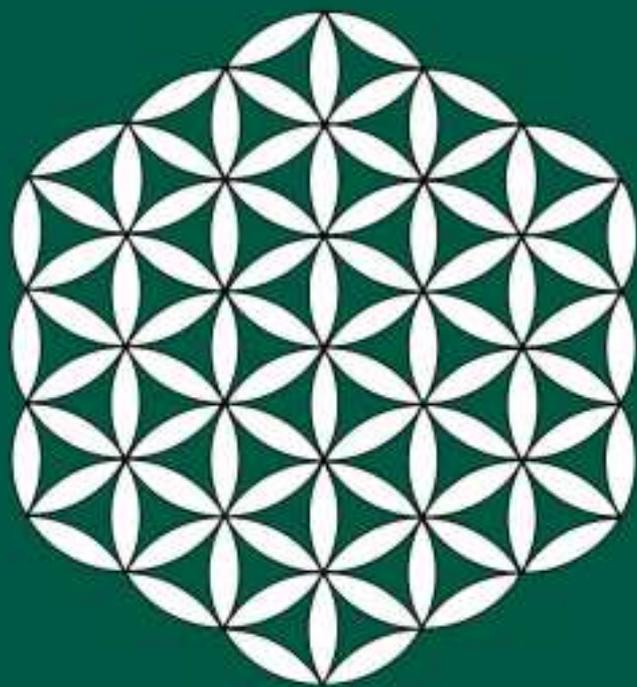


BINGHAMTON JOURNAL  
OF HISTORY



BINGHAMTON  
UNIVERSITY  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Year 2016

Volume 17

# Binghamton Journal of History

Phi Alpha Theta History Journal  
Alpha Theta Epsilon Chapter  
ΦΑΘ

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**Volume 17**  
**2016**

# Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Thank you for taking an interest in the *Binghamton Journal of History*, published by Binghamton University's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the history honor society. This journal proudly provides undergraduates with the opportunity to have high quality research projects published as articles. The journal also provides graduate students experience as the editors who select and review submissions and publish the journal's annual issues.

The editors are excited to present in this volume a selection of undergraduate articles that span several time periods, geographical regions, and methodologies. We also include in the final pages of this volume information regarding Phi Alpha Theta, Binghamton University's Research Days, and the History Department's Combined BA/MA Program.

We appreciate the support of Phi Alpha Theta and its members as well as History Department faculty who have helped make the publication of this journal possible.

Sincerely,  
The Editorial Board

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# Author Biographies

**Laura E. Earls** was a senior history and music major with a minor in Japanese studies when she wrote “Defining Autonomy: Women Navigating Transatlantic Intellectual Connections in Boston, 1770–1779” as part of her senior honors thesis, “Defining Autonomy: Women Navigating Economic, Political, and Intellectual Spaces in Boston, 1770–1779,” under the supervision of Professor Dael Norwood. She is interested in early American cultural and gender history, as well as material culture, and most of her research has focused on gender in the mid- to late eighteenth century. Earls was on the executive board of Phi Alpha Theta and Mu Phi Epsilon, the professional international coed music fraternity, for much of her time as an undergraduate. Being a part of these organizations and working with the history professors at Binghamton University have been integral to her work ethic and the development of her historical writing over the past four years. Earls plans to have a career in museum collections and curation, which she has begun through her work as a tour guide at the Shaker Museum Mount Lebanon. In fall 2017, she will enter a graduate program to pursue a master’s degree in history.

**Sara Marie Hobler** is a history and sociology major with a minor in Spanish. She wrote “Building Up and Breaking Down: Community Building and Its Difficulties among Mexican and Chicano Homosexuals” as a sophomore for the Latin America and the United States course taught by Professor Nancy Appelbaum. Her historical interests include social movements, revolutions, and transnational history, particularly in Latin America and Eastern Europe during the twentieth century. Hobler plans to pursue a doctorate in sociology once she completes her bachelor’s degree at Binghamton University.

**Lindsey McClafferty** wrote “The Imperial Press: American Reflections on the Subjugation of the Philippines” as a junior for Professor Stephen Ortiz’s US and the World, 1914–1945 course. McClafferty is a history and English major with a minor in education. She is interested in Philippine history and race and gender studies. Her future plans include obtaining a master’s degree in education and teaching high school English courses.

**Gabrielle Schiller** was a senior history major when she wrote “From Tape to Mendez: The Boundaries of Race, Citizenship, and Education in California” for Professor Dael Norwood’s United States, Asia, and Empire seminar. Her historical interests include social policy, especially immigration and refugee experiences. Schiller plans to obtain a master’s degree and doctorate in public health and demography so that she can pursue a career writing policy measures.

**Jiajun Zou** wrote “Chinese Diaspora in the Dutch East Indies during the Eighteenth Century: Religion and Custom as Roots of Identity against Assimilation and the Discrediting of Chineseness” as a junior history major for Professor John Chaffee’s Maritime Asia course. His focus is on Qing history during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with a particular interest in identity. His other interests related to this field are folk religion of lower classes, the provincial history of Fujian and Canton, the anti-Qing rebels and Han nationalists in these two provinces and abroad, the flourishing literature and opera, the role of women in society, and the persistence and transformation of Confucian moral codes. Zou plans to pursue a doctorate degree in Chinese history with a focus on “new Qing history” to become a history professor in the United States.

# **Chinese Diaspora in the Dutch East Indies during the Eighteenth Century: Religion and Custom as Roots of Identity against Assimilation and the Discrediting of Chineseness**

*Jiajun Zou*

In his article “Creolized Chinese Societies in Southeast Asia,” the anthropologist William Skinner developed the idea of the overseas Chinese diaspora as “the creation through ‘fusion’ of a new sociocultural system that achieved autonomy and stability despite continued contact with both parent societies.” In an anthropological view, Skinner saw Java as one of the examples in which the Chinese community “yielded a wondrous array of adaptive, acculturative, and assimilative phenomena.”<sup>1</sup> The creolization process certainly occurred and created a new group called the Javanese Peranakan, which now has fully evolved into a distinctive ethnic community. However, I disagree on the so-called “acculturative and assimilative

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<sup>1</sup> William G. Skinner, “Creolized Chinese Societies in Southeast Asia,” in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 51–93, 51.

phenomena” and the idea that ethnic diasporic community becomes the product of mixed cultural systems. Although multicultural societies often provide the opportunity for interaction and socialization between different people, Skinner’s overarching argument underestimates the resilience of the old system and institutions that maintained the Chinese diasporic identity.

Skinner was limited by a lack of Chinese language sources and a reliance on the preexisting English scholarship. While not necessarily a cultural outsider since Skinner understood Fujianese dialect, he was unmindful that available archival sources on the overseas Chinese community in Batavia, as well as eighteenth-century Chinese travelers’ accounts, demonstrate a paradox in which the Chinese overseas community nurtured their distinctive cultural system and maintained a high degree of autonomy and self-regulation under the supervision of Dutch colonial authority. I argue that it is a paradox for two reasons. On the one hand, it does not conform with the anthropological studies of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, wherein mixed marriages between the Chinese and the locals was ubiquitous. On the other hand, it overrides the Chinese official record, especially of the Ming and Qing dynasties, which often alienated the Chinese diaspora as a despicable cultural other. In other words, they were orphans of their own culture and viewed by the Ming and Qing governments as barbarians because of adopting foreign culture.

I intend to demonstrate that, at least in eighteenth-century Java, the large Chinese community lived under a cultural system that was transplanted from China to Java. The community’s autonomy and stability was achieved because of the distinctive cultural background of the Fujianese Chinese. Their identity was not rooted in the land but a portable set of ideas and customs that they carried with them throughout the long history of their seafaring tradition. With a history of maritime exploration, the Fujianese brought with them practices and beliefs critical to their spiritual identity. As a people with an esoteric dialectic, they

also formed a unique solidarity based on their provincial identity. Thus, rather than being absorbed into another culture, such as Javanese culture, the Fujianese Chinese instead were cultural disseminators rather than students.

In fact, the creolization of race does not necessarily produce a distinctive cultural community; the dominant and stable cultural system that worked efficiently for the ethnic diaspora can subsume any potential budding of Peranakanization. I resist conforming with Skinner's anthropological view of the Chinese diaspora in Java because it showed a tendency of racial essentialism that assumed identity as a product of birth rather than a contingency of the particular social circumstances that happened to dominate at a given place in a given time. We know that at least throughout the eighteenth century, there was a strong Chinese cultural community in Java with a Chinese Kapitan system actively exercising the esoteric Chinese culture, religion, and customs of its community. Furthermore, the dissemination of Fujianese temples and deities to Southeast Asia demonstrated the Chinese diaspora's desire to create a cultural homeland where collective identity is honored and maintained for generations.<sup>2</sup>

This strong sense of localized Chinese identity is idiosyncratic and esoteric. The Chinese Kapitans of Batavia actively utilized their private cultural capital as an invaluable resource for a functional Chinese judiciary system. In an attempt to not heavily rely on Dutch and English sources that scholarship of the Chinese in Southeast Asia over the past century has focused on, I hope to illuminate a glimpse of the Fujianese Chinese who lived in China's maritime frontier and cultural

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<sup>2</sup>I used the term Chinese and Fujianese interchangeably to underscore the considerable overlapping of these two generalizations.

borderland.<sup>3</sup> It is a cultural borderland because whether it was the tradition of venturing overseas or staunch beliefs in ghosts and deities, the people of Fujian actively refused to conform to the desires of the central government. While they necessarily shared some of these same traditions with people of other provinces, like neighboring Guangdong, they demonstrated a particular loyalty to their historical cultural practices that produced an enduring consciousness of self-identity.

The unique Fujianese identity has often been suppressed by Chinese scholar-officials, such as Wang Dahai, who downplayed evidence of provincialism and disunity, as well as by historians like E. S. de Klerck and Bernard H. M. Vlekke, whose Dutch sources also generalized the Chinese community as a homogeneous unity. One of the goals of this article is to depart from the convention of simplifying the Chinese identity as singular and to use the plurality of Chinese identity and its place in Java to explain how details of local Chineseness, such as Fujianese and Cantonese, can strengthen the case against an assimilationist view.

Often heterogeneous, the Chinese diasporic community internally creates a complex question about identity, given its multiple layers, such as provincial identity that may be more appropriate rather than describing them all as Chinese. Provincialism, however, does not mean that Chineseness is weakened or broken down in the process of migration. Provincialism represents a part of everyday Chineseness existing in the mainland and overseas communities. By emphasizing the voices of contemporaries, I intend to provide their self-assertion of identity against Skinner's anthropological hypothesis. My

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<sup>3</sup> For examples of comprehensive volumes, see E. S. de Klerck, *History of the Netherlands East Indies*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: B. M. Israël, 1975); and Bernard H. M. Vlekke, *The Story of the Dutch East Indies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945).

approach is to find the cultural authenticity of the Fujianese Chinese in Java by comparing it with the identity present on the mainland. Skinner challenged the use of the term *Chinese*, as for the Chinese Kapitans. He argued that they were only “so-called ‘Chinese’” and were “in fact, Peranakan leaders.”<sup>4</sup> Skinner is right but only in an ethnological view for it assumed that creoles formed an identity that is “in-between” the Chinese and Javanese cultures. Thus, Skinner is unaware of the fact that the durability of the Chinese Kapitan system depended on the Kapitans’ role in maintaining the old regime and supervising a people’s beliefs in their traditions and history. For the Fujianese, identity is not territorial; the act of moving overseas is not the abandonment of the past, as Chinese official sources often wrongly convey. Familiar cultural practices, rather than ethnic distinction, in the overseas community maintained their cultural roots.

Early records suggest that the Chinese population in Java can be dated back to as early as the tenth century when Fujianese settled and lived under the administration of Java’s king.<sup>5</sup> The migrant population in Southeast Asia as a whole, however, remained relatively small until the Qing dynasty. One study of the genealogical records of the Fujianese migrants to Southeast Asia with a sample size of 2,385 traced 94 Fujianese migrants during the Ming dynasty. The number unprecedentedly increased to 723 during the Qing dynasty in the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> While it provides us with a perspective of the larger trend of migration from Fujian to Southeast Asia, it is

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<sup>4</sup> Skinner, “Creolized Chinese,” 56.

<sup>5</sup> Yang Li 楊力 and Ye Xiaodun 葉小敦, *Dongnanya de fujian ren 東南亞的福建人* (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1993), 69.

<sup>6</sup> Lin Jinzhi 林金枝, “Min yue qiaoxiang zupu yanjiu” 闽粤侨乡族谱研究, in *pudiexue yanjiu hui bian, Pudiexue yanjiu di yi ji* 谱牒学研究第一辑, ed. Zhongguo pudixue yanjiu hui 中国谱牒学研究会 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1989), 166.



Chen also noted that most of its clansmen considered going overseas as the only way to feed themselves.<sup>11</sup> The *Fujian Gazetteer* showed similar concerns. “Lands were scarce, and the population was so large. Farm lands were disappearing, and thus, the place has a lot of land suits.”<sup>12</sup> The *Xiamen Gazetteer* also echoed this theme: “The coastal prefectures of Southern Fujian had most of its soil laid barren, the people did not have enough to eat.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, in response to this problem, the Fujianese acted according to their own agency. We can see this from the Zhangzhou prefecture whose people were said to “appear as hardworking but are nasty-minded at heart,” and “whenever barbarian ships came near, these sea dwellers abandon their wives and children and ships along with the barbarians.”<sup>14</sup> This description, written by the scholar-officials compiling the gazetteer, resonates with the stigma attached to the Fujianese by the central government. The latter actively marginalized and cast doubt on the authentic Chineseness of people who decided to leave the empire. What this stigma does not take into account is that although they were leaving the country, moving from one place to another, it was often propelled by dire economic necessity. Of course, the tradition of going overseas is not only a Fujianese prerogative. Cantonese were also known for their overseas migrations. But during the eighteenth century, the scale of Fujianese migration to Southeast Asia had become a serious security concern and annoyance for the Qing central government, who viewed the Fujianese as untrustworthy and marginalized the Cantonese as unauthentic Chinese. I intend to demonstrate this alienation to reveal the perpetuation of the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>12</sup> Wei and Xie, *Fujian tongzhi*, 9:2.798.

<sup>13</sup> Zhou Kai, *Xiamenzhi* 厦门志 (Jizang yupin shuyuan, 1832), 8:1.143.

<sup>14</sup> Wei and Xie, *Fujian tongzhi*, 9:10.806.

stigma attached to the act of moving overseas and to shed light on the inveterate provincialism.

The dilemma presented here is the active effort of the Qing authority to discredit the Chineseness of Fujianese migrants who left the country and the form of identity the overseas Chinese took on. I argue that it is not any abstract loyalty to the Qing's Sinocentric worldview or protonationalism but a diasporic community identity modeled upon Fujianese culture, including the religion, customs, and beliefs that they took with them during the migration and subsequently spread in the soil of new lands. The Fujianese Chineseness did not depend on the recognition of the Qing authority, nor was it limited by geographical barriers between China and Java. The subtlety here is that however disgruntled the Qing emperors and official were about the overseas Chinese, the latter did not consider practicing Chinese culture and living abroad as inherently incompatible.

The Qing alienation of the overseas Chinese as shown in court debates and official memorials reveal that the three emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, who collectively reigned from 1662 to 1795, all showed concern about Fujianese loyalty and self-identity. It is important to understand that the way in which an emperor viewed the coastal situation and issues could directly affect the policies advocated during his reign. In October 1716, the Kangxi emperor told the "Grand Secretary and others," "When I was visiting Suzhou during my southern tour and saw a shipbuilding factory, I asked and learned that every year there are thousands of merchants going overseas, and only less than a dozen of them returned...In Luzon and Java, there were Han people who disguised [themselves] as pirates since Ming dynasty...I demand a careful review of this matter with all the governors of coastal provinces like Fujian,

Guangdong...currently in Beijing.”<sup>15</sup> When Kangxi finally lifted the sea ban after he took Taiwan in 1684, he lectured scholar-officials on the uselessness of trying to constrain the coastal people’s mobility and agency “even though we had sea bans before, have those who privately sneak out overseas for trade ever stopped?”<sup>16</sup>

Kangxi showed that he was aware of the active migration abroad, but his concern was more about security, a fear of overseas Chinese colluding with their European rulers. Kangxi thought, “I am concerned that in a matter of hundreds or a thousand years, overseas countries like those of the West are going to plague China. It is my ominous prophecy.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, in 1717, laws prohibited the Chinese from sailing to Southeast Asia.<sup>18</sup> Kangxi’s fear had its bearing from earlier precedents. In 1604, Fujianese merchants were courting Dutch company commanders to bribe Chinese officials in order to obtain trade privileges. The merchants ended up in jail and distressed the Ming civil officials, which the historian John Wills has summarized as “just another case of collusion between eunuchs

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<sup>15</sup> Guan Xiu 官修, *Shengzu ren huangdi shilu* 聖祖仁皇帝實錄 (Qing neifu chaoben, 1731), 270:10.5956, <http://huntenq.com/ancient/ancientkm?00054FE900050201000000000000C800000003F000001910>.

<sup>16</sup> Chen Yixing 陈怡行, “Shunfeng xiangsong dao liuri: Ming qing shiqi fuzhou haishi huodong yu haiwai yimin (1368–1840)” 顺风相送到琉日: 明清时期福州海事活动与海外移民 (1368–1840), in *Minshangshi yanjiu diyiji* 闽商史研究 第一辑, ed. He Zhiyi and Wang Xianbin (Zhangzhou: Fujian sheng yanhuang wenhua yanjiu hui, 2013), 186.

<sup>17</sup> Chen, “Shunfeng,” 188.

<sup>18</sup> Feng Erkang 冯尔康, *Yongzheng zhuan* 雍正传 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1985), 346.

and seagoing Chinese desperadoes.”<sup>19</sup> The Dutch understood that the Fujianese exercised their agency and desire for trade and migration even if the Chinese government did not. Thus, in 1622, the Dutch armed themselves and sailed to Xiamen to demand that the Chinese authorities allow the Chinese merchants to trade with them; the Dutch even gave the Fujianese passes to come and live in Batavia.<sup>20</sup> In essence, the Fujianese were acting from their agency without regard to the Qing, and the question of their loyalty and identity thus arises.

By the time of Yongzheng’s reign (r. 1723–1735), it had become clear that the new emperor inherited the same security concerns about overseas Chinese from his father Kangxi. In 1725, following famine in Fuzhou prefecture, the governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang pleaded for Yongzheng to lift the sea ban to Southeast Asia and allow the importation of food. The center of the court debate was whether the Chinese who traveled overseas were still Chinese in their identity and political loyalty. When his Han Chinese officials Gao Qizhuo, Chang Fen, and Yang Wenqian asked about the need to prevent coastal people from sneaking overseas, Yongzheng rebuked them and reiterated his father’s distrust of the overseas Chinese. “I do not really have to have such people come back. Even if they all come back, what benefit does it do to the nation? These people left their hometown for a long time, resided in foreign lands, it is equivalent to cutting-off their feelings for the homeland [*shouqiu zhi nian*]. However, if they return, who is to say that there will not be those with schemes of treachery and collusion!”<sup>21</sup> Next

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<sup>19</sup> John E. Wills, *China and Maritime Europe, 1500–1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 68.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Feng, *Yongzheng*, 347. 首邱之念 (*shou qiu zhi nian*) is a Chinese idiom from the *Classic of Rites* that refers to a legend about a fox positioning its head to the direction of its birthplace when it knows it is about to die.

year, when the same officials made the same petition, Yongzheng brushed it off by saying “using all kinds of rules and laws to prevent people going out is really ludicrous, I really do not understand.”<sup>22</sup> His suspicion was shown again in 1728, when after the return of the twelve out of twenty-one Fujianese ships that departed from Xiamen to Southeast Asia, Yongzheng demanded that local officials not trust their words and enacted supervision to ensure loyalty.<sup>23</sup>

It is not a coincidence that the Qing attitude in the eighteenth century was consistent because Qing hostility toward overseas Chinese reached a nadir by Qianlong’s reign (r. 1735–1796). The historian Mark Elliot has argued that the new emperor had a “debt to his father and grandfather alike.” Qianlong was beloved by his grandfather Kangxi and his father Yongzheng. Elliot further argued that Qianlong sought to strike a balance between his grandfather’s magnanimity and his father’s harshness.<sup>24</sup> As he also acknowledged, however, Qianlong was an anxious person like his father and did not take challenge and disrespect lightly.

Qianlong’s court record showed two incidences of persecuting people who returned from Java, and both happened to be Fujianese. In early May 1749, the Qing court learned about the case of “Chen Yilao of Longxi, Fujian fled to Java for trade in 1736, and he bought a barbarian woman, raised barbarian children and served as a Kapitan.” He, however, resigned his post and decided to return with his wife, children, and a huge sum of foreign money and goods on the boat of

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Yongzheng indicated here that he believed that the overseas Chinese are not like that.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>24</sup> Mark C. Elliot, *Emperor Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009), 21.

another Fujianese. He was then accused of colluding with foreign countries and was thus banished and beaten. His wife and children were deported.<sup>25</sup> In fact, he stayed in Batavia for over twenty years and served eight years (1742–1749) as the treasurer, the assistant to the Kapitan. His punishment sent a substantial message to the overseas Chinese. One contemporary even wrote, “henceforward, they dare not return with ease.”<sup>26</sup> This punishment is not the arbitrary whim of the emperor but was systematically ingrained in the Qing law code. Under the military border section of the code, “Any civilians who privately sneak out of the country without paperwork will receive one hundred hit of clubbing and two thousand miles of banishment.”<sup>27</sup> We are also not informed how official sources define “collusion” since Chen only served as an official in a foreign land and committed no harm to the Qing.

In another more revealing incident, the official source provides limited context for the details. In late September 1759, Qianlong was discussing his knowledge about a trial testimony (*shenju*) linked to the lives of the Chinese living in Java. The confession of the so-called barbarian merchant Hong Renhui, possibly acting as a stained witness, testified against a Fujianese named Lin Huaisuo. Qianlong’s interpretation and tone are critical in understanding the Qing government’s subjective perception of the oversea Chinese. “Lin Huaisuo resided in Gelupa. His three generations have all grown their hair [*xufa*] to become devils [*guizi*]; there is no way that he can be so well-

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<sup>25</sup> Guan Xiu 官修, *Gaozong chun huangdi shilu shang* 340.31 高宗純皇帝實錄上 364.4 (Qing neifu chaoben, 1799), 10439, <http://hunteq.com/ancient/ancientkm?00054FE9000C0401000000000000C800000003F000003210>.

<sup>26</sup> Yang and Ye, *Dongnanya*, 74.

<sup>27</sup> Xu Ben, *Daqing luli* 大清律例, in *qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書 (1725), 22:1.672.

versed in Chinese characters from the look of this handwriting.”<sup>28</sup> While we lack information about the trial, it appears to be irrelevant to Qianlong given that he was likely using it to make a point. He noted that “Fujian province people are cunning and fierce [*diaohan*]” and demanded officials arrest any remaining families of those who secretly fled overseas in order to “deter the coastal people from making the same mistake.”<sup>29</sup>

I argue that the highlight here is Qianlong’s shock that a Fujianese who resided in Java for three generations could still write Chinese, mainly because his three generations have all grown their hair to become “devils.” The official Chineseness during the Qing required that male Han subjects of the Qing shave their foreheads and grow a pigtail, rather than the traditional Chinese Han-styled hair.<sup>30</sup> We thus find that Lin Huaisuo was taking advantage of his migration overseas to continue his own Chineseness, leaving the Qing authority with no choice other than persecuting any of his remaining relatives. In fact, Qianlong’s anxiety may also have resulted from the Qing dynasty’s ruling house being a Manchu minority ethnic group. The refusal of Han Chinese anywhere to adopt the Manchu hairstyle was a challenge to the legitimacy of Manchu rule in China. Another scholar also noted that in the 1760s, when Han peasants in central China did the same and cut off their pigtails,

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<sup>28</sup> Guan Xiu, *Gaozong*, 597.4: 16707.

<sup>29</sup> Guan Xiu, *Gaozong*, 597.8:16708.

<sup>30</sup> 束发 (*shufa*) or hairdo is the ancient Chinese hairstyle for males after age fifteen when the hair is wrapped into a bun. According to Confucius, hair is a part of the body that we inherit from our parents, and shaving hair can mean a lack of filial piety. Hairstyle and clothing are also historically considered quintessential to Chinese cultural identity.

Qianlong launched a witch hunt due to a fear of possible conspiracy.<sup>31</sup>

The Qianlong emperor immediately followed this with a discussion of the rebelliousness of the Fujianese customs (*minfeng*). His imagination of the overseas Chinese community was similar to those of Yongzheng and Kangxi. The overseas Chinese were imagined as barbarized, devil-like, and dangerous, which meant that they did not deserve sympathy or imperial recognition. This sense of the overseas Chinese as a cultural other was again showed when Qianlong learned about the massacre of the Chinese in Batavia in 1740.<sup>32</sup> He said, “those victims were native born and were actually no different compared to *fanren* [barbarians].”<sup>33</sup> Against the anguish of the Fujianese governor, Ce Leng, who had more sympathy for the overseas Fujianese, the record continued to state that Qianlong graciously forgave the Dutch for the mistake.<sup>34</sup> Ironically, he denied the existence of Chineseness among the overseas Chinese. I argue that the indifference to the Fujianese migrants’ plight is a result of a distrust of not only their diasporic identity but also their Fujianese identity. Provincialism played a role in further alienating the Fujianese Chinese from the Qing authority—a problem that continued to exist among ordinary people of different provincial origins in the diasporic community.

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<sup>31</sup> Elliot, *Emperor Qianlong*, 19.

<sup>32</sup> It is beyond the scope of this article to provide details about this massacre. For more details, see de Klerck, *History of the Netherlands East Indies*, chap. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Guan Xiu, *Gaozong*, 176.6:4969.

<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that this governor may not be Fujianese in origin because of the traditional practice of the “law of avoidance,” which prevents scholar-officials from assuming office in their native places in order to avoid nepotism, etc.

Qianlong's main influence may have been Wang Anguo, who was the grand coordinator (*xunfu*) of Guangdong. In a memorial to the Grand Council (*Junjichu*) in 1741 discussing the rippling effect of this Dutch colonial massacre, Wang suggested that "when Fujianese went overseas to trade...most of them refused to come back...in July of this year, two Dutch ships arrived in Canton to trade...Your servant fears that the Fujianese will take it for revenge." Wang decided to increase supervisions to quell a potential Fujianese riot. Qianlong then complimented Wang's decision.<sup>35</sup> The Cantonese governor, Qing Fu, wrote a similar memorial in 1742 lobbying for the continuation of trade with the red-haired barbarians (*hongmao fan*): "I heard that in Java, the barbarian headmen killed Han people, and Fujian governor Ce Leng feared that barbarians are ferocious and can disrupt trade. He suggested that we should immediately ban the trade with Southern Ocean."<sup>36</sup> Qing Fu then made the argument that trade with "foreign barbarians" was essential for the Guangdong province in terms of revenue, employment, and food supply. Thus, like Wang Anguo, he hoped Qianlong could set this matter to rest and ignore Fujianese governor Ce Leng's proposal on the halt of trade.

The problem with these two Cantonese officials is that they showed a deep-rooted concern for the interest of their provincial people. We lack information about how Qianlong came to his final thought, wherein he demanded that it be decided in the Deliberative Council (*Yi zhengwang dachen huiyi*). This shows, however, that there was not a view of a homogenous overseas Chinese community because the Cantonese and Fujianese officials both concerned themselves about whether their people were involved. Wang Anguo's tone

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<sup>35</sup> Zhongshanshi Danganju 中山市檔案局, *Xiangshan mingqing dangan jilu* 香山明清档案集录 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 706.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 708–9.

conveyed a sense that he did not trouble himself to identify with the overseas Chinese being killed because they were Fujianese.

I will demonstrate later that this provincial rift also existed among ordinary people, not just the officials. In the effort of the Chinese emperors to disown the Fujianese migrants, would the latter still identify as Chinese? In Qianlong's view, the overseas Chinese were no different from the barbarians. I argue that this is an uninformed perception based on assumption. Qianlong's bewilderment about the possibility of Fujianese living in Batavia knowing how to write Chinese is a product of the myth of inevitable creolization. In fact, some overseas Chinese had to work equally hard to meet this perception for their own benefit. During the reign of Yongzheng, two migrants returning from Batavia gave an interesting confession while in jail. Both were put into prison and wrote confessions. Chen Wei was a Cantonese who lived in Batavia for three years. On his return, he emphasized that he "bought two barbarian wives, two barbarian maids, four barbarian servants," and by the time he left, "barbarian headmen Kapitans [*yimu jiabidan*]" had provided the ship.<sup>37</sup> Yang Yin was a Fujianese from Xiamen, who had a similar story of traveling to Batavia and said his brother also bought barbarian wives and servants, while it was the "barbarian headmen Kapitans [*fanmu jiabidan*]" who provided the ship for his return.<sup>38</sup> In addition, they praised the magnanimity of the Qing emperor and their feelings of glory as his subjects. It is possible that they cleverly misled the Qing officials with the words *barbarian headmen* for the Kapitans were in fact most likely Fujianese.

There was already an established Chinese community according to one traveler, Cheng Rijie, who visited around the

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<sup>37</sup> Lin Derong, *Xiyanghanglu yimin mingqing minao yimin beshu dongyindu yu baixia zhimindi de yanjiu* (Jiangxi: Jiangxi gaoxiao chubanshe, 2006), 322.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

same time in 1730. Locally prestigious Chinese acted as Kapitan (*jiabidan*), two lieutenants (*leizelan*), and four treasurers (*leizhenlan*).<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, as Yongzheng thought that those who went overseas must have connived with the barbarians and had crafty ideas of treachery, I argue that the two prisoners tried to keep themselves as little related to them as possible. They thus adopted the term *barbarian* since it could mean both foreigners and overseas Chinese. They were also countering Yongzheng's belief that these people had forgotten their homeland. As Chen Wei said, "Your sinful servant really did not want to sojourn in barbarian lands... If I am someone who forget about homeland, I will not desperately want to return." Fujianese Yang Yin also claimed that "ever since the fifth year of Yongzheng [1727], the gracious emperor lifted the sea-ban, those of us in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou can go out to do business, now that we are well-fed, everyone is thankful of the country. It is not just me, those now in foreign lands all have the desire to return home."<sup>40</sup> Thus, the study of Chinese in Java not only has to confront Skinner's assimilationist view but also needs to overcome the Qing court's own stigma about the overseas Chinese.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, Chineseness may also vary from one group of Chinese to the next. Chinese scholar-officials, however, often ignore such subtleties most likely because of their Confucian

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<sup>39</sup> Li Lintang 李林昌, "Qianlong guiqiao cheng rijie yu gelaba jilue" 乾隆归侨程日焮与噶喇吧纪略, in *Zhangpu wenshi ziliao 1-25 heding ben* 漳浦文史资料 1-25辑合订本, ed. Chen Guiwei 陈桂味 (Zhangpu: Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Fujian sheng zhangpu xian weiyuan hui, 2007), 125.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>41</sup> My use of the terms *Chinese* and *Fujianese* is also a challenging one because even the Chinese emperors and travelers to Batavia did not consider them as mutually independent terms despite the Fujianese continuing to exercise their agency.

education and ideological conformity with the rest of the educated class in the empire. For example, Fujianese Wang Dahai, who dwelled in Batavia for over ten years and was familiar with its Chinese community, described the Chinese there as *Tang* people (*Tangren*) or other forms like *huaren* or *Zhonghua ren*. All of these terms denote descendants of Chinese civilization. Although the provincial and national identities inevitably overlapped at times, I suggest special attention to the particularity of the Fujianese Chineseness as evident in Batavia. Its esoteric nature made it difficult for Perenekianization to take place.

A rare source of archival evidence known as Chinese court archives (*Gong'an Bu*), preserved by the Dutch historian Leonard Blussé, detailed how the Chinese Kapitans served as unpaid officials who, on behalf of the Dutch authorities, governed the Chinese population in Batavia. Despite the earliest surviving eighteenth-century archives ranging between 1787 and 1791, Batavia had already founded the Chinese court (*Gongtang*) system in 1742, which allowed the Chinese Kapitans to assume judiciary functions for the Chinese community.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the Chinese Kapitan system had long been in place since 1619 when the Dutch authority made Fujianese merchant Su Minggang the first Chinese Kapitan. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) board made this decision after calculating that the dominant majority of migrants at the time were Fujianese speakers.<sup>43</sup> In fact, the *Gong'an Bu* contained Chinese records that had predominantly been transliterated from the Fujianese dialect, which testifies to the dominance of the Fujianese population.

Recorded in Chinese by an anonymous Qing traveler, *The History of Batavia (Kaiba lishi shiji)* noted that in 1775, Nankai Academy, which had been created by Kapitans Huang Yanguan,

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<sup>42</sup> Yang and Ye, *Dongnanya*, 72.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

was built next to the Guanyin Temple where teachers tutored children of poor background for free. The school principal, Yang Ben, wrote that “For over a hundred and fifty years from the years of *Wanli* [1572–1620] to now the fortieth year of *Qianlong* [1775], we the *Tang* people came to Batavia where it already had a Kapitan. Never had we thought that they built Buddhist temples, temples of deities...Teacher Du Ganggen lives in this barbarian land but still has not forgotten the holy religion of China and preserved the essence of Confucianism; I admire him deeply!”<sup>44</sup> This record has credibility because the traveler Wang Dahai also wrote in his journal that he stayed in this academy on August 2, 1791, to complete his famous *Haidao yizhi*, recording his experience in three Javanese locales: Batavia, Semarang, and Pekalongan.<sup>45</sup> Nankai Academy suggests that throughout most of the eighteenth century, traditional Chinese learning had roots in Batavia. The fact that Fujianese Lin Huaisuo in Batavia could write perfect Chinese suggests that those who migrated overseas kept their cultural identity despite being physically separated from China. Principal Yang’s description also highlights the longevity of cultural rule since Chinese Kapitans promoted the study of Chineseness despite them being the servants of Dutch authority.

These Chinese Kapitans also actively used Chinese religion and beliefs as instruments of governance. I argue that even though the elite classes, such as the Kapitans themselves, often referred to overseas Chinese in broad inclusive terms like *Tang* people, which does not differentiate the Chinese provincial differences, they were conscious of the particularities of Fujianese culture. The Kapitans not only identified with them but also implicitly sided with them in cases related to the

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<sup>44</sup> Blussé and Wu, *Shiba shiji so*, 86.

<sup>45</sup> Wang DaHai 王大海, *Haidaoyizhi* (Zhangyuan Cangban 漳园藏板, 1791), 12.

conflict between the Cantonese and Fujianese. Xu Jiyu wrote in the mid-nineteenth century that ever since the Ming dynasty, the rich Fujianese and Cantonese in Java “bribed the Dutch to nominate them as Kapitans.”<sup>46</sup> An alternative view suggests that “Fujianese Chinese were always in the dominant majority, and Chinese merchants had plenty of cash”—such was the case that in all parts of Java, the Chinese Kapitans were almost always Fujianese.<sup>47</sup> Thus, financial resources were not enough; community representation was also key. The first Chinese Kapitan Su Minggang was appointed because of his Fujianese identity and ability to speak their language. The regional differences also matter here, especially when trials involved both Fujianese and Cantonese. In fact, Xu Jiyu also noted that “their language remained Chinese in tradition...Kapitans were all people of Zhangzhou and Quanzhou.”<sup>48</sup>

Highly conscious of culture, the Chinese Kapitans strived to keep the community untouched by outside influence, including Chinese Muslims. The announcement of July 25, 1766, declared, “According to Chinese custom, converting to another religion is subject to death penalty. The Dutch government thinks we should not meddle with this affair especially if it is unrelated to Christianity. Normally speaking, Chinese and Muslims are not allowed to marry no matter men or women. In reality, Buddhist Chinese must not marry Muslim women. The treasurer [*wu zhimi*] must attend to this matter.”<sup>49</sup> We know that mixed marriages happened every day. For example, from the

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<sup>46</sup> Xu Jiyu 徐继畲, *Yinghuanzhibilue* 瀛环志略, in Qing daoguang ershibanian fujian fushu keben (1828), 2:17.64, <http://hunteeq.com/ancient/ancientkm?00054FE9000E05010000000000000C800000003F000003E90>.

<sup>47</sup> Yang and Ye, *Dongnanya*, 72.

<sup>48</sup> Xu, *Yinghuanzhibilue*, 2.19:66.

<sup>49</sup> Blussé and Wu, *Shiba shiji mo*, 39–40.

Huang Lineage Genealogy, we learn that the male “Huang Wanguan was born on the ninth year of Kangxi [1670], and lived in *Sanbaolong* [north of Java], married a barbarian woman [*fan nu*] with the surname Bai, and had a baby in the eighteenth year of Kangxi [1679].”<sup>50</sup> While the woman is a *fan*, the surname Bai could be a Chinese one. The historian Bernard Vlekke made the argument that in Batavia, “Chinese never emigrated with their wives. They married native women or bought slave women [;] when they returned to China they took their sons—in their conception the only interest part of the family with them... They took good care of their sons as Chinese. Thus they remained culturally distinct from the mass of the native population.”<sup>51</sup> Vlekke attempted to override Skinner’s argument that creolized culture could challenge Chinese culture.

Similarly, I argue that cultural distinctiveness was demonstrated by how the Chinese judicial system operated under the Kapitans. The Chinese Kapitans clearly classified the *Tang* people and *fan* as two distinct groups and set an impenetrable boundary by law. The sources rarely discuss *Tang* people as Peranakans since they were more often considered as members of *Zhonghua*, i.e. descendants of Chinese civilization. The Qing authority strictly forbade Chinese females from traveling abroad, and thus it makes sense that, according to the historian Charles Coppel, “most marriages in the Nanyang [Southern Ocean] tended to be ‘mixed marriages.’”<sup>52</sup> My point is that the creolization of race does not necessarily mean the creolization of culture. In fact, there was a more obvious divide

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<sup>50</sup> Lin, “Min yue,” 171.

<sup>51</sup> Vlekke, *The Story of the Dutch East Indies*, 92.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Coppel, “Mapping the Peranakan Chinese of Indonesia,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 8 (1973): 143–67, quoted in Leonard Blussé and Menghong Chen, *The Archives of the Kong Koan of Batavia* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 10.

within the Chinese community by region than between Peranakan and *Tang* people, for the Chinese Kapitans failed to make such a distinction. It seems that to the Europeans, the Chinese were a homogeneous entity, which ignores the reality that dialect and customs can easily divide the Chinese—for example, the Fujianese and Cantonese.

The series of events beginning on February 28, 1790, when the maidservant of the Fujianese merchant Lin Mu was said to be forcefully hugged by the Cantonese wood carver Lai Nian, help demonstrate these divisions within the Chinese community. The case involved Lin Mu who gathered Fujianese support and Lai Nian who rallied the Cantonese to fight against them, although all were eventually stopped and arrested by the police (*jaga*). *Gong'an Bu* provide the accounts by each party; it appears that in the testimonies of the Fujianese, they were highly conscious of their provincial identity and the otherness of the Cantonese. The court officials may have also sided with the Fujianese both by not challenging their incomplete narrative and challenging Lai Nian in a harsher tone. Lai Nian claimed that he had no knowledge of why the girl came to hug him and stole things in his home. When he was not able to provide eyewitnesses to the court to testify about her theft, “the court condemned Lai Nian saying that without a witness, you are actually lying!”

In my view, however, the most poignant charge against Lai Nian was not the crime itself but the fact that he represented a minority Chinese community: the Cantonese. All of the remaining witnesses showed a pattern of describing Lai Nian as Cantonese. The maid of Lin Mu, who was the alleged victim, claimed, “I was about to ask the Cantonese for a wood comb, but the Cantonese hugged me tightly. When my master saw it, he immediately engaged in shouting matches with him. On that night, the Cantonese were angry and gathered their people.” Similar versions have been provided by all other witnesses testifying that the “Cantonese were angry. They gathered their knives and wanted to beat up the Fujianese” and the “Cantonese claimed they want to humiliate all the Fujianese.” The

eyewitnesses here were likely Fujianese because the records say that the only three Cantonese witnesses refused to come.<sup>53</sup> The poor Lai Nian's roommate, who was also arrested, completed the story by saying, "at night, Mu called his buddies and was planning to have Nian beaten."<sup>54</sup> Thus, from the view of the Fujianese witnesses and the alleged victim, they sought justice not for the individual *per se* but for their community, feeling a strong sense of community cohesion against the imagined Cantonese evildoer.

*Gong'an Bu* records show the disadvantaged positions of Lai Nian and his roommate, whose words were not trusted and whose defense was further weakened by his minority status as Cantonese. Not only did the many witnesses not mention Mu's role in rallying the Fujianese for the fight, but they also called Lai Nian "Cantonese." In the courtroom, Lai Nian and his roommate, however, did not accuse others because of their Fujianese identity. The consciousness of provincial identity shows that at times of internal conflict, the Chinese identity quickly succumbed to regional identity. Fujianese identity served as a source of immediate cohesion; even though Lai Nian was technically a Chinese cultural insider, he was still a cultural outsider to Fujianese Chineseness.

Chinese provincialism in Batavia is similar to the earlier discussion about Cantonese governors demanding the Qing court ignore Fujianese grievances about the massacre in 1740. I propose that desire for a united Chinese community and uniform Chineseness must not overshadow the diversity of interest and representation within the Chinese community. I argue that the migrants transplanted their provincialism to Java, and rather than this being an abnormality to authentic Chinese lives, it was indeed part of everyday Chinese lives and evidence of

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<sup>53</sup> Blussé and Wu, *Shiba shiji mo*, 232.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

Chineseness. Kangxi once wrote about taking advantage of Chinese disunity for the longevity of Manchu rule: “Han Chinese are not united. We, Manchu and Mongols, have hundreds of thousands of people but are united as one. I have assumed personal rule for years now; the Han Chinese are particularly hard to govern. Since they are not united, the country has been peaceful for a long time.”<sup>55</sup> Thus, Kangxi’s words outlined China’s deep-rooted problem of divisiveness, which was even transplanted overseas. I suggest that because of the differences in dialect, cultural variation, and history, each province inherited a tradition that is uniquely its own. Although in the view of scholar-officials Chineseness is supposed to unify all regional differences, this is not the case in the lives of most ordinary people.

Chinese Kapitans in Batavia could handle most small cases, such as family disputes and quarrels involving small sums of money, through discussing mutual concessions, and in some small cases, they creatively used Chinese culture to rule.<sup>56</sup> One case noted a thirsty shipper who stole oranges from a shipmaster. When he was found out by the latter, he tied up the master. The court decided that “stealing oranges is a small matter, but tying people up is really not right to do. Now we are going to punish you by having you prepare a Chinese opera as a way to apologize.”<sup>57</sup> The location chosen was Guanyin Temple because it housed not only Guanyin but also the Goddess of the Sea (*Mazu, Tianhou*), a deity originating in Fujian and spiritually significant to the Fujianese people. Rather than opting for a physical punishment, the symbolic embarrassment of performing for the community showed that Chinese Kapitans wanted to instill in the villain an internal self-discipline under

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<sup>55</sup> Guan Xiu, *Shengzu*, 270.11: 5956.

<sup>56</sup> Blussé and Wu, *Shiba shiji mo*, 20.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

the authority of Chinese deities. As a way of punishment, it shows that the accused needed to know how to perform a Chinese opera and suggests that there was an audience who was entertained by it. As an example of everyday Chineseness, the community was set to resemble the way of life in China that outsiders could not comprehend. However, not all cases can be as easily decided as stealing oranges.

Between 1787 and 1790, 10.83 percent of cases were solved by swearing a divine pledge (*Mengshen fashi*), which required the people involved to go through Chinese rituals and make promises before gods in the Guanyin Temple.<sup>58</sup> Wang Dahai mocked the presumed holiness of Chinese views of the temple, likely because of his scholar-official status and a disgruntled view of ghosts and spirits. He described Seng Fobin, who was a Fujianese from Zhangzhou and the master of Guanyin Temple in Semarang, as having wives, concubines, and children, often forgetting his Buddhist robe in his wife's chamber, and once saying to his wife, "sweetie [*xiaofa*], tea for the guest."<sup>59</sup> The Guanyin and Mazu deities that the Fujianese brought with them were their spiritual homeland, especially for the lower-class echelon Fujianese, a phenomenon consistent with their history.

I found one incidence of the rhetoric about *Mengshen* from a Cantonese, who was making a promise before the Guanyin Temple in 1775. "Before you honorable Kapitan, if on this matter, I, Guo Naijin, have anything to hide...I beg the gods and deities to investigate me. The god in charge of time monitor this, [for if I lie] Guo Naijin will die without a full body, bleed from all seven holes, die in front of everyone, and upset all my ancestors and leave no descendants. What I am telling is the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>59</sup> Wang, *Haidaoyizhi*, 2:5.

truth.”<sup>60</sup> Although the belief in deities is universal among Chinese, and this promise by the Cantonese certainly works equally well in deterring lies, I suggest that it works even more effectively for the Fujianese migrants, who constituted the majority of Java’s Chinese population. The Ming dynasty’s Fujian gazetteer described Fujian inhabitants as “believers of ghosts and temples, and highly value Buddhism,” and the Qing gazetteer repeated the same description.<sup>61</sup> The Kapitans’ use of the temple for judicial functions captured an understanding of the background of the Fujianese.

As early as the Song dynasty, officials like Zhu Xi and others criticized the endemic obsession with ghosts and deities among the people of Zhangzhou and Quanzhou. As an official of Zhangzhou, Zhu Xi published an announcement with clear demands: “Temples cannot pretend to be worshipping Buddha but have men and women intermingled at night,” “cannot pretend to calm natural disaster just to take money...cannot pretend to be icons” and “a lack of understanding of rites have allowed Buddhism and *guizong* [ghost religion] to take advantage...Ghost teachings are cursing the people.”<sup>62</sup> One contemporary commentator wrote, “I heard southerners are obsessed with excessive religious activities, this town’s people are especially so.”<sup>63</sup> As scholar-officials, Zhu Xi and Wang Dahai

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<sup>60</sup> Blussé and Wu, *Shiba shiji mo*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> On the Fujian gazetteer, see Lin Ting and Huang Cuzhao, [*Hongzhi*] *bamin tongshi* [弘治] 八闽通志, in *Ming hongzhi keben* (1490), 3:1.80, <http://hunteq.com/ancient/ancientkm?00054FE90013070100000000000000000003F000005790>; and on the Qing gazetteer, see Wei and Xie, *Fujian tongzhi*, 9.2:798.

<sup>62</sup> Duan Lingping 段凌平, *Minnan yu taiwan minjian shenming miaoyu yuan liu* 闽南与台湾民间神明庙宇源流 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2012), 26.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

showed the same contempt for the indigenous worship of spirits, but they also underestimated the emotional attachment people had to the deities. Interestingly, both Zhu Xi and Wang Dahai also happened to be natives of Longxi, Fujian, suggesting that their literary education made their beliefs different from those of the local population.

One explanation for why the Fujianese have historically been described as believing in ghosts is the origin of the ethnic group *Minyue zu* who worshiped ghosts and intermarried with Han soldiers as Fujian was first conquered in 110 BC.<sup>64</sup> The belief in ghosts and witchery had dominated most of the official history in describing Fujian. Peng Liaofei, a scholar-official in the Southern Song, wrote that Mazu is one of those deities who became popular in Fujian first because of the Fujianese obsession with *haowushanggui* (ghosts and witchery) and the story was expanded to suggest that she answered to seafarers' calls.<sup>65</sup> Xie Zhaozhe, a Ming official and native of Changle, Fujian, wrote, "Now with the problem of witchery and ghost, Jiangnan [South of Yangtze river] is the source of problem, and Fujian is the worst part in Jiangnan...Rich people and women all piously worship whatever deities."<sup>66</sup> I argue not that the Fujianese are the sole group of people believing in divine spirits but that they are particularly influenced by it because of the long history and tradition. In fact, the Qing gazetteer of Fujian specifically organized a whole scroll titled "Beyond this World" (*fangwai*) to describe people of the province who were historically presumed

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<sup>64</sup> Lin Guoping 林国平, *Mintai minjian xinyang yuanliu* 閩臺民間信仰源流 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chuban she, 2003), 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

to have divine power. This was an organization that I did not find in any other Qing provinces.<sup>67</sup>

I argue that this explains why the *Mengshen* system worked so effectively. It is said that in every one out of four incidents, there were people who dared not come to the Guanyin Temple to make the harsh promises while being watched by gods like Mazu.<sup>68</sup> Those who dared not come gave up their accusations or privately negotiated a resolution with the other parties. In one case in 1789, when a person allegedly refused to pay his money and refused to do *Mengshen*, the Kapitans threatened to imprison him on account that he was afraid of telling the truth before gods.<sup>69</sup> This shows an interesting parallel with one of the earlier confessions by two prisoners who returned from Batavia to China. As I argued earlier, the two prisoners were trying to mislead the government by obfuscating Chinese Kapitans as barbarian officials. The fear of divine punishment left the hope that someone could cheat the spirits as easily as they could the officials.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, there were always exceptions. A case in 1788 showed someone who committed thievery and adultery and went to *Mengshen*, but the stolen goods were found in his residence. As Blussé wrote, he was one of the rare villains not afraid of the divine watch.<sup>71</sup>

Indigenous Chinese religion took on the role of maintaining Chinese identity in Java. The French historian Claudine Salmon found that between 1650 and 1975, there were at least seventy-two Chinese temples and ancestral halls in Batavia alone, which

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<sup>67</sup> Wei and Xie, *Fujian tongzhi*, 24, <http://hunteeq.com/ancient/ancientkm?@@481292836>.

<sup>68</sup> Blussé and Wu, *Shiba shiji mo*, 26.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>70</sup> For similar example of the Chinese obsession with deities and fear of divine punishment, see Wu Jingzi, *Rulin Waishi* (1750).

<sup>71</sup> Blussé and Wu, *Shiba shiji mo*, 27.

suggests a significant scale of piety among Batavian Chinese to their deities.<sup>72</sup> The researcher Mo Jiali found it interesting that some Chinese deified historical figures, like Guan Gong, a Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) general known for his righteousness, which also found their way to Batavia, and argued that these deities provided moral constraints on the people.<sup>73</sup> It is also not an unusual Chinese phenomenon for the Chinese to be polytheistic, which means that Chinese perception of deities can be rather inclusive, allowing even deified heroes, Daoist gods, and Mazu to be worshiped together.<sup>74</sup>

For the Fujianese, Mazu meant more than just another god; it was a familiar god who originated in Fujian. In 1751, the Fujianese Jiu Mulin and his brother built Batavia's Goddess of the Sea Temple (*Tianhou Gong*). In 1858, its history was then inscribed on a stone that stated "ever since the Ming, our Chinese people had traveled between Baling and Chaohai. Your blessing benefits the merchants. The holy mother is from Meizhou [in Fujian], who is the ancestor of our people."<sup>75</sup> This stone suggests that the Fujianese believed deities, particularly Mazu, were omnipresent and that the Fujianese Chinese held that Mazu was with them wherever they went by virtue of them

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<sup>72</sup> Mo Jiali 莫嘉麗, "Yinni huaren xinyang hunhe: zhongguo minjian shisu zongjiao tese de yanxu yu wenhua shenfen de renting" 印尼華人信仰混合：中國民家世俗宗教特色的延續文化身份的認同, in *Huaqiao huaren yanjiu di niji*, ed. Jinan daxue huaqiao huaren yanjiusuo 暨南大學華僑華人研究所 (Guangzhou: Jinan daxue huaqiao huaren yanjiusuo bian, 2001), 76.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>74</sup> For some examples like this, see "san jiao he yi," which is a Chinese phenomenon of combining three religions.

<sup>75</sup> Jiang Weitan 蔣維鏞, "Qingdai shangbang huiguan yu tianhougong" 清代商幫會館與天后宮, in *Mazu yanjiu wenji* 媽祖研究文集, ed. Jiang Weitan (Fuzhou: Haifeng chubanshe, 2006), 111.

being her descendants. The construction of Mazu temples shows a pious worship that stretched across all people of Fujianese descent, allowing for an imagination of self-identity based on this familiar deity. By identifying themselves as descendants of Mazu, the Fujianese found a cultural homeland in which they maintained their Chineseness. Phrases like “Mazu...is our people” and “*Zhonghua* [Chinese] people” contradicted arguments of large-scale Fujianese assimilation. I argue that the spread of Guanyin and Mazu temples not only to Batavia but throughout Southeast Asia is evidence of a Chinese cultural dissemination.

It is also possible that the Chinese Kapitan not only used Chinese culture as a ruling strategy but also felt a sense of belonging themselves. Unlike Skinner’s argument that these “Peranakan leaders” did not think of themselves as Chinese, Claudine Salmon found and studied the gravestone one of Chinese Kapitan, Han Zhengsi, from Zhangzhou. It is said that his tombstone was specifically transported from Fujian.<sup>76</sup> The origin of the stone can be symbolic in that it indicated that the soul of Kapitan Han belonged to a distant place with which he culturally identified. Thus, Qianlong’s proposition that these Chinese were “actually no different comparing to barbarian” underestimates the cultural connections and self-identity the Fujianese possessed. This identity did not wither with the denial of the Qing authority but grew and spread due to the fact that the identity was rootless for a mobile people, thereby allowing the Fujianese to exercise their Chineseness anywhere they went and still be consistent with their history and traditions.

There is no doubt that some Chinese became Peranakan in culture, as Skinner emphasized. Nevertheless, I disagree about how much Peranakan culture played a role in the Chinese community in the eighteenth century and find it troubling that

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<sup>76</sup> Yang and Ye, *Dongnanya*, 73.

Skinner inferred that Chinese Peranakans exercised proud self-assertion when evidence shows that the community viewed them as contemptuous. Wang Dahai had a rather short description about them in his long discussion of the Chinese community: “Among the *Huaren* [Chinese people], there were some for generations who have never returned to China...They practice the holy religion [Islam], speak foreign language, eat foreign food...They disliked being called *Zhaoya* [Javanese], and called themselves Muslim [C. *Xinan*, J. Selam]...be that they are no different from the Javanese.”<sup>77</sup>

Wang’s attitude toward this group, however, can be interpreted as condescension and alienation at best. The overall context of his book suggests that the Peranakans were insignificant compared to evidence of Chineseness. In saying that they were no different from Javanese, even though they did not want to be called that, Wang implied that they relegated themselves to a lesser culture. “Javanese are hundred times more in number than the Dutch. Their nature is simple-minded, cowardly... Whenever they heard the word ‘Dutch,’ they kneel down.”<sup>78</sup> Also when Wang described the selling of opium by the Dutch in Batavia, he differentiated the use of opium by Javanese and *Zhonghuaren* (Chinese). Wang wrote about the use by the former, saying that “Javanese are stupid and greedy, easy to control,” and opium made them “weak and tired, uncommitted to the lands, and no longer complaining;” he sighed that “Javanese used to be just uneducated fools.”<sup>79</sup> He continued to say that “our Chinese people are also the victims...once they take this thing, they forget about the hometown and parents and children.”<sup>80</sup> His tone showed that he was condemning the Dutch

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<sup>77</sup> Wang, *Haidaoyizhi*, 3:5.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:6.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

for selling opium and the Javanese for what he thought as exercising stupidity, a term he always crowned them with throughout the book. By smearing the Javanese and comparing the Chinese Muslims as no different from them, Wang was implicitly looking down on them. This is not to say that he, like the Chinese emperors or Skinner, believed in the overall transformation of the Chinese community. On the contrary, Wang took pride in the Chineseness that he saw.

His feelings toward the overseas Chinese in Java were more inclusive than alienated. I argue that he not only recognized the Chineseness of the *Huaren* in Java but also identified with them since he was part of that community for a decade. He described a group of Chinese martial art practitioners, who he called *Wu Chishi*: “Javanese boatmen were cowardly, but our *Wu Chishi* were superior in the martial arts that these creatures all were scared and thought ‘this must be a Chinese boat from Batavia looking so solemn!’” When the bandits realized they robbed the wrong boat, “they knelt down for a long time.”<sup>81</sup> They were in fact practicing various southern Chinese martial arts, and “men and women began practicing since the age of ten...various teachings included monkey boxing and crane boxing [*taizu dazun hou quan heshi*].”<sup>82</sup> These examples suggest that Wang embraced the overseas Chinese for their culture, which included southern boxing traditions.

Chinese official sources have always assumed that Chinese moving overseas testified to their disloyalty and renouncing of Chineseness. The Fujianese with their history of migrating overseas to Southeast Asia and elsewhere, especially during the Ming and Qing dynasties, showed that their identity was maintained through a familiar culture. Batavia was not a strange land to the Fujianese but rather a familiar community where

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:5.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:2.

they kept a Fujianese identity. Their conflict with the Cantonese migrants resembled the inveterate provincialism in China. Furthermore, the Chinese Kapitans not only strived to preserve this cultural community by preventing intermarriage but also identified with the Fujianese, in court, and the Fujian homeland by returning or having their souls placed in stones from Fujian.

In their history of moving abroad, the Fujianese were traditionally mobilized to search for wealth and land in response to the limited resources in Fujian province. The limited farmland and the proximity to the sea made them, and others like the Cantonese, China's earliest contacts with Southeast Asia and the Europeans. I argue that they did not do so out of a sense of loyalty to the foreigners, as Kangxi and Yongzheng suspected, but were mobile because of traditions and a familiar cultural society that they recreated wherever they went. As they set sail for their own destiny in the journey overseas, they carried with them the seeds of traditions, customs, and religions, which they sowed in each one of their new maritime frontiers.



# Defining Autonomy: Women Navigating Transatlantic Intellectual Connections in Boston, 1770–1779

*Laura E. Earls*

At the dawn of the American Revolution, before the idea of America as a sovereign nation emerged, Mercy Otis Warren wrote her first letter regarding colonial politics to the English historian Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay. In this June 1773 letter, Warren lamented how the “rapacious arm of tyranny has now seized and is devouring the fair inheritance.”<sup>1</sup> As the wife of prominent Patriot and Massachusetts politician James Warren, she was in a position to receive, process, and produce Patriot rhetoric. Warren placed Patriots and Loyalists in a dichotomy as she saw it, with the former as the “lover of his country” whose “land is groaning under the yoke of foreign servitude” versus the latter, comprised of “treacherous sons, dead to more laudable feelings of soul” who “stretch out their miscreant hands to fix the chain on a people.”<sup>2</sup> The ways in which she grappled with Patriot rhetoric resulted partly from class-based connections, educational resources, and her own exceptional intellect. Not all colonial women had access to the resources necessary to write

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<sup>1</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay, June 1773, in *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, ed. Jeffrey H. Richards and Sharon M. Harris (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2009), 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

sophisticated letters to fellow intellectuals, but those who did could build their own rhetorical skills and became increasingly comfortable participating in society outside the home.

Scholarship since the 1980s acknowledges and analyzes women's participation in public life in the latter half of the eighteenth century; however, the majority of it neglects to address the 1770s as a significant decade for women's autonomy. Mary Beth Norton's work is the foundation for much of today's scholarship regarding women in early America because she was one of the first historians to analyze such a breadth and depth of women's private writing. Her timeline for how the revolution affected women's perceptions of themselves focuses mainly on how women's writing in the 1760s evolved by the 1780s and beyond. Norton notes that her work is not a representative cross section of American women at these times, which leaves room to contribute to her earlier work and more recent scholarship, including that of Rosemarie Zagarri, by focusing on how upper-class women in Boston saw their world and functioned within it. Norton's work implies that the mechanics of the change she found occurred in the 1770s, so it is here that Mercy Otis Warren and her contemporaries, especially Abigail Adams, serve as the main examples to illustrate how women exhibited autonomy in varying forms in political and intellectual spaces in the 1770s.

The ways in which Mercy Otis Warren exhibited intellectual autonomy are difficult to trace. The educational resources necessary to develop one's writing skills and write to prominent intellectuals and politicians were rare for women during this time. Warren serves as the primary example of this type of autonomy because of her prolific writing and similar political views to Abigail Adams in the 1770s. By examining two types of autonomy through the lenses of a few women during this decade, we gain a more comprehensive perspective on the cultural spaces women occupied in the United States' foundational stages.

Fairly comprehensive scholarship exists regarding the place of women and their perceptions of themselves before and after the revolution; however, this scholarship does not address the mechanics of how women occupied political and intellectual spaces during the revolution itself. Women around the time of the revolution experienced little to no progress in terms of the acquisition of legal rights; however, they did exhibit changes in their perceptions of themselves in their private writing after the war. In her book, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750–1800*, Norton argues that during the 1780s and 1790s, women's private lives changed in terms of "familial organization, personal aspirations, self-assessments," and that historians can perceive this in women's private writing.<sup>3</sup> While Norton's argument that most women experienced the revolution and its aftermath this way is fairly representative given her research methods and inclusion of white and black women of varying classes, there are a few exceptions worth exploring. Not all women exhibited a greater degree of personal autonomy only after the 1770s ended, and not all of this expression was exclusively in private writing. Women like the wives of Massachusetts politicians Mercy Otis Warren and Abigail Adams navigated political and intellectual spaces to create their own forms of autonomy throughout the 1770s both because of and despite the American Revolution. Their experiences highlight the process of change that resulted in heightened autonomy for some women in the 1780s and beyond.

Perhaps the least documentation exists for the development of intellectual autonomy among Boston's circle of upper-class women. This autonomy, as defined here, manifested itself in the

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750–1800* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), xv.

ability to develop and articulate ideas regarding improving one's rhetorical skills and political ideas, with an additional focus on writing itself and the ability to publish this writing. Considering the resources available to most colonial women in terms of literacy, spare time, access to consistent and reliable political information, and limitations imposed by race and class, only a few upper-class white women from Boston's Patriot circle were able to exercise this type of autonomy. The foremost example of this is Mercy Otis Warren.

Warren was a prolific writer of letters, poetry, plays, and history, making her one of few early American women to have her own writing published in many genres. Because of her work, Warren deserves to assume a place among the ranks of her contemporary intellectuals. Rosemarie Zagari's biography, *A Woman's Dilemma: Mercy Otis Warren and the American Revolution*, seeks to establish knowledge of Mercy Otis Warren and her life on the same level as scholarship surrounding women like Betsy Ross and Abigail Adams. She argues that Warren deserves more recognition for her writing and political thought, especially since she made contributions to the Patriot cause despite not being welcomed by her male counterparts. Zagari also argues that Warren felt tension between her domestic duties and intellectual pursuits because she lacked the language of feminism, and her life is an example of both manipulation of and constraint by eighteenth-century gender roles.<sup>4</sup> Zagari focuses largely on the events of Warren's life and does not extensively discuss her subject's writing.<sup>5</sup>

If women did have access to certain forms of personal independence, or what we will call autonomy here, then what

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<sup>4</sup> Rosemarie Zagari, *A Woman's Dilemma: Mercy Otis Warren and the American Revolution* (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015), xv–xvii.

<sup>5</sup> For more information regarding Warren's writing, see Jeffrey H. Richards, *Mercy Otis Warren* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995).

forms did this take? Who had access to what kinds of educational and political resources? Who was writing to whom and what did they think about a woman's place in society, especially in the context of the revolution? Answering these questions helps to create a more comprehensive arc of women's history and a better idea of how women interacted with the world around them during the American Revolution, especially during the 1770s. Their actions, while not representative, illustrate the mechanics involved in developing the autonomy of the 1780s as discussed by historiography.

Upper-class white women were among the few with access to the resources necessary to develop their academic inclinations, and this development formed the basis of how they interacted with one another in the 1770s. Privileges afforded by race and class meant that women like Abigail Adams, Mercy Otis Warren, and Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay had the time and resources available to write letters for the purpose of improving their writing skills and rhetoric when discussing politics. These women do not represent a cross section of the female populace of the colonies during this decade; however, they forged connections with each other under similar circumstances—an absence of prominent men in their lives—which combined with the events of the war to create a unique transatlantic network of women pushing one another to develop intellectual autonomy by refining their rhetorical skills and contributing to the rhetoric of the revolution in ways that few women did.

Mercy Otis Warren received an education because she had access to a tutor and men who supported her intellectual endeavors. Rosemarie Zagarri notes that Warren received an education alongside her brother, James, who encouraged her pursuits and was her closest friend. Zagarri argues that James's graduation from Harvard was part of improving the status of the Otis family in the Plymouth community. Since college was not standard for everyone, James's ability to attend Harvard and graduate was a clear indicator of membership in the upper

classes, which was the foundation of his younger sister's intellectual autonomy. One other critical aspect of this autonomy, Zagari argues, comes from the ways in which her father, husband, and brother encouraged her education, writing, and entry into politics.<sup>6</sup>

Neither Abigail Adams nor Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay had access to the same kind of personalized education that Warren received; however, they did have support from men in their lives like her. Adams believed that she never attended school due to both her chronic poor health as a child and discrimination against her as a girl.<sup>7</sup> She learned to write and think critically as a child from her parents and grandmother; additionally, she and her friends read books and exchanged letters with the purpose of educating one another.<sup>8</sup> This initiative regarding her education somewhat resembled that of Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay. The biographer Mary Hays attributes Macaulay's early education to her own initiative. Macaulay's governess could not satisfy her curiosity, so she read countless books in her father's library.<sup>9</sup> Even though these women had different educational experiences as children and were part of vastly different societal structures in the colonies and England, they shared a somewhat analogous underlying class privilege that granted them the time and resources necessary to better themselves, even if it was of their own volition.

These women used the skills that their education gave them to forge transatlantic connections partly due to both the

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<sup>6</sup> Zagari, *A Woman's Dilemma*, 3–4.

<sup>7</sup> Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams: A Life* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Karen Green, "Catharine Macaulay," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, spring 2014 ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/catharine-macaulay/>.

development of the American Revolution in the 1770s and coincidental lapses in the influence of men in their lives. Norton argues that American marriage statutes were modeled after English common law and emphasizes that in the case of widowhood, the husband's will often inadequately provided for his widow.<sup>10</sup> Out of these three women, Macaulay was the only one who was a widow in the 1770s for any length of time, and it was during this time that she forged connections to Warren and Adams. Warren began her correspondence with Macaulay due to her brother's poor mental health and subsequent inability to keep up his own writing to Macaulay.<sup>11</sup> Adams did not have such a lapse in male influence, but she still wrote to both women regarding political issues.

Widowhood and the legal circumstances of marriage coincided with developments in Macaulay's political writing and the ways she related to the circle of Boston Patriots that included the Adams and Warren families. Macaulay, like Warren, married later in life. She married her first husband in June of 1760, and he died in 1766. Like Warren and Adams, her husband encouraged her intellectual pursuits. She started to write her histories, and he revised them for her; Karen Green argues that he moderated her language in order to make her sound less radical.<sup>12</sup> As tensions escalated between the colonies and England, she implored her fellow countrymen to see that they could not tax their colonies without allowing them representation in the British Parliament.<sup>13</sup> Macaulay was very connected to other philosophers and intellectuals in England during her time as a widow, which likely allowed for the

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<sup>10</sup> Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 137.

<sup>11</sup> Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 14.

<sup>12</sup> Green, "Catharine Macaulay."

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

development of the kind of intellectual autonomy that she later fostered in Warren and Adams.

Warren began her correspondence with Macaulay because of her brother James's poor mental health and subsequent inability to continue his own correspondence with the Whig historian.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, James's declining health also prompted Macaulay to start preserving her own letters.<sup>15</sup> Warren's early political writing came from a long-standing family tradition of political action, and it was this tradition that contributed to the dissolution of her brother's health. Warren wrote a letter on September 10, 1769, to her older brother, the prominent lawyer James Otis Jr., after he was beaten with a cane by a political enemy employed by the Crown. She states, "Yet though we knew their errand was to uphold villany, and protect villains—I believe few expected they would carry their audacity so far as to stand by and [??] the miscreant, to spill the blood of citizens, who criminate the designs, and their measures."<sup>16</sup> Warren refers to the agents of the British Crown that followed through with the attack as "villains," rather than "peacekeepers" as she had previously thought. Even though Warren refers only to her brother's attack, she appears to conceive of the incident in terms of widespread injustice, such as when she refers to how the attacker fully intended "to spill the blood of citizens."<sup>17</sup> After this incident, Warren began writing to Macaulay in her brother's place.

Warren's connection to Macaulay serves as an exceptional example of women using intellectual and political pursuits to

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<sup>14</sup> Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Mercy Otis Warren, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to James Otis Jr., 10 September 1769, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

further develop their own autonomy. According to the historians Jeffrey H. Richards and Sharon M. Harris, Macaulay wrote to several other Patriots as well, including John Adams.<sup>18</sup> Richards argues that Macaulay was Warren's role model. They shared Whig political ideology, a desire to make names for themselves in the field of history, and a willingness to criticize their respective governments.<sup>19</sup> Warren's first letter to Macaulay indicates this autonomy as she readily delved into discussions regarding the relationship of the mother country to its colonies.

Adams's correspondence with Macaulay began due to her own intellectual curiosity about the historian and her education. Adams began writing to Macaulay after learning about her in a letter that her nephew, Isaac Smith, wrote to John Adams. The historian Woody Holton argues that Macaulay fascinated her because "she had confounded men's limited expectations of women."<sup>20</sup> In a February 1771 letter sent from London, Smith notes that he "had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. McAulay," a woman "not so much distinguished in company by the beauties of her person, as the accomplishments of her mind."<sup>21</sup> Interestingly enough, as Holton notes, Smith wrote a letter to Abigail Adams the same day and did not mention Macaulay at all.<sup>22</sup> Her response to Smith in April of 1771 expresses her "great desire to be made acquainted with Mrs. Maccaulays own

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<sup>18</sup> Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Richards, *Mercy Otis Warren*, 42.

<sup>20</sup> Holton, *Abigail Adams*, 48.

<sup>21</sup> Isaac Smith Jr. to John Adams, 21 February 1771, in *The Adams Papers*, vol. 1, *December 1761–May 1776*, ed. Lyman H. Butterfield (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 71–74, quoted in Founders Online, National Archives, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0056>.

<sup>22</sup> Holton, *Abigail Adams*, 48.

history. One of [her] own Sex so eminent in a tract so uncommon naturally raises [her] curiosity and all [she] could ever learn relative to her, is this that she is a widdow [sic] Lady and Sister to Mr. Sawbridge.” Adams furthermore expresses “a curiosity to know her Education, and what first prompted her to engage in a Study never before Exhibited to the publick [sic] by one of her own Sex and Country, tho now to the honour of both so admirably performed by her.”<sup>23</sup> This curiosity about Macaulay’s education and desire to delve into the mind of a woman intellectual set precedents for their friendship, even though they did not begin writing to each other for a few more years.

Warren’s writing and development of intellectual autonomy began well before her correspondence with Macaulay; however, she often wrote when men prompted her to do so rather than for herself or other women. Warren believed her domestic duties should come before her intellectual pursuits and felt a degree of tension between these two duties for much of her life.<sup>24</sup> Zagari argues that Warren became the exceptional woman that she was because of support and encouragement from her father, brother, and husband.<sup>25</sup> The influence of men in her life reveals itself in her early writing. Warren’s writing encompassed poetry, political plays, verse dramas, political essays, and the 1805 *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*, which made her by far the most prolific woman writer of not only Boston but also the early United

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<sup>23</sup> Abigail Adams to Isaac Smith Jr., 20 April 1771, in Butterfield, *The Adams Papers*, vol. 1, *December 1761–May 1776*, 76–78, quoted in Founders Online, National Archives, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0058>.

<sup>24</sup> Zagari, *A Woman’s Dilemma*, xvi–xvii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3–4.

States.<sup>26</sup> She wrote poetry that focused largely on philosophy for almost fifty years.<sup>27</sup> Richards cites the 1774 poem, “The Squabble of the Sea Nymphs; or the Sacrifice of the Tuscararoes,” which mocked the Boston Tea Party, as a prime example of Warren’s satirical poems, written primarily from 1774 to 1778. She wrote it because of a request made by John Adams to James Warren for her to write such a poem.<sup>28</sup> The text has a lilting, jesting tone to it. For example, part of the first stanza reads, “The heroes of the Tuscararo tribe, / Who scorn’d alike a fetter or a bribe, / In order rang’d, and waited freedom’s nod, / To make an offering to the wat’ry god,” which refers to the Patriots throwing tea into the Boston harbor.<sup>29</sup> The circumstances surrounding the writing of this poem correspond with Zagarri’s assertion that Warren became who she was because of the men in her life. We can see here her formation of Patriot political ideas before the war began – but in the context of how the men in her life wanted her to express herself.

Richards argues that Warren developed a sense of her own identity in the 1750s and 1760s, which corresponds with Zagarri’s argument and leads to the conclusion that the men in Warren’s life supported and directed her in the increasingly hostile political climate of the colonies. Much like the cases of prominent Boston merchant Elizabeth Murray and Abigail Adams, men were primarily necessary during the early phases in which they pursued their personal goals. Richards argues that James Warren’s encouragement and support factored largely

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<sup>26</sup> For more information regarding Warren’s writing career, see Richards, *Mercy Otis Warren*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>29</sup> Mercy Otis Warren, “The Squabble of the Sea Nymphs, or the Sacrifice of the Tuscararoes,” in *Poems, Dramatic and Miscellaneous, by Mrs. M. Warren* (Boston: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1790), 202.

into Mercy Otis Warren's unusual conception of herself as a writer, since many women only acquired autonomy through economic ventures, not intellectual ones.<sup>30</sup> While her letter to her brother after his attack demonstrates a very personal outrage toward the underhandedness of the Crown, the above poem, written five years later, demonstrates her intent to write for the public. Warren's primary subjects for her writing may have been Massachusetts politics and the Patriot cause, but her demonstrated diversity in style and genre are indicative of the political and intellectual autonomy that she derived from writing after she began corresponding with Macaulay.

Warren's political plays indicate her Patriot perspective on local Massachusetts politics and do not appear to have been written at the request of a man, thereby indicating a possible shift toward her political and intellectual autonomy. According to Richards, her early plays discussed "the evils of Tory administration in Massachusetts." She often dealt with themes of "freedom versus liberty," and she often used Massachusetts governor Thomas Hutchinson as her main antagonist.<sup>31</sup> *The Adulateur: A Tragedy, as it is now acted in Upper Servia*, is her first play and was published in the newspaper *Massachusetts Spy* in March and April of 1772 without her name and in pamphlet form in 1773. Richards states that the play focuses on Massachusetts politics in 1772, mainly when the Loyalist Thomas Hutchinson became governor. Considering that he was a Tory and the Warrens were Whigs, Hutchinson was a longtime family rival of sorts.<sup>32</sup> Even though her work was published without her name, the dissemination of this satire of Hutchinson shows a rare instance of the public having access to a woman's opinions regarding the political climate of

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<sup>30</sup> Richards, *Mercy Otis Warren*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

Massachusetts in 1772, even if they did not know it. Warren had an advantage because her writing was published; therefore, the general public had access to her ideas and writing, as opposed to Adams and Murray, whose ideas primarily came across in personal correspondence. This aspect of Warren's writing meant that her intellectual autonomy came from her unique ability to develop and publish her writing, which continued once she became friends with Macaulay.

Warren's first letter to Macaulay delves into the concept of liberty almost immediately, thereby setting a precedent for the direction that their friendship would take. This June 1773 letter begins with humble hopes for a long friendship and quickly transitions to a discussion of liberty as an autonomous entity. Warren laments that "the Genius of liberty which once pervaded the bosom of each British hero animating them to the worthiest deeds [had] forsaken that devoted Island" and expresses the hope that "she [had] only concealed her lovely form until some more happy period shall bid her lift her avenging hand to the terror of every arbitrary despot and to the confusion of their impious minions on each side of the Atlantic?"<sup>33</sup> Despite her avowed dedication to the Patriot cause, as late as 1773, she seems to state here that the British simply had a lapse in judgment. This letter portrays the mounting tensions between England and its colonies as an absence of the ideals extolled by England as a nation. This forthright discussion of the relationship between the colonies and England in Warren's first letter to an esteemed woman historian whom she had never met indicates a readiness to develop the rhetorical skills necessary for her intellectual development.

Warren and Macaulay began a fairly regular correspondence that blossomed into a friendship that allowed Warren to develop

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<sup>33</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay, 9 June 1773, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 15.

her own intellectual autonomy as a historian. As early as her second letter, Warren discusses how history will treat the events of the Revolution. For example, in a December 1774 letter to Macaulay, Warren notes “how Absurd will the plans of modern policy appear when the faithful Historian shall transmit to posterity the late Manoeuvres of a British Administration: when they shall Behold them plunging the Nation still deeper in an immense debte [sic], Equipping her Fleets to Harrass [sic] the Coasts, & her armies to insult & subjugate these loyal & populous Colonies, who [...] have been Voluntarily pouring their treasures into the Lap of Britain.” She conveys the way that she conceives of the relationship between the colonies and England when she states, “But tho America stands Armed with Resolution and Virtue, she still Recoils at the thought of Drawing the sword against the state from whence she derived her Origen [sic], tho that state like an unnatural parent has plung’d her dagger into the Bosom of her affectionate offspring.”<sup>34</sup> In this quote, Warren refines the ways in which she refers to the relationship between England as a restrictive parent state and the colonies as innocent victims. While this creates a somewhat problematic dichotomy because neither side was without fault, this quote does demonstrate the development of intellectual autonomy on Warren’s part because she shifted from statements that liberty was an autonomous entity that simply left the minds of the British to castigating the mother country for its actions and discussing how historical memory will treat them. Part of what makes these letters indications of intellectual autonomy are that they went to a well-connected woman sympathetic to the Patriot cause.

Adams and Macaulay’s correspondence may not have coincided with the development of published writing as in

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<sup>34</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macaulay, 29 December 1774, in Richards and Harris, 37-38.

Warren's case, but it did contribute to the formation of a series of transatlantic intellectual connections for women. Holton argues that Adams waited until she was the wife of a congressman in 1774 to write to Macaulay.<sup>35</sup> This indicates that membership in the upper classes was a precursor to participation in this type of network-based intellectual autonomy. In her first letter to Macaulay, dated to 1774, Adams begins by mentioning that the last letter her husband received from the historian expressed her "Desire to become acquainted with our American Ladies." Adams obliges her by addressing the current state of the colonies and the Patriot cause, "a Cause madam which is now become so serious to every American that we consider it as a struggle from which we shall obtain a release from our present bondage by an ample redress of our Grievances—or a redress by the Sword. The only alternative which every american thinks of is Liberty or Death."<sup>36</sup>

Holton argues that Adams sought to impress Macaulay with this letter.<sup>37</sup> Adams uses similar language to Warren when discussing the present situation of the colonies, thereby creating a common discussion surrounding American desires for England to address their grievances and avoid war. By using similar language when writing to Macaulay in 1774, Adams and Warren placed themselves on a similar trajectory of development of their political opinions and the ways in which they wrote about them.

Adams' correspondence with Macaulay began a year after Warren began writing to the eminent historian, and the two

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<sup>35</sup> Holton, *Abigail Adams*, 72.

<sup>36</sup> "Abigail Adams to Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay, 1774," in Butterfield, *The Adams Papers*, vol. 1, *December 1761-May 1776*, 177-179, quoted in Founders Online, National Archives, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0119>.

<sup>37</sup> Holton, *Abigail Adams*, 73.

American women bonded over this common connection, thereby creating a small network of intellectually autonomous women. Part of Adams and Warren's friendship, which began in 1773, was their common connection to Macaulay. Holton refers to Macaulay as their "mutual hero," and notes that the American women would exchange letters from her, which indicates their admiration for the historian.<sup>38</sup> Zagari, much like Norton, notes that women during the Revolution became adept at running households in the absence of their husbands during the Revolution. Zagari argues that Warren, however, did not adapt as well as Adams to the running of her own household. She also argues that Warren bonded with other women whose husbands were also away either in government positions or fighting in the army.<sup>39</sup> Zagari emphasizes how Adams and Warren equated being separated from their husbands to being war widows.<sup>40</sup> Although these wives of Patriot politicians were not actually widows, Macaulay was when she began her correspondence with both women, which meant that they all had a degree of autonomy in terms of their physical lack of husbands that helped facilitate their intellectual connections. Whether or not Warren ran her household as well as Adams is irrelevant in light of the ways in which this "war widowhood" helped them create a common identity upon which to develop their intellectual proclivities.

Considering the esteem in which Adams and Warren held Macaulay and the ways in which they wrote to her, we can reasonably assume that her advice carried over into their correspondence with each other and women outside this network of three throughout the rest of the 1770s. In letters between Warren and Adams, we often see the younger Abigail

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<sup>38</sup> Holton, *Abigail Adams*, 73.

<sup>39</sup> Zagari, *A Woman's Dilemma*, 79-80.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86.

exhibiting more forthrightness and a greater willingness to transgress boundaries between public and private, whereas Warren was more content to remain within the bounds of propriety for women. According to Zagarri, John Adams did not take Abigail's March 1776 "Remember the Ladies" letter seriously. Rather, he scoffed at the idea and his wife asked Warren's opinion on the matter. However, she apparently never responded.<sup>41</sup> Despite this apparent reluctance to discuss the advancement of women's rights, Warren did have other female correspondents with whom she discussed intellectual pursuits that fell outside of her jurisdiction within the home.

Warren's letters to other female correspondents did not all use the same language; rather, she writes openly and unapologetically to some, and qualifies her assertions to others. In a letter to her friend Hannah Fayerwether Tolman Winthrop, for example, Warren qualifies her perceptions of the happenings of the provincial Congress with words like "appears" and "seem." This marks a shift away from the frankness that she used with Macaulay and Adams. For example, in this January 1774 letter to Winthrop, Warren states: "It appears to me the gentlemen of the provincial Congress have a most difficult part to act, - the public expectation is turned towards them, and eagerly insisting some important step; - while affairs abroad as well as at home seem to hang suspended on such [ ] that the least eccentric movement to the right or to the left might be attended with the most alarming consequences. May heaven direct their resolutions, and mark their conduct with wisdom and integrity, while it invigorates the manly arm to execute whatever the exigencies of the times may require."<sup>42</sup> Richards and Harris note

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<sup>41</sup> Zagarri, *A Woman's Dilemma*, 93.

<sup>42</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Hannah Fayerwether Tolman Winthrop, 31 January 1774, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 25.

that this excerpt refers to the meeting of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, which succeeded a colonial government body dissolved by Hutchinson. The new governor, Thomas Gage, did not allow John Winthrop, who was elected, to take his position.<sup>43</sup> We see here Warren's perspective on local politics in relation to other wives of colonial politicians in very gendered terms, rather than the more general ideological discussions she had with Macaulay. Warren's hopes that the men of the provincial congress would act morally and as good Christians and her apparent faith that these men would act with a strength specific to men demonstrates the perspective of the dutiful wife who does not transgress the boundaries between the public and the private. Her manner of expressing herself conveys her tendency to confine her writing within the domestic sphere, despite her intellectual proclivities.

In contrast to this qualifying language, Warren also expressed her political sentiments quite directly in letters to other women in her social circle. Richards and Harris argue that letters like those to longtime friend Hannah Quincy Lincoln demonstrate her complex rhetorical strategies that linked gender, social connections, family, and politics.<sup>44</sup> In a June 1774 letter to Lincoln, Warren stated, "I know not why any gentleman of your acquaintance should caution you not to enter any particular subject when we should meet. I should have a very ill opinion of myself, if any variation of sentiment with regard to political matters, should lessen my esteem for the disinterested, undesigning, and upright heart; - and it would argue great want of candour to think there was not many such (more especially among our own sex) who yet judge very differently with regard to the calamities of our unhappy country,

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<sup>43</sup> Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

and the authors of its misery.”<sup>45</sup> Richards and Harris note that this quote may refer to the differing political views between herself and Hannah Lincoln’s brother, but it seems mostly to refer to a warning from a friend of hers not to listen to Warren’s politically radical ideas.<sup>46</sup> The rest of the letter continues to vaguely discuss the need for men to avoid civil war. This quote relays Warren’s own willingness to discuss politics without apology with other women, as well as her recognition of gender disparities in regards to political opinions, which is a marked transformation from her apologies in letters to men that discussed politics. This correspondence with both Winthrop and Lincoln shows that Warren used different language with different people within Boston’s elite circle, thereby indicating that she had intellectual autonomy in how and to whom she chose to articulate and distribute her ideas and opinions.

Warren was somewhat apologetic in letters to men that discussed politics. Her letters to female correspondents in 1774 show more ease in discussing what she thinks, but later letters to men show a more restricted form of expression in which Warren couches her inquiries into contemporary politics in either apologetic terms or in terms of her relationship to a man. Zagari argues that Warren “frequently felt herself open to attacks, both real and imagined, for having violated her assigned domestic sphere.”<sup>47</sup> This fear is evident even in letters to her friend John Adams. In a letter to Adams dated to April 4, 1775, Warren asks for Adams’ “indulgence so far as to Favour me with your opinion [...] of the present dark and Gloomy aspect of public affairs. [...] You Cannot Wonder sir at my perticuler [sic] anxiety and solicitude to know the sentiments of the judicious as

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<sup>45</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Hannah Quincy Lincoln, 12 June 1774, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 29-30.

<sup>46</sup> Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 30-31.

<sup>47</sup> Zagari, *A Woman’s Dilemma*, xvii.

Mr. Warren is Absent and in such a Remote quarter that I have not heard from him since the news of the late transactions of an August Assembly [...].”<sup>48</sup> While we can most likely attribute Warren’s request for Adams’s “indulgence” in her inquiry as to the state of contemporary politics to the formalities of eighteenth-century letters, the part about her husband stands out in particular. Here, Warren frames her inquiry in terms of her husband’s absence. If he were at home, she would have asked him, but since he is away, she asks Adams instead. Warren does not express her desire for knowledge as directly as she does in letters to women.

In the second half of the 1770s, once the war began, Warren’s correspondence with Macaulay still encompassed the ideas surrounding the relationship between the colonies and England, but came to include discussions of widowhood as her friends’ husbands died in war. In a letter from August 1775, Warren refers to a previous letter in which she stated “that the sword was half Drawn from the scabbard.” However, by the time of this letter, the first battle at Lexington and Concord had passed, and “Soon after which this people were obliged to unsheath it to Repel the Violence offered to Individuals.”<sup>49</sup> Warren then proceeds to update Macaulay on the state of affairs in the colonies after the Battle of Lexington and Concord, and refers to the last attempt of the Continental Congress to reconcile with England. Warren describes this last effort as “A final proof with what Reluctance the progeny of Britain Draw

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<sup>48</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to John Adams, 4 April 1775, in *The Adams Papers*, vol. 2, *December 1773-April 1775*, ed. Robert J. Taylor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 413–414. quoted in Founders Online, National Archives, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-02-02-0087>.

<sup>49</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macaulay, 24 August 1775, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 58-61.

forth the sword against their unnatural parent.”<sup>50</sup> The continued use of language that emphasizes American reluctance to go to war with its mother country indicates more of a consistency of political opinion than development of rhetoric through correspondence. As the war progressed, however, Warren’s language shifted away from this American reluctance to go to war.

Two years into the war itself, Warren’s rhetoric in writing to Macaulay no longer referred to a parent-child relationship between England and America, but rather oppressor and oppressed. In a letter from February 1777, Warren laments how “freedom of intercourse is now cut off” by royal proclamation and “necessarily impeded by the hostile movements between Great Britain and a country which has been long used to look over to her with warm affection as a friend, protector, and parent.”<sup>51</sup> Although this language resembles that of her previous letters, Warren then states “That period is now past, the connexion [sic] is broken, and the American Continent feels these convulsions which have been experienced by every country ere they have obtained the permanent establishment of the rights too frequently wrested from them by the strong hand of power.”<sup>52</sup> This focus on an irreversible change in relations between the two nations becomes especially apparent in her statement “that no suffering which ministerial vengeance can inflict [...] will reduce America to submission and dependence on a foreign power who has already added insult to injury.”<sup>53</sup> These shifts in language indicate a definitive acknowledgement of America as an independent nation, rather than colonies

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macaulay, 1 February 1777, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 84.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 84-85.

revolting against a parent nation. Warren's tone seems harsher as well, which can likely be attributed to the hardships she both faced and witnessed at the center of the war.

Warren's letters to other female friends besides Macaulay in the latter half of the 1770s did discuss politics and the broader ideological significance of the Revolution, but as the war progressed, war widowhood became a central theme in her correspondence. Although she was not a widow herself until 1808, some of her friends lost their husbands in the war. Janet Livingston Montgomery, wife of General Richard Montgomery and sister of Chancellor Robert Livingston of New York, was one such correspondent. The British killed the general and several others in battle in Quebec on December 31, 1775.<sup>54</sup> Warren's January 1776 letter to Montgomery expressed her deepest condolences both as a fellow woman and fellow lover of her country. She related his death to the broader Patriot cause by telling Montgomery that "the Urn of the companion of your heart will be sprinkled with the tears of thousands who revere the character of the commander at the gates of Quebec, though not personally acquainted with General Montgomery." Since Montgomery and Warren had never met, she attributed the motivation for this letter to the war widow to her own "love of virtue, from the tenderest feelings of humanity to the distressed, and from a particular respect and affection to the votaries of freedom, and to the distinguished supporters of the righteous cause which ingrosses [sic] not only the attention of the American Continent but of the European World."<sup>55</sup> This letter, unlike her earlier letters to women like Abigail Adams, was very forthright in both tone and purpose. She conceived of war widowhood in terms of sacrifice for a nation as well as a tragic

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<sup>54</sup> Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 62.

<sup>55</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Janet Livingston Montgomery, 20 January 1776, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 64-66.

loss to a family, which indicated a shift away from writing concerned primarily with her own family and community earlier in the decade.

By 1779, Warren's letters to her female correspondents still discussed war widowhood. For example, in a March 1779 letter to Montgomery, Warren expresses her desire to "readily accompany the widowed hand to spread over the Cypress and pour a plentiful shower into the Urn of a Montgomery" for "the anniversary of that day when the hero fell *in the reins of* glory and thus insured the applause of his enemies will never be forgotten by his friends."<sup>56</sup> Even two years after General Montgomery's death, Warren still conceives of his passing in terms of its significance for the Revolution. She does not discuss death in this way in a May 1779 letter to her friend Hannah Fayerweather Tolman Winthrop after Dr. Winthrop's death earlier that month; rather, she instead implores her friend to "consider the memorable and great name of our excellent Friend, as past beyond the short date of human life into the annals and veneration of Posterity."<sup>57</sup> These letters indicate that widowhood was part of womanhood in the 1770s, as it had always been, but it carried political weight in times of war. Whether or not these women were war widows, Warren still offers her most articulate condolences and confidence in the legacies left behind by the husbands.

By 1779, Warren also had confidence in America's future as a sovereign nation, even though the end of the war was not yet in sight. For example, in a letter to Abigail Adams from March 1779, Warren lamented that she knew little of "the late disputes

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<sup>56</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Janet Livingston Montgomery, 18 March 1779, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 110.

<sup>57</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Hannah Fayerweather Tolman Winthrop, 24 May 1779, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 113-114.

among the higher powers of America [...] except what is contained in the public papers.” She felt that “time must unravel some misteries which authority at present thinks best should be hushed in silence.”<sup>58</sup> She believed that the “lord of the universe will disappoint the projects of our foes to carry on the system of his own Government” and would not “suffer a new formed Nation to be trodden down ere it arrives to maturity.” Furthermore, she stated that “America is a theatre just erected – the Drama is here but begun – while the actors of the Old World have run through every species of pride, luxury, venality, and vice.”<sup>59</sup> Judging by her language, Warren conceived of America as a new nation destined to mature, despite the fact that the war was still happening. Unlike her letters at the beginning of the decade, Warren was unapologetic. She stated what she believed without qualifying herself, and part of this came from the network of female correspondents she developed over the course of the 1770s, namely with Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay and Abigail Adams.

Zagarri attributes the tension that Warren felt between her duties as a wife and mother and her intellectual and political activities to the absence of a feminist ideology to explain herself.<sup>60</sup> This anachronistic twentieth-century language, however, does little to explain this tension because there was no concept of feminism in the eighteenth century, and Warren’s writing indicates that this tension ceased to be an issue. In letters to both Abigail and John Adams in the early 1770s, she does express uncertainty as to whether or not she should write, discuss politics, or even educate her own children. By 1779,

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<sup>58</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Abigail Smith Adams, 14 March 1779, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 107-108.

<sup>59</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Abigail Smith Adams, 14 March 1779, in Richards and Harris, *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters*, 108-109.

<sup>60</sup> Zagarri, *A Woman’s Dilemma*, xvii.

however, she no longer expresses such doubts in herself. She unapologetically states her opinions and even reaches out to people to whom she has never met. We can attribute this in part to the small network of intellectually autonomous women that Warren participated in because she, Adams, and Macaulay, along with their other correspondents, provided feedback for one another's rhetorical strategies and writing in general. In supporting each other like this, they were able to create their own forms of intellectual autonomy.

Autonomy for the elite women discussed here did not end in 1779, or even with the end of the American Revolution. While the war may not have caused a clear change in terms of women's rights, we can still see developments of economic, political, and intellectual autonomy in a few upper class white women who were able, due in part to their race and class privilege, to work within and stretch the boundaries of eighteenth-century gender constructs partly as a result of the upheaval caused by the American Revolution. After the 1770s, we can discern a continuation of the trends exhibited by the women studied in this watershed decade, especially in terms of Warren's political activity and work as a historian.

The work by which we now recognize Mercy Otis Warren developed during the 1780s through the early nineteenth century. The increase in written works that she published under her own name indicated that her intellectual autonomy only developed further after the 1770s. Her most substantial work after the American Revolution was the Antifederalist *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*. Zagari notes that Warren's work was the first history of the war written by a woman, it carried myriad moral implications, and, unlike her earlier writing, did not conceal her perspective

as a woman.<sup>61</sup> Zagarri also discusses the falling out between John Adams and Warren as a result of her writing this work.

John Adams's infuriated reaction to Warren's *History* serves as a testament to her intellectual autonomy in that she developed her rhetorical skills enough to write and publish three volumes of her own opinions with a wider audience than just her correspondents. Adams wrote a series of letters in 1807 denouncing Warren and her work, which was unprecedented in their friendship. In the first of these letters, Adams informed Warren that he read her work and was "not about to write a review of it" because if his comments were truthful, then "the Commentary would certainly be at least twice as voluminous as the Text." Perhaps most important to him was his perception that "in those Passages which relate personally to [him], there are several Mistakes."<sup>62</sup> The ease with which he took offense to her writing of history and her criticism of him within it indicated that her intellectual autonomy was not confined to just herself, it was public knowledge.

Warren's response to this first critical letter embodied the development of her intellectual autonomy because she still defended herself and her work, and indicated her knowledge that this work would reach a wider audience than her other writing. She chided Adams for his unjust criticism, stating that she did not expect to be "charged with a want of veracity, or a malignancy of heart, by a gentleman who has long known [her] too well to suspect [her] wilfully [sic] guilty of either." She furthermore noted that she had "lived long enough to be sensible that such a work would be variously received by such a world,

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<sup>61</sup> Zagarri, *A Woman's Dilemma*, 144-149.

<sup>62</sup> "From John Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, 11 July 1807," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified July 12, 2016, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-5193>.

and in such times as those in which we live.”<sup>63</sup> Warren did not stray from her faith in her own abilities, and unlike her letters or fiction from the 1770s, she knew that her work would reach many people. Here, she had intellectual autonomy because she had an audience.

Mercy Otis Warren and Abigail Adams were exceptional women for their time. The 1770s in the American colonies fell right before the solidification of public spheres for men and private spheres for women, but gendered activities and societal perceptions of proper roles for men and women at home and in public were already prevalent. The documents of upper-class white women form the narrow source base with which to analyze the implications of eighteenth-century gender constructs. Even though they were not representative of colonial women as a whole, these women demonstrated a variety of ways in which it was possible to function within yet move beyond established gender constructs. Perhaps the most telling testament to the ways in which they developed their own autonomy is the unapologetic ways in which they wrote about their own lives and personal decisions after the 1770s. Not all women had the resources available to Warren or Adams, and these women used what was available to them to both defy and live within established gender constructs. By having other women and each other as correspondents, they were able to validate each other’s opinions and rhetorical strategies, and these connections helped solidify them as the means by which women’s autonomy developed on a personal level by the 1780s. While not representative, these women and their writing demonstrate the myriad ways in which women exercised autonomy in the 1770s.

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<sup>63</sup> “To John Adams from Mercy Otis Warren, 16 July 1807,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified July 12, 2016, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-5194>.



# From Tape to Mendez: The Boundaries of Race, Citizenship, and Education in California

*Gabrielle Schiller*

## Introduction

There has been a significant amount of historical research done on segregation, specifically in California's public schools. It is widely known that the legal case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) brought the end of public school segregation based on race in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Many people, however, do not know that there were other important civil rights cases surrounding desegregation in California decades prior to *Brown v. Board: Tape v. Hurley* in 1885 and *Mendez v. Westminster* in 1947.<sup>2</sup> California was notably the first state in the United States to desegregate public schools; following *Mendez v. Westminster*, the California Supreme Court recognized segregation in schools as unconstitutional. This was not the first time that segregation in California's public schools was deemed unconstitutional. In the case of *Tape v. Hurley*, a nineteenth-century Chinese American family attempted to enroll their daughter in their local public school, only to find her admittance refused. The case found its

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<sup>1</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

<sup>2</sup> *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County*, 64 F. Supp. 544 (1946); and *Tape v. Hurley*, 66 Cal. 473 (1885).

way to the California Supreme Court, and educational segregation was established as illegal. Nearly sixty years prior to *Mendez*, *Tape v. Hurley* did not hold as much sway in the public's eye. The San Francisco Board of Education simply went on to build separate schools for Chinese children and other minorities—one of the earliest examples of “separate but equal” prior to *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).<sup>3</sup> While there has been much research on the connection and differences between *Brown v. Board* and *Mendez v. Westminster*, there is little discussion of the connection between *Tape* and *Mendez*, the ways the public's perception of race shifted over time, the differing results of each case, and the ways these individuals changed social policy in California. In the literature, there is a categorization of themes of racialized policy, assimilation, and the political efficacy of Chinese and Mexican immigrant groups.

## Historiography

The three main works that inspired this study were Mae Ngai's book *The Lucky Ones: One Family and the Extraordinary Invention of Chinese America*, Irving Hendrick's book *Education of Non-Whites in California, 1849–1970*, and Charles Wollenberg's *All Deliberate Speed: Segregation and Exclusion in California Schools, 1855–1975*. Ngai provides an important description of the history of the Tape family, including the immigration of Mary and Joseph Tape and the *Tape v. Hurley* case in 1885.<sup>4</sup> For Ngai, the Tapes are a symbol of the “invention of Chinese America”—the Chinese immigrants who successfully assimilated into the United States. Ngai moreover describes the Tape family as an

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<sup>3</sup> *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

<sup>4</sup> Mae Ngai, *The Lucky Ones: One Family and the Extraordinary Invention of Chinese America* (Princeton, NJ: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2010).

early example of the “Chinese American middle class,” an important distinction. As members of the middle class, the Tape family had more financial resources at its disposal and was more “palatable” to the white-dominated society. But, as Ngai explores, there were limitations on assimilation for the Chinese American community in the context of the increasingly widespread anti-Chinese sentiment growing throughout the country following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. What exactly were these limitations? How did they play out in California’s growing public school system?

In *Education of Non-Whites in California*, Irving Hendrick specifically describes the different experiences of Chinese Americans, blacks, and Mexican Americans within California’s public schools. These experiences influenced how each group was treated in schools and the courts. For example, Chinese students were not accounted for in California’s school laws until *Tape v. Hurley*. Hendrick explains why the Chinese were not included—they were so “socially excluded from American institutions” that they “simply were ignored.”<sup>5</sup> He argues that many deemed public school education a sole right for citizens. After the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the pathway to citizenship was taken away from the Chinese American community. Chinese immigrants increasingly lost their ability to become naturalized citizens, and Chinese American parents—including the Tapes—tried instead to improve the position of their children through the Fourteenth Amendment. Originally passed with the intent to protect the citizenship and equality under the law of former slaves, the Fourteenth Amendment also helped protect the rights of American-born Chinese children.

Wollenberg’s *All Deliberate Speed* explains the importance of education to minorities in California’s history as a tool of social

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<sup>5</sup> Irving Hendrick, *Education of Non-Whites in California, 1849–1970* (San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1977), 30.

mobility and assimilation.<sup>6</sup> For Wollenberg, this use of education is precisely why public schools became increasingly limited in California. He contributes to the surrounding discussion of public education in California by providing an analysis of the interactions between the schools and the courts. This article expands on Wollenberg's work through the exploration of the politicization of California's local boards of education and the differing experiences of Chinese American and Mexican American students.

### **Arrival of the Chinese in California: The Gold Rush, Diplomatic Relations, and the Negroization of the Chinese**

Chinese immigrants began to arrive in enormous numbers following California's gold rush in 1849, and, for the most part, this group was welcomed as a cheap source of labor that would help develop and industrialize the newly forming state. The Tape family was not a part of the first wave of Chinese immigrants to arrive in California and, as such, arrived after the perception of Chinese American immigrants was already cemented in the racial imaginings of white Californians. The first stereotypes of, and legislation against, Chinese immigrants in California followed the gold rush. These stereotypes, however, were not always negative; during the third senate session of California in 1852, senate leaders described Chinese immigrants as "one of the most worthy classes of our newly adopted citizens...to whom the climate, and the character of these lands, are peculiarly suited."<sup>7</sup> Voicing a similar opinion on Chinese

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed: Segregation and Exclusion in California in Schools, 1855-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the Third Session of the Legislature of the State of California* (San Francisco: G. K. Fitch and Co. and V. E. Geiger and Co., 1852), 15.

immigration, a San Francisco newspaper publication, the *Daily Alta California*, wrote in 1852, “the China boys will yet vote at the same polls, study at the same schools and bow at the same altar with our countrymen.”<sup>8</sup> In this statement, it is clear that American citizenship was associated with religion and the right to vote and study. The “same altar” is a reference to the desire to assimilate the dominant religion in America—Christianity. Shortly after this article was published, California’s governor, John Bigler, was encouraging anti-Chinese sentiment by labeling the Chinese laborers as “contract coolies,” who were “corrupt, filthy, and vicious.”<sup>9</sup> Following up on Bigler’s remarks, the “China boys” were soon denied access to both voting and California’s public schools, as evidenced by the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and the treatment of Chinese American students in California’s public schools, even prior to *Tape v. Hurley*. What happened in California, and the larger world, that led to this shift in thought?

California has always had the largest Chinese population in the United States and was the first to attract Chinese immigrants in large numbers during the gold rush. This pattern of Chinese immigration continued well into the nineteenth century until the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882. In the early years, Chinese immigrants were predominantly composed of migrant male laborers and rarely settled down because Chinese women immigrated in much smaller numbers to the United States during the “forty-niner” gold rush.<sup>10</sup> According to the historian George Peffer, sex ratios in Chinatowns in the United

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<sup>8</sup> “Editorial,” *Daily Alta California*, May 12, 1852.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Roberts Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909), 60.

<sup>10</sup> George Anthony Peffer, “Invisible Women and Untold Stories,” in *If They Don’t Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration before Exclusion* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 1–11, 4.

States remained largely imbalanced until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> It was this migratory status that contributed to the stereotype of the “Chinese Coolie” and their subsequent negroization. This perception of the Chinese in California is a central reason why they were increasingly denied access to public education.



Figure 1: Edgar Holden, “A Chapter on the Coolie Trade,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 29, no. 169 (1864): 1–11, 2.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

In the image above from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1864, the “Chinese Coolie” is depicted as “enraged.”<sup>12</sup> In addition, this “coolie” laborer is noticeably portrayed as dark-skinned and violent—qualities attributed to contemporary black citizens. It was not long before white laborers viewed Chinese laborers as competition in California, and anti-Chinese sentiment grew in response. Chinese laborers were increasingly deemed as unworthy of citizenship and, as argued by the historian Stacey Smith, “inimical to free white labor and republican institutions.”<sup>13</sup> The growing Chinese population in California furthermore played into the racial anxieties of white Americans, who were trying to maintain their superiority in the developing social and political hierarchy. These anxieties influenced the decision making of California’s local boards of education, which were dominated by whites. In California, Chinese Americans comprised the largest group of nonwhites; by 1890, 6.01 percent of the state’s population was Chinese, while only 0.94 percent of the population was African American.<sup>14</sup> Still, the experience of Chinese American students was noticeably different from other nonwhite groups in California’s public school system.

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<sup>12</sup> Edgar Holden, “A Chapter on the Coolie Trade,” *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 29, no. 169 (1864): 1–11.

<sup>13</sup> Stacey L. Smith, “Hired Serfs and Contract Slaves,” in *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle Over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 80–108, 83.

<sup>14</sup> Arnoldo De León, *Racial Frontiers: Africans, Chinese, and Mexicans in Western America, 1848–1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2002), 21.

## The Beginnings of “Separate But Equal” Education for Nonwhites and Chinese Americans and Nineteenth-Century White Supremacy

White supremacy was an important factor that influenced policy and the experiences of nonwhites in California and the wider United States. It is important to understand how California fits into the history of race relations in the United States and how this influenced the development of California’s social relations.<sup>15</sup> In the nineteenth century, the most popular and dominant racial theory was Anglo-Saxon supremacy, and local politicians and state legislators often drew on this ideology to reaffirm their position of white supremacy and political legitimacy. The widely accepted definition of white supremacy is the “restriction of meaningful citizenship rights to a privileged group characterized by its light pigmentation.”<sup>16</sup> The historian Arnolfo De León has argued that people of color in the West were politically and socially handicapped; government intervention on behalf of white settlers was not uncommon and affected which groups had a chance of making an “economic go of it.”<sup>17</sup> Public education was another institution that was restricted to “those who already were citizens or had the potential of becoming citizens.”<sup>18</sup> In this article, I argue that San Francisco’s Board of Education was simply following in the tradition of political white supremacy, and this impacted the outcome of *Tape v. Hurley* in 1885. San Francisco’s Board of Education politicized the public school as a tool of securing citizenship solely for the white community. In lieu of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and pervasive anti-Chinese

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>17</sup> De León, *Racial Frontiers*, 49.

<sup>18</sup> Hendrick, *Education of Non-Whites*, 32.

sentiment rooted in class-based and race-based dialogue, the Chinese American community lost much of their political efficacy, and this ultimately led to the failure of *Tape v. Hurley*.

For decades prior to *de jure* segregation following *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), California was not entirely unlike the American South in their segregation of nonwhite groups. In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the US Supreme Court determined that

the object of the Fourteenth Amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either. Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power.<sup>19</sup>

Although *Plessy v. Ferguson* firmly established the concept of “separate but equal” and its enforcement “within the competency of the state legislatures,” this had already played out in California’s public schools, as evidenced by the shifting racialized language of California’s school codes. For example, in 1874, California’s school code read: “Section 1662. Every school, unless otherwise provided by special statute, must be open for the admission of all white children between five and twenty-one years of age residing in the district, and the Board of Trustees or Board of Education have power to admit adults and children not residing in the district, whenever good reasons exist

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<sup>19</sup> *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

thereof.”<sup>20</sup> The language of this school code is very important. It states that these schools must be open for all “white children”; it implies that this does not guarantee that these schools will remain open for children who fall outside of the “white” category.

Once more, crucial to the analysis of this article is how public schools were politicized on the Western frontier, particularly in California. Before the Chinese, other groups of nonwhites were already discriminated against in California’s public school system. California’s School Code Laws of 1874 explicitly stated that public schools were meant for white children. Soon thereafter, this law was challenged in *Ward v. Flood*, and the word *white* was removed from the law. California’s Supreme Court ruled that a city’s board of education retained the right to “exclude children of filthy or vicious habits, or children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases.”<sup>21</sup> This race-based language was used to ensure the continued segregation of white and nonwhite students. Unlike black children, Chinese children did not even have access to segregated schooling; they were denied access to public education until 1884.<sup>22</sup> This is not meant to negate the advocacy efforts of the Chinese American community in San Francisco’s Chinatown. After the establishment of the Chinese Exclusion Act, there was a marked shift in the political participation of Chinese Americans in California; instead of advocating on behalf of acquiring citizenship, they shifted

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<sup>20</sup> *School Law of California: Provisions of the Political Code Relative to Public Schools* (Sacramento: Department of Public Instruction, 1874), 24, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433075990550;view=1up;seq=9>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Victor Low, *The Unimpressible Race: A Century of Educational Struggle by the Chinese in San Francisco* (San Francisco: East/West Publishing Company, 1982), 47.

towards advocating on behalf of their children, who were guaranteed citizenship because of the premise of *jus soli*—or the “right of the soil”—which had been reaffirmed by the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868.<sup>23</sup> In her book *The Making of Asian America through Political Participation*, the historian Pei-te Lien explains how Chinese immigrants used the American court system and states that “equal access to education was another theme of participation in the lives of early immigrants.”<sup>24</sup> It is important to note that the *Tape v. Hurley* case was not the first instance of Chinese Americans using the court system to gain equal education. After the only public school in San Francisco for Chinese students was closed in 1871, Chinese students were not allowed to attend public school once more until 1884.<sup>25</sup> Mary and Joseph Tape—the parents of Mamie Tape and the plaintiffs in *Tape v. Hurley*—understood that their adopted homeland would not confer upon them the rights of citizenship, but there was still hope to secure these rights and the political and social advancement of their children.

### *Tape v. Hurley*

In her book *The Lucky Ones*, the historian Mae Ngai charts the experiences of the Tape family. Important to this study, Ngai elaborates on the *Tape v. Hurley* case and claims that it was a victory—albeit a small victory—for the Chinese American community in San Francisco. According to Ngai, the story of the Tape family is reflective of the experiences of both Chinese immigrants and the ways “Chinese immigration and civil rights

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<sup>23</sup> Pei-Te Lien, *The Making of Asian America through Political Participation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), ix.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

cases defined the rights of all immigrants.”<sup>26</sup> *Tape v. Hurley* reaffirmed the denial of public education for nonwhites in California’s public schools, specifically in San Francisco.

The Tape family was an early example of Chinese Americans; the Tapes identified as Christians and regarded themselves as “the same as other Caucasians, except in features.”<sup>27</sup> Mary and Joseph Tape were both Chinese immigrants who were highly acculturated; both spoke more English than Chinese and wore Western clothing. According to an interview with Mary Tape in the *San Francisco Morning Call* in 1892, she stated that she first arrived in California when she was eleven years old and spent the first few months in Chinatown before she was “taken up” by the Ladies’ Relief Society. There, she “learned to speak the English language and acquire American manners.”<sup>28</sup> Later, she met Joseph, who had adopted the American last name Tape in lieu of Dip. Both Mary and Joseph were later married in a Christian ceremony.

No matter how assimilated the Tapes believed they were, there were limitations as to how far this assimilation would take them. For the most part, Chinese Americans were viewed as aliens incapable of true assimilation and the adoption of American culture. As such, they were also viewed as unworthy of citizenship. This perception was not limited to white San Franciscans; black San Franciscans understood the alienability of Chinese Americans and distanced themselves from the Chinese American community. William Hall, a respected leader in San Francisco’s black community, described the Chinese as anti-

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<sup>26</sup> Ngai, *The Lucky Ones*, ix.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>28</sup> “What a Chinese Girl Did,” *San Francisco Morning Call*, November 3, 1892, <http://www.womeninphotography.org/archive09-Jan02/gallery4/>.

American and incapable of assimilation. In an 1869 editorial submitted to San Francisco's black newspaper, the *Elevator*, Hall juxtaposes African Americans against the "heathen" Chinese: "Now, the Negro, seeks to be an integral part of the nation, which their political status will soon secure—while the Chinese are making no such pretension to mingle with the whites; because they are unlikely to become converted to the tenets of our religion, incapable to understand the system of our government, to appreciate our civilization, morals and manners, and are of that docile and humble nature that makes them fit subjects for that class who persistently adhere to the doctrine of the inferior races."<sup>29</sup> Hall additionally describes the Chinese as one of the lowest classes, addicted to gambling, drugs, and prostitution. For Hall, blacks, in contrast, were positive contributors to American society; as model citizens, Hall asserts that blacks deserved proper schooling unlike the inferior Chinese. Hall's description of the Chinese is consistent with those pushed forward by whites in California. In many ways, the Chinese did not make any efforts to "mingle with the whites"; they often remained segregated in Chinatowns. The Tapes, however, wanted out of Chinatown and acceptance from the white community. For this to happen, the Tape family combined two main courses of action pursued by immigrants both then and today: the use of the American court system and the pursuit of a public education.

In 1884, the Tapes decided that they wanted to enroll their daughter, Mamie, in their local public school. Much to their surprise, however, Mamie was turned away at the door on the basis of her Chinese descent. Soon after, Joseph and Mary Tape sued the school, and the Chinese consul sent a letter to the San Francisco Board of Education, arguing that denying Mamie entry to the public school was in direct contradiction with "treaties,

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<sup>29</sup> W. H. Hall, "Freedmen vs. Chinamen," *Elevator*, November 19, 1869.

the Constitution, and U.S. laws.”<sup>30</sup> In the end, the California Supreme Court upheld the decision that Mamie was guaranteed entry to the public school. This victory was short-lived, however; when Mamie arrived at the school the second time, she was denied access to the school on the grounds that she was not up-to-date on her vaccinations.

In figure 2, an “Official Map of Chinatown San Francisco” originally published in 1885, there are specific sections denoting where there were areas of “Chinese Gambling Houses,” “Chinese Opium Resorts,” “Chinese Prostitution,” and “Joss Houses,” which were temples or shrines. It is noteworthy that this map was published in the same year that *Tape v. Hurley* took place, and the map is reflective of the commonplace perception that the Chinese had “filthy” habits and, by extension, so did their children. After the supreme court decision, the San Francisco Board of Education quickly built a separate public school for Chinese students, and once schools were available for the Chinese, Chinese students were prohibited from attending white schools.<sup>31</sup>

In response, Mary Tape wrote a vehemently worded open letter to the San Francisco Board of Education: “Dear Sirs: I see that you are going to make all sorts of excuses to keep my child out of the public schools. Dear sirs, Will you please to tell me! Is it a disgrace to be Born a Chinese? Didn’t God make us all!!! What right! have you to bar my children out of the school because she is a Chinese Descend [sic]....My children don’t dress like other Chinese....Just because she is descended of Chinese parents I guess she is more of a American than a good many of you that is going to prevent her being Educated.”<sup>32</sup> Mamie Tape only attended this Chinese public school for a brief

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<sup>30</sup> Lien, *The Making of Asian America*, 30.

<sup>31</sup> Hendrick, *Education of Non-Whites*, 35.

<sup>32</sup> “An Indignant Mother,” *Sausalito News*, June 11, 1885, 1.



period of time, and the school eventually burned down in the infamous San Francisco fire of April 18, 1906.<sup>33</sup> The battle for access to equal education for the Chinese American community in California did not end with *Tape v. Hurley*, but the legal segregation of Chinese Americans continued until 1947 with *Mendez v. Westminster*, when California became the first state to end school segregation. Why was California the first state to dismantle segregation? Why was the Mexican American community more successful at tackling public school segregation than the Chinese American community in the late nineteenth century? Of course, much changed between 1885 and 1947, including the ideation of white supremacy, the definition of citizenship, and the social hierarchy in California and the wider United States. Beyond societal changes, the treatment and experiences of Mexican Americans in California differed from those of their Chinese predecessors, and this significantly contributed to the *Mendez v. Westminster* decision.

### **The Experiences of Mexican Americans in California and *Mendez v. Westminster***

Similarly to the origins of the Chinese in California, many Mexican Americans first immigrated to California as a part of the waves of immigrants following the gold rush. For the most part, many of these immigrants were migrant laborers in search of the fortune promised by the gold rush. Like the Chinese “coolie,” however, the Latino “peon” soon entered the racial imaginings of white Californians. Both the “peon” and the “coolie” were depicted as degraded individuals, similar to slaves, and a threat to free white labor.<sup>34</sup> As argued by Smith, “peons and coolies became crucial figures in California’s struggles over

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<sup>33</sup> Hendrick, *Education of Non-Whites*, 35.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Freedom’s Frontier*, 81.

the meaning of slavery and freedom, race and nation, expansion and empire.”<sup>35</sup> By expelling Chinese Americans and Mexican Americans from California’s public schools, white Californians were able to “protect citizenship as the exclusive domain of white freemen” in the Pacific.<sup>36</sup> Unlike the Chinese American community, however, the Mexican American community in California declined after the establishment of the Foreign Miner’s Tax of 1850, which targeted both Mexican and Chinese peoples. Although anti-Mexican violence persisted to a small degree, it was not until the early twentieth century when Mexicans began arriving in large numbers once more that the Latin American “peon” returned to the racial imaginings of white Californians.<sup>37</sup> By this time, the Chinese population had largely decreased in California, and Mexican migrant laborers became the new popular cheap labor source. By 1930, Mexicans became the largest minority group in California—a status that they maintain today.<sup>38</sup> This status profoundly impacted school enrollment.

Racial anxieties played out once again in the public school system, and Mexican American children found themselves segregated on similar grounds that Chinese American children were in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Unlike Chinese American children, however, Mexican American children were segregated *extralegally*; there was never any California school code that accounted for the public education of Mexicans, although there were codes that accounted for black, Chinese, and Native American students. In addition, white Americans viewed Mexican Americans as capable of citizenship and fully adopting American culture.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 82

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>38</sup> Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 108.

The *Mendez v. Westminster* case took place in 1947, in a United States redefined by the Great Depression and World War II. Like Mary Tape, Gonzalo Mendez was infuriated when he was told that his daughter could not enroll in the same local public school that he paid taxes for. Following the Great Depression, as argued by the historian Charles Wollenberg, there was a gradual shift in thought that an individual's success had more to do with environment and less to do with personal biological factors.<sup>39</sup> In a post-WWII society, people were more hesitant about segregation because the Allied powers were supposedly aligned with "justice and equality," whereas the Axis powers stood for racism.<sup>40</sup> Many Mexican Americans and other nonwhites had fought in WWII and returned to a society that was bent on denying them equal rights; the legitimacy of white supremacy was beginning to fail and, with it, the institutions that it supported.

In the time of *Tape v. Hurley*, white supremacy was based on Anglo-Saxonism. It was considered necessary to build "separate but equal" public schools to protect white children from "filthy" nonwhites. In contrast, at the point of educational history that *Mendez v. Westminster* took place, social science became the crux on which white supremacy rested in the public schools. The sociologist David Torres-Rouf argues that local school boards in California redefined the status of Mexican Americans as nonwhites by placing them in segregated schools. These school boards achieved this by citing the lower IQ test scores of Mexican American children and claiming that these children would achieve more if placed in separate schools. The general public typically viewed Mexican American students as worthy of

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<sup>39</sup> Charles Wollenberg, "Mendez v. Westminster: Race, Nationality, and Segregation in California Schools," *California Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1974): 317–32, 319.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

American citizenship, and California created the Commission of Immigration and Housing, which worked to protect immigrants “from exploitation and [encourage] their education in the English language.”<sup>41</sup> Although some thirty years prior to *Mendez v. Westminster*, these efforts illustrate the citizenship status of Mexican migrant laborers—no such efforts were ever made to Americanize the Chinese.

The Mexican American community was not alone in the fight for *Mendez v. Westminster*. In the court transcript, several key figures were present, including Thurgood Marshall of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples, members of the American Jewish Congress, and the American Civil Liberties Union. All organizations worked as *amicus curiae* on the behalf of the Mendez family. This collaboration is a significant difference between *Tape* and *Mendez*; the Tape family did not live at a time when they could garner so much support in the name of civil rights, especially for those of Chinese descent. *Tape v. Hurley* and other actions by members of San Francisco’s Chinese American community may arguably be considered early examples of legal maneuvers for the advancement of civil rights among nonwhite peoples.

Following the California Supreme Court decision of *Tape v. Hurley* in 1885, Chinese students remained segregated in California’s public schools until *Mendez v. Westminster*. Unlike *Tape v. Hurley*, *Mendez* took place in a different time, when civil rights cases were gaining more attention in American society. In the post-Exclusion Act era, the rights of Chinese citizens were extremely limited and anti-Chinese racism was pervasive, supported by government figures on the local and state levels. From the very beginning, Mexican Americans were in a position that awarded them the rights of citizenship and, by extension, a

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<sup>41</sup> *Annual Report of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California* (Sacramento [?]: State Printing Office, 1915), 25.

right to public education. Despite the progress made by Chinese families, the Exclusion Act effectively stripped them of much of their political power and rights as citizens. In the larger historical debate surrounding nonwhites and political participation, Asian Americans—and in particular the Chinese—have been left out.<sup>42</sup>

In sum, I argue that *Tape v. Hurley* failed to end separate but equal education in California—where *Mendez v. Westminster* later succeeded—due to the institutionalized racism targeted against Chinese immigrants in California at the turn of the twentieth century. It is also important to further contextualize that the United States as a whole was undergoing vast demographic transitions at this time in history; immigrants from all over the world from different backgrounds and races were crossing both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and challenging the traditional conception of what defined American citizenship. The controversy surrounding the Tape family was, therefore, a reflection of the larger racial anxieties developing across the United States. The Chinese American community in San Francisco was not as insular and anti-assimilation as the San Francisco Board of Education described them; Mamie Tape and many first generation immigrants like her desired acceptance from their larger American community. It was the harsh prejudice against Chinese immigrants that pushed the agenda for equal access to education further into the future for Californians. Perhaps had Mamie lived fifty years later, *Tape v. Hurley* would have had an outcome more in line with *Mendez v. Westminster*. The failure of *Tape v. Hurley* and the later success of *Mendez v. Westminster* highlight the connection between the evolving themes of race and citizenship and the ways they permeated the public school system in California.

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<sup>42</sup> Lien, *The Making of Asian America*, xi.

# The Imperial Press: American Reflections on the Subjugation of the Philippines

*Lindsey McClafferty*

In February 1901, beloved American author Mark Twain published a chilling statement criticizing his country, which he had depicted in so many famous works of literature. Speaking on behalf of the American Anti-Imperialist League, Twain penned his trenchant disapproval of American international affairs. He addressed his article to “the Person Sitting in Darkness”—to the imperialists, blinded by greed and the prospects of power. Twain wrote, “There must be two Americas: one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive’s new freedom away from him...We have debauched America’s honor and blackened her face before the world.”<sup>1</sup> With these pointed words, Twain addressed an issue that divided the nation: the Philippine question. The fate of the islands led the American public to question the very foundations of American identity and its position in the world. The Philippine question illuminated discussions of morality, race, religion, citizenship, and more. While the country remained divided in 1901, Mark Twain made his sentiment clear—America’s treatment of the Philippines forfeited the nation’s integrity: “And as for a flag for the Philippine Province, it is easily managed. We can have a special one—our States do it: we can have just our usual flag, with the

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Twain, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” Mark Twain: The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War, Library of Congress, last modified June 22, 2011, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/twain.html>.

white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and crossbones.”<sup>2</sup>

The American acquisition of the Philippines in 1898 and the subsequent years of American colonial rule have endured as an important branch of historical study. Many scholars use the subjugation of the Philippines as a case study to discuss American colonization at large or to analyze how American territorial conquest fits into the global narrative of imperialism. Historical accounts of US rule in the Philippines can be separated by four common themes that run through scholars’ analysis of the topic: the internal American political and cultural debates concerning colonial rule over the Philippines, the international factors that promoted American assertion as a colonial power, American colonization of the Philippines in relationship to racial ideology, and the Filipino reaction to and perspective of American rule. Together, these four themes provide a comprehensive understanding of the colonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines.

Scholars have revealed how the imperial relationship between the United States and the Philippines brought to life dynamic conversation within the United States concerning citizenship, race, religious duty, and global power. While soldiers and political overseers carried out the institutions of colonization abroad, the American public examined and debated the Philippine question at home. The trajectory of American progress in the Philippines became a feature of the American press. Newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals rapidly covered reports sent back from administrators in the Philippines, accounts from soldiers abroad, and political debates and speeches. Using this material, this article analyzes the discussion of the American people at two critical moments in Philippine American history: directly after the conclusion of the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Spanish-American War, which resulted in the Treaty of Paris (1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899–1902), and the months of conversation leading up to and immediately after the ratification of the Jones Act of 1916. It compares political debates and press coverage from these two historical moments to address the transformation in the American public's opinion of imperialism, provoked by involvement in the Philippines. I first analyze the arguments made by anti-imperialists and expansionists in 1898 and then discuss the debate between defendants and opponents of the Jones Bill in 1916. Next, I consider the similarities and differences in these positions over time. This article argues that the roughly twenty years of American rule in the Philippines affected the two schools of thought differently. While the anti-imperialists' arguments remained relatively unchanged and focused on moral stances and democratic principles, the expansionists and challengers of the Jones Act reactively altered their claims based on the evolving status of American "success" in the Philippines and the contingencies of the shortcomings of American rule.

When the United States defeated Spanish forces in 1898, concluding the Spanish-American War, they successfully completed an intervention on behalf of the Cuban people. With this victory came the spoils of glory—the possession of Spain's colonial territories and the emergence of the United States as a truly *global* power. On December 21, 1898, President William McKinley delivered a proclamation explaining American duty to the Philippine islands in light of the defeat of Spain, their former protectorate. The president claimed, "With the signature of the treaty of peace between the United States and Spain...the *future control, disposition, and government of the Philippine Islands are ceded to the United States*. In the fulfillment of the *rights of sovereignty* thus acquired and the responsible government thus assumed, the

actual occupation and administration of the entire group of the Philippine Islands becomes immediately necessary.”<sup>3</sup> For many Americans, this circumstance of the United States’ acquisition of the Philippines motivated their beliefs of how they should be managed. They received news of the president’s call to action, which painted America as Spain’s successor, obligated to protect the Filipinos “in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights.”<sup>4</sup>

The press was quick to adopt this point of view presented by the president and explain American colonization of the Philippines in relationship to victory in the Spanish-American War. Three months after the president’s proclamation, a Topeka newspaper included a feature that aimed to explain American duty to the Philippines in simple terms. To achieve this, the writer presented a fictional conversation between a father and young child asking questions for a school report. The father describes to his son that those in favor of “expansion” desire that the United States keep its claim to the Philippines and other colonial possessions. When the son asks his father why the United States “bought” the Philippines, the father responds, “Oh, I suppose I’ll have to begin at the beginning. You know Spain is a cruel nation and has persecuted her colonies for many years. The people of the United States sympathized with Cubans...so we went to war to free Cuba.” When the child asks what the war had to do with the Philippines, the father goes on to explain that the Filipinos fought Spain for years, and “Spain is a corrupt and dishonest power, while the United States is a progressive and humane nation. We want to do what is best for these people. Of course we can’t turn the islands over to them

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<sup>3</sup> William McKinley, “Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation,” 21 December 1898, <http://www.msc.edu.ph/centennial/benevolent.html>. Italics in the original.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

because they don't know enough to govern themselves. They are not sufficiently civilized."<sup>5</sup> Mirroring the claims made by President McKinley, this Kansas newspaper defended the purchase of the Philippines as the only suitable plan of action following a victory against a colonial power. In the press, expansionists conceptualized the acquisition of the Philippines as a transfer of rule from a tyrannical power to more benevolent, capable hands rather than as a financial transaction. Other sources reveal, however, that this mindset had as much to do with belief in American preeminence as it did with belief in Filipino inferiority and ineptitude.

President McKinley's 1898 proclamation set the tone for how the American press depicted the Filipino people for years to come. His speech was referenced repeatedly for its concluding remarks: "the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation...to repress disturbance and to overcome all obstacles to the bestowal of the blessings of good and stable government upon the people of the Philippine Islands under the free flag of the United States."<sup>6</sup> McKinley's words depict a clear difference between the United States and the people of the Philippines; however subtle, it suggested a dichotomy between the civilizers and the uncivilized. This conceptualization of the United States' duty to the Philippines as a civilizing mission resonated with Americans who took pride in the United States' dealing with the native population. The conclusion of the Spanish-American War and the postulation of the Philippine question occurred only eleven years after the adoption of the Dawes Act, and many expansionists relied on the same language employed in the struggle to civilize the natives. They pointed to

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<sup>5</sup> Mable Diggs, "Reading for the Young Folks: Children Cannot Understand These Things," *Advocate and News* (Topeka, KS), March 22, 1899, 14.

<sup>6</sup> McKinley, "Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation."

Indian removal as a successful practice of the United States, which served to rationalize taking on the Philippine mission. For example, *The Living Age* featured an article in 1899 that stated “The conquest of the Spanish islands in the East and West Indies, while arousing a world-wide interest, has raised issues of magnitude, and laid responsibilities of a new sort on the United States of America. Hitherto the Great Republic has managed its Red Indians in their reserves with partial success; it has brought the isolated Mormons of Utah under ordinary laws...Past experience of the prompt and decisive actions of the Americas in the field allows the hope that this ordinary phase of administration will soon be reached.”<sup>7</sup> This article draws a clear parallel between the United States’ call to action as declared in the Treaty of Paris and the previous treatment of Native Americans. In the eyes of expansionists, both Filipinos and Native Americans embodied inferiority compared to Anglo-Saxon Americans; they saw the concessions of the Spanish-American War as a new frontier for the civilizing mission, which had been relatively successful on the mainland of the United States. This dichotomy of the civilized and the uncivilized soon came to dictate many of the opinions expressed by expansionists in regards to the Philippine question.

As reports from soldiers in the Philippines reached the United States, the press and academic publications produced highly racialized accounts of Filipino life. *Scientific American* magazine printed in 1898 a comprehensive exposé of Filipino tribal life. J. B. Steere, a professor of zoology and paleontology, classified distinct tribes of Indians based on their propensity to be civilized, claiming the Tagalogs were the “superior race” among Filipinos. Steere believed that the United States’ development of the islands must be achieved through the most

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<sup>7</sup> John Jardine, “The Indian Civil Service as a Model for Cuba and the Philippines,” *The Living Age* 222 (1899): 144–54, 144.

“civilized Indians.”<sup>8</sup> In 1899, *Forum* magazine took advantage of a rare opportunity. In their September publication, they included an account of Philippine culture as described by Ramon Reyes Lala, the first ever Filipino to become an American citizen. Although born in Manila, Lala was educated in Europe. Once an American citizen, Lala vocally discussed the phases of the Philippine question, and his descriptions of the Philippines and the Filipino people became widely circulated. *Forum* included Lala’s article entitled “The People of the Philippines,” which depicted the Philippines as a “meeting-point” for two peoples spread across the East: the Malays and the Negritos. Lala described the Negritos as the “aborigines of the Philippines...mentally they are the lowest, or one of the lowest, of the human races, stupid in mind, degraded in condition, forest wanderers scarcely more settled than the apes.” Then, Lala discussed the “Filipinos” (as named by the Spanish) on the islands that come from Malay origin. As a Filipino himself, Lala described this group as mostly “civilized” and “physically well-developed” despite the presence of other savage tribes across the Philippine islands. Lala concluded by saying, “These foregoing must serve as examples of the many wild tribes which inhabit the islands, and some of whom live like savages of the lowest type. One would think they could not be of the same race as the civilized Filipinos.”<sup>9</sup> The circulation of such a report in American magazines and newspapers presented a thought-provoking argument. The highly racialized differences described between the civilized Filipinos and the underdeveloped savages on the island created a justification for expansionist thought. Lala

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<sup>8</sup>J. B. Steere, “The Civilized Indians of the Philippines,” *Scientific American*, September 17, 1898, 184–87, 184.

<sup>9</sup>Ramon Reyes Lala, “The People of the Philippines,” *Forum* 28 (1899): 29–34, 29–30, 34.

himself represented in particular the possibility of educating these people. Despite their inferiority to American colonizers, Lala showed the propensity of Filipinos to become educated and thus more civilized. Just as a global racial hierarchy existed, there existed one in the Philippines. While supposedly savage tribes inhabited the islands and especially required the hand of civilization, there also existed an entire race of people already developing and ready for the hand of American guidance to achieve higher civilization.

While expansionists defended President McKinley's Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation and the early implementation of American institutions in the Philippines, the anti-imperialists did not shy away from expressing their discontent. Written in 1899, the platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League read: "The United States have always protested against the doctrine of international law which permits the subjugation of the weak by the strong. A self-governing state cannot accept sovereignty over an unwilling people. The United States cannot act upon the ancient heresy that might makes right."<sup>10</sup> Critics of expansion condemned the acquisition of the Philippines on the grounds that American imperialism was in contestation with the Constitution and the principle of liberty. The Anti-Imperialist League repeatedly referenced the words of Abraham Lincoln in its manifestos: "When a white man governs himself, that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism."<sup>11</sup> By using Lincoln's rhetoric, many anti-imperialists created a comparison between the subjugation of the Filipinos and the injustices of slavery. Just as

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<sup>10</sup> "Platform of the American Antilmperialist League," in *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, vol. 6, ed. Frederick Bancroft (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 77.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

expansionists drew a parallel to American westward expansion and the civilizing forces used against Native Americans to justify expansion, anti-imperialists presented a parallel between the subjugation of the Filipinos and the history of slavery in the United States as an argument *against* the acquisition of the Philippines. An article in *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* explained that just as labeling slavery a “peculiar institution” did not make its practices just, calling the colonization of the Philippines “benevolent assimilation” was also a euphemism.<sup>12</sup> An 1899 Washington newspaper similarly called “benevolent assimilation” a “mask worn” to “cover a multitude of heinous ‘national sins.’”<sup>13</sup>

While the league presented these connections in their official documents, newspapers and magazines across the country featured pieces expressing similar anti-imperialist views. In 1901, the *New York Times* reported on the Anti-Imperialist League’s July 4th manifesto. The writer clearly sympathized with the group’s cause and stated that “The idea that this country may acquire territories anywhere upon the earth, by conquest or treaty, and hold them as mere colonies or provinces, and the people inhabiting them to enjoy only such rights as Congress chooses to accord them, this is wholly inconsistent with the spirit and genius as well as with the words of the Constitution.”<sup>14</sup> Especially considering the trajectory of American history and its own former status as a colony of England, asserting imperialistic power seemed hypocritical and blatantly un-American to many US citizens. The same *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* article that compared colonization abroad to slavery at home

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<sup>12</sup> George A. Richardson, “The Subjugation of Inferior Races,” *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 35, no. 205 (1900): 49–60, 54.

<sup>13</sup> “Equality,” *Industrial Freedom* (Edison, WA), April 29, 1899, 2.

<sup>14</sup> “Anti-Imperialists’ July 4 Manifesto,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1901, 77.

also made the argument that colonization “barbarianized” the expansionist power and distracted imperialist nations from their own internal developments.<sup>15</sup> These arguments made against colonial expansion in the Philippines all presented imperialism as a threat to American identity and prosperity.

Like their expansionist counterparts, anti-imperialists looked to race ideology as justification for their claims. While anti-imperialists and expansionists disagreed on many principles, people arguing on both sides of the Philippine question seemed to believe in the innate inferiority of the Filipino people. In 1900, George Richardson wrote for *Overly Monthly and Out West Magazine* a description of the anti-imperialist position: “They object to any expansion which adds to this nation large numbers of people greatly inferior to our own civilization and of a different race, or which places such people permanently under our control, compelling this nation to assume the responsibility for their political behavior.”<sup>16</sup> While expansionists comprehended the “civilizing mission” of “inferior” races as the duty of the American people and other developed nations, anti-imperialists argued that racial inferiority made some peoples unassimilable and the task of modernizing such nations too daunting. A story included in a 1902 edition of *Cosmopolitan* represented this same belief. The writer, J. B. Walker, told the story of a young boy from Luzon named Pedrito to illustrate his point. An American took pity on Pedrito, adopted him, and had him educated in Europe. Although Pedrito returned to the Philippines fluent in three languages, the boy nonetheless chose to flee from the position his adopted father set up for him in Manila and was found years later to be living with a mountain tribe of “savages.” J. B. Walker published this story to communicate the impracticability of educating and civilizing an

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<sup>15</sup> Richardson, “The Subjugation of Inferior Races,” 57.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 49–50.

entire population of people like Pedrito. He wrote, “Ten millions of people with this heredity! What an undertaking to assimilate them into our body politic!”<sup>17</sup> This writer’s use of the word *heredity* to explain his anecdote reveals his belief in the natural, scientific inferiority of the Filipino race. It conveys the popular sentiment that some characteristics were fixed traits that could not be altered by any civilizing force, no matter how great.

Many anti-imperialists similarly used such logic to explain the frivolousness in attempting to teach such principles as liberty and democracy to an uncivilized population. George Richardson’s article in *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* also made the claim that “The American people cannot teach any nation the real spirit of democracy or republicanism. Every nation has to slowly evolve its government as a plant develops its buds, its blossoms, and its fruit.”<sup>18</sup> This idea assumed the intellectual inferiority of the Filipino people, but unlike arguments made by expansionists, Richardson did not view this as motivation for American intercession. According to his article, even Anglo-Saxons had a more primitive past, but their civilization was born from “free play,” not the intervention of any superior power.<sup>19</sup> Richardson proposed that American intervention in the Philippines (not to mention the atrocities committed in the Philippine-American War) prevented rather than secured the spread of justice and liberty in the Philippines. In 1900, Mark Twain likewise described the irony of US forces implementing a military government in the Philippines, thus stripping the Filipinos of their liberty and their own democratic capabilities. He wrote about the discrepancy between the

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<sup>17</sup> J. B. Walker, “Heredity in the Philippines,” *Cosmopolitan: A Monthly Illustrated Magazine* (March 1902): 564–65, 565.

<sup>18</sup> Richardson, “The Subjugation of Inferior Races,” 55.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

promises of the United States' mission in the Philippines and the reality of the institutions in place: "It was not to be a government according to our ideas, but a government that represented the feeling of the majority of the Filipinos, a government according to Filipino ideas. That would have been a worthy mission for the United States. But now—why, we have got into a mess, a quagmire from which each fresh step renders the difficulty of extrication immensely greater."<sup>20</sup> Twain's dismay with American policy in the Philippines once again reveals the tension between American identity as the protectorate of freedom and the subjugation of the Filipino people.

Despite the grievances of the Anti-Imperialist League and other citizens sympathetic to its cause, the United States continued at full force establishing its rule in the Philippines. American dissatisfaction and protest against the United States' course of action abroad, however, did not disappear over time. By 1915–1916, the voice of the anti-imperialists was rejuvenated, fueled by the international consequences of imperialism. In 1914, World War I erupted in Europe, and the question of US involvement in the conflict loomed over the American people. While the war raged on overseas, the United States represented a nation untarnished by the dissent of imperialism. As the war further unfolded, it was only natural that the United States reconsidered its own imperialistic ventures. Once the Jones Bill, which recommended a declaration of the United States' intention to grant the Philippines independence, was proposed, both US representatives and the public at large more intently considered the available options. Like in 1898, the Philippine question once

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<sup>20</sup> Mark Twain, "Mark Twain, The Greatest American Humorist," in *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire: Anti-Imperialist Writings on the Philippine-American War*, ed. Jim Zwick (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992).

again presented a conflict that questioned American identity. The United States was faced with the choices of granting the Philippines complete independence, indefinitely delaying withdrawal, or creating a plan for withdrawal within a set number of years—and the press and scholarly journals dissected these options with great zeal.

After the introduction of the Jones Bill, anti-imperialist opinions became increasingly prevalent in newspapers, magazines, and published journals. Just as the anti-imperialists in 1898 opposed the acquisition of the Philippines on the grounds that the process contested with American principles of liberty and democracy, supporters of the Jones Bill used this notion to criticize administrative policies implemented on the islands. In 1915, *The Independent* included an article that explained the Jones Bill in these terms by analyzing the position of President Woodrow Wilson, who defended bill. The article included a transcript of a speech delivered by Wilson in which he stated, “Please express to the people of the Philippine Islands my deep and abiding interest in their welfare and my purpose to serve them in every way possible.” He declared his determination to see the bill passed and reiterated what the bill would achieve: “The bill is one that would enlarge the share of the people in the local government. It empowers them to elect the upper house or Senate, which is now a commission of appointed members, and the preamble carries a promise of ultimate independence.”<sup>21</sup> As Wilson presented it, the Jones Bill would transition the Philippines into its long-overdue independence through completely democratic means. He made it clear that changes would be made in order to finally grant liberty to the Filipinos

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<sup>21</sup> “Mr. Wilson and the Philippines,” *Independent...Devoted to the Consideration of Political, Social, and Economic Tendencies* 82, no. 34 (1915): 274–75, 274.

and uphold the promises made by the United States at the point of acquisition.

Many defendants of the Jones Bill furthermore desired that the United States withdraw from the Philippines as a political rejection of American imperialism at large or as an acknowledgement that American forces had not accomplished their lofty, moralistic goals of protecting the Philippines. *The Youth's Companion* included an article in a 1916 entitled "Give Up the Philippines?" The writer claimed, "The real question is distinctly a moral one. It is our duty to give the Filipinos their political independence almost at once, and to labor for an agreement with the other nations that shall preserve that independence inviolable: or have we taken on ourselves an obligation that we cannot so cavalierly surrender without dishonor?"<sup>22</sup> Many advocates for the Jones Bill believed that the United States had no right getting so heavily involved in the Philippines in the first place, let alone staying for almost twenty years. They defended the Jones Bill as the best way for the United States to honor its original promises to the Philippines and relinquish its duty as soon as possible, despite the corrupted motivations behind the islands' acquisition. In 1916, Professor David Y. Thomas wrote for the *New York Times*, "Possibly a few zealots did sincerely believe that the islands were given to us by Providence eighteen years ago, but the people most active in taking them never did believe anything of the kind. The islands came to us as a prize of war. Once in our hands we decided to keep them because they looked like a rich possession and made us look and feel like a world power."<sup>23</sup> Many of those in support of the Jones Bill by no means commended the initial justifications for purchasing and subduing the Philippines but

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<sup>22</sup> "Give Up the Philippines?" *Youth's Companion* 90, no. 9 (1916): 118.

<sup>23</sup> David Y. Thomas, "American Conceit in the Philippines," *New York Times*, May 25, 1916, 7.

understood that exposing the American failure to meet even their own expectations and promises would create a moral appeal to accept the Jones Bill proposal. Advocates for the Jones Bill presented the bill as a moralist resolution to reject the United States' imperialist past, while making right the promises made to the Philippine nation.

After roughly twenty years of American rule in the Philippines, and thus an increase in knowledge of the Filipino people, race ideology held a prominent position in discussions for and against the Jones Bill. While many supporters of the bill advocated for withdrawal from the islands because they believed imperialism to be unjust, undemocratic, and demoralizing to the United States, this did not mean they rejected claims of Filipino racial inferiority. In Thomas's article, he claimed, "Ethnically, the people are utter aliens. For us to assimilate them is out of the question. We will not even grant them citizenship as we did the negro. No one dreams of admitting them to State-hood."<sup>24</sup> This article contended that in the long-term, possession of the Philippines was unviable; they were never racially and intellectually cut out for a permanent place in the American politic and never possessed the traits intrinsic to American identity. In 1916, *Life* magazine included another pointedly sarcastic article titled "Short History of the Philippines: According to the Popular Conception." It read: "What we are trying to do with the Philippines is to get them to govern themselves eventually as badly as we do, but this is a long way off. In the meantime, we are very good to them, and are teaching their children how to read and write and play politics, which is the chief end of all Americans."<sup>25</sup> The sarcastic tone of this article relays two things: that the author had little faith in

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> "Short History of the Philippines: According to the Popular Conception," *Life*, January 1916, 103.

American administrators in the Philippines and believed educating Filipinos with American intellect and values was fruitless. The article portrayed American efforts in the Philippines as ridiculous and unproductive; it suggested that educating Filipinos to be like Americans would ultimately never be attainable and was just “play” for the “meantime.” This article reveals the racialized conceptions Americans held of Filipinos and their capabilities, which led many to support the Jones Bill as a way of abandoning an impossible mission.

The Jones Act (also known as the Philippine Autonomy Act) was ratified by Congress in August 1916. It formally declared the United States’ commitment to grant independence to the Philippines once a “stable” government was solidified and made provisions for a more autonomous and representative system of government in the meantime. The bill passed despite overt opposition from the Republican Party. Hostility towards the bill was manifested in not only Congress but also the media and scholarly publications. Despite the success of the bill, it is nevertheless important to analyze its controversy and the arguments made by the bill’s opponents. The act did not include an explicit timetable for granting the Philippines independence but rather provided leeway for US officials to decide *when* the Filipinos were ready for self-rule. (The final act did not include the provisions of the Clarke amendment (1916), which set the framework for Philippine independence to be granted within two to four years.) In many ways, this caveat reflected the disagreement and internal debate within the American public and political institutions that shaped the fate of the Philippine islands.

As the Jones Bill progressed through the American legislature, the press reported the diverse positions taken up by opponents of the bill. Across numerous news sources, magazines, and scholarly journals, denouncers of the bill expressed a common belief that the Jones Bill was unfit because American forces had not yet completed their mission in the Philippines, and Filipinos were not yet prepared for self-rule.

Opponents of the bill described American administration in the Philippines as a work-in-progress, which would be wasteful and immoral to abandon mid-project. In May 1916, the *New York Times* featured an article written by Hamilton M. Wright, author of *A Handbook of the Philippines*. The article, entitled “Our Task in the Philippines Not Yet Complete,” claimed, “What kind of self-government would the Filipino people have upon the complete moral and physical withdrawal of the Americans?...It can hardly be expected that in twenty years they will have learned entirely to adopt the American system, and will entirely cast aside practices in local administration that have ruled in the Philippine Islands for centuries.”<sup>26</sup> Throughout the article, Wright contended that Filipinos were neither ready for independence, nor did they *desire* it. He relayed that American forces were put in place to guarantee the personal rights and liberties of Filipinos and to withdraw prematurely would be to forfeit the progress made towards those rights and stable Filipino self-rule. Wright concluded by stating, “If we relinquish the Philippines we will be put back 100 years. We would be disregarding the Christian work of almost three and a half centuries. We would be abandoning our ideals for the public school system. We could be conferring nothing upon the Filipino people but unhappiness. Can the American people afford to backslide?”<sup>27</sup> Wright’s article depicted the Philippine mission as an investment that had not yet reached its potential, not only politically but socially. To withdraw from the Philippines would be to destabilize the progress made by such American institutions as schools and churches and waste the time and resources already spent by the US government.

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<sup>26</sup> Hamilton M. Wright, “Our Task in the Philippines Not Yet Complete,” *New York Times*, May 7, 1916, 12–13, 12.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

In an article published in *The Independent*, ex-President of the United States Howard Taft warned against the proposals made by the Democratic Party. He claimed, “It is utter folly to suppose that in ten or eleven years all of this could be fully accomplished. Our work is very far from completed. Our duty to the Filipinos is far from done.”<sup>28</sup> Taft’s article emphasized *duty* as the paramount reason for the United States to remain actively involved in the governance of the Philippines. He suggested, “It will be cowardly to lay down the burden until the purpose is accomplished...To confer independence upon them now would be to subject the great mass of the people to the dominance of an oligarchical, very small, and probably exploiting minority. Such a course would be suicidal—as cruel to them as it would be shameful to us.”<sup>29</sup> As proof of his claims, Taft referenced the fact that at the time roughly only 3 percent of Filipinos voted, and thus representative self-government was not yet viable.<sup>30</sup> He believed that it was not only the American mission but the American *duty* to ensure democracy thrived in the Philippines at its fullest potential. Opponents of the Jones Bill such as Taft rejected the proposal to grant the Philippines independence because they believed American institutions had not had enough time to run their course and leave a meaningful impact on the Filipino people. Those who denounced the Jones Bill praised the work of US forces that had made notable “improvements” to the Philippine islands by introducing bureaucratic institutions and sanitation programs, eradicating diseases, facilitating trade, spreading Christian teaching, establishing English-speaking schools, and creating infrastructure but believed that the United

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<sup>28</sup> William Howard Taft, “Our Duty to the Philippines,” *Independent...Devoted to the Consideration of Political, Social, and Economic Tendencies* 76 (1913): 116–18, 116.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

States had far more to accomplish before removal could be considered.

As previously discussed, many supporters of the Jones Bill claimed that expedited withdrawal from the Philippines was necessary in order for the United States to fulfill its promises to the Philippines, as well as to Spain. Opponents of the Jones Bill, however, cited this same premise as a reason why the United States should remain in the control of the Philippines for the foreseeable future. A 1916 *Outlook* article entitled “American Good Faith in the Philippines” described the Treaty of Paris not only as a contract between the United States and Spain but also as a pledge to the Philippines. The article stated, “If a treaty means anything, this treaty means that the United States cannot escape by any action its responsibility for the promises it has made regarding the Philippine Archipelago...To withdraw the Governmental authority of the United States from the Philippines without making sure, by the firmest and most material guarantees as enforceable as a mortgage...is to be faithless to its trust and to disregard its word and its honor. There is only one reason which would justify the United States in yielding up its sovereignty without fulfilling its obligations, and that reason would be in defeat by a superior force.”<sup>31</sup> According to *Outlook*, the United States’ obligation to the Philippines was to remain in control until an autonomous Filipino government proved functional, which in 1916 was not the case. An article written in 1916 for *The Independent* made similar claims. The author wrote, “Democracy and independence are not synonymous; they are not even inseparable...It is self-government that we owe to the Philippines...The Democratic proposal, speciously attractive in appearance, is in reality a plan for spurning this duty and

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<sup>31</sup> “American Good Faith in the Philippines,” *Outlook* (1916): 370–72, 370.

violating the trust we assumed when we took over the islands from Spain.”<sup>32</sup> Both of these articles suggested that independence was not in the best interest of the Filipinos and thus would be a violation of the Treaty of Paris and the United States’ promises to the Philippines. Not only would “discharging its duty” to the Philippines be detrimental to the progress of the Philippine nation, but it would reflect poorly on American virtue at a time when international approval was becoming increasingly important. Opponents of the Jones Bill suggested that withdrawal from the Philippines threatened the integrity of the United States and would reveal to the world weakness and dishonesty.

Although many of those who spoke out against the Jones Bill declared their desire to uphold the American pledge to the Philippines and expressed concern with the well-being of the Philippine people, they discussed the matter with highly racialized language and assumptions. Evaluations of the progress of the Philippine islands were gauged by a standard of how “Americanized” the islands had become. Many believed, for example, that the Philippine mission was not yet complete because not enough Filipinos were educated to speak fluent English. When discussing the institutions of stable, democratic government, many scholars employed racial ideology to explain why the mission to modernize the Philippines required more time. Hamilton M. Wright wrote, “Nowhere have the Malay people ever enjoyed self-government. This is, of course, no argument why they should not. It simply shows that self-government is not native to them.” He continued, “Autonomous government as we know it is an Anglo-Saxon institution. It is part of the wool and fabric of the Anglo-Saxon... We have been

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<sup>32</sup> “Independence or Self-Government,” *Independent...Devoted to the Consideration of Political, Social, and Economic Tendencies* 85, no. 350 (1916): 217–18, 218.

endeavoring to teach this self-government to the Filipino, with whom it is not native. He has had less than twenty years of our tutelage.”<sup>33</sup> This article described an innate difference between Anglo-Saxons and Filipinos; it explained the natural inferiority of races that were less susceptible to democratic values. Wright argued that it would require more time to implement efficient self-government in the Philippines because the Filipinos were by nature less inclined to the foundational principles of civilization and democracy and thus had to be taught their values. Using arguments that highlighted the inferiority of the Filipino races, many Americans tried to justify the indefinite continuation of the subjugation of the Philippines.

Looking at newspaper articles and periodicals from 1898 and 1916—two turning points of Philippine-American history—one can glean a better understanding of the Philippine question as it was perceived by Americans at home—eight thousand miles removed from physical contact between Americans and Filipinos. Journalists and scholars used the outlets of the press and scholarly publications to question American institutions in the Philippines, the effectiveness of their administrators, congressional debates concerning the matter, and the opinions of the American public. While politicians debated the Jones Bill at the federal level, members of the American public once again took to the press to present their positions on a matter of policy that had occupied the United States for roughly twenty years. By looking comparatively at 1898 and 1916 as two critical moments in Philippine-American relations, one can see how the subjugation of the Philippines changed American perceptions of imperialism, national identity, and the United States’ role in the world.

By comparing the arguments made by anti-imperialists between 1898 and the conclusion of the Philippine-American

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<sup>33</sup> Wright, “Our Task in the Philippines,” 12.

War with those introduced by advocates of the Jones Bill circa 1916, one can evaluate the transformation of the conceptions of American imperialism by those who stood firmly against it. Both in 1898 and 1916, those in favor of Philippine independence criticized the colonization of the Philippines as a crime against the Constitution and the most intrinsic American principles of democracy and liberty. Before American forces took hold of the Philippines and began to install pieces of “American” government, anti-imperialists warned that the practices of “benevolent assimilation” would breed tyranny and the complete submission of the Filipinos to unchecked American colonizers. In 1916, supporters of the Jones Bill confirmed these suspicions and advocated for the bill as a way to finally grant the Philippines their independence, which was long overdue. The arguments made by anti-imperialists in 1898 and again in 1916 generally dealt with the issue of imperialism holistically; they did not rely heavily on the specific infractions of American action in the Philippines but focused primary on moral and conceptual stances to convey their discontent with overseas colonization. In 1898, anti-imperialists spoke out against the *principle* of subjugating a distant people and the ways this would alter American values. After years of expensive and tiresome work in the Philippines, these opinions remained; defendants of the Jones Bill returned to these arguments in light of more global concerns with the ramifications of American imperialism and with the confirmation that even after almost twenty years, the Filipinos remained fully subjected to American rule. They saw the Jones Bill as a way of abandoning the unjust path the United States had taken while still securing stability for the Filipino people. Between 1898 and 1916, anti-imperialist arguments changed very little because the basis of their concerns still remained an issue: the United States, the world’s model of democracy, was continuing to impose itself on a distant territory whose population did not formally consent to its authority.

Conversely, the twenty years of American occupation in the Philippines drastically altered the arguments made between

expansionists in 1898 and denouncers of the Jones Bill in 1916. Opponents of the Jones Bill responded reactively to the status of American institutions in the Philippines in order to defend delaying Philippine independence. Unlike the arguments made by their opponents, those made by expansionists evolved based on the successes and failures of the implementation of American rule. They furthermore focused not on the issue of imperialism at large but solely on the relationship between the Philippines and the United States as its benefactor. In 1898 and as the Philippine-American War unfolded, expansionists discussed the Philippine question as a response to the special circumstances of victory in the Spanish-American War. In 1916, opponents of the Jones Bill once again contingently defended American involvement in the Philippines based on the status of American rule. The evidence provided by the press to denounce the Jones Bill pointed to insufficiencies in Philippine progress over the course of the past twenty years. Those in opposition to the bill commended American efforts to educate and civilize the Filipinos and establish functional democratic institutions but expressed their belief in the incompleteness of these tasks. In the media and academic circles, adversaries of the Jones Bill reflected on expansionist arguments made circa 1898 and referenced them as promises made to the Filipino people. When the United States acquired the Philippines as a territory, the nation pledged to extend democracy and modernization to the Philippines. For those questioning the provisions of the Jones Bill, the Philippine question became the task of measuring the fulfillment of these promises.

While anti-imperialists contended that the United States should withdraw from the Philippines because of moral and abstract reasons (such as the hypocrisy of imperialism), opponents of the bill speculated how such a withdrawal would *practically* and detrimentally impact the Filipino people. They examined closely the extent to which the United States had achieved its civilizing mission to educate, sanitize, Christianize, modernize, and democratize the Philippines and how much

more had to be accomplished for the Filipinos to experience the benefits of the American way of life. Their claims were reactionary in nature and aimed to defend not the principles of American imperialism but the ramifications of the task at hand. Unlike most of the cases made by anti-imperialists, expansionist arguments evolved over the course of American administration in response to tangible measurements of the progress of the Philippine mission.

Despite these differences, one clear similarity persisted in both anti-imperialist and expansionist debates from 1898 through 1916. As seen in the majority of opinions expressed in the press and academic journals, a common racial ideology guided American perspectives of the Philippine question. On both sides of the argument and at both points in time, the assumed racial (and thus intellectual) superiority of Americans as compared to Filipinos dictated American conceptualization of the Philippine question. Even when the contestation of the Jones Bill became clearly divided between the Republican and Democratic parties, racial ideology remained a common ground. In almost every source reviewed for this study, the writers spoke of the United States as the protectorate of the Philippines that knew best its needs, desires, and capabilities. While some questioned the moral and legal authority of the United States' control of the Philippines, there is little evidence that the American public did not wholeheartedly accept the inferiority of Filipinos and their ineptitude to become fully civilized and democratic by their own means. It is important to acknowledge that the standards by which the Filipinos were weighed were completely American constructs of values and ideals. This study serves to assess the distinctly American conceptions of the Philippine question, and as such, it is important to consider the biases that existed and shaped these conceptions of American identity and the identity of those that did not reflect this image. Racial ideology ran as a common thread through the American confrontation of the Philippine question and greatly influenced the outcomes of US policy decisions.

Comparative analysis of the public discussion of the Philippine question in 1898 and 1916 reveals the distinct ways that American administration of the Philippines influenced the opinions of the American people. While anti-imperialist concerns consistently grounded themselves in moralist claims, expansionist views developed in response to the progress of American programs in the Philippines. While this comparison looks closely at two very specific moments in time, its trends are telling of the overarching narrative of American imperialism. As previously discussed, the imperialist debate over the Philippines highlighted the United States' questioning of American identity, the grounds of citizenship, racial ideology, the parameters of democracy, the implications of the Constitution and the United States' colonial past, American reflections of conflict with Native Americans and the institutions of slavery, the role of the United States in the world, and much more. While the institutions of colonialism were enacted overseas, their development incited *internal* consideration of American values. In essence, imperialism became an international battleground of an American identity crisis. From the vantage point of today, historians know the outcome of the Philippine question: while the Jones Act was ratified in 1916 and a Philippine bicameral legislature was put in place, the United States did not formally recognize the independent Republic of the Philippines until 1946 after regaining the territory from Japan following WWII. This knowledge, however, does not diminish the value of analyzing both 1898 and 1916 as moments in history when the American public reflected upon and contested not only American identity but the United States' role in the world as a developing international power. These two moments of American political debate reveal the consciousness of a nation, whose deliberations decided the fate of another people.



# **Building Up and Breaking Down: Community Building and Its Difficulties among Mexican and Chicano Homosexuals**

*Sara Marie Hobler*

## **Introduction**

With the recent legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States and the recognition and legalization of same-sex marriage in certain states of Mexico, the visibility of queer lives—that is people who experience same-sex attraction and/or identify outside of the gender identity assigned them at birth—and queer communities is more prominent than ever. More specifically, the middle-class picture of a (usually white, at least in the United States) same-sex couple living happily alongside heterosexual couples has become the dominant image in mainstream conceptualizations of homosexuality and queerness. Although the greater mainstream acceptance of queer folk is certainly a positive development, there is commonly also an erasure of nonwhite and working-class queer communities, as well as those that existed in the days before queerness was widely visible, in both the United States and Mexico. I have therefore chosen to study these groups whom American

narratives frequently leave out: historical Latinx communities.<sup>1</sup> I have chosen to focus on Chicano and Mexican queer communities in order to examine both queer communities in different national frameworks as well as groups who tend to be erased from the typical North American queer narrative. In taking a comparative approach, it is possible to not only challenge the US-centric narrative of queerness but also observe how issues facing queer communities existed across borders and among groups that shared the same cultural heritage, even if they did not share the same geographic or national space. Moreover, such cross-border interactions as communication, cultural influence, and other linkages can be explored.

This article examines the living situations of gay and lesbian people in the United States and Mexico in the 1970s and 1980s, drawing on existing scholarship as well as publications in gay newspapers and writings by queer individuals, to explore how they used the press to build communities and what the tensions contained in these publications reveal about the priorities, gains, and even fractures within these communities. In particular, I will attempt to illustrate the diverse and multifaceted natures of Mexican and Chicano homosexual communities, especially with regards to gender and class, and the ways this diversity affected these communities. For the purpose of this article, community is defined as a network of individuals who have formed social support systems based on shared experiences. In this case, the overarching shared experience on which these communities were built was that of homosexuality and the discriminatory attitudes towards homosexuals in society. However, despite

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<sup>1</sup> I use Latinx as a gender-neutral and all-inclusive adjective to describe communities of people who are of Latin American descent. By not using Latino/a or Latin@, I am acknowledging that there are people in these communities who do not consider themselves to be a part of traditional masculinity or femininity and, as such, cannot be described by a masculine (Latino) or feminine (Latina) demonym.

holding their homosexuality in common, many members of these communities also came from different gender, cultural, and class backgrounds, causing fractures within the homosexual community as a whole.

Although this article focuses on gay and lesbian people, it is worth noting that people of other gender identities and sexual orientations did exist and faced considerable adversity during this time. The focus on gay and lesbian struggles and community building reflects not only the predominant language of self-identification used during this time period but also the marginalization of people who did not fit into these categories. I will refrain from using the current terminology of contemporary LGBTQIAP+ discourse in order to avoid being ahistorical, as well as impose contemporary labels on the identities of a different time. Thus, the word *homosexual*, although largely out of use with the contemporary community and seen in some circles as derogatory, will at times be utilized to describe gay and lesbian people, as that is what they called themselves during the period studied in this article. An additional study into the experiences of people who identified outside of the labels of heterosexual and homosexual, as well as those whose gender identities differ from those they were assigned at birth, would be a valuable contribution to the existing scholarship of historical queer communities.

First, I will identify the ways homosexuals in Mexico and the United States built communities around their common homosexuality. Second, I will examine the social factors that Mexican and Chicano homosexuals faced, both outside and within their communities, to explore the effectiveness of community building and better understand the Mexican/Chicano homosexual experience. Finally, I will examine the ways that gay and lesbian communities failed to build complete communities—based on the diversity of experience and difficulties identified in the second section of this article. After all, homosexuals were not a monolith, and by building communities that focused only on homosexuality, they

often neglected other aspects of the lives of various homosexuals, such as women and poor people. By examining these exclusions and instances of neglect, I bring to light the lives of homosexual individuals whose concerns are rarely addressed in historical narratives about homosexuality.

## **Community Building among Homosexuals**

Marginalized by a culture they deemed “heterosexist,” or at the very least homophobic, homosexuals in Mexico and the United States formed their own communities to protect themselves from homophobia as well as advance their own agendas.<sup>2</sup> These communities were formed in a number of ways. As the major source of subject material for this study, gay publications were prominent in both Mexico and the United States. Requiring writers, editors, and other publication and reporting staff, these publications were communities in and of themselves where homosexuals in both Mexico and America could gather to write and report about the goings-on of homosexual life. The staff of these publications, however, were merely a microcosm of a much larger system of communities that they were reporting on. Used as a method of communication among gay communities, publications served as a hub for community building and provide valuable insights about the ways in which homosexuals were creating their own spaces and addressing their concerns on an interpersonal and intracommunity level.

Looking in Mexican publications, it is easy to learn the goals of those working on community building through publishing. The Tijuana-based periodical *¿Y Qué?* declares in its mission statement that it works against political, social, and economic

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<sup>2</sup> “¿Qué es ¡Y Qué!?” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 2.

oppression of homosexual people in a society that it deems “heterosexist.”<sup>3</sup> I will focus here for a moment on the social oppression faced by homosexuals and the solutions offered within the pages of *¿Y Qué?*. Faced with homophobia in their daily lives, Mexican homosexuals frequently experienced social isolation—either marginalized by the society they were in if they were “out” or silenced into an erasure of their identities if they chose to hide their sexual orientation. Evidence for this isolation and oppression are spread across the pages of *¿Y Qué?*, where even an outside observer writing for the paper comments on the way that homosexual individuals felt “isolated, insecure, devalued, without rights, and powerless in the face of injustice.”<sup>4</sup> Lacking social spaces meant for them in mainstream society, they instead decided to build their own. The most obvious examples of social community offered within homosexual circles were the gay bars that were widely advertised within homosexual publications, such as *¿Y Qué?*. Because they were largely advertised in these publications, gay bars were a place where homosexual men formed social connections based on their shared homosexuality without worrying about having to share space with heterosexuals, who were far less likely to find these bars due to their advertisement outside of heterosexual mainstream publications. Acting almost as a haven where homosexuals could make social connections with other homosexuals without having to deal with the discrimination they experienced when in predominantly heterosexual spaces, gay bars were a major social form of community building for Mexican homosexuals.

Much like in Mexico, American homosexuals built social communities through publications and social spaces. American

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Felix Escamilla, “Adelante... ICM,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 3.

homosexuals also advertised gay bars in their periodicals and frequented them in their free time.<sup>5</sup> Chicano homosexuals, however, faced a different situation than Mexicans, as they were not only sexual but also racial minorities. According to the historian Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, the racial aspect of the discrimination Chicano homosexuals felt extended even into mainstream homosexual culture—which was predominantly white, or Anglo.<sup>6</sup> Chicanos responded to the exclusion they faced in the predominantly white homosexual community by forming parallel structures for themselves that focused on both their homosexuality *and* their Chicano identities. This was particularly important because the Chicano community, which was largely heterosexual, discriminated against homosexuals just as the Anglo homosexual community discriminated against Chicanos.<sup>7</sup> Chicano homosexuals thus needed a community that catered to both their sexualities and their racial identities because they could not rely on either of them on their own to form a true social support system based on shared experiences.

One example of homosexual Chicano community building was the formation of the Gay Latino Alliance (GALA) in San Francisco. Beginning with advertisements calling for a Chicano community in (predominantly Anglo) homosexual publications, Chicanos formed their own social organization beginning in the homes of homosexual Chicano men.<sup>8</sup> The organization achieved further growth by advertising in other homosexual spaces, including posting flyers in mainstream gay bars. Once fully

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<sup>5</sup> Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, “‘That’s My Place!’: Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco’s Gay Latino Alliance, 1975–1983,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, no. 2 (2013): 224–58, 226.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

established, GALA sustained itself through such social events as dances, which provided not only funding but also a place for homosexual Chicanos to find a sense of togetherness.<sup>9</sup> Excluded from society based on both sexuality and race, homosexual Chicanos formed communities to support one another through the difficulties of these multilayered oppressions. The separation of white and Chicano homosexuals appears to have existed beyond just the people who formed GALA, as there is little Chicano or Latino representation in American gay newspapers, including *The Bay Area Reporter* and the *Gay Activist*. The racism and exclusion felt by Chicanos in white spaces identified by Ramirez necessitated the creation of specifically Chicano spaces. Because the Chicano community itself perpetuated homophobia, there was moreover the need to create a social support system that served individuals who were both homosexual and Chicano.

Although social support systems were a necessary survival mechanism for homosexuals living in Mexico and the United States during the 1970s and 1980s, there was also a broad recognition that these systems were needed due to the structural homophobia in Mexican and American society. Change and support within communities was thus not enough to solve the problems of homosexual individuals and communities; structural changes needed to be made to society to make it more amenable to homosexual people. The mission statement of *¿Y Qué?* states that it hoped to raise people's consciousness in order to make people aware of the need of an organization that was in favor of "the liberation of homosexual and lesbian people" in its area.<sup>10</sup> The recognition of the "economic, social, and political" oppression of homosexuals informed the activism of Mexicans and Chicanos in homosexual communities, leading them to form organizational structures that reached into heterosexual-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>10</sup> "¿Qué es ¡Y Qué!?" 2.

dominated spaces and demanded visibility, acceptance, and change.<sup>11</sup> Throughout the newspaper, there are mentions of “activists,” “organizations,” “social work,” “community,” and even an international “pride group” for homosexuals to organize solidarity socially, politically, and culturally.<sup>12</sup> Although these organizational structures provided social community, they also served the purpose of change making on a broader scale. By organizing together, homosexual activists could not only create greater connections among themselves but also make change outside of their communities. In order to make the changes they desired and address their needs on a societal level, there were a number of different strategies utilized that differed from place to place.

According to the sociologist Rafael de la Dehesa, on the ground political change efforts often involved consciousness raising and political visibility in Mexico.<sup>13</sup> Often erased by mainstream narratives, it was a struggle to even get homosexuality noticed on the mainstream political agenda, and most political work in the 1970s done by homosexuals in Mexico was geared towards consciousness raising.<sup>14</sup> Moving into the 1980s, however, there was increasing emphasis on electoral politics and representation in the political system. Although there was a divide about how to go about this—with some

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.; “Progreso del Grupo Orgullo,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 4; “6to Aniversario de FIGHT,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 9; “El Lesbianismo,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 11; “POLEN,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 13; and “Noticias Sociales,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 14.

<sup>13</sup> Rafael de la Dehesa, “Global Communities and Hybrid Cultures: Early Gay and Lesbian Electoral Activism in Brazil and Mexico,” *Latin American Research Review* 42, no. 1 (2007): 29–51, 32.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 32.

believing in the formation of activist coalitions with other movements and others advocating autonomy of the homosexual movement—the increased emphasis in affecting change through government was nonetheless present. The focus on public visibility did not fade so much as shift as this change was made, with public rallies emphasizing the homosexual vote.<sup>15</sup> Consciousness raising remained important as well, and the efforts of Mexican activists became increasingly left oriented at this time. Beyond working in establishment politics, Mexican activists formed broad networks of solidarity (which also tended to be leftist) across both the country and the border with the United States, holding conferences and educational events in both Mexico and California. Articles in *¿Y Qué?* indicate that these international conferences addressed issues of AIDS, family, human rights, and race.<sup>16</sup>

### **Divisions within Homosexual Communities in Mexico and the United States**

When trying to determine the difficulties faced by gay and lesbian people in the 1970s and 1980s, the most predominant (and most visible) struggle beyond generalized alienation from heterosexual culture was with AIDS, called by its Spanish acronym SIDA in Mexico. Indeed, in just one eighteen-page copy of the Tijuana gay periodical *¿Y Qué?*, AIDS is mentioned in no less than seven separate articles and notices.<sup>17</sup> Having

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>16</sup> “¿Qué es ¿Y Qué!?” 2; and “Progreso del Grupo Orgullo,” 4.

<sup>17</sup> “Editorial,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 3; “Progreso del Grupo Orgullo,” 4; “Proyecto SIDA en Tijuana,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 5; “Orientación para Afectados por el SIDA (ORASI),” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 5; “Hablando de SIDA,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 6; “Un Ejemplo a Seguir,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11

consumed so much attention in gay Mexican media, it is clear that AIDS was a major issue within the gay community in Mexico and that AIDS discrimination was deeply linked with cultural homophobia. This was an issue that moreover extended beyond the scope of this periodical, continuing to dominate Mexican gay publications, including *Frontera Gay*, well into the 1990s.<sup>18</sup> The persistence and prevalence of the AIDS struggle in gay communities is well documented in existing scholarship, so it suffices to say that the AIDS crisis was a serious issue that affected gay communities on a transnational scale, causing grief, fear, and discrimination from outside communities.<sup>19</sup>

I would like to take time here, however, to examine what the discussion of the AIDS crisis tended to leave out: lesbians. In the Mexican periodicals used in this study, there were advertisements for men's health clinics, advertisements promoting the use of condoms, and discussions of how anal penetration increases the risks of the spread of AIDS, amongst other things. Nowhere is there mention of women's health concerns, use of sexual protection for lesbians, such as dental dams, or sexual health resources of any kind. The only published mention of women's health resources was an advertisement looking to start a women's health clinic listed below an article dedicated to lesbians.<sup>20</sup> Placed in the part of the newspaper dedicated to lesbian struggle, the advertisement is indicative of not only the lack of resources for lesbians but also the divide lesbian health had from the larger male-dominated homosexual

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(April–May 1986): 7; and “Sigue Creyendo el Grupo GOHL,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 11 (April–May 1986): 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Frontera Gay* (Tijuana, Mexico), 2, no. 32 (1991).

<sup>19</sup> Further reading on gay life in Mexico during the AIDS crisis can be found in Héctor Corillo, *The Night is Young: Sexuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002).

<sup>20</sup> “El lesbianismo,” 8–9.

community. Although the risk of being infected with AIDS with another female partner is low compared to the risk faced by gay men having penetrative sex, the male-centric focus of the AIDS crisis took over discussions of homosexual health more generally, leaving lesbian women to find community in whatever space was left, whether or not they were infected.<sup>21</sup> In *¿Y Qué?*, the space left for lesbian health was small indeed.

The exclusion of women's health from discussions among homosexuals was just one of the many specific issues faced by lesbians in Mexico. Lesbians in Mexico felt that there was a considerable erasure of their identities in their day to day lives and felt "insult[ed]" and a great "shame" to constantly be presumed to be heterosexual.<sup>22</sup> The narrative painted by the author of one lesbian-specific column demonstrates the heteronormativity of the world in which Mexican lesbians lived. She writes, "men will not leave us alone," "gynecologists want us to use anti-contraceptives," and their (presumably straight) friends want them "to hook up with boys."<sup>23</sup> Lesbian women had to either pretend to be straight and endure the erasure of who they were and the "fear of being discovered" or risk social rejection by coming out.<sup>24</sup> Lesbians moreover feared isolation from their fellow women when they came out, as fear of being perceived as a lesbian by association and the homophobia that accompanied such assumptions led many women to avoid any level of intimacy with their fellow woman. Both homosexual and heterosexual women were known to isolate themselves

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<sup>21</sup> "HIV/AIDS," US Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, last modified July 1, 2011, <http://www.womenshealth.gov/hiv-aids/women-are-at-risk-of-hiv/women-who-have-sex-can-get-hiv.html>.

<sup>22</sup> "El lesbianismo," 8–9.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

from female intimacy for this reason; being assumed a lesbian in public spaces was dangerous, especially for lesbians but also for straight women. Aggression and abuse, both physical and psychological, were a common fear and experience among lesbians who were out, and there was a fear of blackmail.<sup>25</sup> Even lesbian women who wanted to embrace their identities struggled with doing so in the face of such adversity.

The concern most specific to lesbians, however, was one of patriarchy as much as it was of homophobia. In a society that expected women to define themselves by their relationships with men, be they familial or romantic, lesbians were seen as undermining the gender status quo and acting as “marimachos,” or women who were attempting to act as men.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the experience of lesbians within the Mexican homosexual community appears to have been one of being relegated to second-class status to men, to whom much of the publications were catered and whose voices appeared to be the most dominant. Much like women of all sexualities in society more generally, lesbian women within the homosexual community faced a struggle with structural patriarchy. Unable to find the support and community that they needed within a male-dominated homosexual community, Mexican lesbians formed their own groups.

One example of both the need for lesbian community and the male domination of the homosexual narrative can be seen in an advertisement for the formation of a new lesbian consciousness-raising group found in *¿Y Qué?*. The Grupo Lesbico de Tijuana (Lesbian Group of Tijuana) was supported by the writers of *¿Y Qué?*, who clearly did not see themselves as part of the lesbian community. Instead, they remind their readers

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.; and Carla Mari Trujillo, ed., *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* (Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press, 1991), 1.

that the advancement of lesbian consciousness is an advancement of the homosexual cause more generally and that it is “silly” to oppose it.<sup>27</sup> The preemptive strike against anti-lesbian criticism is indicative of the resistance to the advancement of lesbians in the homosexual community; there was an implicit assumption that there would be opposition to lesbian empowerment in the dismissal of those who would stand against it. Although there were male homosexuals who supported lesbians and their empowerment, it is clear that there was also a significant number who did not.

It is worth noting that the women whose voices are recognized in *¿Y Qué?*, as well as the men who took it upon themselves to speak for them, were some of the most visible members of the Mexican homosexual community, with the time and sense of security to speak openly about their experiences with homosexuality. Closeted members of the community, working-class people with little time to write for publications, and people living in rural areas where publications and communities like the ones found in Tijuana likely did not exist are all absent from this narrative. I therefore caution against seeing this narrative as telling the full story of all lesbians in Mexico. Even lesbians in Tijuana recognized the divide between “bourgeois” lesbians and lesbian members of the working class, although there was ultimately a call for a unified communication network among all lesbians. Further study and attention to these less visible members of the gay and lesbian community would be a valuable expansion of existing scholarship.<sup>28</sup>

Knowing this erasure, it is interesting to note that in the same article where the Tijuana lesbians called for a network among lesbians, the authors also call for a connection with

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<sup>27</sup> “Nuevo Grupo de Lesbianas en Tijuana,” *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 16 (November 1987): 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

lesbians in other countries, including Chicanas in the United States. Following this connection, I now turn to the concerns of the Chicano/a communities in the United States. Although AIDS was a prominent concern in the United States, it did not take up the same amount of space in gay publications in the United States as it did in Mexico. The gay periodicals utilized for this study come from the dominant group within the gay community: Anglos.<sup>29</sup> Within the Chicano community, there was even less concern with AIDS, as Chicanos were often experiencing racial and class-based discrimination, and many of their concerns centered on these issues. AIDS, which was seen as a homosexual concern, was unlikely to gain much ground within the greater Chicano community because of the homophobia that existed within it, as well as the desire to focus on issues of race and class.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond representation in publications and health concerns, homosexual Chicanos felt that they lacked community and a space of their own in which they could identify both with their *raza* (race) and their sexuality.<sup>31</sup> In middle-class homosexual spaces, Chicano men felt that they could not connect easily with their fellow Chicanos because they were placing Anglo men on a pedestal and competing among themselves about who could be with them.<sup>32</sup> Ethnographic studies done by Enrique Horacio Ramirez demonstrate moreover that there was racism in the

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<sup>29</sup> As Anglos dominated the homosexual scene and had considerably more economic resources to put out publications, I encountered great difficulties finding a Chicano-only gay periodical. This, I feel, is just one reflection of many of the marginalization of Chicano homosexuals.

<sup>30</sup> “El caso de discriminación de una sindicalista chicana en contra de la universidad de Washington tocó un nervio del movimiento Chicano, de los grupos feministas y de la izquierda—y los polarize a todos,” *The Freedom Socialist* (Seattle, WA), no. 2 (Summer 1978): 5.

<sup>31</sup>Ramirez, “That’s My Place!” 226.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

places that middle-class gay men tended to frequent, including excessive checks of identification cards and behavior in gay bars.<sup>33</sup> Racism from Anglos, however, was only one form of discrimination faced by homosexual Chicanos. Within the Chicano community, too, there was a considerable amount of discrimination, with much of the community believing that homosexual Chicanos had become agents of Anglo culture and abandoned their roots in *la raza*.<sup>34</sup> Faced with racism and class discrimination, Chicano activists focused more on issues of race and work than sexuality or gender, leaving homosexual Chicanos feeling like they were not fully embraced by gay subculture or their fellow *raza*. Working-class Chicano homosexuals, who lacked the same level of access and visibility when compared to more assimilated men who spent time in Anglo homosexual circles, likely lacked even the partial communities available to the men whose experiences are documented in the primary and secondary literature.

Ramirez claims that Chicano and Chicana homosexuals were attracted to gay subculture because they were victimized by racism, sexism, and cultural alienation and hoped to create a pluralistic approach to these social issues within their community. There was, however, still a considerable amount of gender-based exclusion among Chicano/a homosexuals.<sup>35</sup> Much like in Mexico, Chicana lesbians faced a particular struggle beyond their gay male Chicano counterparts: the double burden of sexism and homophobia. Within the homosexual community, Chicana lesbians found that spaces were often male dominated and not meant for them, leaving them to feel as if they were without a true home in the mainstream homosexual

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>34</sup> Trujillo, *Chicana Lesbians*, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ramirez, "That's My Place!" 225.

community.<sup>36</sup> Within the Chicano community, however, Carla Trujillo, herself a Chicana lesbian, claims that other Chicanos saw lesbians as aberrant not only because they were homosexual but also because they subverted traditional gender norms by rejecting the idea that they had to define themselves by their relationships with men.<sup>37</sup> By rejecting traditional patriarchal values, Chicana lesbians were seen to be subverting the values of their race and heritage and accused of being *vendidas*, or sell outs, to Anglo culture.<sup>38</sup> Chicana lesbians thus represented a particularly burdened group during this time period, left on the sidelines of homosexual communities and rejected by both Anglo and Chicano cultures alike.

Issues of sexism and rejection from culture appear to have been present within both the Mexican and Chicano homosexual communities of the 1970s and 1980s, albeit more pronounced within Chicano circles.<sup>39</sup> Knowing these difficulties, I turn now to how they affected Chicano and Mexican communities, with a particular eye towards gender.

Despite providing valuable support systems for homosexual males, many of the communities identified previously in this article were also susceptible to the divisions I have already laid

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Trujillo, *Chicana Lesbians*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>39</sup> Although not extensively explored here, it is still worth remembering the struggle homosexuals, particularly men, faced with AIDS during this time. Although it will not be addressed at length in this article for the same reasons as AIDS, it is also important to remember the violence faced by homosexuals at this time, both in households and the communities and societies in which they lived. This exploration of the struggles of homosexual Chicanos and Mexicans is by no means exhaustive or fully representative, realizing the diversity of queer communities. It does, however, provide a basis for starting to understand the complex struggles of historical queer communities.

out, especially in terms of gender. One only has to glance at the Mexican homosexual publications to see that the social community building was not targeted at women. The advertisements for gay bars in *¿Y Qué?* that I previously examined are examples of not only social community building but also social exclusion. Accompanied by images of men or images that evoke maleness, such as moustaches, these clubs appear to be catered exclusively to homosexual men.<sup>40</sup> Although there is one advertisement that features women, it is much smaller in comparison to those displaying male-centric gay bars and does not appear to be specifically for lesbians but rather the entire gay community.<sup>41</sup> In this way, although the need for homosexual community was being met, it was not addressing the full concerns of the entire community. Just as lesbian women faced unique difficulties in Mexico, they also had specific needs for community, as the exclusion they felt in society was not ameliorated by mainstream homosexual community building.

Other intra-community efforts to support homosexual people included discussions of theatre that addressed the issue of AIDS and a number of conferences and gatherings for homosexual individuals. Knowing the previously established patriarchal structure of the homosexual community, it seems unlikely that these events were catered to the specific needs of lesbians. Although there is evidence of lesbian organizing, including an article calling for the formation of a lesbian consciousness-raising group, the availability of purely social spaces for lesbian women appears to have been quite limited.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Mi Kasa Bar," *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 16 (November 1987): 10-11, in addition to other untitled advertisements.

<sup>41</sup> "Expendido 'Club Marimbas,'" *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 16 (November 1987): 9.

<sup>42</sup> "Primer Encuentro Nacional de Lesbianas," *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 16 (November 1987): 4.

In sum, there was quite predominant intra-community organizing to provide social support structures for homosexuals in Mexico; there are indeed even advertisements for a gay youth group.<sup>43</sup> Such structures, however, did not address the needs of the entire community, particularly those of lesbian women. By focusing on travel (conferences) and consumerism (bars), homosexual community building was furthermore exclusionary to Mexican homosexual people who lacked financial resources or access to adequate transportation.

As in Mexico, Chicana lesbians found themselves wondering where their space was. Much like their Chicano counterparts, they were concerned about their exclusion from heterosexual and white spaces. Their needs for social systems of support, however, were not nearly as well met. GALA, for example, was a group founded by men that appeared to operate largely for men, with Chicana women eventually finding that they were not entirely welcome at the social events that sustained GALA.<sup>44</sup> Faced with patriarchy, they were seldom leaders within homosexual communities, making it very difficult for them to address their own needs. One Chicana lesbian, Carla Trujillo, stated that she felt undervalued as a woman and rejected by her culture as a homosexual. Instead of turning to her fellow homosexual men for support, however, she called for unity among women, whom she felt were all oppressed under patriarchy and must rise up.<sup>45</sup> Because there were few specific accommodations for them in homosexual communities, Chicana lesbians often had to turn to feminist circles to find a space. Feminism during this time, however, was often racist and heteronormative, leaving Chicana lesbians without a space to fully call their own. Although they were involved in community

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<sup>43</sup> "Grupo Polen," *¿Y Qué?* (Tijuana, Mexico), 16 (November 1987): 9.

<sup>44</sup> Ramirez, "That's My Place!" 252.

<sup>45</sup> Trujillo, *Chicana Lesbians*, 192.

building, I have had difficulty finding instances in which they were the primary beneficiaries of it.

Beyond gender, racism was a major problem faced by Chicanos in the United States that had widespread effects within both homosexual and Chicano communities. Much like in Mexico, Chicano discourse was usually leftist; however, the conversation was centered more on race and then class, with little room given to homosexuals. The discussion of race issues often left homosexual Chicanos outside of the main organizing force, or out of the narrative completely. One such instance of this is found in a Spanish-language article in *The Freedom Socialist*, where a woman facing race- and gender-based discrimination in the workplace found that the coalition supporting her fell apart when she refused to reject the support of homosexuals and feminists, angering the Chicano heterosexual male organizing base, who felt that she had taken a specifically Chicano issue to the feminists and homosexuals where it did not belong.<sup>46</sup> The internal divide within the Chicano community made it harder for Chicano homosexuals to organize, as their larger community focused on race and class issues.

Turning to homosexual activism also presented the issue of white- and male-dominated organizing. The concerns that the homosexual community faced, it appears, were the same ones preventing them from making the change they wanted to see. Lacking a strong community base that was fully their own, especially among Chicanas whose exclusion was based on not only race and sexuality but also gender, Chicano homosexual activism was limited in comparison to that of Mexican homosexuals. This is not to say, however, that they were not active. Also concerned with visibility and popular consciousness, American activists participated in international conferences

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<sup>46</sup> "El caso de discriminación," 5.

about homosexual issues and agitated for gay consciousness.<sup>47</sup> Homosexual Chicanos were moreover acutely aware of their roots outside of the United States and were often proponents of Third World liberation theory, linking their oppression as homosexuals and members of an oppressed race to the struggles of peoples abroad.<sup>48</sup> American Chicano activists also agitated visibly for public acceptance of their sexualities, holding pride parades and other public events.<sup>49</sup>

Despite difficulties with the homosexual movement in the United States, it is undeniable that Chicanos were also participating in more mainstream activism, including white-dominated visibility politics that aimed to destigmatize homosexuality as well as electoral activism that attempted to forward antidiscrimination laws.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, it is important to remember the lesbian women who were partaking in these movements, as their efforts and voices remain largely absent from the documents and narratives created by the homosexual movement, despite scholarly evidence that they wished to participate in activism.<sup>51</sup> Organizing was divided by not only race and sexuality but also gender. While Chicano homosexuals did attempt to address the needs of their community on a societal level, they ultimately found it difficult to do so due to discriminatory practices within activist communities. Chicano homosexuals indeed often felt their loyalties were divided between their race and sexuality and had a very difficult time

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<sup>47</sup> "Progreso del Grupo Orgullo," 4.

<sup>48</sup> Ramirez, "That's My Place!" 242.

<sup>49</sup> "Progreso del Grupo Orgullo," 4; and *The Gay Activist* (New York), (October 1973): 1.

<sup>50</sup> Mary Bernstein, "Identities and Politics: Toward a Historical Understanding of the Lesbian and Gay Movement," *Social Science History* 26, no. 3 (2002): 531–81.

<sup>51</sup> Ramirez, "That's My Place!" 243.

working for both at once. Thus race, gender, and sexuality served as a basis for exclusion, not inclusion, into larger communities, leaving Chicano homosexuals forced to organize among themselves and Chicana lesbians on the margins altogether.

## **Conclusion**

In both Mexico and the United States, homosexual people of Mexican heritage found themselves facing considerable social and political challenges. From health discrimination and physical violence to social exclusion and rejection, homosexual life in Mexico and the United States was characterized by stigma, discrimination, and social isolation. As this article has demonstrated, in both Mexican and Chicano communities, sexism was often compounded onto homophobia to create a specifically difficult experience for lesbian women, who then found themselves without a real place within homosexual and feminist communities. In the United States, Chicanos and Chicanas also found themselves struggling with a split identity, with their loyalties torn between *la raza*, who usually rejected their homosexuality, and the homosexual community, which often either erased their race or discriminated against them because of it.

In Mexico, there were considerable efforts made to create social support systems and vehicles of political change for the benefit of homosexuals to address the needs of the community; these efforts, however, tended to lack space for women and poor people. Facing multiple oppressions, lesbians in general as well as poor homosexual and lesbian individuals often found that the attempts at community building among homosexuals did not cater to their needs. In the United States, there was a similar issue of exclusion for lesbian women and poor people. Community building was more difficult, however, due to a divided loyalty among Chicanos, who did not feel that they fully fit in either Chicano or homosexual spaces. Activism, too, was

difficult, as Chicano activism did not address their needs as homosexuals and homosexual activism did not address their needs as Chicanos.

Bringing the narrative back to the present, it is important to recognize that the marginalization of people of color and those who do not identify as a cisgender male continues today in queer activist circles, as well as in mainstream discussions of queer people. Through this study, I have illuminated some of the struggles of the past within the community in a way that better allows us to understand and address the issues facing us in the present.

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Daniel Sternbach

# Research Days

During Binghamton University's Research Days, the History Department and Phi Alpha Theta host an undergraduate research conference. This provides undergraduates and honors thesis writers who have undertaken substantial independent research with an opportunity to share their work with one another and the history community. The first Undergraduate History Research Conference was held in 2012. The 4th annual conference held in spring 2016 had four outstanding presentations.

## 2016 Participants

Ali Cain—"One Man's Terrorist is Another Man's Freedom Fighter: Terrorism, the Global Anti-Imperialism Struggle, and the International Community's Response"

Laura E. Earls—"Defining Autonomy: Women Navigating Economic, Political, and Intellectual Spaces in Boston, 1770–1779"

Kelly Jean Gavin—"Challenging Colonial Authority: Understanding the Organization and Spread of the Nativist Purification Ideology during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680"

Daniel Kersten—"The Evacuations of British Cities during World War II: Its Impact on Children and Its Marketing"

# Combined BA/MA in History Program

At Binghamton University, students have the option of combining a Bachelor of Arts with a Master of Arts in history, completing both degrees in just five years. Students take graduate-level courses that satisfy both graduate and undergraduate degree requirements. The combined BA/MA program provides an excellent foundation for applying to top doctoral programs in history or pursuing careers in journalism, public service, historical parks, museums, and many other areas. Students develop skills that prepare them for occupations that require research, analysis, organization, and reporting. Specific skills include planning and prioritizing work, making persuasive arguments that influence others, processing information, decision making and problem solving, and verbally communicating ideas.

Students chose between the major fields of the United States, Europe, East Asia, Latin America, and the Ottoman Empire and between such thematic areas as women, gender, and sexuality; imperialism and colonialism; environmental history; and science, technology, and medicine.

For more information about the program, please visit the department's webpage:

[www.binghamton.edu/history/graduate/combined-ba-ma.html](http://www.binghamton.edu/history/graduate/combined-ba-ma.html).

Interested students should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies in History and/or the Director of Graduate Studies in History for more information.

# Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our History Department professors and staff listed below. Without them, we could not have accomplished everything we have accomplished thus far.

Dr. Nathanael Andrade

Dr. Nancy Appelbaum

Dr. Anne Bailey

Dr. Ayse Baltacioglu-Brammer

Dr. Howard Brown

Dr. Elisa Camiscioli

Dr. Elizabeth Casteen

Dr. John Chaffee

Dr. Heather DeHaan

Dr. Arnab Dey

Dr. Sean Dunwoody

Dr. Fa-ti Fan

Ms. Kathy Fedorchak

Dr. Jonathan Karp

Dr. Gerald Kutcher

Dr. Meg Leja

Mr. Keith Limbach

Dr. Richard Mackenney

Ms. Colleen Marshall

Dr. Dael Norwood

Dr. Stephen Ortiz

Dr. Robert Parkinson

Dr. Jean Quataert

Dr. Kent Schull

Dr. Brad Skopyk

Dr. Diane Sommerville

Dr. Wendy Wall

Dr. Yi Wang

Dr. Heather Welland

Dr. Leigh Ann Wheeler