-de-Siècle Theatrical Adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes Stories and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Hyde,” in *Victorian Medicine and Popular Culture*, eds. Louise Penner and Tabitha Sparks (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2015), 114.

84 “The Growing Drug Habit,” *The Daily Mail*, January 2, 1902.

85 Conti, “Ungentlemanly Habits,” 114.

86 Berridge, *Opium and the People*, 138–44.

smoking habits attributed to Chinese others or the consumption of patent medicines for non-medical ends by some white residents, and both forms of consumption were wrapped up in an array of prejudices and anxieties. Echoing other historians of consumption—and particularly imperial consumption—I presented a “bottom-up” approach to opium’s history in the capital in order to access what these meanings were among ‘everyday Londoners’ and how understandings of illicit opium usage in these two very different imagined spaces intertwined in public discourse.

With the opium den being the imagined site of foreign opium smoking in London’s East End, and non-medical consumption of patent opiate medicine being the vice of London’s white, sometimes even elite, populace, these meanings may appear different. But, on a closer look, it becomes clear that similar thinking animated both. Mainstream London society viewed opium dens as the “East writ small,” places where Londoners could ‘consume’ an Oriental experience. This strange presence of the Empire within the metropole rattled Londoners’ assumptions about their city. Imperial consumption in the dens fed into public discourse about national decline, middle-class norms of proper economic activity, space, gender, and London’s control over its imperial subjects—all challenging Londoners’ grand self-identity and the perceived social stability of their city. White opium consumption was not so different. Despite being a seemingly common practice in nineteenth-century London, and one seen as more British than foreign, this form of opium consumption touched the same nerves—about national decline, proper economic activity, gender roles, and so on. In both contexts, opium raised questions, and often concerns, about the precariousness of London’s entire social order and imperial position in the world. Evidently, through comparing opium consumption in these two sides of London, one can grasp broader overlaps in public discourse about London’s center and its peripheries. Positioned at

the nexus of imperial grandeur and slummy decay, opi-⁶⁹um could synthesize many conflicting, even paradoxical, perceptions of the city at the time. And so, while opium may have occupied a complicated position in late Victorian London, it merely reflected the complexity of late Victorian London itself.

Coherence: Purple Bacteria, Quantum Physics at Room Temperature, and Scientific Atomism

BY ARI FELDMAN, The University of Chicago

[W]e must be careful to avoid the aura of mystery which can so easily be produced by reference to “quantum-mechanical effects.”

*H.C. Longuet-Higgins*¹

The beauty of how the purple bacteria have evolved a solution to the problem of efficiently harvesting light energy comes, as we show below, from how *they have, by trial and error, been able to elegantly exploit quantum mechanics.* We find that this is a truly remarkable outcome.

*Richard J. Cogdell*²

Imagine photosynthetic quantum computers!

*MIT Technology Review*³

Introduction: What took you so long?

You are purple bacteria. You live in a sewage sludge

digester in Göttingen, Germany, or in a “waste lagoon of a vegetable canning plant in Minnesota.”⁴ There’s no air where you are (you’re anaerobic) and little light: you likely live underneath layers of floating plants, some algae, and perhaps cyanobacteria.⁵ This is a problem, because you create energy from sunlight through photosynthesis. And it doesn’t help that the lilies above you are filtering out most of the blue and red light.⁶ Is this a poor choice of an energy source for an organism that doesn’t live in direct sunlight? Possibly. But consider this: the structures you use to process sunlight may be as old as photosynthesis itself; furthermore, scientists have measured the efficiency with which you turn photons from the sun into ATP, and you’re a whiz.⁷ Between your light-harvesting antennae and the nearly circular ring structures through which you transfer electrons to your reaction core, your energy efficiency can be almost one-and-a-half times the efficiency of terrestrial plants growing in direct sunlight.⁸ In particular, there’s

1 H. C. Longuet-Higgins, “Quantum mechanics and biology.” *Biophysical Journal* 2 (1962): 215.

2 Richard J. Cogdell et al., “The architecture and function of the light-harvesting apparatus of purple bacteria: from single molecules to in vivo membranes.” *Quarterly reviews of biophysics* 39 (2006): 229. Italics added.

3 “First Evidence of Entanglement in Photosynthesis.” MIT Technology Review, May 28, 2009. <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/413634/first-evidence-of-entanglement-in-photosynthesis/>.

4 Michael T. Madigan and Deborah O. Jung, “An overview of purple bacteria: systematics, physiology, and habitats,” in *The purple phototrophic bacteria*, ed. C. Neil Hunter, Fevzi Daldal, Marion C. Thurnauer, and J. Thomas Beatty (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer Netherlands, 2009): 9.

5 Cogdell et al., “The architecture and function,” 230.

6 Cogdell et al., “The architecture and function,” 229.

7 John M. Olson, and Beverly K. Pierson, “Photosynthesis 3.5 thousand million years ago.” *Photosynthesis Research* 9 (1986): 253.

8 David Chandler, “Secret of Efficient Photosynthesis Is

one part of your mechanism whose efficiency is, to use a technical phrase, “astonishingly high.”⁹

On the way to the reaction core, your electrons—they used to be photons, before your antennae persuaded them to change their minds—need to pass through several rings, like a roller coaster with multiple loop-de-loops. Here’s what is so astonishing: your electrons make it from ring B800 to ring B850 with nearly 100% efficiency in less than one trillionth of a second.¹⁰ It’s almost as if your electrons appear in the B850 ring *before they’ve left the B800 ring*.¹¹ As if, for a split second, they’re in two places at once.

This phenomenon is called quantum coherence: the theory that two electrons may share such a similar state that you can gain information about one by observing the other. It derives from quantum mechanics. In a very basic way, quantum coherence describes energy transfer much more accurately than classical physics could—and it explains why purple bacteria pass their electrons around with such efficiency and speed.¹²

Decoded,” *MIT News*, May 13, 2013. <https://news.mit.edu/2013/secret-of-efficient-photosynthesis-decoded-0514>.

Studies have put the overall efficiency of C3 plants (rice, barley, woody trees) at 4.6% and C4 plants (sugarcane, grasses) at 6%. See Xin-Guang Zhu et al., “What is the maximum efficiency with which photosynthesis can convert solar energy into biomass?,” *Current opinion in biotechnology* 19 (2008): 155.

A foundational study measured hydrogen production efficiency for certain species of purple bacteria to be 7.9% in extremely low sunlight. See J. Miyake and S. Kawamura, “Efficiency of light energy conversion to hydrogen by the photosynthetic bacterium *Rhodobacter sphaeroides*,” *International Journal of Hydrogen Energy* 12 (1987): 147.

9 Y. C. Cheng and R. J. Silbey, “Coherence in the B800 ring of purple bacteria LH2,” *Physical review letters* 96, no. 2 (2006): 1.

10 Cheng and Silbey, “Coherence in the B800 ring,” 1.

11 This is a feature of quantum coherence.

12 Gregory D. Scholes, “Quantum-coherent electronic energy

Two statements are important at this point. First, since the 1930s theoretical physicists have repeatedly suggested that quantum effects undergird all vital phenomena; second, only within the past ten years have molecular biologists accepted quantum-mechanical explanations of certain vital phenomena. Why did it take seventy years for molecular biologists to accept quantum mechanical explanations of vital activity? A possible explanation for this is technological: it took some time before biologists had the optical microscopes to confirm such quantum effects, or the ability to observe certain energy transfer mechanisms in isolation from their native organisms. But the original discussion over quantum effects in biology was pre-technological: the computations for energy transfer were theoretical, as were the musings of physicists on quantum effects in organisms. As we will see, even when biologists and biochemists admitted the influence of quantum mechanics in their fields, they thought of the field as providing them with problems to investigate (such as the nature of electron transfer) and equations to undergird better technology (such as for microscopes) rather than precisely describing vital activity.

In her book *The Restless Clock*, Jessica Riskin describes the 300-year history of the conflict between mechanist and vitalist explanations of vital phenomena. She writes that biology has been, and remains, under the influence of “a dialectical tradition at the heart of scientific explanations of life and mind,” the conflict between naturalizing and eradicating agency in explanations of vital phenomena.¹³ Riskin tracks not only the influence of these two competing ideologies, but

transfer: Did nature think of it first?,” *The Journal of Physical Chemistry Letters* 1 (2010): 2.

13 Jessica Riskin, *The Restless Clock* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016): 374.

also how these ideologies borrow from one another and, at times, become a single conception of life: the eponymous “restless clock.” Yet Riskin’s main source materials are the popular writings of biologists, both molecular (as the field came to consider itself) and evolutionary. She limits her central critique to the sciences of life and mind, and ends her book at the outset of molecular biology—before biology became even more atomized and researchers began to spend entire careers working on a single molecule in a single structure of a particular bacteria’s photosynthetic cycle. Riskin fails to ask, however, whether one can hope to impose a critique of “dialecticism” on a field of science that lives and dies by the infinitesimal details of its experiments.

The story of quantum coherence in electron transfer can be read as a test case of Riskin’s hypothesis. Did the “dialectical” conflict over agency keep molecular biologists tongue-tied on the question of quantum effects in living things? Or was it simply a matter of course—that is, was the eventual “discovery” of quantum effects simply the result of a plodding progression of empirical study?

This complicated story borrows histories from two extremely sophisticated scientific disciplines. And it is this progression of sophistication that ultimately concerns me: to what extent can historians of science project social tensions onto the most advanced scientific studies? When, so to speak, is a quantum explanation of vital activity just a quantum explanation of vital activity?

This essay aims to answer this question by telling the history of quantum theory in biology; its initial mixed—but not entirely disapproving!—reception among biologists; the emergence of evidence for quantum effects in organisms; and the ongoing period of acceptance of quantum effects in biology. My goal is to see just how likely it was for biologists to accept

the reality of quantum effects in vital phenomena in the 1990s and early 2000s. I will attempt to do so through my readings of a few influential papers on the subject. Though green-sulfur bacteria and European robins play a role in the last part of the story, I focus on purple bacteria, as they appear to have the longest publication history for speculation over quantum effects by biologists.

As you may have inferred from the second epigraph to this essay and its cheeky intro, I agree with Riskin that biologists cannot pretend to have effectively eradicated the notion of ‘agency’ from the study of vital activity; at the very least, their writings suggest otherwise. Whether theoretical physicists would agree or not, biologists seem to have perceived something disquieting about the randomness—the apparent vitalism—of quantum mechanics. Can the emerging field of quantum biology overcome biology’s resistance to vitalism? Or will quantum effects be subsumed into the vital machine? Can science, to challenge Riskin, ever be “made anew”?¹⁴

A note on terms

Throughout this essay I differentiate between the activity of living organisms and “life” writ large—with its philosophical implications—by referring to the former with the adjective “vital.” (For example, photosynthesis is a vital phenomenon.) This may be somewhat confusing, as my essay references the back-and-forth (or “dialectic,” as Riskin calls it) in biology between vitalism and brute mechanism. *Vitalism*, briefly, is the idea that the existence of vital phenomena is not due to the interaction of physicochemical forces, but rather to something deeper: a self-determining principle, a kind of physical teleology. (Henri Bergson called it “*élan vital*,” or vital force.) *Mechanism*, the intellectual op-

14 Riskin, *The Restless Clock*, 373.

ponent of vitalism, is the notion that physicochemical interaction is all there is to it.

Ghost in the cell: The view from quantum physics

In 1944 Erwin Schrödinger published *What Is Life?*, a book based on a series of lectures he gave in Dublin, to significant interest. The treatise found favor with big names such as J. B. S. Haldane, Michael Polanyi, and Max Delbrück, and made a wide impression on the field of biology.¹⁵ (It caused quite the ruckus in Dublin's religious community.) The book is famous for having "predicted" the discovery of DNA: Schrödinger supposed that if there were a gene-molecule responsible for heritability, it would likely be "aperiodic," in the sense that even single atoms might have a role to play in constituting and reconstituting such a molecule.¹⁶ Such was DNA: an "aperiodic crystal."

Schrödinger's interest in the importance of lone atoms in biology was unusual—that was considered the domain of physics. As an earlier commentator has noted, when Schrödinger published his book, biologists weren't concerned about the complexity of vital phenomena on such a small scale: from Schrödinger's book they "merely appropriated the idea of studying the molecular structure of the gene."¹⁷ But as a physicist, Schrödinger saw a strong connection between the behavior of individual atoms and vital activity, drawing a foundational connection between quantum mechanics and biology.

He wrote that the "jump-like" changes observed by Hugo de Vries in thoroughbred horses "[remind] a

physicist of quantum theory—no intermediate energies occurring between two neighboring energy levels. He would be inclined to call de Vries's mutation theory, figuratively, a quantum theory of biology."¹⁸ Schrödinger went on to walk a fine line, in which he posited this atomic understanding of the "gene," without directly tying the *forces* of atomic physics to vital activity. "We must be prepared to find," he wrote, that vital activity works in a way "that cannot be reduced to the ordinary laws of physics."¹⁹ This wasn't to say that "any 'new force'" held sway over "the behaviour of single atoms within a living organism."²⁰ The ultimate question, he concluded, was a structural one. In words that anticipate François Jacob's theory of the "integron," Schrödinger wrote that natural phenomena "are visibly based to a large extent on the 'order-from-order' principle"—life produces orderliness.²¹ He then tied this to a recent paper from the physicist Max Planck that suggested that large-scale physical phenomena are tied to the behavior of "small-scale events, the interaction of the single atoms and molecules."²² Schrödinger was trying to create a bridge between the "dynamical"—or mechanical—processes of planets and the same of cellular activity—structure from structure, a system of systems—even though he knew that such "dynamical" processes were only known to happen at temperatures close to absolute

15 Edward J Yoxen, "Where does Schroedinger's *What is life?* belong in the history of molecular biology?" *History of science* 17 (1979): 18.

16 Riskin, *Restless Clock*, 371.

17 Yoxen, "Where does Schroedinger's *What is life?* belong," 36.

18 Erwin Schrödinger, *What Is Life?: The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell*, Cambridge: University Press, 1955: 34.

19 Schrödinger, 76.

20 Schrödinger, 76.

21 Schrödinger, 80. Jacob's "integron" was any organic structure that is made up of a class of smaller structures and in turn makes up a larger structure, e.g., a kidney, or a lipid. See François Jacob, *The Logic of Life: A History of Heredity* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973): 302.

22 Schrödinger, *What is Life?*, 82.

zero (such as the temperature of outer space).²³

As Riskin has pointed out, Schrödinger seemed to have been trying to “rebuild” science by merging vitalism and brute mechanism.²⁴ This claim holds up for Schrödinger’s statements on the unity of structure and behavior. But there is a greater ambivalence to his book. At the same time that Schrödinger suggested that all things in the universe may have the same mechanical underpinnings, he seemed not to want to extend the boundaries of that structure to the atomic level. He used a telling metaphor: imagine a steam engineer inspecting an electric motor. Such an engineer would intuit, from the motor’s construction, “an entirely different way of functioning,” not that the electric motor was “driven by a ghost.”²⁵ This is a decidedly mechanist way of viewing the physical underpinnings of biology, but, crucially, understood in a way that maintains a separation between physics and biology: quantum mechanics—or atomic-scale phenomena—become a kind of tool or machine used by a biological system. This is what I call the *utilitarian* understanding of quantum mechanics in vital activity. It continues to hold sway in current literature. Quantum physics was (and is) considered a mechanism-in-itself.

Other physicists and influential scientists in Schrödinger’s world had taken up the question of how quantum mechanics might be important to the biologist. Niels Bohr, Pascual Jordan, Henry Marganau, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin all attempted to create theories of matter that linked quantum mechanics with a decidedly classical understanding of vital activity.

Bohr, in the early 1930s, was taken with the pos-

sibility that his recent theory of complementarity—that complete knowledge of an atom requires information on its wave and particle functions—might be relevant to the life sciences.²⁶ In 1933 he published a two-part essay in *Nature*, in which he suggested that life is reducible to phenomena that are studied by the atomic physicist. In photosynthesis in particular, he wrote, “the individuality of photo-chemical processes must undoubtedly be taken into consideration.”²⁷ Scientists should expect that analysis of “the mechanism of living organisms” on the atomic scale would find similar features to the “properties of inorganic matter.”²⁸ Bohr was convinced that “no well-defined limit can be drawn for the applicability of physical ideas to the phenomena of life.”²⁹

Bohr’s ravings and writings were hugely influential on Max Delbrück, a biophysicist, who hosted a regular, informal meeting of theoretical physicists at his home to discuss the potential for physical theories of vital activity. Their discussions centered, for the most part, around photosynthesis, as they considered it the most fruitful ground for biology and theoretical physics to meet.³⁰ Delbrück would go on to publish a foundational paper for the field of molecular biology, “On the Nature of Gene Mutation and Gene Structure.”

The question of quantum physics in vital activity was a kind of proving ground for these physicists’

23 Schrödinger, 84.

24 Riskin, *Restless Clock*, 373.

25 Schrödinger, *What is Life?*, 76.

26 Kärin Nickelsen, *Explaining Photosynthesis: Models of Biochemical Mechanisms, 1840-1960*. Vol. 8. Springer, 2015: 284. She refers to Bohr’s 1928 complementarity theory as a “quantum mechanical dialectic.”

27 Niels Bohr, “Light and life,” *Nature* 131 (1933): 457.

28 Bohr, “Light and life,” 458.

29 Bohr, “Light and life,” 458.

30 Nickelsen, 123-4.

larger epistemological and ideological theories.³¹ While Schrödinger spoke of quantum physics from what I have termed the utilitarian stance, Pascual Jordan saw “quantum biology,” as he termed it, as a way to link modern science to Nazi ideology by identifying quantum physics with the vitalism that was so important to Nazi theories of life.³² Henry Margenau and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin—two very spiritually-minded scientists—incorporated different versions of Bohr’s “limitlessness” hypothesis into their grand theories of everything, Margenau with an eye towards describing consciousness as a fundamental feature of matter and Teilhard seeing eventual divine unification of matter in quantum mechanical theory.³³

Throughout the rest of the 20th century, many physicists published speculative works about the possibilities for understanding vital activity by recourse to quantum mechanics. Some of these papers were based off experiments conducted by the physicists, while some were state-of-the-field articles meant to build support for quantum theories of life. Herbert Fröhlich, a British physicist, noticed in 1968 that certain biological systems show a kind of coherence found in super-chilled Bose gas. “Stimulated by a different attitude” from those who would discount low-temperature phenomena in vital activity, he found that processes in the cell

membrane, among other things, might be expected to exhibit long-range electron coherence.³⁴ He suggested that this quantum mechanical effect might be important to cell division.³⁵ And, in language echoing Schrödinger’s “order-from-order” principle, he suggested that biologists interested in understanding life structurally might find that life’s co-operative features are mirrored by material physical theories.³⁶ Though he referred to his subsequent suggestions for biological research as “speculative,” he ended his paper by noting that one of his findings “may be relevant to photosynthesis.”³⁷

Andrew Cochran, a professor of physics at the University of Missouri, published many papers in the late 1960s and 1970s on the possible inter-relatedness of quantum physics and biology—though in a much more polemical style. In a 1971 article he wrote:

The known facts of modern quantum physics and biology strongly suggest the following related hypotheses: atoms and fundamental particles have a rudimentary degree of consciousness, volition, or self-activity; the basic features of quantum mechanics are a result of this fact; the quantum mechanical wave properties of matter are actually the conscious properties of matter; and living organisms are a direct result of these properties of matter.³⁸

This is unabashed vitalism. Cochran blamed classical physics for characterizing atoms as lifeless, lamenting that this definition maintained its dominance despite

31 For more on Bohr, Pascual Jordan, and Delbrück, see Leyla Joaquim et al., “Quantum Explorers: Bohr, Jordan, and Delbrück Venturing into Biology,” *Physics in Perspective* 17 (2015): 236-250.

32 Jordan: “The extension of quantum ideas would stand in an extension of the power of the German imperium.” Quoted in Richard H. Beyer, “Targeting the organism: The scientific and cultural context of Pascual Jordan’s quantum biology, 1932-1947,” *Isis* 87 (1996): 250.

33 See particularly Henry Margenau, “Reality in quantum mechanics.” *Philosophy of Science* 16 (1949): 287-302., and Teilhard’s *The Human Phenomenon*.

34 Herbert Fröhlich, “Long-range coherence and energy storage in biological systems,” *International Journal of Quantum Chemistry* 2 (1968): 643.

35 Fröhlich, 648.

36 Fröhlich, 642.

37 Fröhlich, 649.

38 Andrew A. Cochran, “Relationships between quantum physics and biology.” *Foundations of Physics* 1 (1971): 236.

the quantum revolution in physics and its theoretical antecedents. Thus, despite Schrödinger's preference for a mechanistic universe, there was clearly a strain of vitalism in quantum physics. We might call this the *emergent* theory of quantum mechanics in vital activity, as opposed to the earlier described *utilitarian* theory. (And it echoes, to some degree, Jordan's Nazi quantum biology.) Here, we might locate a preliminary reason why biologists may have remained averse to quantum explanations of vital activity: that they perceived it not as fascist, but as vitalist. The irony is that, in many cases, physicists saw quantum effects as simply the next system down from cell organelles, much in the way that Jacob described the hierarchy of "integrans" that make up organisms.³⁹

How did biologists receive this quantum speculation? There is a particular document that current biologists are pointing to in their articles on the origins of 21st century quantum biology. In a 1962 lecture, H. C. Longuet-Higgins, a biochemist, touted his conservatism on "the usefulness of quantum mechanics to biologists."⁴⁰ He argued that the job of the biochemist and biologist is to study whole-cell processes, following the structural argument of biologists at the time. He found value, however, in quantum mechanics as a descriptor of the underlying reality of all things, in the sense that "all physico-chemical phenomena are quantum-mechanical in nature."⁴¹ Longuet-Higgins maintained that though "it is always unwise to underestimate the ingenuity of the living cell," biological systems could be understood without recourse to quantum

mechanics. That is, he understood quantum mechanics as a tool (albeit an inadequate one) that biologists could use to describe vital activity by analogy—and as an *unlikely* tool of living cells.⁴²

Longuet-Higgins' ambivalence was the defining feature of this speech: he discussed quantum mechanics as a useful tool not of organisms, but of biologists, at the same time that he explicitly made the case against over-complicating explanations of vital activity. Quantum physics, he admitted, had posed research questions for molecular biologists to consider, and provided them with better imaging technology with which to conduct their research. But when it came down to it, quantum mechanics had an "aura of mystery" that was not necessary for the biologist, especially when vital phenomena could be likened to watches, locks, and keys.⁴³ To his credit, he did allow that "the photo-synthetic act is that biological problem to which quantum mechanics has made, and is likely to make, the most useful contribution."⁴⁴ Yet the questions of exciton energy transfer would more likely "yield to attack" by experimental, and not theoretical, investigations.⁴⁵

Though Longuet-Higgins described his view as "conservative," there is little evidence that suggests biologists and biochemists felt otherwise—either more or less interested in quantum effects. Perhaps the most significant piece of evidence is that biologists published little on the subject in the intervening years between Longuet-Higgins' speech and the seminal experiments on purple bacteria.⁴⁶ In certain cases, other biologists

39 Jacob, "The Integron," in *The Logic of Life: A History of Heredity* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973).

40 H. C. Longuet-Higgins, "Quantum mechanics and biology," *Biophysical Journal* 2 (1962): 207-215.

41 Longuet-Higgins, 208.

42 Longuet-Higgins, 211.

43 Longuet-Higgins, 215.

44 Longuet-Higgins, 212.

45 Longuet-Higgins, 213.

46 There are many speculative articles about quantum

seemed to agree with Longuet-Higgins that quantum mechanics was too mysterious. Gunther Stent, a prominent biologist at Berkeley, published an article in 1968 picking up on an idea advanced by Niels Bohr: that, like particles, organisms remained fundamentally obscure to scientists because one would have to kill the organism to study it on an atomic scale. “On this view,” he wrote, “the existence of life must be considered as an elementary fact that cannot be explained, but must be taken as a starting point in biology.”⁴⁷ Stent would have us consciously appoint mechanism as the first principle of biology. Stent even concluded by speculating that Bohr’s conundrum might mean that humans could never achieve an understanding of life as such.⁴⁸ Like Longuet-Higgins, and seemingly in opposition to the prevailing biological concepts of structural hierarchy, Stent proposed that there was a bottom to biological investigation: floorboards underneath which a biologist need not—indeed, could not—look.

Life isn’t too warm and wet after all: quantum physics in organisms

In his PhD dissertation in 1952, Louis Duysens, a Dutch biophysicist, made several important findings. One of these was that in purple bacteria’s light harvesting process, energy transfer between photosynthetic structures was nearly 100% efficient.⁴⁹ In an earlier paper he had also identified the three proteins involved in purple bacteria’s photosynthetic process: B800, B850, and B890, so named for the wavelengths of light

(measured in nanometers) they grabbed energy from.⁵⁰ He calculated the energy transfer efficiencies using a particular theorem, Förster resonance energy transfer. “Estimations” of transfer efficiency, he wrote, “based on Förster’s considerations, are in accordance with, or at least do not contradict, the results recorded above.”⁵¹

For over sixty years molecular biologists approached the study of electron transfer under the influence of a single theory, published in 1946 by Theodor Förster, a German scientist (and a member of the Nazi party).⁵² His theory, known as Förster resonance energy transfer (FRET), described the way that energy transfers between two chromophores, which are the regions of organic structures and organisms (such as the retina, plant cells, certain bacteria, and the emerald green sea slug) that absorb and emit certain wavelengths of light. In photosynthetic organisms, the chromophore absorbs light by “exciting” an electron, sending it into a chain of reactions that ultimately turn the electron into energy (in the form of ATP) for that organism. The process is thus called “excitation energy transfer,” or EET. Förster knew that his theory could be derived either through classical or quantum physical calculations, though it described a theoretical version of electron transfer that approximated the outcome of EET: the baking-soda-volcano equivalent of *in vivo* (occurring within the organism) electron transfer mechanisms.⁵³ In his model, energy transfer efficiency was highly sensitive to changes in distance, which eventually made it a

mechanics and psychology. For example, see Ivan D. London, “Quantum biology and psychology,” *The Journal of General Psychology* 46 (1952): 123-149.

47 Gunther S. Stent, “That was the molecular biology that was,” *Science* 160 (1968): 392.

48 Stent, “That was the molecular biology that was,” 395.

49 Nickelsen, *Explaining Photosynthesis*, 193.

50 L. N. M. Duysens, “Transfer of light energy within the pigment systems present in photosynthesizing cells,” *Nature* 168 (1951): 548.

51 Duysens, quoted in Nickelsen, *Explaining Photosynthesis*, 286.

52 Theodor Förster, “Energiewanderung und fluoreszenz,” *Naturwissenschaften* 33 (1946): 166-175.

useful tool for molecular biologists measuring distances between intracellular structures.

Yet earlier research had essentially derived Forster's same formula: research conducted on—you guessed it!—the speed of EET in photosynthetic structures in bacteria. In 1941, a short abstract appeared in the back of *Physical Review*. It described how energy transfer in photosynthesis was analogous to a similar process—having to do with radiation and decay—in gamma rays.⁵⁴ The abstract had been presented at a meeting of the American Physical Society in Pasadena in June 1941. Its presenter was one J. R. Oppenheimer.⁵⁵ Though he would later get sidetracked by a larger, more pressing project, in 1950 Oppenheimer and his research partner on this question, William Arnold, published a more in-depth treatment of EET and its similarities with quantum mechanical processes. “One is tempted to speculate,” Arnold wrote, “on the possibility that we have here a method for the transfer of energy through the chloroplast.”⁵⁶

At this point it is important to note that FRET—either Forster's theory or Arnold and Oppenheimer's—is *not* quantum mechanics. It has to do with light quanta, but it describes a form of energy transfer that is *not* coherent. In FRET, energy is shared between proteins through overlap of light spectra (i.e., 800nm, 850nm, and 890nm). In quantum coherence, two molecules “couple” in such a way that they share certain characteristics and are considered a single “superposition.” FRET can occur over much wider distances than quan-

tum coherence, but only when the light spectra of the proteins overlap. Thus when Duysens wrote that FRET “[did] not contradict” his data, what may be inferred is that FRET, as a model, accounted for a significant portion of purple bacteria's photosynthetic efficiency—but quantum coherence explained what was really happening, and the energy transfer's near-perfection.

Many other researchers built upon Duysens' most celebrated findings: not only the three proteins that processed light in purple bacteria, but also his discovery that most plants contained two photosystems. In the late 1990s, however, the particular question of how energy transferred between B800 and B850 became interesting again. Renewed interest in this process was due, as papers at the time said, to advances in 3D imaging of light-harvesting structures in purple bacteria.⁵⁷ Still, a group of researchers had recently performed some tests and found that FRET didn't explain completely the speed of energy transfer.⁵⁸

Researchers presenting findings in the *Journal of Physical Chemistry B* offered possible new ways of understanding EET in purple bacteria that didn't rely solely on FRET. Hu et al. offered a quantum mechanical model that better predicted the EET efficiency in 1997; Mukai et al., in 1999, didn't buy fully into the Hu team's findings, though they did allow that coherence was at play in EET between B800 and B850.⁵⁹ Further

54 Nickelsen, *Explaining Photosynthesis*, 284.

55 Yes, that J. R. Oppenheimer. See J. R. Oppenheimer, “Internal conversion in photosynthesis,” *Phys. Rev* 60 (1941): 158.

56 William Arnold and J. R. Oppenheimer, “Internal conversion in the photosynthetic mechanism of blue-green algae,” *The Journal of general physiology* 33 (1950): 434-435.

57 Xiche Hu et al., “Pigment organization and transfer of electronic excitation in the photosynthetic unit of purple bacteria,” *The Journal of Physical Chemistry B* 101 (1997): 3854.

58 S. Hess et al., “Enhanced rates of subpicosecond energy transfer in blue-shifted light-harvesting LH2 mutants of *Rhodobacter sphaeroides*,” *Biochemistry* 33 (1994): 8300.

59 Koichiro Mukai et al., “Theory of rapid excitation-energy transfer from B800 to optically-forbidden exciton states of

B850 in the antenna system LH2 of photosynthetic purple bacteria,” *The Journal of Physical Chemistry B* 103 (1999): 6096.

papers in the early 2000s cemented the experimental and theoretical validity of quantum coherence in purple bacteria.⁶⁰ The researchers noted, in particular, that modeling the reaction with quantum mechanics helped explain certain phenomena (the timescale being hundreds of femtoseconds) and created a more intricate picture of the reaction itself. It also provided, perhaps most astonishingly, that quantum coherence was possible at room temperature, when physicists had long assumed quantum mechanical effects could not happen anywhere other than near zero degrees Kelvin, and certainly nowhere warm and wet like a cell.

In the late 2000s and early 2010s, papers pointing toward quantum effects in other biological phenomena emerged, at the same time that early review articles on the subject began to get published. In 2007, Engel et al. observed quantum effects in the FMO complex—another photosynthetic structure—in green-sulphur bacteria.⁶¹ In 2011 Gauger et al. published a paper pointing to the role of quantum coherence in the European robin’s avian “compass”—the means by which birds are able to navigate the globe. The researchers concluded that their findings were “starkly at variance with the view that life is too ‘warm and wet’ for such quantum phenomena to endure.”⁶²

The review articles that connected the findings across bacteria and birds used language that harkened

back to the utilitarian understanding of quantum mechanical effects. Gregory Scholes, writing in 2010, said that the recent studies on bacteria suggested that “rather than being constrained by classical probability laws, some antenna proteins are able to employ interference of quantum amplitudes to steer energy transfer.”⁶³ Scholes also recognized that finding quantum effects in “warm” environments sustained for periods of hundreds of femtoseconds would galvanize quantum-computing researchers, and provide a springboard for theories of “quantum photosynthetic computers,” as one *MIT Technology Review* article had raved a year earlier.⁶⁴ In 2011 Lambert et al., who gave an overview of the new reports on purple bacteria, the FMO complex, and birds, also conformed to the utilitarian view of quantum effects, noting, “[P]reliminary evidence suggests that nature may also leverage quantum effects to enhance the efficiency, or functionality, of some of these amazing feats.”⁶⁵ The follow-up questions, the authors speculated, would be around technological applications and the extent of quantum effects in other organisms.

Lambert et al. also re-inaugurated the discipline of “quantum biology,” a term that had largely been on hiatus in the more prestigious journals and among prominent scientists since Pascual Jordan’s era, the 1930s and 1940s. Since the Lambert article, biologists and physicists have taken to the new term. But in both Lambert and articles that have followed it, a strict demarcation remains between biological systems that use quantum effects and those that are simply classical. Quantum

60 See Scholes and Fleming 2000; Jang et al 2004; and Cheng and Silbey 2006.

61 This is the lone non-review paper published on the subject of quantum effects in organisms that shows an awareness of the long back-story of speculation into quantum possibilities in vital activity. Gregory S. Engel et al., “Evidence for wavelike energy transfer through quantum coherence in photosynthetic systems,” *Nature* 446 (2007): 782-786.

62 Erik M. Gauger et al., “Sustained quantum coherence and entanglement in the avian compass,” *Physical Review Letters* 106 (2011): 1.

63 Gregory D. Scholes, “Quantum-coherent electronic energy transfer: Did nature think of it first?,” *The Journal of Physical Chemistry Letters* 1 (2010): 2.

64 “First Evidence of Entanglement in Photosynthesis,” *MIT Technology Review*, May 28, 2009.

65 Neill Lambert et al., “Quantum biology,” *Nature Physics* 9 (2013): 16.

mechanics is like the new kid in town—who's been there all along.

Conclusion: A part that is not part of the whole

Scholes' 2010 article ends on a telling note: "The benefits" of creating a discussion on quantum effects amongst physicists, chemists, and biologists, he writes, "will be the elucidation of insights into the light-initiated dynamics of very complex systems that were, until recently, unforeseen."⁶⁶

"Ignored" might fit better in that conclusion. Despite—or perhaps because of—robust support from the founding fathers of atomic physics, biologists and biochemists did not pursue, and hardly even considered the possibility of, quantum effects in vital activity. Even as physicists continued to speculate on the importance of quantum physics in biology—whether it was from the point of view of positing an origin for consciousness or hoping to answer specific structural questions—biologists, for the most part, didn't respond.

Biologists and biochemists also spoke—and continue to speak—of quantum effects in a way that demarcated their discipline. Quantum effects have consistently been referred to as a "tool" of biological systems, not inherent to them. This may turn out to have some experimental validity, as some biologists have speculated that quantum effects may have, in some cases, evolutionary advantages over processes that appear to be strictly classical (such as providing purple bacteria with the energy transfer efficiency necessary to survive in low-light conditions). But even then, biologists probably wouldn't speak of an opposable thumb as a tool we humans use to grip beer bottles or hitchhike. There is a biological theory of "self," perhaps, yet to be articulated—an attempt to locate the root of "being" in an organism. Is there a difference between the "being" and

what organic "tools" the being uses?

A central irony of this story is that though molecular biology's founding documents were written by physicists, the discipline in many ways resisted identification with modern physics, which was quantum physics. This paper tries to sketch a possible outline for why non-physicists like Longuet-Higgins found "an aura of mystery" in quantum physics, but it's hard to be sure. The fixation on inherent consciousness held by more than a few quantum physicists certainly did not help.

Why biologists seemed to define their field in part in opposition to quantum mechanics remains to be seen. Despite the prevailing "integron" theory of biology, quantum physics has remained an alien presence in biology, a monster under the floorboards. It is used by life but is not life: a part that is not part of the whole. At many times in this story the tension of the possibility—and then the experimentally validated proof—of quantum effects in organisms has seemed to take on aspects of Jessica Riskin's vitalist/brute mechanist dialectic. Yet the whole discussion takes on an intensely complicated (and somewhat mystical) cast when you consider that some quantum physicists genuinely think the big takeaway from quantum mechanics is that matter *is* consciousness.

In the introduction I speculated that with a field like molecular biology it becomes difficult to find exactly where and how baked-in ideological stances affect research programs and results. The story given here is not a complete enough picture of the course of molecular biology, or of purple bacteria research in particular, to satisfy our curiosity on a study-by-study scale. But from a bird's-eye view, there is sufficient evidence to claim, at the very least, that discipline-level stances—like the false dilemma of mechanism outlined by Riskin—are identifiable even in the hardest of sciences. The hyper-specialization of disciplines in the sciences may well be

66 Scholes, "Quantum-coherent electronic energy transfer," 6.

to blame for this. It's possible that molecular biology going forward—perhaps with quantum biology as the first bridge—will begin to look more like applied quantum physics and less like atomized biology.

In a work published in translation in 1945, the influential geochemist Vladimir Vernadsky proclaimed, “The twentieth century is the century of scientific atomism.”⁶⁷ One could say, after examining the history of quantum biology, that the self-isolation of the various disciplines left significant research gaps, quantum effects in vital activity being a central one. What exactly contributed to that atomism, and how it was characterized and defended by successive generations of biologists, was only loosely sketched here. The 21st century, so far, seems to be a period of scientific holism, with a resurgence of interest in the cross-pollinatory possibilities of physics and biology, biology and geology, and so on. It is possible that the resurgence of quantum hypotheses in biology in the late 1990s had something to do with the growing industrial imperatives and enthusiasms of scientific collaboration and holism, as with the *MIT Technology Review*'s “quantum photosynthetic computers.” When I consider such an explanation, however, I become deeply skeptical of scientific holism—perhaps it is just as disagreeable in the 21st century as atomism was in the 20th. It remains to be seen whether the biases and “dialectics” of biology will be subsumed under or negated by a quantum biology; or, alternatively, that scientists determine that biology is best left in its “classical” state. Future developments rest at least in part on a dimension that has emerged subtly through my own historical analysis: what are the political stakes of disciplinary holism in the modern study of organisms?

67 W. I. Vernadsky, “The biosphere and the noösphere,” *American Scientist* 33 (1945): 6.

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