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Preface

Regular readers will notice that this Fall 2021/Spring 2022 double issue of the *Bulletin* features a new cover design and layout. We are delighted to launch the German Historical Institute's new corporate design with this issue. We are also happy to share the good news that the GHI Washington and its Pacific Office in Berkeley received a positive evaluation from an external review commission and that, as a result, our parent organization, the Max Weber Foundation, has granted permanent status to the GHI's Pacific Office, which first opened in 2017.

This issue opens with the GHI's 2021 Annual Lecture, delivered by the intellectual historian Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen (University of Wisconsin-Madison) on "Asking the Impossible: The Hunger for the Unknowable in Twentieth-Century U.S. and European Thought." In this lecture Ratner-Rosenhagen examines how, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, an increasing number of American and European intellectuals who once felt committed to making an inscrutable universe legible found themselves drawn to pondering the unknowable. By exploring their efforts to redeem the intellectual credibility of asking unanswerable questions – such as *Do human beings have free will? Do human beings have a soul? What is the good life?* – she also considers whether such questions are inescapable for living the examined life.

The next two articles present the research of the winners of the 2020 and 2021 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which is awarded annually by the Friends of the GHI for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university. Due to the pandemic, the award of the 2020 prize was postponed, so that the 2020 and 2021 prizes were awarded together in May 2021.

Emma Thomas (University of New South Wales, Australia), recipient of the 2020 Stern Prize, was honored for her University of Michigan dissertation on New Guinean women and colonial indenture in German New Guinea, 1884-1914. Her article "'Contact' Embodied: German Colonialism, New Guinean Women, and the Everyday Exploitation of a Labor Force" examines women's sexual and economic exploitation in the German colony of New Guinea. Focusing on New Guinean women's experiences as recorded in colonial court documents and missionary texts, Thomas demonstrates how the sexual exploitation they experienced from male colonists was linked to the German colonial system of indentured labor.

Richard Calis (Trinity College, Cambridge) was awarded the 2021 Stern Prize for his Princeton University dissertation on Martin Crusius (1526-1607), a Tübingen Professor of Greek. His article "Cross-Cultural Contact in Sixteenth-Century Tübingen: Martin Crusius and his Greek Guests" uses the figure of Crusius to explore the nature and meaning of cross-cultural contact in the early modern period. By analyzing how Crusius used these encounters to develop his knowledge of Greek language and culture Calis also shows how the globalization of Christianity affected life in a small town.

Although this issue of the *Bulletin* is not a thematic issue, Thomas's and Calis's theme of cross-cultural contact is also prominent in the other articles featured in this issue. In May 2021 the film historian and cultural studies scholar Cathy S. Gelbin (University of Manchester) delivered a lecture on the golem tradition in the GHI's lecture series "'The spirits that I called': Artificial Life from the Enlightenment to the Present." Gelbin's article based on this lecture, "The Golem: From Enlightenment Monster to Artificial Intelligence," traces the origins and development of the golem story, which relates the creation of an artificial man through a ritual of words. Gelbin shows how the golem story, which was originally presented as a Jewish ritual for unlocking the secret

of divine creation, turned into a Christian signifier for negative Jewish stereotypes before being transformed into a metaphor for technological progress.

Negative cross-cultural stereotypes also play a central role in the next article, which is based on the keynote address at the June 2021 GHI conference “Mobilities, Exclusion, and Migrants’ Agency in the Pacific Realm in a Transregional and Diachronic Perspective,” which was delivered by historian Mae M. Ngai (Columbia History), whose 2021 book *The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics* just won the prestigious Bancroft prize. Her article “The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics, 1849-1910” examines how the western myth of the “coolie” laborer arose as a racist stereotype used to fuel anti-Chinese sentiment and how the United States, Australia, and South Africa came to answer the “Chinese Question” with laws excluding Chinese people from immigration and citizenship.

Migration and cross-border movement are also the subject of the final two articles, which report on current GHI research on the history of mobility and migration, which has joined the history of knowledge and digital history as one of Institute’s research foci. Andreas Greiner’s article “Aviation History and Global History: Towards a Research Agenda for the Interwar Period” presents the conceptual template of the research project that Greiner is pursuing as a research fellow at the GHI. Applying a global history approach to the study of aviation infrastructure, Greiner moves beyond national frameworks to provide a trans-imperial analysis that pays equal attention to global connections and disconnections, entanglements and disentanglements, in order to reveal the challenges that globalization faced in the interwar period.

The final feature article in this issue is an interview with GHI director Simone Lässig about the GHI’s new research focus “In Global Transit,” which has been developed through a

series of conferences on the long-neglected global dimension of the flight of Jews from Nazi Europe. Using the term “transit” to refer to phases in the lives of migrants in which they are on the move between different cultural, political, and geographical spaces, this research focus has now resulted in the formation of a Standing Working Group, whose research agenda is explained in the interview.

Although the GHI’s conference program continued to be curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute organized a substantial number of virtual events over the past year. We are pleased that this issue’s “Conference Reports” section can report on a number of these virtual events, including a panel series on “Migration and Racism in the United States and Germany,” a conference on “Mobilities, Exclusion and Migrants’ Agency in the Pacific Realm,” the 26th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History, the 5th Bucerius Young Scholars Forum, and the First International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies.

Please turn to our news section for recent GHI news. For up-to-date information on upcoming events, publications, fellowships, and calls for papers, please consult the GHI website (<http://www.ghi-dc.org>), Facebook page, and twitter account. As this issue goes to press, we are planning to resume in-person events. We look forward to welcoming you again in both Washington and Berkeley.

**Simone Lässig (Director) and
Richard F. Wetzell (Editor)**

The background features abstract geometric shapes. A dark blue triangle points downwards from the top left. A light blue triangle points upwards from the bottom left. A grey triangle points upwards from the bottom right. The word "Features" is centered in the white space.

Features



Asking the Impossible: The Hunger for the Unknowable in Twentieth-Century American and European Thought

35th Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute, Washington,
November 11, 2021

Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen

University of Wisconsin-Madison

It seems that one's twilight years can be a very fertile period for pondering ultimate questions of existence and the meaning of life. This certainly was the case for the nineteenth-century British philosopher Herbert Spencer, who in 1902, at the age of 83 (one year before he died), sought to lay bare the "riddle of existence." He contemplated: "Old people must have many reflections in common ... For years past when watching the unfolding buds in the Spring there has arisen the thought [in me] – Shall I ever see the buds unfold? ... Now that the end is not likely to be long postponed, there results an increasing tendency to meditate upon ultimate questions."¹ What is striking about this otherwise very common move is that it was coming from a famed atheist and materialist who spent his career pushing modern thought away from speculation about the ultimate nature of things—what he called "the

¹ Herbert Spencer, "Ultimate Questions," in *Facts and Questions* (New York, 1902), 288. For more on Spencer and "ultimate questions," see Lafcadio Hearn, "Ultimate Questions," *Atlantic Monthly* 96 (September 1905): 391-96; and Michael C.L. Chambers, "Unknowable Realism, 1860-1900: Realism Beyond Herbert Spencer's Limits to Knowledge" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2019).

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² Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (New York, 1899 [1862]), 116, 571.

³ Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology*, Vol. 1 (London, 1864), 444.

Unknowable” for it “is for ever inscrutable.”² Modern thinkers’ time was better spent discerning unmistakable reality, laid bare by evolution, which brings lofty questions about the universe down to earth. Spencer endorsed what he called “the survival of the fittest,”³ a view that human society works by the natural—if unlovely—laws of tooth and claw, and that any attempt to gussy this up was willful romanticism and fruitless. But facing his own mortality, Spencer wondered why non-believers like himself should ask questions about the function of the universe only and be deprived of asking ultimate questions about its larger meaning.

What are ultimate questions? Many of them are with us today, even if they are not ones that trouble us on a daily basis. They include questions like:

Do human beings have free will?

Do human beings have a soul?

Is the soul immortal?

What is true happiness?

Is pleasure a good?

What is the good life?

What is the meaning of life?

Does God exist?

And if there is a God, how was God created?

How should I live?

There is no single sourcebook for ultimate questions. The Stoics asked how our mortality should inform our lives. Renaissance thinkers asked whether man had a special status in God’s creation. For Enlightenment philosophers, ultimate questions grew out of a fundamental concern with the scope and nature of human freedom. Ultimate questions may be ultimate, but the forms they take are not universal. Because they are invariably products of a specific time and place in human history, they bear the traces of the contexts in which they are posed. They are therefore master shapeshifters. Often they are born of crisis: some large-scale, like war,

famine, economic collapse, and what we today would call a “natural disaster” but in earlier times was understood as the workings of an angry God’s will. Throughout history people have been pressed to ask the impossible in response to something more personal—like illness, impending death, or the death of a loved one. However, ultimate questions typically have a shared feature—they are the kinds of big, audacious, searching, questions that seek to get beyond the limited economic, political, and moral conditions in which they were formulated, and to ask: *Why? How? Whence? Whither?* They seek answers that move beyond what is apparent to what is hidden. They seek to go beyond the furthest reaches of human possibility and grasp that which abides long after the human who poses them is dead and buried—ashes to ashes, dust to dust. They are the questions that seek to pierce the veil between the knowable and the unknowable. They are an expression of the human longing for transcendence.⁴

⁴ Bryan Magee’s *Ultimate Questions* (Princeton, 2016), is philosophical, not historical in its outlook but is valuable for considering how thinkers have approached what they either explicitly or implicitly understood as “ultimate questions.”

Asking impossible ultimate questions confesses a desire to get beyond the noise, the blinders, the time-bound, place-bound, tradition-bound, and to challenge the once radiant truths that have become dimmed, deformed, or destroyed by the hubris of their unquestioned authority.

Today, posing “ultimate questions” may seem like a worthy enough pursuit. But to a growing number of European and American thinkers during the late nineteenth century, these sorts of questions started to look pretty silly. The direction of modern thought—driven by an increasing empiricism, positivism, naturalism, and materialism (the sorts of scientific understanding that Herbert Spencer exemplified and fearlessly pursued)—disavowed them as hopelessly idealistic, sentimental, and otherworldly, and therefore unworthy of serious consideration. This is the period when the modern research university was coming into full form with a new generation of academic intellectuals at work carving up domains of inquiry and knowledge into narrower and narrower specialties—or what came to be referred to

5 This impulse at work in philosophy, pushing towards what would come to be called “analytic philosophy,” can be seen in Ludwig Wittgenstein’s famous remark that “die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt” [“the limits of my language mean the limits of my world”] in *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung [Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus]* (1921).

6 On transformations in turn-of-the-last-century philosophy, see: Gary Gutting, *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2001); H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New York, 1958); James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York, 1986); Bruce Kuklick, *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1860-1930* (Yale, 1977); Dean Moyar, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Nineteenth-Century Philosophy* (Abingdon/New York, 2010); Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, “Philosophy,” in *Fin-de-Siècle World*, ed. Michael Saler (New York, 2015), 424-40; and Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophie in Deutschland, 1831-1933* (Frankfurt a. M.; 1993).

as “intellectual disciplines.” This is the period in European and American thought when the natural and social sciences were gaining intellectual authority while theology and metaphysics were losing their spheres of influence in the academy. The late nineteenth century is when modern thinkers worked to professionalize knowledge by narrowing the field of inquiry and posing only those questions that were deemed answerable and verifiable by experts’ standards. They wanted a clearer set of ground rules for questions and answers which would be deemed intellectually legitimate and authoritative.⁵ So out with ultimate questions, and in with randomized control trials.

This move toward increased specialization, professionalization, and secularization had implications across all fields of knowledge in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century academy, in particular, and in northern transatlantic intellectual life more broadly. But it had the greatest ramifications for philosophy, which, given its historical linkages to theology, had long been regarded the “queen” of the speculative sciences. Now, however, philosophers were eager to dissociate themselves from theologians, and they made dramatic efforts to reduce their domain of inquiry by leaving behind cosmology, ontology, and aesthetics, and limiting their jurisdiction to epistemology (the nature and scope of knowledge) and logic (the study of reasoning). While some applauded and others mourned the abandonment of ultimate questions, all recognized the need to keep philosophy in line with the winds of modern thought.⁶

Harvard philosopher and psychologist William James stands out as a voice of protest. He understood the value of scientific testing, but he also had a heart that ached for larger questions of the human self, meaning, and morality—questions that gave life a sense of purpose and even grandeur. James longed for the existential consolation of religion even though he could not quite be a believer himself. As he observed in 1879: “Now our Science tells our Faith that she is shameful,



Figure 1. William James at a séance pursuing his “psychical research” to widen “the field of search of God,” n.d., Houghton Library, Harvard University.

and our Hopes that they are dupes; our Reverence for truth leads to conclusions that make all reverence a falsehood.”⁷ James thus developed his “pragmatic method,” which would come to be known as philosophical “pragmatism,” to welcome the human desire to ask these larger ultimate questions, while encouraging modern inquirers to recognize that their answers could be only provisional and partial, and that they needed to be tested against their own experiences. For James, then, the question moderns should ask was no longer: *Does God exist?*—which he considered an unanswerable question. But rather: *What does belief in God make possible for human beings?* Now *that’s* a question that is answerable, according to James. What James sought at the dawn of the twentieth century was a rapprochement between science and religion—and one that preserved a space for asking ultimate questions and for what he called “the will to believe” in answering them.⁸ This meant believing in something even when the evidence for it was not forthcoming. What James wanted was to have modern inquiry “[widen] the field of search for God.”⁹

There would not be much more to this story if James’s line of argument had been more persuasive to his fellow philosophers. But he was not without his formidable critics, many of whom regarded his philosophy as naïve empiricism mixed with guileless romanticism.

⁷ William James, “Clifford’s ‘Lectures and Essays,’” in *Collected Essays and Reviews* (London, 1920), 140.

⁸ William James, “The Will to Believe,” in *The Writings of William James*, ed. John J. McDermott (Chicago, 1977 [1967]), 717.

⁹ William James, “What Pragmatism Means,” in *Writings of William James*, 390.

10 Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (New York, 1959 [1912]), 7, 161.

11 Bertrand Russell, *The History of Western Philosophy* (New York, 1972 [1946]), 818, 814.

12 Bertrand Russell, *Freethought and Official Propaganda* (London, 1922), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/44932/44932-h/44932-h.htm>, accessed January 14, 2022.

Just two years after James's death in 1910, the British philosopher Bertrand Russell sought to set the record straight about the limits and possibilities of modern philosophy in his *Problems of Philosophy* (1912). According to Russell, modern philosophy certainly can pose and seek to answer what he called "ultimate questions," but must not do so "carelessly and dogmatically as we do in ordinary life and even in the sciences, but critically, after exploring all that makes such vague questions puzzling." Indeed, he maintained that

philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation.¹⁰

However, in the years that followed, though he had some words of affection for James, Russell repeatedly ridiculed what he regarded as the American pragmatist's fast and loose regard for "facts" and his vague conception of "experience." James's genial pluralism seemed to Russell to be "benevolence, not philosophy," for to be philosophy, inquiry must observe "the moral duty of veracity."¹¹ Russell thus sought to narrow (to the point of oblivion) James's widened field of search for God: "William James used to preach 'the Will to Believe.' For my part, I should wish to preach the 'will to doubt' In all affairs it's healthy ... to hang a question mark on things you have long taken for granted."¹²

Russell essentially engaged in a philosophical brawl with many of the foremost early twentieth-century philosophers on both sides of the northern Atlantic. The horrors of the First World War—the belligerent nationalism; the religious, racial and ethnic chauvinism; the blood and iron imperialism; not to mention the trenches, flamethrowers, and mustard gas—added urgency to philosophers' internal debates about how

to adjudicate contradictory truth claims. But while philosophers were busy tending to difficult technical matters of their transforming field and turning their attentions from a larger educated audience to one another, ultimate questions slipped out from their traditional domains of authority and started to migrate to other fields of twentieth-century inquiry, including cultural criticism, literature and the arts, and even the natural sciences. It is these other domains that I want to explore here.

Where did ultimate questions go when they lost much of their authority and credibility in professional philosophy? What forms did they take? What uncertainties and longings did they seek to assuage, and why?

Before turning to explore some of the peregrinations of ultimate questions in twentieth-century American and European thought, it is helpful to consider how I, as a historian, go about tracking them. A fruitful method here is what intellectual historian Sarah Igo describes as “free-range intellectual history.”¹³ It is an approach that is necessary when a particular discourse—like “ultimate questions”—slips out of its disciplinary and institutional settings and starts to wander off into other domains and registers of twentieth-century thought, sometimes very far from its original home. During and after the First World War, an increasing number and variety of intellectuals began to welcome (or at least not recoil from) the pressure of accountability to a larger audience of nonspecialists, who felt whiplashed by the traumas of modernization, and eager for direction and clarity. This is not to say that professional philosophers and theologians wholly abandoned them. Nor is it to suggest that their seminar rooms, lecture halls, seminaries, and places of worship resembled battery cages for idea production. But I think there is a value—indeed a high necessity—for the historian to pay close attention to moments of intellectual rupture, when a discourse gets adopted, transformed, and repurposed in diverse—and often unexpected—genres of thought. After the war, ultimate questions traversed a wide range of inquiry, to which no short talk can fully do justice.

¹³ Sarah Igo, “Toward a Free-Range Intellectual History,” in *The Worlds of American Intellectual History*, eds. Joel Isaac, James Kloppenberg, Michael O’Brien, and Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen (New York, 1917), 324-42.

14 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, Rebecca Niles, eds. (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), <https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/hamlet/act-2-scene-2/>, accessed February 28, 2022.

But this talk can, at least, draw our attention to a handful of notable episodes in their journey: through cultural criticism; children’s literature; popular discourses of science, which at mid-century molded into a form of moral inquiry; and nature writing, before circling back to the relevance of asking impossible “ultimate questions” for us today.

Ultimate Question 1: *What (a Piece of Work) is Man?*

Let us start with an ultimate question as it appeared to the American literary critic Joseph Wood Krutch in 1929. At the time, Krutch was a well-respected drama critic for the *Nation* magazine, but it was his exceptionally bleak jeremiad *The Modern Temper*—a stark counterpoint to the riotous image of the “roaring twenties”—that established his reputation as an influential humanist and public moralist in twentieth-century American life. Surveying the consequences of modern science for man’s view of himself and his world, the book turned the exclamatory sentence of Shakespeare’s Hamlet—“*What a piece of work is man?*” into an interrogatory one. This question was one that Krutch was unable and ill-disposed to answer with Shakespeare: “how infinite in faculties, ... in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god.”¹⁴ Krutch’s modern man was in no way an angel, and certainly not like a god—though, in his arrogance, the modern scientist sought to pull the entire universe into the range of human comprehension and mastery.

Krutch argued that the universe revealed by modern knowledge was either mechanistic or organic, neither of which make it particularly hospitable for human flourishing. He believed that tragedy was no longer possible for the modern mind because it required a noble sense of man, which Freud had turned into rubbish. “A tragic writer does not have to believe in God, but he must believe in man.” The terrible paradox that modern knowledge presents for modern man is that he has

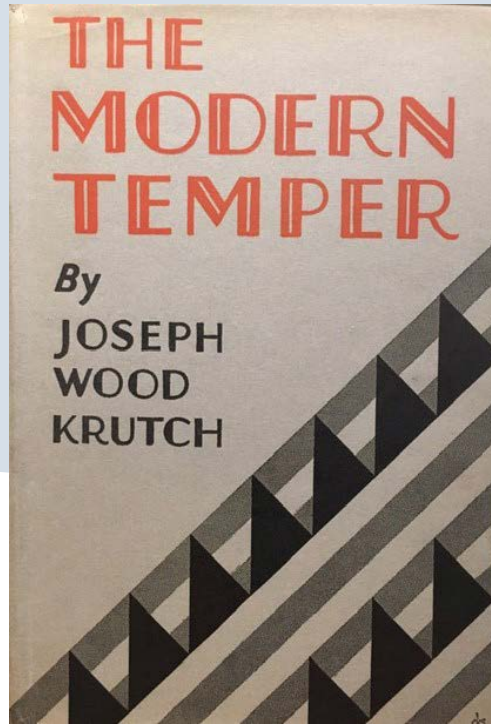


Figure 2. Joseph Wood Krutch's *Modern Temper* (1929), which he called "a study and a confession," lamented the loss of ultimate questions in modern thought.

been rendered just another mean creature trapped in nature's "blind thirst for life." The only difference between him and nonhuman creatures is that he is cursed with the consciousness of being in a world inhospitable to his craving for moral orientation and meaning. Krutch thundered:

God, instead of disappearing in an instant, has retreated step by step and surrendered gradually his control of the universe [T]he role which he plays grows less and less, and man is left more and more alone in a universe to which he is completely alien. His world was once, like the child's world, three-quarters myth and poetry. His teleological concepts molded it into a form which he could appreciate and he gave to it moral laws which would make it meaningful, but step by step the outlines of nature have thrust themselves upon him, and for the dream which he made is substituted a reality devoid of any pattern which he can understand.

For Krutch, no degree of intellectual modernization will keep man from being an "ethical animal." And yet the problem with modern knowledge was that it yielded an image of "a universe which contains no ethical element."¹⁵

¹⁵ Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper* (New York, 1929), 87, 7-8, 10.

16 Ibid., 32-33. It would be another thirty years before C.P. Snow would introduce his notion of the "two cultures." But in *Modern Temper*, Krutch worked so powerfully with literary imagery and made such an urgent case for the power of the literary imagination that it helped set the terms for debates for the coming century about the need for humanistic modes of inquiry, and with them, the practice of posing open questions without absolute answers.

17 Ibid., 101, 168-69.

Krutch's *Modern Temper* is Max Weber's "disenchantment of the world" on steroids and depressants. It took a dark view of the consequences of modern scientific culture for the human types in its wake. Modern industrial society created the human being who will "perform without question the part assigned to him in the division of labor." This modern society "owes both its stability and efficient harmony to the absence of any tendency on the part of individuals ... to question the value of existence." For Krutch, to question is human, but in a thoroughly naturalistic worldview, the human is just another creepy, crawly creature, whose tendency to ask questions about "the human condition" is nothing more than a burden for his smooth functioning. For Krutch, then, the modern world is more hospitable to the ant than to man. "When a man looks at an ant he realizes the meaning of his humanity." After all, the ant has "no art and no philosophy," but this is all to the good because these two forms of human inquiry and expression have no place in the modern world.¹⁶

Krutch's "confession" may best be understood as a protest not only against transformations in modern knowledge but also against the sorts of inquiry deemed legitimate for the modern mind. "As soon as one begins to raise a question as to the purpose of life," he averred, "then the problem of conducting that life ceases to be merely a problem of technique and begins to involve certain ultimate questions concerning the end which we wish to reach or concerning what may properly be called success in life." Krutch seemed convinced that the universe did not much care to respond to humans' pesky and outmoded ultimate questions, but "at least ... we have discovered the trick which has been played upon us and that whatever else we may be we are no longer dupes." *The Modern Temper* thus ends on ultimate questions as a form of protest: "Ours is a lost cause and there is no place for us in the natural universe, but we are not, for all that, sorry to be human. We should rather die as men than live as animals."¹⁷

Ultimate Question 2: *Look up at the Sky. Ask Yourself: is it yes or no?*

Over the course of the twentieth century, ultimate questions have taken strange forms, and they have been posed by strange figures, both real and imagined. There is no straight line from Joseph Wood Krutch's interwar social criticism to the mid-century burgeoning children's book industry in the United States. And yet the case of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry suggests that American and European authors who built a career writing for adults came to identify writing for young readers as a legitimate mode of yearning for the unknowable. Some of the more notable examples of twentieth-century authors who made their fame writing for adults before writing a book (or more) for children include Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, C.S. Lewis, E.B. White, Aldous Huxley, James Baldwin, and Ken Kesey. Saint-Exupéry is particularly striking because, unlike the others, he is best known as a children's book author (though his entire corpus, with the exception of *The Little Prince*, was written for adults). Why the pivot to a children's book? Because, according to Saint-Exupéry, only children were still allowed to "look up at the sky" and ask the impossible.¹⁸

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's 1943 *The Little Prince* is one of many examples of the migration of ultimate questions into twentieth-century children's literature.¹⁹ Saint-Exupéry had made a name for himself with his novel *Vol de Nuit* [*Night Flight*] in 1931 and continued to build an international reputation with his memoirs *Terre des hommes* [with the title *Wind, Sand and Stars* in English translation] in 1939, and *Pilote de guerre* [*Flight to Arras*] in 1942. But faced with fragile health, disconsolate in his unintended exile in New York City, unable to speak English but also unable to publish back in Vichy France (where his works had been banned), and thoroughly dispirited with a world again at war, Saint-Exupéry took refuge in "the child's world [of] myth and poetry,"

¹⁸ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, transl. Katherine Woods (New York, 1943), 91.

¹⁹ Though drawing out the authors' varying commercial incentives and artistic desires to write a children's book are often difficult, few of these authors seem to have made the choice because of an overwhelming desire to write for children. Rather, it was because the conceit of a children's book allowed them to ask ethical and even existential questions they felt they could not ask in their work otherwise. See: Marilyn Apseoff, *They Wrote for Children Too: An Annotated Bibliography of Children's Literature by Famous Writers for Adults* (Westport, CT, 1989); "They Also Wrote Children's Books" Exhibit at Grolier Club, NYC, March 2020, <https://vimeo.com/465950963>, accessed January 14, 2022; and Bruce Handy, *Wild Things: The Joy of Reading Children's Literature as an Adult* (New York, 2017). A helpful essay interrogating the concept of "children's literature" both in theory and practice is Marah Gubar, "On Not Defining Children's Literature," *PMLA*, 126 (Jan. 2011): 209-16.

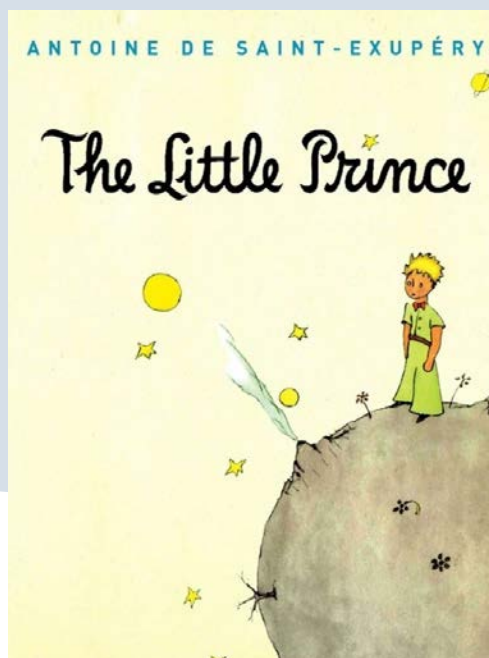


Figure 3. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry wrote *The Little Prince* (1943) for children because “no grown up will ever understand [matters] of so much importance.”

²⁰ Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, 8. For biographical information on Saint-Exupéry, see Stacy Schiff, *Saint-Exupéry: A Biography* (New York, 1994); and Joy D. Marie Robinson, *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry* (Boston, 1984).

which Krutch believed the acids of modernity had destroyed. If, as Krutch saw it, asking “ultimate questions” was no longer really dignified to the stoutly modern, secular mind—if it was time to put away childish things—fine, then: Let a child ask them! And that’s exactly what Saint-Exupéry set out to do. As the narrator of *The Little Prince* puts it: “Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.”²⁰

The story begins with an aviator who is stranded in the desert and encounters a strange little boy—a little prince, who, we learn, hails from Asteroid B-612, which was the size of a house, and where he lived alone with a single rose, three volcanoes, and a pesky infestation of baobab trees. The little prince had what appears to be a lover’s quarrel with a petulant, fragile rose, and takes off with a flock of birds to other planets, where he encounters a king, a conceited man, a drunkard, a businessman, a lamplighter, a geographer—all in some way dehumanized, reduced to their mere functions, unable to break out of their mindless habits and blinkered understanding. All lacked curiosity and a sense of wonder. He then makes it to Earth where he discovers that all the problems of these other

planets are scaled up—and with them, the sense of wonder and existential comforts are scaled down.²¹

The Little Prince is crowded with ultimate concerns. But it raises questions and then provides tantalizingly, frustratingly, incomplete answers. Why the crazy plague of baobab trees? It's not clear, but what is clear is that the little prince has to take good care of his planet or else it will be destroyed. Why the love of a single, demanding flower—especially when he learns there are so many more he can choose from on Planet Earth? It's not clear, but surely he learns that love doesn't need explanations; what it does need, however, is care. The little prince meets a fox who wants the prince to tame him: "One only understands the things that one tames," said the fox. "Men have no more time to understand anything. They buy things all ready made at the shops. But there is no shop anywhere where one can buy friendship, and so men have no friends any more. If you want a friend, tame me." This sly fox also tells the little prince a hint about the unknowable: "What is essential is invisible to the eye."²²

The Little Prince is also a meditation on the frustration of yearning for answers to questions and not getting them. Curiosity is essential, but it is often greeted by an inscrutable, reticent universe. There is a scene where the little prince climbs a high mountain on this strange planet called Earth, and says to the universe "Good morning," and hears in response: "Good morning-good morning." "'Who are you?' says the little prince." "'Who are you—Who-are you—who are you?' answered the echo." In his innocence, the little prince calls out: "Be my friends, I am all alone," thinking that the voices are coming from a number of children. "'I am all alone—all alone—all alone,' answered the echo." Saint-Exupéry here shows the same indignity as Krutch, where the earnest inquirer calls out to an indifferent universe and receives no answer, only an echo.²³

The *Little Prince* opens with a line that was shared by other authors who turned to children's literature to ask their

²¹ The published version ends with a somewhat mysterious, open-ended conclusion, but Saint-Exupéry experimented with a more "agonized and melancholy" conclusion, confessing the torments and trauma of war. Ula Ilyntzky, "The Little Prince: A New York Story," *Washington Post* (January 10, 2014), https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/the-little-prince-a-new-york-story/2014/01/09/2763abf2-77cf-11e3-8963-b4b654bcc9b2_story.html, accessed February 25, 2022.

²² Antoine de St. Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, transl. Katherine Woods (New York, 1943), 67, 70.

²³ *Ibid.*, 61. For a similar treatment of earnest questions answered by echoes, see: Thomas Carlyle's chapter 7 "The Everlasting 'No,'" in *Sartor Resartus* (1836): "Thus has the bewildered Wanderer to stand, as so many have done, shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receive no Answer but an Echo." <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1051/1051-h/1051-h.htm>, accessed February 26, 2022.

24 Ibid., from the book's dedication to Leon Werth.

25 On clues to Saint-Exupéry's mysterious disappearance, see John Tagliabue "Clues to the Mystery of a Writer Pilot Who Disappeared," *New York Times* (April 11, 2008) <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/11/world/europe/11exupery.html>, accessed February 24, 2022.

26 Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley, 2000). The United States has arguably become even more religious since then. According to a Pew research poll of 2017, "the vast majority [90%] believe in some kind of higher power [with 56% believing in "God as described in the Bible"]. Dalia Fahmy, "Key Findings about Americans' Belief in God" (April 25, 2018), from the Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/25/key-findings-about-americans-belief-in-god>, accessed February 28, 2022. Nevertheless, Wuthnow himself gives us good reason to greet poll numbers on religious belief and affiliation with some skepticism in his *Inventing American Religion: Polls, Surveys, and the Tenuous Quest for a Nation's Faith* (New York, 2015).

ultimate questions: "All grown-ups were once children—although few of them remember it."²⁴ This line—like the little book from which it came—is singular. But the move its author made—using the garb of childhood innocence and curiosity to hunger after the unknowable—became increasingly popular, though few of these other experiments would achieve even a tiny fraction of *The Little Prince's* critical and commercial success. Saint-Exupéry would not live long enough to see his book in print, nor to discover that it would be translated into 250 languages and become the second most read book worldwide since its 1943 publication. He left America in April 1943 to join a French squadron in Algeria, and a year later went missing on a reconnaissance mission that departed from Corsica on July 31, 1944, never to be heard from again.²⁵

Ultimate Question 3: *Is God Dead?; Or, What are the limits of a "holy curiosity"?*

Joseph Wood Krutch's secular apologia for faith was premature. God did not "retreat step by step" from twentieth-century moral imaginations. So when editors at *Time* magazine ran a stark black-and-red cover on April 8, 1966 asking: "Is God Dead?" (referring to its lead article about a small circle of "death of God" theologians), they knew full well that their readers would answer—with more than a touch of outrage—in the negative. (And they, of course, counted on this outrage to help catalyze brisk sales). They knew that the question was provocative rather than sincere because they ran it at a time when religious affiliation in the United States was, by many measures, on the rise.²⁶

Despite the surge in religiosity, several of the most prominent mid-century religious intellectuals in the United States felt pressed to defend their abiding commitment to a theistic universe, especially in light of the Holocaust, the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and the widespread devastation of the Second World War. It is at this time that we see stirring defenses of religion by clergy and theologians, who main-

tained that the horrors and dislocations of the twentieth-century world demanded the continual reckoning with the unknowable. For theologian and Civil Rights activist Howard Thurman, “suffering ... [is a] vast but solitary arena. It is here that [the person] faces the authentic adversary. He looks into the depth of the abyss of life and raises the ultimate question about the meaning of existence. He comes face to face with whatever is his conception of ultimate authority, his God.”²⁷ Polish émigré rabbi and Civil Rights activist Abraham Joshua Heschel maintained that “the realm of the ineffable rather than speculation is the climate in which the ultimate question comes into being, and in its natural abode ... the question must be studied.”²⁸ And the exiled German Protestant theologian Paul Tillich insisted that “religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life.”²⁹ Though coming from different faith traditions, all these religious thinkers sought to demonstrate that religious faith was the natural home of ultimate questions about the self (or soul) and the world, neither of which could be usurped by science.³⁰

Though the United States remained a deeply pious country, the modern sciences, with their capacity to map the universe, the human psyche, and genetic codes, enjoyed deep and widespread reverence as well. Many Americans still hungered after what they regarded as unknowable, but they sought guidance on their “ultimate questions” from professional scientists.³¹ No

³¹ Works that have been helpful to me in conceptualizing the role and social location of professional scientists as public moralists include Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life*

in Britain, 1850-1930 (Oxford, 1993); Nancy Lutkehaus, *Margaret Mead: The Making of an American Icon* (Princeton, NJ, 2009); Ira Katznelson, “The Professional Scholar as Public Intellectual: Reflections Prompted

by Karl Mannheim, Robert K. Merton, and C. Wright Mills,” in *The Public Intellectual: Between Philosophy and Politics*, ed. Arthur Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Lanham, MD, 2003), 189-200;

²⁷ Howard Thurman, “Suffering” (1963) in Thurman, *The Strange Freedom: The Best of Howard Thurman on Religious Experience and Public Life*, ed. Walter Earl Fluker and Catherine Tumber (Boston, 1998), 45.

²⁸ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* (New York, 1976), 59.

²⁹ For Paul Tillich on “ultimate concern” (and the ambiguities in his different uses of the phrase), see: *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Chicago, 1951) and *Dynamics of Faith* (New York, 1957).

³⁰ Heschel points out that “the moment we utter the name of God we leave the level of scientific thinking and enter the realm of the ineffable. Such a step is one which we cannot take scientifically, since it transcends the boundaries of all that is given. It is in spite of all warnings that man has never ceased to be stirred by ultimate questions. Science cannot silence him, because scientific terms are meaningless to the spirit that raises these questions, meaningless to the concern for a truth greater than the world that science is engaged in exploring.” (*God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* [New York, 1955], 102.)

Declan Fahy, "A Brief History of Scientific Celebrity," in *The New Celebrity Scientists: Out of the Lab and Into the Limelight* (Lanham, MD, 2015), 1-17; David Hecht, "Constructing a Scientist: Expert Authority and Public Images of Rachel Carson," *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 41 (Summer 2011): 277-302; David Hecht, "The Atomic Hero: Robert Oppenheimer and the Making of Scientific Icons in the Early Cold War," *Technology and Culture* 49 (October 2008): 943-66; and Britta Scheideler, "The Scientist as Moral Authority: Albert Einstein Between Elitism and Democracy, 1914-1933," *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 32 (March 2002): 319-46.

32 Jane Goodall, *In the Shadow of Man* (Boston, 1971), 251.

doubt, after the shocks and horrors of the Second World War, an increasing number of commentators looked at the atomic bomb as an example of the amoral—even immoral—arrogance of science to prostrate itself and turn its discoveries into technologies of doom and destruction. Just as religious commentators felt pressed to defend their tenacious faith in God, professional scientists felt called to account for the role of science in making such widespread devastation possible. They were called to account not only for the "hows" of the world (that is the workings of the world), but also, and more importantly for the "whys" (that is, questions of meaning).

Many of the marquee figures of post-World War II modern science were sought out by their publics to provide answers to their "ultimate questions." Theoretical physicists Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer; physician and medical researcher Jonas Salk; anthropologists Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, and Ashley Montagu; primatologist Jane Goodall; mathematician Jacob Bronowski; astronomer Carl Sagan; and biologist E.O. Wilson all understood that lay audiences turned to them as their "North Star" for the question whether the unknown would always remain unknowable. Some of these scientists reluctantly and others with great gusto explained how their scientific discoveries offered perspectives on human ethics even if the subject of their research had nothing to do with human ethics, or even human beings for that matter. Lay audiences often turned to Goodall, for example, not for information on chimpanzees in Tanzania but rather for what living among chimpanzees in Tanzania had taught her about what it means to be human. (One of her answers was that humans, unlike their chimp relatives, ask the "whys" of their existence: "Man demands an explanation of the mystery of his being and the wonder of the world around him and the cosmos above him."³²) Similarly, lay audiences often turned to Carl Sagan not for an explanation of the formation of the stars but rather how his understanding of space, time, motion, and matter could help human beings explain themselves to themselves.

Einstein, in particular, was repeatedly asked how—or if—he reconciled his scientific theories with a view of the divine, and he was repeatedly prodded to reconcile them for others. While he encouraged readers to “never lose a holy curiosity,” Einstein was unabashed in reminding them that even the holiest of curiosities will not fully break open the structure of ultimate reality.³³ As he put it in a letter to an Oberlin College student, who in 1951 asked him the ultimate question “Why are we alive?”: “The question ‘Why’ in the human sphere is easy to answer: to create satisfaction for ourself and for other people. In the extra-human sphere the question has no meaning. Also the belief in God is no way out for in this case you may ask ‘Why God.’”³⁴

A rather charming example of how lay audiences turned to Einstein to help them answer their ultimate questions can be found in a letter written by a young girl named Phyllis, from the Riverside Church in Manhattan in 1936. Addressed to “My dear Dr. Einstein,” her letter shared that:

We have brought up the question: Do scientists pray? in our Sunday school class. It began by asking whether we could believe in both science and religion

We will feel greatly honored if you will answer our question: Do scientists pray, and what do they pray for?

We are in the sixth grade, Miss Ellis’s class.

Respectfully yours,
Phyllis

Less than a week later, on January 24, 1936, Einstein penned Phyllis a reply:

Dear Phyllis,

I will attempt to reply to your question as simply as I can.
Here is my answer:

³³ Albert Einstein, as quoted in “Death of a Genius: His fourth dimension, time, overtakes Einstein,” *Time* (May 2, 1955), <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,866292,00.html>, accessed February 28, 2022.

³⁴ Albert Einstein to Marion Block, April 28, 1951 as documented in *themarginalian.org*, <https://www.themarginalian.org/2013/11/27/einstein-on-why-we-are-alive/>, accessed March 1, 2022.

35 This exchange is documented in Alice Calaprice, *Dear Professor Einstein: Albert Einstein's Letters to and from Children* (Amherst, NY, 2002), 127-29.

Scientists believe that every occurrence, including the affairs of human beings, is due to the laws of nature. Therefore a scientist cannot be inclined to believe that the course of events can be influenced by prayer, that is, by a supernaturally manifested wish.

However, we must concede that our actual knowledge of these forces is imperfect, so that in the end the belief in the existence of a final, ultimate spirit rests on a kind of faith. Such belief remains widespread even with the current achievements in science.

But also, everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that some spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe, one that is vastly superior to that of man. In this way the pursuit of science leads to a religious feeling of a special sort, which is surely quite different from the religiosity of someone more naive.

With cordial greetings,
your A. Einstein³⁵

Alas, not all of Einstein's answers were so agreeable. Take, for example, his response to a father named Robert Marcus who wrote him on February 9, 1950 asking him the impossible: *is there an afterlife?* The father wrote:

Last summer my 11-year-old son died of polio ... His death has shattered the very structure of my existence, my very life has become an almost meaningless void, for all my dreams and aspirations were somehow associated with his future and his strivings. I have tried during the past months to find comfort for my anguished spirit, a measure of solace to help me bear the agony of losing one dearer than life itself—an innocent, dutiful and gifted child who was the victim of such a cruel fate. I have sought comfort in the belief that man has a spirit which attains immortality—that somehow, my son lives on in a higher world

Marcus added “without immortality the world is moral chaos,” and then pleaded with Einstein:

I write you all this because I have read your volume *The World as I See It*. On page 5 you stated: “Any individual who should survive his physical death is beyond my comprehension Such emotions are for the fears or absurd egoism of feeble souls.” And I inquire in the spirit of desperation, is there in your view no comfort, no consolation for what has happened ... [to] my beautiful darling child?

May I have a word from you? I need your help badly.

Sincerely yours, Robert S Marcus

Einstein wrote back three days later on February 12, 1950:

Dear Dr. Marcus:

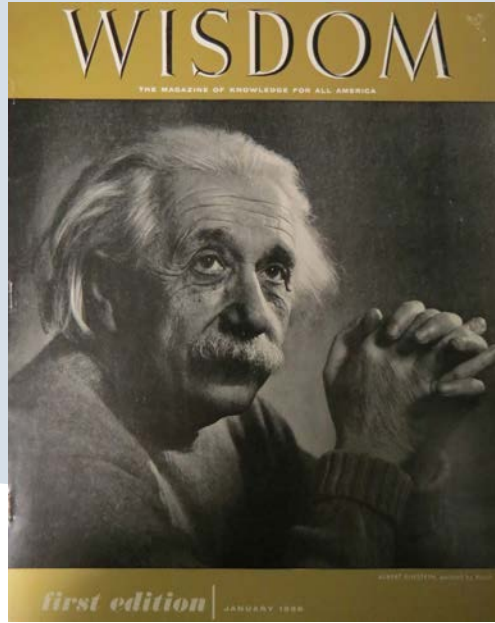
A human being is part of the whole, called by us “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. The striving to free oneself from this delusion is the one issue of true religion. Not to nourish the delusion but to try to overcome it is the way to reach the attainable measure of peace of mind.

With my best wishes, sincerely yours,
Albert Einstein³⁶

Einstein responded here not to any grieving father, but a grieving father who also happened to be a rabbi. Dr. Robert S. Marcus was also known as *Rabbi* Robert S. Marcus, who was ordained in 1931 and served an Orthodox congregation before leaving to work at the American Jewish Congress and eventually as an Army chaplain during the Second World War. Rabbi Marcus was one of the first chaplains to gain access to Buchenwald and help in its liberation in April of 1945. During its liberation, he discovered 904 Jewish orphans at the camp,

36 Marcus's and Einstein's letter exchange is documented in Naomi Levy's *Einstein and the Rabbi: Searching for the Soul* (New York, 2017).

Figures 4 & 5. Albert Einstein's presence on the inaugural issue of *Wisdom* magazine (1956) shows how lay audiences thought of him: as a source of timeless wisdom. Clearly some religious audiences did as well, as we see in Einstein's inclusion among saints in the façade of the Riverside Church in Manhattan, built in 1930. Young Phyllis attended Sunday school at the church, and so she and her sixth-grade classmates likely passed by "St. Albert" every week.



37 For the fuller treatment of Marcus's biography, see: "Reviving Souls" in *ibid.*, 15-22.

who were hidden by the adult inmates. Marcus made it his mission to care for the children (among them was a young Elie Wiesel) and provide them all safe passage out of Germany and to adoptive homes. After the war, Marcus became the political director of the World Jewish Congress, and from there one of the WJC's representatives at the United Nations. It was in 1949, as he was en route to France to do advocacy work on behalf of European Jews, when he got word that all three of his children back home had been infected with polio, and his eldest son, age 11, did not survive. To process his grief, he wrote to Einstein.

To be sure, any father who loses a child would be desperate for answers whether there is a moral order to the universe, whether the soul is immortal, whether God exists, and if so, whether that God is just and benevolent. But the astonishing fact that this particular father was an Orthodox Jewish rabbi (not to mention that he experienced firsthand the horrors of the Nazi genocide, which Einstein himself escaped), makes an already heart-rending exchange almost excruciating to behold. Why Marcus thought a secular physicist would have answers about the afterlife when he could have turned to his own faith tradition to find them, we will never know. Eleven months after receiving Einstein's letter, Rabbi Marcus died of a heart attack at the age of 41.³⁷



Ultimate Question 4: “What (a piece of work) is man?,” revisited

Let us now meet up with Joseph Wood Krutch again, because his intellectual trajectory enables us to see how, in the twentieth century, ultimate questions often transformed themselves along with the thinkers who posed them. In 1950, the same year that Einstein shared with Marcus his conviction that the “human being is part of the whole,” Joseph Wood Krutch moved from New York City to Tucson for a climate and lifestyle more hospitable to the wholeness he was seeking. Krutch had built a vibrant career both as a professor of English at Columbia University and as what we would today call a “public intellectual,” writing a variety of criticism and commentary for nonacademic audiences. While it might seem that coming out with his excessively downbeat *Modern Temper* in the same year as the stock market crash and at the dawn of the global economic crisis and the rising specters of Fascism and Nazism would have turned Krutch into a pretty unpopular writer, those unhappy turns of events likely helped boost his credibility as a sober and discerning thinker. Indeed, Krutch emerged as one of the most esteemed, sought-after intellectuals in interwar American life. All of the books that follow *Modern Temper* in his impressive oeuvre trafficked in ultimate questions. But they

38 Joseph Wood Krutch, *Henry David Thoreau* (New York, 1948), 78.

39 The works of the later Krutch who made his fame (anew) as a nature writer and environmentalist include *The Desert Year* (1951), *The Measure of Man* (1954), *The Voice of the Desert* (1954), *The Grand Canyon* (1957), and more. On Krutch's transformation from literary critic to nature writer and naturalist, see: John Margolis, *Joseph Wood Krutch: A Writer's Life* (Knoxville, 1980); James I. McClintock, "Joseph Wood Krutch, 'Metabiologist'" in *Nature's Kindred Spirits* (Madison, 1994), 46-65; Robert Rowley, "Joseph Wood Krutch: The Forgotten Voice of the Desert," *The American Scholar*, 64 (Summer 1995): 438-43.

changed quite dramatically as Krutch himself changed, thus showing how urgent questions of meaning shapeshifted depending on the larger social, political, and economic contexts in which they were framed, as well as the life course of those asking them.

In the 1940s, Krutch's sensibility and the subjects of his moral inquiry underwent a slow, subtle, but unmistakable transformation. Krutch never backed off from his challenges to what he regarded as the arrogance of modern science, but he did start to appreciate what might be possible with a more naturalistic view of man. That is, he started to look at the natural world and reconsider whether it was so inhospitable to human flourishing after all.

In the 1940s, Krutch embarked on writing a biography of Henry David Thoreau, which helped him reconsider what he called "human nature and the human condition" by reexamining the natural world through his protagonist's eyes. Thoreau's "simple, self-sustaining existence" during his two-year experiment living close to nature at Walden Pond "was not an end in itself." "Thoreau was ... enough of a Transcendentalist to believe that there was also some ultimate truth beyond 'phenomena' and 'actuality' which could be caught only, if at all, by grace of direction, super-rational communication from nature to man."³⁸ Krutch's biography of Thoreau, quickly followed by his first collection of nature writings, *The Twelve Seasons* (1949), marked a striking redirection in his searching prose, and the beginning of a new path as nature writer.³⁹

To be sure, Krutch the nature writer of the 1950s and 1960s remained very much a humanist, never losing his focus on questions about what makes a human life significant. But he no longer used the disparaging image of the feverish anthill to think about modern humanity, and instead adopted a lyrical vision of birds. He began to examine the sublime pleasures of being part of the natural world, and noted that having a place



Figure 6. Joseph Wood Krutch in Tucson, Arizona ca. 1960, making a home in nature and a space for “meaningless” questions. Courtesy of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

within “the great chain of life” warranted awe and reverence rather than fear and trembling.⁴⁰ Exchanging a language of declension for interconnectedness, Krutch observed that “one of the most striking aspects of the human condition is the simple fact that we share the earth with a vast number and a vast variety of other living things.”⁴¹ Thus Krutch delighted in the “intricate marvel” of the desert toad and the ragged landscapes of the southwest.⁴² Nature, though, is “more than a tonic.”⁴³ It is a site—and to his mind sturdy evidence—of larger structures of meaning. “Personally, I feel both happier and more secure when I am reminded that I have the backing of something older and perhaps more permanent than I am—the something, I mean, which taught the flower to count to five and the beetle to know that spots are more pleasing if arranged in a definite order. Some of the most important secrets are, they assure me, known to others beside myself.”⁴⁴ Humility, awe, wonder, patience, reverence: these were the lessons of the natural world. This is the Krutch who now wanted moderns to find a home in nature, and even existential consolation in naturalism.

With Krutch’s turn to nature, and with it a more naturalistic perspective, he continued to ask the impossible. However, he

⁴⁰ Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Great Chain of Life* (Boston, 1957).

⁴¹ Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Best Nature Writing of Joseph Wood Krutch* (New York, 1969), 14.

⁴² Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Best of Two Worlds* (New York, 1950), 170.

⁴³ Krutch, *The Best Nature Writing*, 14, 251.

⁴⁴ Krutch, *The Best of Two Worlds*, 170, 128.

45 Krutch, *Best Nature Writing*, 346; Joseph Wood Krutch, "Conservation is not Enough!," *American Scholar* (Summer 1954): 295-305.

46 Joseph Wood Krutch, "The Meaning of the Meaningless Question," in *Human Nature and the Human Condition* (New York, 1959), 155-67.

no longer sought a God's eye view—or even a disenchanting modern's human eye view—but rather a perspective attentive to the interdependence of the human and nonhuman world. While awareness of the interconnectedness of man and nature can be psychologically consoling and aesthetically enlivening, for Krutch it also came with an urgent moral imperative to recognize that human beings are "the most dangerous predator[s]" putting other species and themselves at grave risk, and that "conservation is not enough."⁴⁵

For the naturalist Krutch, "What [a piece of work] is man?" no longer stood as the ultimate of ultimate questions, gripping his moral imagination. Nevertheless, he remained defiant in his endorsement of "the meaning of the meaningless question," arguing that to narrow the scope of modern inquiry only to questions that have verifiable, reproducible answers, is to narrow moderns' "field of competence [to] technology rather than what used to be called wisdom."⁴⁶ This Krutch was more ecumenical in terms of his appreciation of impossible questions; but he was quite sure whatever they asked, that their answers must widen the field for epistemic humility and a humanism that embraces naturalism.

Conclusion

The handful of philosophers (James and Russell), literary and social critics (Krutch, 1.0), children's book authors (Saint-Exupéry), religious and scientific public moralists (Heschel, Thurman, Tillich, Goodall, and Einstein), and environmentalists (Krutch 2.0), examined here offers nothing more than a tiny and imperfect sampling of the variety of twentieth-century American and European intellectuals who navigated the persistent yearning to ask ultimate questions, either of themselves or on behalf of others. Though they recognized the impossibility of answering ultimate questions with ultimate answers, they nevertheless recognized their importance for living the examined life. Indeed, some went so far as to

suggest that only the most impossible questions warranted our attention. As Milan Kundera put it in *Nesnesitelná lehkost bytí*⁴⁷ [*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*] (1984): “The only truly serious questions are ones that even a child can formulate. Only the most naïve of questions are truly serious. They are the questions with no answers. A question with no answer is a barrier that cannot be breached. In other words, it is a question with no answers that set the limits of human possibilities, describe the boundaries of human existence.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The novel was first published in French translation as *L'insoutenable légèreté de l'être*.

⁴⁸ Milan Kundera, *Unbearable Lightness of Being*, transl. Michael Henry Heim (New York, 1984), 139.

It is not hard to imagine Kundera in conversation with the other thinkers explored here. We can envision him and Krutch in firm agreement that ultimate questions help us to understand the borders of our shared humanity. We can imagine that Einstein might partly agree, noting that a “holy curiosity” can push at the boundaries of what is knowable and unknowable and might show us that there are indeed verifiable answers to some of our impossible questions. Or we might imagine Saint-Exupéry reformulating Kundera’s claim by saying that *only children* are willing to ask the serious questions, whereas adults forgot how to do so. As we eavesdrop on these imagined conversations, we can hear the specific conditions of their historical moment pressing their felt urgency into a distinct form and mode of expression. In this give-and-take, we can see how some of the most urgent existential questions of the twentieth century took their particular and often peculiar shape in response to crisis. For the earlier Krutch it was the crisis of “modernity,” for Saint-Exupéry it was the crisis of the Second World War, for the later Krutch it was the creeping environmental crisis in the United States, and a nation not yet awakened to its threat, and for Kundera, it was a response to the Soviet crushing of the Prague Spring, his forced exile, or both.

Ultimate questions in the twenty-first century are similarly born of crisis. But unlike earlier iterations, one of the most urgent questions of our own time in fact has answers that are neither unknown nor unknowable but are right in front of us, with blazing clarity. Though we may still need a child to pose them. After all, it is the teenage Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg who is

Figure 7. Greta Thunberg posed the ultimate question of our day, pressing adults who had bequeathed their children a broken planet. “We deserve a safe future. And we demand a safe future. Is that too much to ask?”



49 Greta Thunberg, Speech at New York Climate Strike (September 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/video/2019/sep/21/we-will-make-them-hear-us-greta-thunbergs-speech-to-new-york-climate-strike-video>, accessed February 27, 2022.

challenging us with the ultimate of ultimate questions today. “We deserve a safe future. And we demand a safe future,” she maintained in 2019, fed up with adults who are passing onto her and the world’s children a devastated planet. “Is that too much to ask?”⁴⁹

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“Contact” Embodied: German Colonialism, New Guinean Women, and the Everyday Exploitation of a Labor Force, 1884-1914

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Born in 1910 on Maron Island, a small island in the Western Pacific, Natalie Wahlen—or “Nati,” as she was known—would later recall:

My mother was one of his young virgins—all Germans did that, all the colonial white men, and they had to be virgins—it is nothing, why do white men make so much of it? They had to be beautiful as well as virgins. They went to the village chiefs, the *lululai* [sic] or *kukurai*, and they would buy them, usually two or three at a time—often swapped them for an axe or a gun. Those bloody Germans, they had the time of their lives, five or six women feeding them, waiting on them, and the women liked saying they “belonged to So-and-So Master,” and getting new things.¹

¹ Natalie Wahlen, quoted in Jan Roberts, *Voices from a Lost World: Australian Women and Children in Papua New Guinea before the Japanese Invasion* (Alexandria, NSW, 1996), 109.

Today part of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, at the time of Nati’s birth Maron Island was part of what Imperial Germany designated the “Protectorate of German New Guinea.” The “he” to whom Nati referred was a German

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2 Seminal works are Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, 1997); Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor, 1998).

businessman and colonist who established extensive commercial plantations in the islands of German New Guinea, some eight thousand miles away from his hometown of Hamburg. He was also, as Nati's Germanic last name suggests, her estranged father. Nati's mother—"one of his young virgins"—was an Islander woman known to the historical record only as Avi. She was among a large group of Islanders transported to Maron to fulfill the German colonist's desire for plantation laborers. Nati's mother was, in other words, likely a laborer on Nati's father's vast plantation estate.

Nati Wahlen's story touches upon a number of the central issues addressed in this article and my research more broadly. For instance, by dismissing white men's apparent preoccupation with Islander women's virginity as "nothing," Nati gestures to cultural contingencies surrounding understandings of gender and sexuality. In observing that these men would "buy" women, often in exchange for trade goods like guns, she draws our attention to ways in which white, European men promoted ideas and practices that worked to commodify Islander women. Noting the domestic labors that these "young virgins" were expected to perform in the service of "colonial white men," Nati highlights the profound linkages between Islander women's economic and sexual exploitation under German colonial rule. But crucially, too, she suggests some of the ways in which New Guinean women were able to navigate a colonial situation that was complex, coercive, and often violent.

Germany's colonial pasts and their legacies have received growing scholarly attention since the 1990s. In recent decades, important research has challenged an older orthodoxy that considered German colonialism to be a marginal affair; one that was, at least, largely inconsequential to the history of the German nation state. As scholars have now demonstrated, "colonial fantasies" abounded in German imaginaries before, during, and after Germany's tenure as a formal colonial power.²

A wealth of important works now detail the multiple ways in which empire informed national identities, parliamentary politics, scientific knowledge, artistic production, and all manner of popular culture in modern Germany. This growing body of research has powerfully demonstrated that the presence of German and European overseas empire resonated loudly within metropolitan society.

These valuable studies have shed much-needed light on histories of German colonialism. Yet, in focusing largely on white metropolitan and settler colonial contexts, existing scholarship has also (re)produced some historiographical asymmetries and lacunae. As the historian and Africanist Jürgen Zimmerer cautioned over a decade ago now, a focus on European imperial interests and mentalities, while important, is not sufficient to understanding histories of colonialism.³ This is in part because, as Pacific anthropologist Nicholas Thomas has demonstrated, colonialism is marked by entanglements. These are entanglements of peoples, ideas, objects, and power.⁴ The perspectives of colonial subjects and their experiences of these entanglements are therefore vital to understanding colonial processes, practices, and legacies. And there are stakes to omitting the experiences, stories, and histories of those whom Europe claimed as colonial subjects from histories of colonialism. As the Papua New Guinean historian Anne Dickson-Waiko has argued, without a reckoning with its “colonised other,” Europe again centers itself within narratives of empire—this time staking its claim to the “post-colonial” on the exclusion of its former colonial subjects.⁵

Propelled by these concerns, my research shifts the focus away from the metropole and toward sites of on-the-ground encounter and interaction that constituted the “everyday” in a German colonial situation. It is an approach that resonates with Matthew Fitzpatrick and Peter Monteath’s recent call for “microhistories of German frontier entanglements” that are attentive to the broad range of European and non-European

³ Jürgen Zimmerer, in Lora Wildenthal et al., “Forum: The German Colonial Imagination,” *German History* 26, no. 2 (2008): 253.

⁴ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA, 1991).

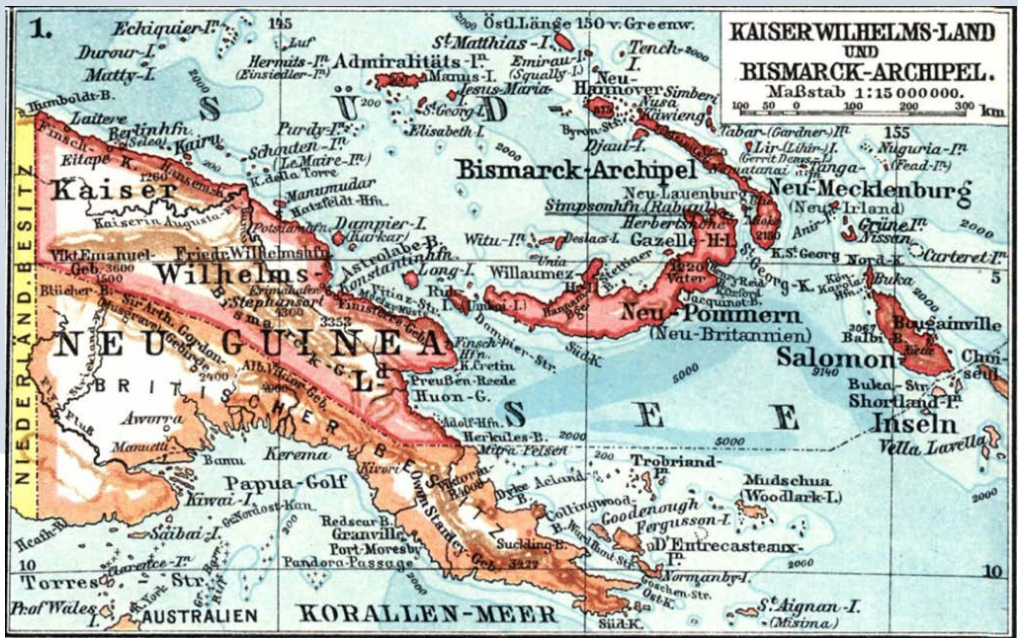
⁵ Anne Dickson-Waiko, “Colonial Enclaves and Domestic Spaces in British New Guinea,” in *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, eds. Kate Darian Smith, Patricia Grimshaw, and Stuart Macintyre (Carlton, 2007), 206.

⁶ Matthew P. Fitzpatrick and Peter Monteath, "The Savagery of Empire," in *Savage Worlds: German Encounters Abroad, 1798-1914*, eds. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick and Peter Monteath (Manchester, 2018), 2.

⁷ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, "Postscript: Bodies, Genders, Empires: Reimagining World Histories," in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham, 2005), 406. Also see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992).

actors whose everyday interactions shaped German colonialism in diverse ways.⁶ Informed by a theoretical literature that understands the colony as a site of "contact," and considers bodies in—and *as*—colonial contact zones, my research advances a methodological approach that centers *embodied* experiences of colonial rule. Gender emerges as a key category of historical inquiry because, as Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton have argued, colonialism "produces gender itself as a terrain of contested power."⁷ Drawing attention to the corporeal, this approach allows for an understanding of subaltern women's highly embodied experiences of colonial power in multiple, concrete, and heterogenous sites of colonial interaction.

In this article, I begin by laying out some of the key historical, historiographical, and methodological contexts and considerations of my research. From a brief sketch of Germany's annexation of the New Guinea islands and efforts to mobilize an indigenous labor force to serve foreign interests in the colony, I turn to the kinds of archives that these endeavors gave rise to. I argue that although imperial archives and much subsequent scholarship have worked to efface Islander women, women's presence in the German colonial labor indenture is one that must be reckoned with if we are to more fully understand how German colonialism operated in policy and practice. Turning to analysis of white colonial men's constructions of Islander women as "commodity" items within vernacular societies, the following section examines how a legitimizing narrative of empire was both highly gendered and embedded in understandings of labor. Finally, this article turns to the ways in which these narratives and logics manifested on the ground, foregrounding New Guinean women's experiences of German colonial rule. Drawing attention to instances of abduction, assault, sexual exploitation, and rape, I seek to shed new and vital light on dense entanglements of gender, labor, sexuality, and violence that constituted daily life in the German colony.



I. German Colonialism, New Guinean Women, and the Archive

Germans began raising the imperial flag on the New Guinea islands in 1884, the same year that Imperial Germany also claimed colonial holdings in Africa, China, and elsewhere in the Pacific. Germany's annexation of the islands was formalized in May 1885, when the German New Guinea Company was granted an imperial charter to rule the islands. Under German colonial rule, the northeastern part of the island of New Guinea was named Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, after the German emperor, and the island chain to the east became known as the Bismarck Archipelago, after the German chancellor. The major islands of the Bismarck Archipelago were renamed Neu Pommern and Neu Mecklenburg, after the regions in northern Germany. By the time of German annexation, several German commercial firms had already established trading stations in the Bismarck Archipelago. Also by that time, many New Guineans were familiar with the European colonial system of indentured labor known as the "Pacific labor trade." For several decades already, New Guineans had served as "cheap" migrant laborers within this system, which transported them from their homes to serve expanding European economic and imperial interests across the Pacific. Principally,

Figure 1. A map of German New Guinea. Germans named the northeastern part of mainland New Guinea "Kaiser-Wilhelmsland," after the German emperor, and the island chain to the east became the Bismarck Archipelago, after the German chancellor. The major islands of the Archipelago became Neu Pommern and Neu Mecklenburg, after the regions in northern Germany. <http://www.dcstamps.com/german-new-guinea/>

⁸ See, for example, "Mittheilungen für Ansiedler aus dem Schutzgebiet von Deutsch-Neu-Guinea," sent by the governor of German New Guinea, Albert Hahl, to the Colonial Division of the Foreign Office, Berlin, October 2, 1901, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArch): Reichskolonialamt; R 1001/2262, 25.

⁹ Stewart Firth, "The Transformation of the Labour Trade in German New Guinea, 1899-1914," *The Journal of Pacific History* 11, no. 2 (1976): 51.

these people worked as plantation laborers in places like Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia, and Samoa.

With the establishment of the German colony, the ruling New Guinea Company closed off the islands to labor recruiters for rival empires. It was evident to the Company that the labors of its newly claimed colonial subjects must serve German imperial interests. The Company thus established its own indenture system in New Guinea. Like the larger Pacific labor trade, the German colonial indenture in New Guinea was a system based on labor migration, relocating New Guineans from their local villages predominantly to work on copra (dried coconut meat) plantations in other parts of the colony. This system was based on a logic shared by the German colonial administration and other European imperial powers that held that Islanders would not feel compelled to labor for whites in their homelands, where they had access to local subsistence economies. Rupturing Islanders' access to the resources they had at home was a necessary step toward exploiting their labor, so the argument went.⁸

Between 1884 and 1914, at least 85,000 New Guineans served as indentured laborers in the German colony, working for plantation and trading companies, the administration, and the missions, typically on a three-year contract. About another 15,000 worked as day laborers.⁹ The vast majority of these laborers were recruited between 1899 and 1914, when a civil administration assumed governance of the colony from New Guinea Company. This was a period marked by the establishment of new government stations, the spread of foreign-owned plantations and the concomitant alienation of New Guinean lands, and increased efforts to "pacify" local populations in and around Germany's expanding colonial settlements. As a plantation colony, the mobilization of an indigenous labor force was *the* central priority of German rule in New Guinea, both under the New Guinea Company and during the later period of civil administration. As German colonial demands for New Guinean laborers grew, efforts to

recruit became increasingly coercive. Under the civil administration, systems of taxation and mandatory and *corvee* labor were implemented, and the administration also appointed village intermediaries (the *luluais* and *kukurais* that Nati Wahlen mentioned) in order to recruit ever-greater numbers of New Guineans into the indentured labor force.¹⁰

Labor is therefore an essential category of analysis for understanding this colonial context. Indeed, as one of the most prevalent modes of colonial entanglement across the Pacific World, labor regimes have been central to many scholarly analyses of German New Guinea and the colonial Pacific more broadly. But gender—that critical “terrain of contested power”—has been largely overlooked in existing historiographies. The tendency thus far has been to treat a majority male labor force as an exclusively male labor force.¹¹ This has worked to obscure the New Guinea women who were also embroiled in colonial labor regimes and to neglect broader considerations of how gender and sexuality informed those regimes.

There are multiple reasons for the persistent silences surrounding German colonialism’s impact on, and entanglements with, indigenous women. One of the reasons for scholarly silences pertaining to indentured women and the gender dynamics within German New Guinea’s labor system is that the imperial archive is complicit in the erasure of subaltern women. The archival traces produced following an encounter between a Russian trader and a New Guinean woman in 1887 are revealing in this regard. During a visit to a Neu Mecklenburg village known as Kures, this trader came across a woman of about twenty-three years of age who was said to go by the name Sialê. The village in which Sialê found herself was far from her home. Her home village of Nusa was some 200 miles away, in Neu Mecklenburg’s northwest. The trader ascertained that Sialê had previously served as an indentured laborer on a plantation in Queensland, Australia. When her indenture had come to an end, a vessel under the supervision of a British government agent was supposed to

¹⁰ Firth, “The Transformation of the Labour Trade,” 51-65.

¹¹ Important exceptions in Pacific history more broadly are Margaret Jolly, “The Forgotten Women: A History of Migrant Labour and Gender Relations in Vanuatu,” *Oceania* 58, no. 2 (1987): 119-139; Kay Saunders, “Melanesian Women in Queensland, 1863-1907: Some Methodological Problems Involving the Relationship between Racism and Sexism,” *Pacific Studies* 4, no. 1 (1980): 26-44; Dorothy Shineberg, *The People Trade: Pacific Island Laborers and New Caledonia, 1865-1930* (Honolulu, 1999), 90-115; Caroline Ralston, “Women Workers in Samoa and Tonga in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Labour in the South Pacific*, eds. Clive Moore, Jacqueline Leckie, and Doug Munro (Townsville, QLD, 1990), 67-77.

12 A. Rosenthal, Barawon, to Georg Schmiele, Mioko, July 26, 1887, BArch: R 1001/2299, 136-137.

13 Georg Schmiele, Kerawara, December 9, 1888, BArch: R 1001/2299, 134-135.

14 Lord Salisbury, Foreign Office, London, to Count Hatzfeldt, July 16, 1888, BArch: R 1001/2299, 100-101; Salisbury to Hatzfeldt, March 14, 1889, BArch: R 1001/2299, 151-155; British Foreign Office to Hatzfeldt, April 9, 1889, BArch: R 1001/2299, 165-167.

repatriate her to her home. However, according to the trader, the ship's crew—themselves from Kures, Neu Mecklenburg—had abducted Sialê, keeping her and her possessions on board the vessel using “threats and violence” before taking her ashore once they reached their home village. By the time of the trader's visit to Kures about a week later, Sialê had been “deprived of her things and offered for sale.” As an outsider, she was taunted and avoided by the women of this village and treated “impudently” by the men.¹²

We can know about Sialê's story because the trader who encountered her reported the matter to a local imperial judge in the employ of the New Guinea Company. The trader first recounted the story in conversation, and then, upon the judge's request, put it in writing. Because of this, we can know Sialê's name (or, at least, how it sounded to the trader). We can know her approximate age, her home village, something about her history as an indentured laborer, and something about what became of her after that. When the judge reported the matter in writing to Berlin, however, he mentioned only in passing that “an English ship had landed a woman in the wrong place in Neu Mecklenburg” where she had become enslaved by the local people.¹³ Both the woman and the place went unnamed in the judge's report. For the judge, and indeed, for the Berlin-based founder of the New Guinea Company (a man who never set foot in the Pacific) the concern was not Sialê or the goings on in the village of Kures. What concerned them was alleged British violations of Germany's claims to sovereignty in its recently acquired Pacific empire. And that included German claims to the labors of its new colonial subjects. As the matter escalated to the level of a diplomatic affair that played out in correspondence between titled men in the metropolitan capitals of Berlin and London, the story of the female laborer named Sialê had receded completely from archival view.¹⁴

The archival erasure of laboring New Guinean women is also evident in the colony's own labor ordinance. This was German New Guinean's principal labor law, dating from 1888,



Figure 2. Images like this one, which was published in 1910 in the German colonial journal *Koloniale Rundschau*, as part of ethnographer Richard Thurnwald's 1910 report titled "The Native Labor Force in the South Sea Protectorate," illustrate New Guinean women's presence as indentured laborers in the German colony. According to the caption, these women were recruited into the indenture from and around Neu Mecklenburg. Richard Thurnwald, "Die eingeborenen Arbeitskräfte im Südseeschutzgebiet," *Koloniale Rundschau* (1910): 623.

governing the recruitment and transportation of indentured Islanders within the German colony. In a draft version of this ordinance, dated July 26, 1887, stipulations were made for the recruitment of "healthy [...] men, women, boys, and girls between the ages of fourteen and sixty" into the colony's indentured labor force.¹⁵ However, the official version of the ordinance, which was enacted on August 15 the following year, was not only less explicit about age requirements, it also erased gender completely as a category pertaining to recruited laborers. With the enactment of the official ordinance, the language of German colonial labor law in New Guinea now read: "Only healthy people, who are sufficiently physically developed and are not frail as a consequence of advanced age may be recruited as laborers."¹⁶ German New Guinea's 1888 labor regulations acknowledged the presence of female laborers only with regards to their accommodations

¹⁵ The draft ordinance, dated July 26, 1887, can be found at BArch: R 1001/2299, 12.

¹⁶ "Verordnung betreffend die Anwerbung und Ausführung von Eingeborenen des Schutzgebietes der Neu Guinea Compagnie als Arbeiter. Vom 15. August 1888, *Nachrichten über Kaiser Wilhelms-Land und den Bismarck-Archipel* (1888): 124.

17 "Verordnung betreffend die Arbeiter-Depôts im Schutzgebiet der Neu Guinea Compagnie. Vom 16. August 1888," *Nachrichten über Kaiser Wilhelms-Land und den Bismarck-Archipel* (1888): 141.

18 Peter Sack and Dymphna Clark, eds. and trans., *German New Guinea: The Annual Reports* (Canberra, 1979), 73.

19 For estimates of percentages of women recruited from the New Guinea islands, see, for example, Jeff Siegel, "Origins of Pacific Islands Labourers in Fiji," *The Journal of Pacific History* 20, no. 1 (1985): 53; J. J. Cummins, Brisbane, to the Prime Minister, November 24, 1921, National Archives of Australia, Canberra (hereafter: NAA): Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Central Office; A4, Correspondence files; NG8.

in the colony's labor depots. Unmarried women and "girls over twelve years of age" were to be provided separate houses, or compartments sectioned off from the men's and families' quarters with "thick walls." The same was to apply to recruited families.¹⁷ It is possible that the "thirty women and girls" who were among the 227 laborers contracted to work in Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen (Madang), on Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, in the early 1890s passed through such accommodations on their way to being "chiefly employed for cleaning and in road maintenance."¹⁸ Given the erasure of gender as a category pertaining to laborers in German New Guinea, exact numbers of female recruits are unknowable. On the basis of available data, however, it is reasonable to estimate that by 1914, at least 4,900 New Guinean women had worked for foreign interests in the colony, laboring on plantations, at trading, government, and mission stations, and in the homes of white colonists, mostly under indenture contracts. It is possible that the number of New Guinean women who served in the German colony's labor force was as high as 8,500.¹⁹

Surviving, fragmentary registers of recruited laborers reveal some further information about female recruits. Figure 3, for example, provides details about five women who were among the twenty-one people recruited aboard the *Zabra* on December 8, 1904. This recruitment register shows that laborer number 5,452 was named Tobein. Her gender is recorded next to her name as "*weiblich*"—female. She was recruited from the village of Kono, on the south coast of Neu Mecklenburg, and was transported to the colonial capital of Herbertshöhe (Kokopo), on the Gazelle Peninsula of Neu Pommern, to serve out a three-year contract laboring for the colonial administration. Three women from the Neu Mecklenburg village of Lamusmus were also recruited that day. Solen was approximately eighteen years old when she was recruited; Solomati and Bayak were both about twenty years old. Kimok was also among the recruits on board the *Zabra*. She was around twenty years of age when she was recruited from Kamalabo, on the west coast of Neu Mecklenburg. As was

Nr. der Dienst- Gemein- schaft	Zus- ätze Nr.	Voller Name des Arbeiters.	Geschlecht.	Alter.	Woh- nort- ge- gen- ständ- liche.	Zeit der Anwer- bung.	Zustand der Ver- pflichtung.	Geburtsort des Arbeiters begl. Ort der Anwerbung			Name und andere Bezeich- nung bei Bestimmungs- ort.	Zust. Schicks. für besten Theile der Arbeiter gemeinlich		Bemerkungen (z. B. betreffend Todesfälle, Geburtsorten u.)
								bei Dienst und Dienstl.	bei Zeit über Blitz.	bei Dienst über bei Zeit		Stamm.	Abkunft.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
54	9	1.	Kapou	weibl.	17 J.	6. h.	Off.	3. h.	Koro (Kallawate) i. d. G.	Neu-Meckl.				
50	2.	2.	Kadim	weibl.	18.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
1	3.	3.	Kuna	weibl.	19.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
2	4.	4.	Tobain	weibl.	10.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
3	5.	5.	Wanarika	weibl.	15.	h.	h.	h.	Lamoran (Neu-Meckl.)	h.				
4	6.	6.	Solen	weibl.	11.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
5	7.	7.	Solomati	weibl.	10.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
6	8.	8.	Bayak	weibl.	10.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
7	9.	9.	Apuan	weibl.	15.	h.	h.	h.	Neiroaran (Neu-Meckl.)	h.				
8	10.	10.	Jerari	weibl.	11.	h.	h.	h.	Lamau (h. h.)	h.				
9	11.	11.	Rongo	weibl.	15.	h.	h.	h.	Mastrunau (h.)	h.				
60	12.	12.	Akan	weibl.	15.	h.	h.	h.	Kamalabo (h.)	h.				
1	13.	13.	Kahuan	weibl.	18.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
2	14.	14.	Kimok	weibl.	10.	h.	h.	h.	h.	h.				
3	15.	15.	Siden	weibl.	20.	h.	h.	h.	Korokoko (Neu-Meckl.)	h.				

the case for most of other recruited men and women aboard the *Zabra* that day, Solen, Solomati, Bayak, and Kimok, like Tobain, were transported to Herbertshöhe to serve out a three-year indenture contract for the colonial administration. Unlike their male counterparts, however, who were offered a monthly wage equivalent to six German marks, these female recruits were offered the equivalent of four marks per month. Always a numerical minority on the plantations and colonial stations and frequently receiving lower wages than their male counterparts, indentured women like these were rendered particularly vulnerable within the labor force and German colonial enclaves alike, both of which were male-dominated spaces.²⁰

Figure 3. Pages from a register of laborers recruited aboard the *Zabra* for the colonial administration in Herbertshöhe in 1904. Details about female laborers, including the Neu Mecklenburg women named Tobain, Solen, Solomati, Bayak, Kimok, emerge from such sources. National Archives of Australia: Imperial Government of German New Guinea; G255, Correspondence files; 566.

²⁰ Vicki Luker, "A Tale of Two Mothers: Colonial Constructions of Indian and Fijian Maternity," *Fijian Studies: A Journal of Contemporary Fiji*, special issue 3, no. 2

(2005): 361. In German New Guinea, the gender disparity in the indenture was much more acute than in Fiji, where British labor regulations mandated that women constitute

at least 40 percent of indentured laborers. The term "colonial enclaves" is from Anne Dickson-Waiko, "Colonial Enclaves and Domestic Spaces in British New Guinea,"

in *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, eds. Kate Darian Smith, Patricia Grimshaw, and Stuart Macintyre (Carlton, 2007), 205-230.

21 Wahlen, quoted in Roberts, *Voices from a Lost World*, 109.

22 Hugo Zöllner, *Deutsch-Neuguinea und meine Ersteigung des Finisterre-Gebirges: Eine Schilderung des ersten erfolgreichen Vordringens zu den Hochgebirgen Inner-Neuguineas, der Natur des Landes, der Sitten der Eingeborenen und des gegenwärtigen Standes der Deutschen Kolonisationsthätigkeit in Kaiser-Wilhelms-Land, Bismarck und Salomoarchipel, nebst einem Wortverzeichnis von 46 Papuasprachen* (Stuttgart, 1891), 295.

23 Zöllner, *Deutsch-Neuguinea*, 295.

II. New Guinean Bridewealth and European Commodity Logics

Within German New Guinea's colonial enclaves, as Nati Wahlen recalled, white men would "buy" Islander women. Perhaps swapping trade goods and weapons with "village chiefs" (the intermediaries known as *luluais* and *kukurais*), colonists would acquire local women to cook for them, serve them, and to wait on them, she said.²¹ A German traveler, journalist, and colonial enthusiast who visited German New Guinea in 1888—just three years after the New Guinea Company officially annexed the islands—made similar observations to rather different effect. This writer declared that in Germany's Western Pacific colony, women were "traded like commodities [*Ware*]." On Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, women could be "bought" with trade goods, whereas to the east, in the islands of Bismarck Archipelago, he claimed, women "are usually purchasable only with *diwarra*" (a local shell valuable).²² Whereas Nati's recollections were pointedly about gendered and racialized practices that characterized entanglements between white men and Islander women, this male writer held Islander women's status as "commodities" available for "purchase" to be characteristic of gender relations in New Guinea's *vernacular* societies. *Diwarra* and *tambu* are names for the shell valuables that were, and in many cases remain, important forms of wealth used in New Guinean marriage ceremonies involving bridewealth. This writer, thus, rendered vernacular marriage practices in German New Guinea as the "buying" and "selling" of women.

Indeed, the transference of bridewealth from the groom's family to the bride's upon marriage was widely characterized by white, European commentators as the "purchase" of New Guinean women by New Guinean men. As the traveler and journalist continued: "While in Neu Lauenburg a wife costs at least sixty marks, in outermost northern Neu Mecklenburg, a young girl can still be had for ten to twelve marks."²³

One of his compatriots and a contemporary in German New Guinea similarly wrote of bridewealth: “The purchase price fluctuates enormously. For fourteen fathoms of *diwarra* one can still have a woman of low quality. For premium goods [*Primawaare*], as defined by the Kanakas, one would perhaps pay 200 fathoms of *diwarra* or more.”²⁴ Men like this either did not know or chose to ignore the fact that in New Guinean (and other) bridewealth societies, bridewealth functions within larger systems of gift exchange that bind kinship groups through systems of reciprocity. It is embedded in—and constitutive of—broader social, economic, and familial structures. That these meanings of bridewealth are obscured under the older (and sometimes, still, alternative) term of “brideprice,” is something that has concerned anthropologists for almost a century now. As one anthropologist of Papua New Guinea has noted more recently: bride-wealth serves “to establish or sustain relations of equivalence between the parties to a marriage, to make affinity the basis of commodity exchange, but *not* to transform brides themselves into commodities.”²⁵

Yet, “ein käufliches Objekt”—a purchasable object—was precisely the term that one early European colonist used to describe New Guinean women’s position in vernacular society.²⁶ “Kaufpreis”—or purchase price—was the term that German writers commonly employed to describe bridewealth.²⁷ They used the same term to refer to the purchase of goods like copra, which New Guineans traded with European colo-

24 Joachim Friedrich von Pfeil, *Studien und Beobachtungen aus der Südsee* (Braunschweig, 1899), 28.

25 Colin Filer, “What Is This Thing Called ‘Brideprice?’” *Mankind* 15, no. 2 (1985): 171. (Emphasis in original.)

26 Louis Couppé, “Aus der Herz-Jesu Mission. (Apost. Vikariat Neupommern.—Deutsche Südsee.),” *Hiltruper Monatshefte zu Ehren unserer lieben Frau vom hh. Herzen Jesu* 10, (1893): 51.

27 Zöllner, *Deutsch-Neuguinea*, 295; Bernhard Hagen, *Beobachtungen und Studien über Land und Leute, Thier- und Pflanzenwelt in Kaiser-Wilhelmsland* (Wiesbaden, 1899), 226; Ernst Tappenbeck, *Deutsch-Neuguinea* (Berlin, 1901), 43-44, 88-89; Ernst Hesse-Wartegg, *Samoa, Bismarck-Archipel und Neuguinea: Drei Deutsche Kolonien in der Südsee* (Leipzig, 1902), 192; Carl Ribbe, *Zwei Jahre unter den Kannibalen der Salomo-Inseln: Reiseerlebnisse und Schilderungen von Land und Leuten* (Dresden, 1903), 141; Heinrich Schnee, *Bilder aus der Südsee: Unter den kanibalischen Stämmen des Bismarck-Archipels* (Berlin, 1904), 96-99; P. A. Kleintitschen, *Die Küstenbewohner*

der Gazellehalbinsel (Neupommern—deutsche Südsee): ihre Sitten und Gebräuche (Hiltrup, 1906), 194, 196, 198; Richard Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee: Land und Leute, Sitten*

und Gebräuche im Bismarckarchipel und auf den deutschen Salomoinseln (Stuttgart, 1907), 62, 66; Emil Stephan and Fritz Graebner, eds., *Neu-Mecklenburg (Bismarck-Archipel):*

Die Küste von Umuddu bis Kap St. Georg. Forschungsergebnisse bei den Vermessungsfahrten von S. M. S. Möwe im Jahre 1904 (Berlin, 1907), 107, 109-110.

28 Kleintitschen, *Die Küstenbewohner der Gazellehalbinsel*, 100.

29 See Karl Vieweg, *Big Fellow Man: Muschelgeld und Südseegeister: Authentische Berichte aus Deutsch-Neuguinea 1906-1909* (Weikersheim, 1990), 4.

30 Zöllner, *Deutsch-Neuguinea*, 295.

31 Ribbe, *Zwei Jahre unter den Kannibalen*, 100.

32 Schnee, *Bilder aus der Südsee*, 96.

33 Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee*, 61.

34 Partha Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 662-663; Barbara Bush, "Gender and Empire: The Twentieth Century," in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford, 2004), 98; Oyèrónkẹ Oyèwùmí, "Colonizing Bodies and Minds: Gender and Colonialism," in *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, eds. Gaurav Desai and Supriya Nair (New Brunswick, 2005), 339-361.

nists.²⁸ The idea that New Guinean women were "bought" and "sold" as objects, goods, or even livestock was ubiquitous in the many European writings about the German colony. Formulated during colonial encounters that were perhaps fleeting, these discourses circulated among colonists within German New Guinea's small colonial enclaves, and between sites of colonial interaction and metropolitan milieux. In Germany, men would consume these texts in an effort to familiarize themselves with the New Guinea islands in preparation for their own travel to the German colony.²⁹

The reason why New Guinean men would "buy" women was evident to these European commentators: quite simply, men would buy women to exploit their labor. According to the journalist who thought the "price" of New Guinean women to be between ten and sixty marks, "since the men find it almost a disgrace to work in their own homeland, most of the field work and housework is done by women, who are often married for this purpose."³⁰ A German trader who spent two years in the colony similarly asserted that "the woman is the man's slave, she has to cultivate the fields, perform most of the housework, and tend to raising the children."³¹ One of German New Guinea's imperial judges concurred: "Across the Bismarck Archipelago, women occupy a low social status and have to serve as beasts of burden [*Arbeitstiere*] for their lazy husbands."³² Even a long-term settler and planter claimed in his 1907 publication that on the Gazelle Peninsula "The woman is [the man's] property [*Eigentum*] and has to work for him."³³

These were legitimizing narratives of empire, and they were thoroughly gendered ones. As scholars of empire and colonialism have often pointed out, European proponents of colonialism frequently mobilized tropes of the supposedly poor standing of women in non-European societies as evidence of social backwardness and as a legitimizing factor in European empires' extension of a "civilizing mission."³⁴ Understanding bridewealth as a crucial signifier of women's low social status among the supposed *Naturvölker* of

New Guinea, these white colonial men considered it anathema to the “civilized” norms of the self-designated *Kulturvölker*. Equally importantly, the commodity language of “buying” and “selling” in white, European men’s accounts of bridewealth reflected and produced the imperialist and capitalist paradigms within which these writers were positioned, and which New Guinean women increasingly found themselves navigating. Even as white, European men purported to describe pre-capitalist *Naturvölker*, the capitalist logics they applied to vernacular cultures, and gender relations in particular, underpinned a colonial situation predicated on European exploitation of New Guinean peoples and their labors. As the following section demonstrates, colonial discourses that cast women as commodity items available for “purchase” reverberated in on-the-ground colonial encounters in which male colonists made claims to the labors not only of New Guinean men, but women as well.

III. Colonial Entanglements and Women’s Experiences

Given just how pervasive the notion was among white Europeans that New Guinean women were little more than downtrodden “objects” who were “bought” and “sold” within their vernacular societies, we should probably not be surprised by Nati Wahlen’s assertion that “all the Germans [...], all the colonial white men,” would *themselves* “buy” local women. Amidst the everyday entanglements of colonial interaction, narratives used to legitimize empire became narratives that served the interests and practices of individual colonists. Consider the case of a lapsed Catholic missionary in the Bismarck Archipelago, who, in 1903, was charged by his erstwhile mission brothers of having coercively taken two local women as “concubines.” Writing in his own defense to the relevant colonial court, this colonist wrote the following:

The only thing the mission and its friends can say against me is that I have always had one or two native women in my service. But why do these holy people only rise up against

35 Assunto Costantini, Gunanur, to the Imperial District Court, Herbertshöhe, November 6, 1903, NAA: Imperial Government of German New Guinea; G255, Correspondence files; 18.

36 Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht zu Herbertshöhe. Akten in der Strafsache gegen den Pflanzer Assunto Costantini zu Gunanur wegen Bedrohung (1903-04), NAA: G255, 18.

37 Friedrich Schulle's statement, recorded on board the *Alexandrine*, October 15, 1889, Stationsgericht Herbertshöhe, NAA: G255, 147.

me when all Europeans are doing the same thing? From the imperial governor to the last trader, many gentlemen have or have had native women in their service... .

Only before an inquisition tribunal would I have been found guilty and thrown alive into the fire! But before a German tribunal, before a non-medieval tribunal: never!³⁵

While the righteous indignation of this former missionary's "defense" borders on the absurd, it should not eclipse the fact that he stood accused of taking women into his "service" *by force*. The charge he faced in the colonial court was assault.³⁶

Indeed, colonial court records like this one indicate that violence perpetrated by white colonial men against New Guinean women was widespread in the German colony. This violence was frequently accompanied by European men's claims to be "buying" women in a manner consistent with local practices. Take, for instance, the case of a European trader who, in July 1889, having been stationed in Neu Mecklenburg for around five months, informed another trader that he intended to "buy" a local woman by the name of Marankas. What followed was likely the trader's abduction of Marankas. It seems that Marankas had spent about a day with the trader—"whether voluntarily or not," his friend could not be sure. Whatever the precise nature of trader's actions, they were certainly deemed an offense to Marankas's people, and it was an offense that cost the trader his life.³⁷

Lessons were not necessarily learned: in 1897, in the same part of the colony, another trader was said to have attempted "to buy six women" during a visit to a neighboring trading station. He was, however, only able to take one woman back with him. She was known as Caroline. She managed to flee from him a few days later, making her way across the harbor and escaping into the bush. This trader then threatened to punish her people if they failed to return her. Afraid, Caroline's people did return her, and after they had done so, the trader shackled

her and beat her before sending her away himself. When it became known that this same trader planned to return to the station to get two more women, the locals thwarted his plans by robbing and destroying the station, forcing the resident white traders to take flight.³⁸ Just the next year, yet another Neu Mecklenburg trader was said to have “recruited about twelve women” since his arrival in the colony. His brutal treatment of these “paid for” women compelled each of them to flee, the latest after just a few days, it was said, after the trader struck her across the head with a tomahawk.³⁹ The situation was such that one imperial judge conceded that traders’ “imprudent conduct in matters of women” was a common cause of violent conflict between colonists and local peoples, at least in remote parts of the colony.⁴⁰

However, the violent treatment of New Guinean women was not a practice restricted to lonely traders on remote trading stations. In 1902, the colonial center of Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen, on Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, was the site of a similar event. Formerly an administrative center of the New Guinea Company, this harbor town remained an important colonial enclave from the turn of the century onward, not least as a major port in the transportation of indentured New Guineans between Kaiser-Wilhelmsland and the Bismarck Archipelago. Moreover, with the harbor serving to connect the mainland to a number of outlying islands, local people would frequently traverse the waters, fishing and traveling by canoe to tend to nearby gardens.

In October 1902, the labor recruitment vessel *Zabra* was anchored in this harbor, having been sent by the administration to recruit laborers from the area for transportation to Herbertshöhe.⁴¹ Word had reached a nearby missionary that a local woman named Geldu, from the island of Beliao, had been forcibly “dragged” aboard the recruitment ship. Upon learning about this, the missionary got into his boat and hastily sailed into the harbor to investigate. When the missionary arrived at the recruitment ship, he recalled, “the girl came crying and

38 Axel Monrad’s statement, Herbertshöhe, March 30, 1897, Kaiserliches Gericht des Schutzgebietes der Neu-Guinea-Compagnie zu Herbertshöh [sic], Strafsache gegen der Händler Lundin in Kableman §§ 223, 223a StGB, NAA: G255, 259.

39 B. Lanser, Nauan Station, to Albert Hahl, Herbertshöhe, June 28, 1898, Kaiserliches Gericht Herbertshöh [sic], Strafsache gegen August Coenen Händler in Bagail wegen Vergehens des Hausfriedensbruches, Sachbeschädigung, Körperverletzung §§ 123, 223, 303 RStGB, NAA: G255, 261. Also see the laborer Bakoi’s statement of August 12, 1898, Herbertshöhe, in this file.

40 Schnee, *Bilder aus der Südsee*, 261.

41 Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen. Akten betr. die Strafsache gegen den Bootsmann der Ketch “Zabra” Mantoku Komine (1902-03), NAA: G255, 16.

42 Gustav Bergmann, Siar, to the mission house, Barmen, October 28, 1902, Gustav Bergmann papers, vol. 1, Vereinte Evangelische Mission, Bestand Rheinische Mission (hereafter: RMG): 2.140.

43 W. Hoffmann, Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen, March 27, 1903, Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen. Akten betr. die Strafsache gegen den Bootsmann der Ketch "Zabra" Mantoku Komine (1902-03), NAA: G255, 16.

44 Stuckhardt, Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen, to Hahl, October 28, 1902, Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen. Akten betr. die Strafsache gegen den Bootsmann der Ketch "Zabra" Mantoku Komine (1902-03), NAA: G255, 16.

45 Gustav Bergmann, Siar, to the mission house, Barmen, October 28, 1902, Gustav Bergmann papers, vol. 1, RMG: 2.140.

46 Gustav Bergmann, Siar, to the mission house, Barmen, October 28, 1902, Gustav Bergmann papers, vol. 1, RMG: 2.140; Stuckhardt, Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen, to Hahl, October 28, 1902, Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen. Akten betr. die Strafsache gegen den Bootsmann der Ketch "Zabra" Mantoku Komine (1902-03), NAA: G255, 16.

in a state of despair out of the ship's hold and sprang immediately into my boat." She was promptly followed, however, by the ship's captain, who "forcibly dragged the girl back on board, abusive that [the missionary] had dared to take someone from his ship, where he was supposedly master." When the missionary asked Geldu whether she wanted to return to Beliao or go to Herbertshöhe, "she screamed and cried, 'I want to go home, I want to go home!'" The missionary then proceeded into town and reported the matter to the district judge, whose secretary accompanied him back to the *Zabra*. Despite the boatswain's repeated efforts to impede them, the missionary and judge's secretary retrieved the now "exuberant" Geldu and returned her to her home of Beliao.⁴² As the boat had been dispatched on behalf of the colonial administration in Herbertshöhe, and stood in the midst of the busy harbor, news of the incident spread quickly across the station of Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen, causing a "justifiable sensation" that undermined German claims to rule, as one administrator later commented.⁴³

In fact, the reason for this "sensation" was that some colonial officials, stationed in German New Guinea's colonial centers, had—like those remote traders discussed above—engaged in the business of "buying" and "selling" Islander women. It was an imperial judge in Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen who had first "bought" Geldu, as one colonial official reported matter-of-factly to the colony's governor.⁴⁴ According to the missionary, this imperial judge had "bought the girl for his immoral purposes" using "deceit and threat."⁴⁵ Although this judge had dismissed Geldu shortly thereafter and himself returned to Germany on leave, he had apparently "sold" Geldu to his colleague—another imperial judge—in Herbertshöhe. This colleague in the Bismarck Archipelago had sent the recruitment ship to Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, at least in part, to claim his purchase of Geldu.⁴⁶

This is a case, documented by German New Guinea's colonial courts, for which we have access to Geldu's own testimony.

47 Geldu's testimony, Imperial District Court, Friedrich Wilhelmshafen, October 27, 1902, Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen. Akten betr. die Strafsache gegen den Bootsmann der Ketch "Zabra" Mantoku Komine (1902-03), NAA: G255, 16.

48 Rose, Finschhafen, to Bismarck, Berlin, February 13, 1890, BArch: R 1001/2960, 66.

49 Rose, Finschhafen, to Bismarck, Berlin, February 13, 1890, BArch: R 1001/2960, 81.

ranting. The men then ran away. Only Nalon stayed behind with me and he persuaded me to get in a canoe—in which he took me to the ship—but only because he had to. Nalon himself said that he only did this out of fear, because otherwise their houses might be burned down. When I left my people, we all cried. I absolutely wanted to go back, but I was scared because [the captain] ranted a lot so I remained on board. The Beliao people refused the trade goods that were offered to them. A few sticks of tobacco were left on Beliao, but the men won't smoke them.⁴⁷

The violence and coercion that characterized the German colonial labor indenture are palpable in Geldu's words. The threats and fears of reprisals for noncompliance are explicit, and there is a knowledge of what these reprisals could and did look like. The Beliao Islanders' refusal of trade goods, and their refusal to smoke the tobacco, are also telling: they did not consent to Geldu's removal. And, quite clearly, neither did she.

This case, and Geldu's testimony, also speak to a central contention of my research: namely, that (generally male) colonists' claims to New Guinean peoples' labors included their claims to New Guinean women's sexual labors. And the indenture system played a key role here. An imperial commissioner recognized this as early as 1890. After just a few months in the colony, this commissioner called into question the definition of "the term 'laborer'" under the New Guinea Company's labor ordinance. "What is the scope of the term 'laborer?'" he asked. "Does it encompass every labor and service relation that a native has to a white, including the acquisition of a native woman in accordance with local customs as a housekeeper (concubine)?"⁴⁸ While cautious not to place "undesirable" constrictions on the Company's ability to recruit indentured laborers, the commissioner determined that "the recruitment of such native girls" should fall under the labor ordinance.⁴⁹ Conceptions of bridewealth surfaced in his use of the phrase "in accordance with local customs," suggesting the extent to which male colonists would purport



Figure 5. Although this image was captioned “German Trader and Kanaka ‘housekeeper,’” implying that the term “housekeeper” was simply a euphemism for a sexual relationship, such terms were far from mere euphemisms. Rather, terms like “housekeeper,” “laundress,” and “chambermaid” signal the dense connections between New Guinean women’s sexual and economic exploitation under colonial rule, with many European men laying claim to local women’s productive, domestic, and sexual labors. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Denham papers, B 695.

to have “bought” New Guinean women whose labors they could exploit. According to the commissioner, extending the labor ordinance to include women “acquired” by European colonists in this way would grant New Guinean women the protections offered by the ordinance “for regular and voluntary recruitment.”⁵⁰ This directive suggests that colonists were engaging New Guinean women in an informal labor economy in numbers significant enough to prompt a reconsideration of colonial labor policies. It further suggests that this “recruitment” was not always voluntary and signals the multiple labors New Guinean women were tasked with on and off the colony’s plantations.

Indeed, the imperial commissioner’s gloss from “housekeeper” to the parenthetical “concubine” draws attention to what was

⁵⁰ Rose, Finschhafen, to Bismarck, Berlin, February 13, 1890, BArch: R 1001/2960, 81.

51 Carl Ribbe, *Zwei Jahre unter den Kannibalen der Salomon-Inseln: Reiseerlebnisse und Schilderungen von Land und Leuten* (Dresden, 1903), 81-82.

52 Stefan von Kotze, *Aus Papuas Kulturmor-gen: Südsee Erinnerun-gen*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1911), 111.

53 Gábor Vargyas, *Data on the Pictorial History of North-East Papua New Guinea* (Budapest, 1986), 43.

54 Zöller, *Deutsch-Neuguinea*, 295.

doubtless an understanding common among white, European men in the colony that collapsed New Guinean women's sexual, productive, and household labors. Terms like "laundress, cook, gardener, housemaid, and chambermaid" were frequently employed by colonists to refer to such women, but such terms were far from mere euphemisms.⁵¹ In the Bismarck Archipelago, wrote one colonist, the "handsome commodity" of a "black house girl" who could soon acquire sewing and laundering skills could be obtained for twenty or thirty fathoms of *diwarra*.⁵² A resident of Kaiser-Wilhelmsland similarly stressed that New Guinean "wives" were "needed, suffice it to say for the odd jobs around the household, for keeping the house tidy, for washing and looking after the underwear."⁵³ One European trader in the Bismarck Archipelago was said to have "bought no fewer than six wives [*Ehegattinnen*]" whose labors he would use to prepare his copra for sale.⁵⁴ As the imperial commissioner recognized, colonists' claims to indigenous women's sexual labors were very much tied up in their broader practices of recruiting and exploiting New Guinean peoples as a colonial labor force.

New Guinean women's testimonies of sexual assault and rape perpetrated against them by white colonial men further attest to dense connections between Islander women's sexual and economic exploitation in the German colony. The experiences of a woman named Pulus, who, in 1906 was working as an indentured laborer for the colonial administration in Herbertshöhe, speak to this. In February of that year, she appeared before the imperial district court in Herbertshöhe and testified that she had been raped while going about her daily duties. As was often the case for indentured New Guineans who appeared before German colonial courts, Pulus gave her testimony in Tok Pisin, or New Guinean Pidgin, some of which was retained in the transcript (italicized below). Her testimony went something like this:

At noon yesterday, as I approached the [government] storehouse to fetch rice, the storehouse foreman, Kolbe, grabbed me near the huts and dragged me into the storehouse. I told him that he should leave me alone. He said: "*never mind by and by me give*

you money." I tried to get away, but he held onto me tightly, he threw me over the sacks of rice and used me sexually.⁵⁵

Pulus went on to say that the foreman had then given her trade goods, consisting of two *lavalavas* (or loincloths), two knives, and five sticks of tobacco, as well as four marks in cash. She told the court that she initially refused these items, but the foreman had stuck them into her belt. She left the storehouse with the trade goods and cash and went to find her husband.

After talking with some other laborers, Pulus and her husband decided to report the matter to the colony's governor, "Doctor Hahl." It was Albert Hahl, himself a trained lawyer and former imperial judge in Herbertshöhe, who brought this case to the local district court. This alone reveals a great deal about the kinds of social networks that indentured women and men maintained and operated within in the German colony. It reveals both a familiarity with structures of German rule and a willingness to navigate them in order to make claims as colonial subjects: to seek justice. However, Pulus did not receive justice from the German colonial court. Neither she, nor any other New Guinean woman I have encountered in my research who charged a white man with rape had their accused found guilty of that crime by a German colonial court.

White men who appeared in German New Guinea's colonial courts on charges of rape frequently rallied a host of gendered colonial tropes in their defense. Making his case in Herbertshöhe, for example, Pulus's accused did not deny that he had sex with her—only that it was rape. According to this foreman, "As Pulus was opening a sack of rice, I grabbed her on the genitals. She easily acquiesced. I bent her over the sacks of rice and used her sexually." When he was done, he told the court: "I finished weighing the rice and gave her two marks from my wallet."⁵⁶ The same tropes are evident in a 1910 case involving the alleged rape of an indentured woman by her white employer. While the woman testified to having been violently raped by her employer as she went about her daily duties as a laundress, the accused defended his actions by denying rape and claiming that he had given her two

55 Pulus's testimony, Herbertshöhe, February 12, 1906, Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht zu Herbertshöhe. Akten in der Strafsache gegen den Lageraufseher Waldemar Kolbe zu Herbertshöhe wegen Notzucht und Unterschlagung (1906), NAA: Imperial District Court and Office; G254, Administrative records of German New Guinea; 106.

56 Waldemar Kolbe's statement, Herbertshöhe, February 12, 1906, Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht zu Herbertshöhe. Akten in der Strafsache gegen den Lageraufseher Waldemar Kolbe zu Herbertshöhe wegen Notzucht und Unterschlagung (1906), NAA: G254, 106.

57 Gustav Thurm's statement, Friedrich Wilhelmshafen, April 27, 1910, Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht zu Herberthöhe. Akten in der Strafsache gegen Thurm, G., Händler, zuletzt in Kieta wegen Notzucht (1910), NAA: G254, 75.

marks "as payment" for sex.⁵⁷ In cases like these, New Guinean women resurface as "purchasable objects" in European colonial imaginaries. No longer the objects ostensibly "bought" and "sold" by New Guinean men, New Guinean women are rendered in such records as objects sexually available to white, male colonists. By describing their accusers as promiscuous, acquiescent, and remunerated for sex, white colonists transformed the trope of the subjugated New Guinean woman into one of the sexually licentious, sexually available "prostitute," while promoting the notion that remuneration precluded the possibility of rape.

These tropes had traction in German New Guinea's colonial courts. Time and again, questions about remuneration and questions about resistance surface in the court documents detailing New Guinean women's allegations of sexual assault perpetrated by white men. German judges asked with some frequency whether women had in fact been willing participants in the crimes that they claimed were perpetrated against them. And they sought to ascertain with similar frequency whether these women accepted payment in exchange for sex. Indeed, in the hands of the colonial courts, these colonial male fantasies of indentured New Guinean women's "promiscuity" and sexual availability became legal presumptions constitutive of the colonial rule of law. That none of white men charged with sexually assaulting a New Guinean woman that I have encountered in the colonial court records was ever convicted of rape should come as little surprise. Like the imperial archive, colonial courts worked to efface the experiences of indigenous women. But fleeting traces of those experiences, as told in women's own mediated testimonies, remain, presenting powerful counternarratives to those that colonists told themselves and each other.

Conclusion

In shifting the focus to on-the-ground sites of embodied colonial interaction and entanglement, my research endeavors to disrupt and dispute the narratives that white, European men

spun about empire, and about indigenous women in particular. European imaginaries, representational strategies, and metropolitan milieux remain crucial to understanding histories of colonialism. How these imaginaries and representations of Europe's "others" manifested in sites of concrete, quotidian, and embodied colonial experience is a critical part of these histories. By tracing the dynamic and contested relationships between colonial discourses and practices in German New Guinea, my research contributes to a growing body of scholarship on the German empire as well as to that on the colonial Pacific. In the first instance, my research challenges prevailing understandings, both in Pacific histories and those of German empire, that posit colonial labor regimes as a singularly male affair. Erasures notwithstanding, indentured New Guinean women left traces in the archive that warrant attention. These traces in turn demand a reckoning with questions of gender and sexuality that, as scholars have shown more generally and for some time now, are central to understanding colonialism.

White, European men's preoccupation with New Guinean practices of bridewealth attest to how central questions of gender—and gendered divisions of labor—were to their own colonial imaginaries. For colonial men, the overwhelming agreement that marriages involving bridewealth rendered Islander women as commodity items to be "bought" and "sold" served as evidence of the savagery of vernacular societies and thus as a justification for colonial incursion. It also served, as I have argued, to justify the everyday practices of many white men in this colonial situation. Maintaining that the purchase of women—and the exploitation of their labors—was "in accordance with local customs," these men transformed a legitimizing narrative of empire into one that legitimized their often-violent incursions into vernacular spaces and equally violent treatment of indigenous women.

New Guinean women's own experiences, recorded in colonial court documents and missionary texts, speak to the violence they faced at the hands of white colonists under German colo-

58 Fitzpatrick and Monteath, "The Savagery of Empire," 16.

nial rule. Bringing their words, stories, and histories to the fore illuminates Germany's colonial past as lived experience; it casts new light on the stories that colonists told, revealing their fissures, tropes, and outright lies. Evident from the testimonies of New Guinean women is the extent to which the sexual exploitation they experienced from male colonists was linked to the German colonial system of indentured labor. Abduction and rape emerge as features of colonial labor recruitment and the daily realities of the indenture for these women. Importantly, however, the recorded words of indentured New Guinean women and men reveal the ways in which they could and did navigate a coercive and violent colonial situation, seeking out networks and seeking out justice. This is paramount because, as stated at the outset of this article, colonialism is marked by entanglements, and these entanglements are always fraught and contested. It is a central contention of my research, therefore, that it is not only necessary to challenge Eurocentric narratives of empire and European characterizations of non-European peoples. Rather, it is urgent that we turn our attentions to those whom German colonialism impacted most profoundly of all: those whom Germany claimed as its colonial subjects.⁵⁸

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Cross-Cultural Contact in Sixteenth-Century Tübingen: Martin Crusius (1526-1607) and his Greek Guests

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In the early morning of 23 January 1581, Katharina Vetscher called her husband down from his study. Accustomed to the help and care of his third wife, Martin Crusius (1525-1607) appeared immediately, only to find three men waiting on the stairs: two Greek pilgrims and their interpreter from Leipzig. The two foreigners, originally from Santorini, had been forced to flee their island after Ottoman corsairs had raided one of its castles in 1577. Their subsequent travels had brought these two men, Andreas and Lucas Argyrus, to various places, including Rome, Paris, Trier, Mainz, Augsburg, and Munich. Although their particular route was probably not predetermined, their arrival on Crusius's doorstep was most certainly not accidental either. The goal of their journey had been to collect alms to ransom family members, whom — as their papal letter of recommendation asserted — certain Ottomans kept hostage in Tripoli, present-day Lebanon. A hefty sum was needed to guarantee the captives' freedom. Crusius, a professor of Latin and

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¹ Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen (hereafter UBT) Mb 37, fol. 85, GH57–76. Crusius specifically kept this manuscript for recording and archiving documents and other evidence related to contemporary Greek civilization. The notes on the Greeks (“Graeci Homines”) who visited Crusius are found after page 85 with a separate pagination. These pages will hereafter be referred to by the abbreviation GH.

Greek at the University of Tübingen, recorded this interaction in minute detail in his notebooks, describing the length of their stay as well as the conversations they shared.¹

Encounters such as this one do not generally appear in our accounts of the Holy Roman Empire. These two Greek Orthodox Christians were nevertheless by no means an anomaly. Between 1579 and 1606 over sixty Greek men and women made their way to Tübingen. Crusius fed these travelers, offered them beds for the night, arranged permission for them to collect alms at the local church, wrote them letters of recommendation, and subjected them to lengthy interviews about their life and language, their religion and culture. In return, these Greeks helped him read and understand his sizeable collection of vernacular Greek books and enabled him, over time, to gain a good command of the language they spoke. They clarified the manuscripts, letters, and written documentation that Crusius’s other informants, who resided in Istanbul, had sent to Tübingen. And they told their host — frequently over lunch or dinner — about the complexities of Greek life under Ottoman rule. All this information, so diverse in nature, presented Crusius with an astoundingly broad portrait of Ottoman Greek society, full of color and perspective, rich in details and experiences.

These encounters are the subject of this article. Needless to say, full details of all visits are too numerous to be listed, let alone discussed in any substantial detail. Instead, the focus here is on using a few exemplary cases to uncover a set of general patterns and to grasp how a single early modern individual experienced one of the period’s many flows of people. Not only does such a historical excavation help us recover the lives of a group of itinerant Greek Orthodox Christians whose adverse circumstances had forced them onto the road but whose movements rarely appear in our archival records. It also teaches us something about the global dimensions of sixteenth-century Lutheran Germany: the social conglomeration, or *Gemeinschaft*, that emerges from Crusius’s documents is one that is

heterogeneous and permeable, open to the world, and part of the great tidings of its time. Examining Crusius's *Nachlass* also affords new insight into the ways in which early modern scholars studied cultural and religious difference. Knowledge in Crusius's Tübingen home was made by examining books and other objects; through moments of collaborative reading; through listening and hearing attentively; through observation and other forms of visualization; and even by tasting. Crusius may have been a classicist by profession, but he was an ocular-centrist by conviction and one who valued highly trained ears as well. His was a "hybrid hermeneutics", to borrow the words of Lorraine Daston, a method in which practices of observing and reading, first- and second-hand experiences, merged.² But such forms of knowledge-making were, as we will see, possible only because of the particularly gendered organization of his household. The silent labor of its female members enabled Crusius to receive so many informants for so long and to reap the fruit of their conversations.

² Lorraine Daston, "The Sciences of the Archive," *Osiris* 27.1 (2012): 156-187 at 156.

My dissertation and current book project, upon which this article is based, traces Crusius's investigation of the lives and languages of the Ottoman Greeks in greater depth. It not only examines the conversations he had in his gendered household with this otherwise undocumented group of Greek Orthodox Christians but also studies an unlikely and ultimately unsuccessful exchange of letters between scholars in Tübingen, including Crusius, and none other than the Greek Orthodox Patriarch himself. It reconstructs how Crusius read books about Greek Orthodox Christianity and all periods in Greek history, from antiquity all the way to the Ottoman period. It illuminates how the symbiosis of scholarship and sociability in early modern Tübingen offered Crusius the resources and manpower needed to develop his ideas. And it analyzes how Crusius, not without difficulty, brought his findings into print in his *Turcograecia*. This important though now largely forgotten work offers a penetrating vision of Ottoman Greece that stood at the cradle of what has been called the "tyranny"

³ Eliza Mariam Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany: A Study of the influence exercised by Greek art and poetry over the great German writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (New York, 1935).

⁴ No modern biography exists. For the fullest account of Crusius's life, see: UBT Mh 443 (his history of his family), UBT Mh 466 (his nine-volume diary) and Veit Müller, *Oratio de vita et obitu ... Martini Crusii* (Tübingen, 1608), which is largely based on the diary and the family history.

of Greece over German culture: the admiration for an imagined Greek past and present that has enthralled generations of writers and scholars to this day, including, most famously, the nineteenth-century philhellenes.³ Tracing how this one scholar, from the comfort of his Tübingen home, and without ever traveling, studied a single culture that was not his own thus allow us to see how some of early modernity's most transformative changes — from religious turmoil to dramatic globalization and forced mobility — permeated all layers of society and in the process fundamentally expanded the horizons of those experiencing them: to travel, the case of Crusius suggests, one need not traverse vast distances. Encountering the other could take place simply sitting at home in a corner of your study, waiting for a visitor.

I. Martin Crusius: Lutheran Philhellene

Martin Crusius was born in 1526 in Grebern near Bamberg, in present-day Bavaria, to Maria Magdalena Trummer and Martin Kraus.⁴ He came of age in a divided world: his father, a minister who had embraced Lutheranism after hearing Luther speak in Wittenberg, was compelled to relocate his family often during the unsettling early decades of the Reformation. Eventually, the family set up home in Württemberg, after Duke Ulrich (1487-1550) had officially introduced the evangelical movement there. In 1540 Crusius enrolled at the local grammar school in Ulm, a free imperial city, and started learning Greek. Five years later he was sent to Strasbourg, where he received the most cutting-edge humanist education in Northern Europe at the famous Protestant gymnasium of Johannes Sturm. In 1554 he accepted the vacant position of rector at the Latin school in Memmingen, a position he left in 1559 to become a professor at the University of Tübingen. Crusius stayed in Tübingen until his death in 1607. He married three times and had fifteen children, only one of whom outlived him. His Latin and Greek grammars for pupils were published in the 1550s and 1560s. The aforementioned *Tur-*

cograecia was printed in Basel in 1584 and was followed by the *Germanograecia* (1585), a sample of the fruits that Greek studies, according to Crusius, had borne in Germany. Another work that he is known for today is the *Annales Suevici* (1595–96), a massive history of Swabia, in three parts, that continues to be one of the main sources for the sixteenth-century history of this region. Crusius himself considered the sermons he collected in the *Corona Anni* (1602–03) his main contribution to the world of print.

Greece was Crusius's lifelong obsession. He taught Greek grammar and poetry for nearly fifty years and apparently with tremendous success: his explications of Homer were so popular that the university had to break down a wall of the lecture room at some point to accommodate all enrolled students. He also innovated. Crusius was by his own account the first to teach the Greek vernacular in Germany. His library, of which nearly 700 items have survived, contained texts from all periods in Greek history, from ancient tragedies to Byzantine histories, from the writings of the Greek Church Fathers to medieval saints' lives. Every bit of news about the Eastern Mediterranean that reached Tübingen was systematically recorded in his diary, as were the receipts of objects from those regions, including coins, paintings, and other gifts. Crusius exchanged dozens of letters with high-ranking Greek Orthodox ecclesiastics living in Venice and Istanbul — and he cherished these interactions with an affection that was all his own: his daughter Theodora was named after one of the Greeks from whom Crusius learned a tremendous amount. He commemorated the day of the Fall of Constantinople, despite being unsure in which year it had occurred, as often as he enthused about his self-professed philhellenism: "I could rightly," he once wrote, "be said to be drunk with love for Greek affairs."⁵

Ulrich Moennig has determined that Crusius also owned one of the largest and most important collections of vernacular Greek books and manuscripts north of the Alps.⁶ In many of these books, which he often acquired through Lutheran con-

⁵ UBT Mh 466, volume 1, fol. 642.

⁶ Ulrich Moennig, "On Martinus Crusius's Collection of Greek Vernacular and Religious Books," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 21 (1997): 40–78.

tacts living in Venice or nearby Padua, Crusius spun a dense web of marginal annotations, enriching them with detailed traces of his scholarly practice. It was after the battle of Lepanto in 1571, in which so many Christians lost their lives, that Crusius first began reading these vernacular Greek texts with great determination. Making productive use of them, however, was hard, not least because Crusius could not read them. His first attempt at working through some of them was unsatisfactory: the specific meaning of many words escaped Crusius, leaving one to guess what he made of the texts themselves. So how did this sixteenth-century professor working in a small German university town eventually master the Greek vernacular?

The solution presented itself serendipitously: on 21 February 1579 an individual from Cyprus by the name of Stamatius Donatus found his way to Tübingen. Crusius invited him into his home and for the next seven days used him as his own living “lexicon.”⁷ Day after day Crusius asked Donatus to explain more and more vernacular Greek words, eventually filling up no fewer than forty-seven pages of his notebook with his guest’s explications of the Greek vernacular. This did not happen only through conversation. Together the two men marked their way through precisely the vernacular Greek books that had baffled Crusius earlier: they read his copy of the 1546 vernacular Greek edition of the *Flower of Virtue*, originally a widely-read fourteenth-century Italian anthology of vices and virtues; the 1564 edition of the *Apollonios*, a hugely popular folk epic that recounts the trials and adventures of Apollonius, prince of Tyre; the 1526 vernacular Greek paraphrase of the *Iliad*; and the *Tale of Belisarius*, a medieval text on Emperor Justinian’s celebrated general. It had taken Crusius years to study these books on his own. Now, in a week, Crusius took down an impressive total of more than 2600 vernacular Greek words and phrases.

Evidently Donatus was exactly what Crusius was looking for. Little did he know, however, that Donatus was only the first

of a string of Greek Orthodox Christians who would help him read his Greek books and develop his command of the Greek vernacular. Nearly every one of Crusius's visitors explicated words from the Greek books in his collection: in January 1581, for example, Andreas Argyrus guided Crusius through at least four modern Greek chapbooks; in April 1582 Alexander Trucello helped Crusius understand another book in his library. In June of that year Crusius read no less than ten books and some manuscript letters with Calonas. Darmarius explicated words from another four of Crusius's vernacular Greek books. With Johannes Tholoitis from Thessaloniki Crusius poured over another three works in 1585. Later that year Mauricius glossed at least four of Crusius's books.⁸ One of Crusius's guests even gave him an outline of a vernacular Greek romance he had heard of but did not yet own.⁹ On a basic level, then, these encounters were centered around one or more of the many vernacular Greek books in Crusius's possession and erected on multiple collaborative reading sessions.

The margins of some of these texts reveal immense determination in the pursuit of knowledge. Let us consider the 1546 edition of the *Flower of Virtue*, in which Crusius discovered the mysterious Greek word τὸ ναέλην. A first investigation of its meaning paid no dividends: "None of the Greeks who was with me in 1582 knew this [word]," Crusius noted sourly in the margin. Four years later Donatus, who had come back after his first visit, told him it referred to a stork. A year after that, in 1587, Gabriel Severus suggested it was some sort of greyish bird. Finally, in 1589, another one of Crusius's guests, Damatius Larissaeus, suggested yet another rendering: eagle.¹⁰ This was knowledge-making as practiced in Crusius's household: over the course of seven years Crusius approached a single page, even a single word, again and again with the same purpose in mind, always hoping that a new, yet similar, reading of the same text with another glossator might unlock its lexicographical mysteries. Sadly, which translation Crusius decided

⁸ Moennig, "On Martinus Crusius's Collection of Greek Vernacular and Religious Books," 67-69.

⁹ UBT Mh 466, volume 3, fol. 674.

¹⁰ Andreas Kunades, *Ἄνθος τῶν Χαρίτων* (Venice, 1546), UBT DK I 6 4°, 10.

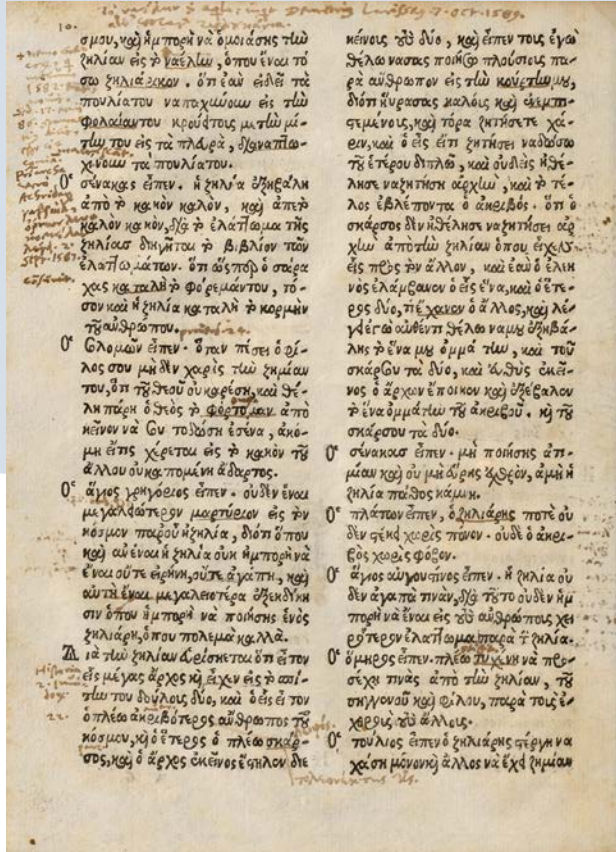


Figure 1. In a copy of one of his Greek books, Crusius recorded the different translations that his Greek guests gave for an unknown Greek word. UBT DK I 6 4°, page 10.

11 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH51.

12 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH68.

to accept cannot be inferred from the marginal notes. He compiled explanations with concentration and determination, but often without further comment.

The bookish nature of these interactions should not obscure the fact that this was often a deeply oral process. Donatus — as Crusius duly noted in his description of his guest — “could not read or write” and knew only a few words of German. His illiteracy meant that he and Crusius had to interpret texts through a motley mix of languages, including Italian, Latin and German, rather than translating from one language into the other. Crusius noted that Donatus would often use “gestures, his hands, and paraphrases” to elucidate specific words and sentences.¹¹ Similarly, the nearly three hundred words that Andreas Argyrus explained to Crusius in January 1581 came from the texts that he and Crusius read together, and their explication often involved “examining the context” in which they occurred.¹² On this occasion, too, more than one

language and form of communication was used: if they did not talk in Italian, Crusius spoke ancient Greek, Andreas a Greek vernacular. That this was not always opportune is suggested by the presence of an interpreter, Johann Friedrich Weidner, who occasionally greased the wheels of communication. This young man from Leipzig spoke Italian with the Greeks and then turned to Latin or German when he spoke to Crusius, trying to ensure that nothing was lost in translation.¹³

13 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85 GH61.

14 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85 GH49.

15 UBT Mb 37 fol. 85 GH11.

Sometimes these collaborative reading sessions went far beyond the material book. It seems that any object in Crusius's house could be brought to bear on his interests in the social history of the Greek language: at one point, the lyre that stood in his study set off a conversation about musical terminology; at another, Crusius took Donatus by the hand, guided him through the house, and recorded the vernacular Greek names of particular parts of the house and of individual domestic items that Donatus translated. In this way, Crusius learned of the vernacular Greek equivalents for the stables, a chandelier, a flour cabinet, an oven, a grater, and numerous other objects.¹⁴ Crusius learned thousands of Greek words and phrases through these collaborative reading and question-and-answer sessions. Topics of conversation ranged from orthodox theology to household items, from dress to topography, from subjects that made his guests blush, to stock phrases about the amount of attention women paid to their appearance.¹⁵ The knowledge of the Greek vernacular that he acquired over the years was thus incredibly extensive, perhaps unparalleled for the period. But it was also serendipitous and by no means comprehensive: Crusius had to make do with what his guests knew and told him.

Just how important mastering the Greek vernacular was to Crusius is also indicated by the way he recorded what his Greek guests told him: he not only took down these words in the margins of his vernacular Greek chapbooks and in two separate manuscripts — his diary and a notebook that he specifically kept for recording Greek testimonies — but at some

16 For the lists, see: Aldus Manutius, *Thesaurus cornu copiae* (Venice, 1496). Crusius's copy is currently in the Beinecke Library: BEIN Zi +5551, copy 3. For an analysis of this document, see: Panagiotis Toufexis, *Das Alphabetum vulgaris linguae graecae des deutschen Humanisten Martin Crusius (1526–1607): Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der gesprochenen griechischen Sprache im 16. Jh.* (Cologne, 2005).

17 UBT Mb 37 fol. 85 GH10.

18 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85 GH10, 18.

19 Martin Crusius, *Turcograeciae libri octo* (Basel, 1584), 209. See also: UBT Mb 37, fol. 85 GH13.

20 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85 GH10.

point he also decided to organize this material in the margins of his copy of Aldus Manutius's 1496 *Thesaurus cornu copiae*, itself a great lexicographical work. Beginning in April 1579, a few months after the first Greek had visited Crusius in Tübingen, he arranged the very same words that he had copied down in conversation in four neat alphabetical lists of vernacular Greek words and kept updating this record as time passed. Crusius thus enriched his copy of Manutius's *Thesaurus* with nearly 18,000 vernacular Greek words and phrases.¹⁶

However, it was not just the sheer quantity of words that mattered to Crusius. Engaging his guests in conversation also made him more attuned than he would otherwise have been to the heterogeneity of the Greek language. Crusius, perhaps aware of the inability of print to communicate the sound of the Greek vernacular (and of language in general), truly hung on his guests' every word. He wrote down words and phrases precisely as he heard them being pronounced and thus gained insight into the Greek language in ways that simply listing words could not. Hearing Donatus speak in 1579 and Trucello in 1582 made him realize, for instance, that these Greeks "pronounced the theta as a phi in the Cypriot way."¹⁷ Probably at Crusius's request, Donatus also elaborated on "the great variety of the Greek language" and other languages spoken on the island: Greek, Albanian, Turkish, Italian, and Armenian were all spoken there and influenced one another. The Cretan language was difficult to understand even for other Greeks (not, Crusius realized, unlike Flemish for Germans).¹⁸ In rural areas, Donatus explained, farmers added unusual prefixes and suffixes to common nouns and spoke what Crusius called "a more corrupt" language.¹⁹ In other cases, Crusius labeled specific words as Turkish loanwords or showed that he knew that some Greeks called their language *romanika*.²⁰ Ever the meticulous observer, he thus connected language and geography.

It is evident that Crusius could acquire this type of information only through his Greek guests. Not only did they bring to life

books that would otherwise have remained mute but they also, by virtue of being native speakers, testified to the diversity of vernacular Greek spoken in the Ottoman Greek Mediterranean. Yet it is not immediately apparent from the material examined here that Crusius actually *spoke* vernacular Greek and, if he did, to what degree of fluency. Nowhere in his documents have I found evidence of him speaking primarily vernacular Greek with his guests. Most likely, Crusius's communication with his guests resembled "the more mundane, quotidian reality of communication" in the early modern Mediterranean, in whose complex linguistic ecosystem most individuals had not mastered languages to perfection. Instead, according to Eric Dursteler, to ensure effective communication individuals "developed an ability to bridge ... linguistic differences well enough" by learning languages phonetically.²¹ Communication in Crusius's home thus approximated polyglot exchanges in Mediterranean ports where merchants from different linguistic backgrounds tried to express themselves in a shared language, the *lingua franca*, to facilitate communication.

Crusius's situation was also emblematic of how many individuals in the early modern period learned foreign languages, a process as conversational as it was textual, as oral as it was aural. In the early modern classroom, students learned Latin and ancient Greek by listening to their teacher explicate texts, by taking notes, and by asking questions about the books that were prescribed as course materials. Such explications of books, though supposed to be done all in Latin, often switched into the vernacular for part or all of a sentence and then switched back. Those who, like Crusius, sought to inform themselves about other cultures often started their inquiries by mastering a language in the way Crusius had: Jesuit missionaries to China — such as Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci — attempted to acquire fluency in the Chinese language by listening attentively as their Chinese teachers explained basic grammar and vocabulary from the schoolbooks and language primers that they had acquired.²² The Franciscan

²¹ Eric Dursteler, "Speaking in Tongues: Multilingualism and Multicultural Communication in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Past & Present* 217 (2012): 47-77 at 76.

²² Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: the Jesuit mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 244, 246.

23 Miguel León-Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún, first anthropologist*. Trans. Mauricio J. Mixco (Norman, OK, 2002).

24 Gerard Wiegers, "A Life between Europe and the Maghrib: The Writings and Travels of Ahmad b. Qâsim al Hajarî al-Andalusî," in Geert Jan van Gelder and Ed de Moor, eds., *The Middle East and Europe: Encounters and Exchanges* (Amsterdam, 1992): 87-115. For the role of *moriscos* in teaching Arabic beyond the Iberian Peninsula, see: Gerard Wiegers, "Moriscos and Arabic studies in Europe," *Al-Qantara* 31 (2010): 587-610.

25 Martin Crusius, *De Imperatore Romano Friderico Ahenobarbo Vel Barbarossa Oratio* (Tübingen, 1593), unpaginated appendix. I would like to thank Janika Päll for bringing this book to my attention.

26 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85 GH19.

friar Bernardino de Sahagún similarly recruited a group of knowledgeable elderly men from the Nahuatl community of Tepeapulco to explain their pictorial form of writing to him and to educate him about their culture and history.²³ Perhaps most comparable to the case of Crusius and his guests were the *Moriscos* who, after their expulsion from the Iberian peninsula, taught Arabic throughout early modern Europe — a particularly well-documented case being that of Ahmad ibn Qasim Al-Hajarî, who taught Thomas Erpenius some Arabic by reading a set of books with him.²⁴

One final snippet of evidence illustrates how these aural and oral encounters offered Crusius penetrating insights into the Ottoman Greek world and its languages. In 1593 a Greek Orthodox woman by the name of Antonia arrived in Tübingen with her husband Andreas. At some point, for reasons left unspecified, she composed a Greek lament — in political verses and addressed to Crusius — about the many hardships she had suffered in her life. While accompanying herself "skillfully and pleasantly," this Greek woman "passionately" performed the song twice, even though she had spent three years in captivity, where "her teeth had been beaten out of her mouth."²⁵ Such performances evidently brought the contemporary Greek world to life in a way that hearing his other Greek guests speak could not. On other occasions Crusius talked about Greece's musical traditions with his guests and learned that in some places women engaged in singing competitions — in other words, he was interested in folksongs long before they became a common way to learn about a people and a culture.²⁶ Songs like Antonia's brought this musical world, this snippet of Greek culture, directly into his home. Her performance afforded a rare opportunity to hear in Tübingen some of the sounds and rhythms that characterized everyday life in Greece. Antonia, then, made audible what Crusius could otherwise only know through oral inquiry. It is telling that he reproduced the song — in full and with a detailed note about Antonia's performance — in one of his publications.

II. Virtual Witnessing and Forms of Visualization

Given the nature of these encounters, and the nature of language learning in this period, it should hardly come as a surprise that listening attentively was perhaps Crusius's single most important tool for expanding his understanding of the Greek language. Nevertheless, Crusius's encounters were not only about language or about listening attentively to sounds and their differences. Over the years his guests informed him about other aspects of the Ottoman Greek world as well. Conversation could quickly turn from explications of the Greek vernacular to discussions about Greek Orthodoxy, the Greek archipelago, or the demographics and religious landscape of specific islands and cities. For these topics, too, Crusius harnessed his skills as a listener, but in an altogether different way. Even though conversation played a key role, his guests went to great lengths to help him visualize the early modern Greek world. In answering the questions Crusius put to them, they directed the mind's eye to the Hellenic world he was so profoundly interested in but had never visited. For all their glitches and complexities, these exchanges enabled Crusius to *see* the Ottoman Greek world, as it were, through the eyes of his guests.

In this case, too, the process of knowledge-making often started with a book. One of the most complex vernacular Greek texts in Crusius's collection was a nautical book that contained the roads and distances between different Mediterranean ports. This *Portolanos*, as such books are known, had been printed in Venice in 1573 and had been acquired by Crusius on September 6, 1580 through an acquaintance of his named Hieronymus Vischer. This short booklet was essentially an encyclopedic list of Mediterranean ports and their surroundings, a sort of *vademecum* for navigators. It was also a remarkably complex text, written in an idiom that was both technical and idiosyncratic. When he first read it, Crusius could not understand it. Neither was his contact in Venice of much help in this respect: Crusius wrote to Vischer, request-

27 UBT Mh 466, volume 2, fol. 334.

28 Πορτολάνος (Venice, 1573), UBT Fa 16a, 55.

29 Πορτολάνος, UBT Fa 16a, 139.

30 Πορτολάνος, UBT Fa 16a, 16^b, 19^v, and 105^e.

ing more vernacular Greek books and attached a list of words from the Portolanos “that some Greek [in Venice] should interpret.” Even if the response that Crusius received may not have been unexpected, it was certainly disappointing: Vischer told Crusius that not even Gabriel Severus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, could understand the text. In fact, Vischer specified, the “dialect of this Portolanos is only known to sailors.”²⁷ How, then, would Crusius ever be able to peruse this book?

His opportunity came in the summer of 1587, when a man from Chania, by the name of Joannes Dondis, stayed in Tübingen for no fewer than fifty-four days. Dondis “had been a sailor for years” and thus offered exactly the type of expertise that the Portolanos required. (He even showed Crusius the wounds he had suffered at the Battle of Lepanto.) This man made the book speak to Crusius in ways the latter could not have imagined. As they pored over the book, Dondis informed his host about several Venetian islands, often appealing to standards of direct observation: as they went over the entry on the Gallipoli peninsula, Dondis told Crusius he had seen the Dardanelles Strait “very well.”²⁸ Crusius also recorded that Dondis himself had been in Tripoli and on the island of Djerba, off the coast of Tunisia, where he had been held captive. Unsurprisingly, Dondis had few positive things to say about Djerba: the water was not good, there were no mountains, and the people were barbaric.²⁹

In different parts of the book these conversations appear in strikingly visual form. There is a map of Crete, a drawing of the port of Lisbon, and an image of one of Menorca’s ports.³⁰ None of these are very elaborate, but in their simple form they did make intelligible a text that was linguistically complex and, in its orthography, heavily influenced by the contemporary pronunciation of Greek. Dondis even gave Crusius an aid to visualize the distances between different places and to understand their internal connections: on the first page of the book Crusius copied out a compass, which in Greek “is called a *bousoula*” and without which “it is impossible to nav-

33 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH9.

34 UBT, Mb 37, fol. 85, GH17.

35 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH 90.

36 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH135-136.

37 Mh 466, volume 3, fol. 369-370.

38 UBT Mh 466, volume 3, fol. 592.

From Donatus Crusius learned that “in the whole of Cyprus there are fifteen thousand cities and villages”, that “the capital ... is Nicosia” and that “its second city ... Famagusta.”³³ He also described to Crusius what was left of ancient Troy: “[Donatus] says he has even seen the ruins of Troy which is [a] white land, close to the sea. Not far away is the island of Tenedos. There are still many walls. But the rest has been destroyed. Constantinople is a bigger city. Not far from Troy and Tenedos is a small island called Archistrategos.”³⁴ In a sense, what Donatus is doing here is guiding Crusius through the remnants of ancient Troy, not unlike an early modern travel writer, comparing it with better-known places (Constantinople) while also offering his audience specific clues (Tenedos, Archistrategos) to locate this ancient city on the map of the Greek world.

Not surprisingly, as a professor of Greek, Crusius was particularly eager to hear what his Greek guests knew about contemporary Athens: he asked nearly all of his visitors for details of the city’s schools and churches, its inhabitants and physical contours. In 1582 Trucello told Crusius “he had seen Athens and that the lower city had been destroyed. The upper city, however, was around three times the size of Tübingen.”³⁵ Two years later, at Crusius’s instigation, the Greek copyist Andreas Darmarius shared what he knew about Athens as well as Corinth, Sparta and other Greek cities and places.³⁶ After yet another two years, in May 1586, a priest named Michael made his way to Tübingen and described to Crusius some of the cities that he knew: Athens was “a city bigger than Augsburg”; Thessaloniki, “big, like Paris”; Corinth, “about the same size as Augsburg,” with “many olive gardens”; and Constantinople had “a hundred and one gates” and a “circumference” of “eighteen Greek miles.”³⁷ Still later, when the archbishop of Ohrid and his party stayed in Tübingen, Crusius learned that Athens “was still a big city” with several churches.³⁸ It is striking how often Crusius’s informants also tried to make this form of visualization easier by comparing Greek cities

to places he knew or may have known better: Trucello compared Athens to Tübingen; Michael compared it to Augsburg. Through comparisons such as these, however elemental, Crusius could better comprehend the sizes of places he had never witnessed firsthand.

These conversations reflected the kind of inquiries that early modern antiquaries and cartographers conducted: Cristoforo Buondelmonti (1386-1430), for instance, sailed the Mediterranean seas and offered detailed descriptions of the Greek ports and islands that he visited, illustrating many of them with celebrated sets of drawings. Fra Mauro (c. 1400-1464) relied on the testimonies of a host of Italian sailors and merchants for his monumental map of the world. Peter Gillis, whose descriptions of Istanbul and the Bosphorus Crusius owned and read, became a model of this type of quantitative interest in cities and places. Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, famously, mobilized a whole network of merchants, ship captains, and other informants to send him exact measurements of Mediterranean port cities, shipping patterns, and much more.³⁹ Obtaining exact measurements, then, whether through conversation or firsthand observation, was evidently one hugely important way in which Crusius and his colleagues sought to understand places. This was a kind of examination that had deep roots: the ancient authorities Strabo and Ptolemy, whose works Crusius annotated with great care, had already advocated the art of describing the world's many regions. But it was in the late medieval and early modern periods, influenced by the rapid rise of antiquarian studies, that the scholarly engagement with landscapes and places, and their past and present lives, really started to flourish.

Crusius could thus build himself a mental image in Tübingen, one piece at the time, of the Greek Mediterranean and of Athens in particular, not unlike what his travelling colleagues did for other places in and beyond the Mediterranean. But it is important to emphasize that such forms of knowledge-making were not solely the product of Crusius's

³⁹ On Buondelmonti, see: Benedetta Bessi, "Cristoforo Buondelmonti: Greek Antiquities in Florentine Humanism," *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 9 (2012): 63-76. On Fra Mauro, see: Piero Flachetta, *Fra' Mauro's World Map: a History* (Rimini, 2013). On Peiresc, see: Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc's Mediterranean World* (Cambridge, MA, 2015).

40 Steven Shapin, "Pump and Circumstance: Robert Boyle's Literary Technology," *Social Studies of Science* 14.4 (1984): 481-520.

41 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH147 and UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, 159.

42 For the use of *depingere* and *pingere* in this context, see Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge/New York, 1998), 133ff.

43 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH163.

prowess as a listener or the result of his inquisitorial line of questioning. In no small part, the descriptions that Crusius's guests provided were much more than just descriptions. They were attempts at making visible something that lay beyond what was directly discernable for Crusius and could be considered what Steven Shapin has called "virtual witnessing": the images that Crusius's interlocutors painted of places in the Mediterranean Greek world enabled him to create a sort of mental image of these places, even though he had not directly witnessed them.⁴⁰ The very precise Latin terminology that Crusius used to record his interactions suggests that his guests went to great lengths indeed to actually visualize the cities that they were describing. Sometimes he noted that his guests "painted" (*depinxit*) the cities they were talking about — as Johannes Tholoitis did for Thessaloniki, and Platamon and Mauricius for Corinth and Athens.⁴¹ No actual drawings of these places survive in Crusius's records. Instead, it seems that Crusius's specific choice of words reflects the vividness (*enargeia*) with which his guests verbally described these places. They created what ancient rhetorical standards would have considered verbal paintings. In theory such images were so powerful that they recreated these Greek places in words, almost as if Crusius saw them with his own eyes.⁴²

In at least one case actual drawings and maps played an important role in the conversations between Crusius and his informants. In September 1585, Crusius diligently subjected Daniel Palaeologus to his customary interrogation: Palaeologus, Crusius learned, was originally from Athens, where his father worked as a merchant. In time, he had become a monk at the Iviron monastery on Mount Athos, the single most important site of Greek Orthodox monasticism. At Crusius's instigation, Palaeologus clarified a few dozen vernacular Greek words from the books in his study.⁴³ Crusius also asked his guest for a description of Athens. Even though the monk initially con-

fessed to “hardly being able to write his own name” and thus certainly incapable of “painting” (*depingere*) his hometown, he agreed to do so in the end.⁴⁴ Athens, Palaeologus revealed, had a citadel and a city around it. It had “many good springs” and was surrounded by olive trees. The Ottomans held its castle. Greek Orthodox churches defined the skyline of the city, including, close to the ancient marketplace, “the big church of Saint Anne.” There were fifteen female monasteries, but no male monasteries — male monastics lived “outside the city in the wilderness.” Many powerful and rich Byzantine families had moved to Athens after the fall of Constantinople, including the Palaeologi and the Comneni, who could both claim an impressive imperial lineage. According to Palaeologus, local Ottoman magistrates feared some of these families, even though Greeks and Ottoman Turks lived largely in separate parts of the city. Some Greek inhabitants, Palaeologus went on, had become rich through commerce. The circumference of the ancient city was “eighteen Italian miles.” The current city, however, was almost five times smaller and there were no walls anymore.

It is striking how precisely Palaeologus located the buildings of the city: the Church of the Holy Nikodemos, for instance, was placed to the east, as were, outside the city, the “eight columns” that were left of the ancient Academy. The castle in the citadel was “three Italian miles away from the sea.”⁴⁵ It was this level of precision that allowed Crusius, once Palaeologus had finished talking, to draw a map of the city in his notebook with the help of an acquaintance of his called Simon Eisen.⁴⁶ It depicted nearly all locations mentioned by Palaeologus and paid close attention to the orientation of both the map and the buildings. Once Palaeologus started describing Athos, the process was repeated. Even though the notes that Crusius took on Athos are not as elaborate as those on Athens, they did suffice to create a map of the peninsula. In this case, too, Crusius carefully located and numbered each and every

44 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH161.

45 UBT Mh 466, volume 3, fol. 299-301.

46 UBT Mh 466, volume 3, fol. 299.

to images of a Turkish soldier and a Turkish priest, Crusius received paintings by an otherwise unknown Frenchman of a Greek Orthodox monk, a Greek citizen, a Greek woman, a Greek girl, a noble Greek, and even the Greek Orthodox Patriarch. Objects such as these derived from a stock set of images that foreigners could acquire in the Ottoman Empire and are found in numerous costume books that have survived from the period. It is clear that the numerous details of the various types of clothing intrigued Crusius greatly. When Donatus was in Tübingen Crusius asked his guest to clarify and translate the names of the garments of these various individuals. In a series of notes as precise as they were elaborate, Donatus not only explained what individual pieces of clothing were called, but also specified how they were worn and by whom: “the dress that Greeks wear in the city differed little or nothing from that of a Turk” apart from the color of their hats. The hoods that Greek monks used to cover their head were not attached to their habit. And Greek women, according to Donatus, had certain “golden ribbons” hanging down from their dresses and wore necklaces made of beads.⁴⁸

Conversations such as these reveal exactly how in the early modern period images from costume books, which emerged from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, could be studied. Ulrike Ilg has shown how these books, a popular form in which antiquarianism and ethnography converged, not only portrayed the full diversity of the world’s peoples as visible in their appearance, but also advanced specific and complex classifications of the human race. Costume books were connected to the cartographic impulse to map the globe and exhibited that “preference in the sixteenth century for organizing knowledge in an encyclopedic manner.”⁴⁹ They offered certain ethnographic clues to character and culture. Their illustrations of clothing and individual appearance informed the way Crusius and his contemporaries understood the peoples portrayed, not unlike the ethnographic illustrations on maps and in travel books. By carefully observing and considering these

⁴⁸ Crusius, *Turcograecia*, 188.

⁴⁹ Ulrike Ilg, “The Cultural Significance of Costume Books in Sixteenth-Century Europe,” in Catharine Richardson, ed., *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650* (Aldershot, 2004), 29-47 at 33.

50 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH10-13.

51 William H. Sherman, "The Reader's Eye," *forthcoming*.

52 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH142.

objects with Donatus, Crusius thus acquired valuable lexicographical details, but also ethnographic information about the appearance of Greek women, the attributes of the Byzantine Patriarch, and the garments of a Turkish soldier.⁵⁰ In that sense, Crusius's Greek visitors, oftentimes clothed in traditional attire, offered another occasion for Crusius to see the world he never saw in person.

So whether Crusius was in conversation with his Greek interlocutors, perusing one of his many books or objects, or both at the same time, the eye, in the words of Bill Sherman, served "as an instrument of apprehension," even when this process was premised on Crusius's competency as a listener.⁵¹ The forms of visualization and *enargeia* that defined these encounters demonstrate how Crusius's Greek interlocutors made him see their world through their eyes and how their descriptions offered Crusius substitutes of the journeys that his interlocutors had actually undertaken.

III. Embodied Encounters

For Crusius there was no way to predict when people might appear on his doorstep. Sometimes years separated the departure of one Greek from the arrival of another. Lucas and Andreas Argyrus, for instance, arrived nearly two years after Donatus, and it would take over a year before Trucello, the next pilgrim, knocked on Crusius's door. Most of his guests stayed in Tübingen for only a few days before they continued their journeys: in 1581 Lukas and Andreas Argyrus visited Tübingen for just two days, as did Trucello in 1582, Daniel Palaeologos in 1584, and Jonas Taritzius in 1592. Johannes Tholoitis remained not much longer. Neither did Andreas Darmarius in 1584, even though Crusius "begged" this knowledgeable scribe to extend his stay.⁵² Johannes Constantinus Paraskeva would stay for just a single day. It is not always clear how these men and women divided their time in Tübingen, but we may very well assume that they dedicated much of it

to collecting alms from the local population. Time was scarce and therefore always of the essence.

If this were not already frustrating enough, the full teaching load that kept Crusius occupied during term time — he repeatedly complained about being up to his ears in work and about having to correct his students' many papers — limited time for conversation even further. In August 1589 Crusius could only give a Cypriot from Famagusta some money because, much to his own displeasure, his “occupations” prevented him from talking to the man properly.⁵³ Similarly, when the Greek copyist Darmarius was in Tübingen, Crusius had to set exams and attend the wedding of his godchild Barbara Hailand. Even though he brought Darmarius to the wedding and helped the scribe sell some of his books to the Duke, he nevertheless complained that “many things prevented [him] from using [Darmarius] to explicate [his] vernacular Greek books” to satisfaction.⁵⁴

Knowing that time was limited and that the string of visiting Greeks might break, Crusius thus tried to make the most of their precious time together. His determination to hear them out simply jumps off the pages of his notebooks. Crusius confessed that he had not given Donatus, for instance, who himself had been a very eager talker, a single moment of rest.⁵⁵ During the four-day visit of Calonas, “who spoke very fast” and “was lisping” in such a way that “he was incredibly hard to understand,” Crusius got so carried away that his “head was full of Greek and was buzzing with it,” while he had to admit that his interrogation had tired his guest considerably.⁵⁶ Even as Calonas was departing, Crusius would not leave the man alone. He followed him to the gates of the city, pen and paper in hand. As Calonas “read” the city, pointing out and translating individual objects, Crusius eagerly scribbled these items on his Greek wordlist — writing so hastily, as Panagiotis Toufexis has noted, that he blotted the pages of his notebook.⁵⁷ In that respect, whether it was day or night, early morning or late evening, mattered less than the potential harvest that could be gathered: it was the dead of night when

53 UBT Mb 37, fol. 84v .

54 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH137 and UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH140.

55 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH51.

56 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH100, 120.

57 Toufexis, *Das Alphabetum*, 239.

58 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH75.

59 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH12.

60 UBT Mb 37, fol. 85, GH103.

Crusius, together with Stephan Gerlach, had first sat down to record Calonas's tragic testimonies about his life and travels. Crusius and his guests really burned the midnight oil.

Even meals did not interrupt his interrogations, but rather offered new topics of conversation: when Lucas and Andreas Argyrus had dinner with Crusius, they talked, appropriately, about tableware.⁵⁸ Next to a short note about some sort of Cypriot side dish of roasted meat with vinegar and saffron, mentioned by Donatus in 1579, Crusius recorded excitedly: "we had this for dinner!" Crusius also listed, with great precision, the vernacular Greek names of the individual ingredients of the dish — a powerful reminder that he learned about the contemporary Greek world through taste as well.⁵⁹ Interestingly enough, it was not only the food that appeared on the table that encouraged conversation. Sometimes what was *not* eaten was talked about as well. Many of the Greeks who shared Crusius's table were fasting. For two days in late June, 1582, Calonas, for instance, abstained from "eggs, meat and other dairy products."⁶⁰ In these cross-cultural conversations, then, whether Crusius was tasting Greek dishes and recording the vernacular names of its ingredients or whether he observed his guests' religious practices, the dinner table was as much a site of knowledge-making as the study.

Taken together these small vignettes gesture at something much broader: conversation in Crusius's home was a deeply embodied way of making knowledge. To ask how Crusius made knowledge out of interpersonal encounters is to realize that knowledge was from many points of view an interpersonal affair. It was the confined space of Crusius's home, combined with the limited amount of time for conversation, that made these encounters intellectually intense and physically demanding. Even though these Greek Orthodox Christians spent significant amounts of time collecting alms — and sometimes lodged not with Crusius but in one of Tübingen's inns — they and Crusius nevertheless spent hours in each other's presence. This goes some way toward explaining the eagerness with which Crusius subjected

his visitors to systematic interviews and the undivided attention that he devoted to making the most of his guests' sojourns in Tübingen. Opening his home to these Greeks and serving them a hot meal was evidently worth his while.

But showing forms of hospitality was possible in no small part because of the particularly gendered organization of Crusius's scholarly household. Only with a supportive wife and a hospitable table could he have received so many Greek informants for so long. Only relatively recently had this particular household arrangement become a viable model. Gadi Algazi has shown that from the fifteenth century onwards marriage — preferably to an affluent party — and maintaining a family became an increasingly attractive option for organizing a scholarly life. This refiguring of the scholarly habitus prompted a similar reorganization of the domestic space. While scholars' wives took charge of household affairs, their husbands could dedicate their energies to activities that guaranteed social recognition and a salary: scholarship.⁶¹ This new gendered organization of the domestic sphere, with its social and hospitable dimensions, evidently formed the bedrock of Crusius' scholarly practices.

One bit of evidence can illuminate just how important Crusius's wife was in welcoming Greeks into their home: in January 1581, two Greeks stayed with them for just two days. In his notebook, Crusius complained that they did not stay longer. Nevertheless, he also noted that their departure was probably for the better, because his wife had already a lot of laundry to do.⁶² I caution against dismissing this as a petty detail. This kind of work, so often overlooked or taken for granted by historians, was vital for creating opportunities for company and intellectual exchange. Crusius's scholarly world was, like those of numerous other early modern scholars, "not a world without women but a world *among* women," to stress a point made by Deborah Harkness.⁶³ And conversation, in that sense, was no more Crusius's work than it was the product of the silent labor of his wife and the other female members of his household.

⁶¹ Gadi Algazi, "Scholars in Households: Refiguring the Learned Habitus, 1480-1550," *Science in Context* 16:1-2 (2003): 9-42.

⁶² UBT, Mb 37, fol. 85, GH67.

⁶³ Deborah Harkness, "Managing an Experimental Household: The Dees of Mortlake and the Practice of Natural Philosophy," *ISIS* (1997): 247-262, at 251.

Conclusion

The story of Crusius and his Greek guests is as much a story about Lutheran Germany as it is a story about Mediterranean mobility and about the production of knowledge in the early modern world. Crusius's records reveal in great and granular detail how conversation enabled scholars like him to make knowledge out of interpersonal encounter. The movements of the Greek Orthodox Christians studied here also afford us another opportunity to revisit the purported provincialism of the Old Reich. Clearly, Crusius's world was one imbricated in the global texture of the period and shaped by geopolitical developments far beyond its borders. In that sense, the case of Crusius and his Greek guests can help us think about what a chapter in the global history of Lutheran Germany would look like — and how this would be very much an entangled history that reveals how the period's most transformative phenomena, including the globalization of Christianity, inflected small-town German life. Crusius's conversations with his Greek Orthodox guests thus act as a powerful reminder that global lives of the kind that historians are now tracing need not be lived on a global scale. Local cases like that of Crusius, stories of people who were deeply rooted in their communities, were never fully separated from events taking place in worlds away.

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The Golem: From Enlightenment Monster to Artificial Intelligence

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The Hulk, Superman, Terminator: all of these figures are popular culture echoes of the golem, that artificial human of Jewish mysticism. The golem tradition, which tells of the making of an artificial man from clay through a ritual of words, first arose from medieval Jewish mysticism in the German-speaking lands. Yet the wide-ranging stories told around this figure today are the product of secularization. On the cusp of the age of industrialization, looking back to an idealized image of the seemingly quaint Middle Ages, German Romantic writers constructed the golem as the sign of an assumed Jewish essence, fusing the medieval image of the uncanny Jew with their monstrous perception of the rising new age. Today's golem bears out these complex and varying meanings – which are both particular and universalizing – as the ambivalent sign of cultural interaction between non-Jews and Jews on the one hand, and the state of the human in the rising age of artificial intelligence (AI) on the other.¹

The term golem is taken from the biblical word “galmi” (Psalm 139:16), which is often translated as “shapeless mass” or “embryo”,

¹ This article draws on some material from my book, *The Golem Returns: From German Romantic Literature to Global Jewish Culture, 1808-2008* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010). It is published here with the kind permission of the University of Michigan Press.

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Figure 1. Joshua Abarbanel, *Golem (study)*, 2013. Wood, ceramic, and metal. 18" x 18" x 4". Collection of the artist.

connoting the unfinished human being before God's eye. Mid-rashic literature understood the term "golem" as referring to the biblical creation story of Adam before he received a soul. Stories about the creation of artificial humans or animals by various Jewish sages preceded the medieval Kabbalah. But it was only here, in the German-speaking lands, that the term "golem" began to be applied to the mystical creation of a silent man from clay, brought to life through a Hebrew incantation. This secret ritual, the Kabbalists believed, would initiate the sage into the knowledge of divine creation.

Yet the modern stories told about the golem are notably distinct from the medieval Kabbalah, which in time became a mere cue for the supposedly different nature of the Jews. Today, it is commonly assumed that the tales of a secular golem are linked to the hazy origins of a centuries-old Eastern European Yiddish popular culture. This assumed path, however, is more than uncertain, and sprang at least partly from accounts by Christian German authors during and following the Renaissance, which Jewish writers have continually sought to (re)claim, spawning in turn further versions by non-Jewish writers.

I. From the Christian Kabbalah to Racial Antisemitism

From the Renaissance onwards, Christian German scholars such as Johannes Reuchlin showed a keen interest in the Kabbalah and its golem.² By the early 1600s, reports of golem creations took a distinctly sinister turn when Samuel Brenz, a Jewish convert to Christianity, reportedly attributed the golem to Jewish sorcery.³

However, the overall template of today's golem story first emerged later that century in a letter by the Christian German poet Christoph Arnold, published by Johann Christoph Wagenseil in 1674.⁴ In his letter, Arnold recounted the creation of a golem for profane purposes by a Polish rabbi Elias, who is today assumed to have been the sixteenth-century historic figure of Rabbi Eliyahu of Chelm. According to Arnold, Jews customarily make themselves a golem, a silent man from clay, to help with domestic work after their religious festivals. Animated by an amulet inscribed with the Hebrew word for truth, "emet," the golem, who at first is very small, grows a little every day until it is stronger than its makers. Now fearing their creation, the Jews remove the first letter of its amulet, aleph, so that it reads "met," which means death. But Rabbi Elias's golem grew so tall that the amulet could no longer be easily removed, and when the rabbi attempted to lay it to rest, the golem fell over and crushed him.

Arnold's tale would become the template for the most prominent versions of the golem today. During the early eighteenth century, Rabbi Jacob Emden of Altona related the story of Rabbi Eliyahu's gigantic golem as well, but here, in a significant departure from Arnold's version, the golem merely slaps its maker without killing him at the end.⁵ Christian Orientalist Johann Jakob Schudt's 1714 account of the golem would have a significant impact on the golem's reception during the Romantic period. Tracing the aforementioned Christian writings, Schudt constructed the genesis of golem stories which

² Johannes Reuchlin, *De verbo mirifico*, 1494. *De arte cabalistica*, 1517 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1964).

³ Samuel Friedrich Brenz, *Jüdischer abgestreifter Schlangenbalg* (Nuremberg, 1614). Cited in Solomon Zewi Offenhausen, *Jüdische Theriak* (Hanau, 1615).

⁴ Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Sota. Hoc est: Liber Mischnicus de uxore adulterii suspecta* (Aldorf, 1674).

⁵ Hans Held, *Das Gespenst des Golem. Eine Studie aus der hebräischen Mystik mit einem Exkurs über das Wesen des Doppelgängers* (Munich, 1927), 72; Gershom Scholem, *Zur Kabbala und ihrer Symbolik* (Frankfurt a.M., 1973), 256.

6 Johann Jacob Schudt, *Jüdischer Merckwürdigkeiten* (Berlin, 1922 [Frankfurt a.M., 1714]), 208. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

7 Jakob Grimm, "Entstehung der Verlagspoesie," *Zeitung für Einsiedler*, no. 7 (1808), 56.

still underpins scholarship today. Here, once again, the golem is attributed to the Polish rabbi Elias, and it is a sign of sorcery and of "Kabbalist lies."⁶

German Romantics would borrow from Schudt's negative view of the Jews' relationship to the interlinked realms of the divine, nature and art. The Romantic preoccupation with artificial humans, automata and living statues ambivalently gauged contemporaneous Enlightenment dichotomies regarding nature and artifice, reason and emotion, and Christians and Jews in order to probe the escalating relationship between humans and technology during the first industrial revolution. These new texts used the golem as a vehicle to simultaneously displace onto Jews the crisis of the human in the ensuing age of mass (re)production, and to imbue them with the demonized residues of the natural world as a thing of the past.

It has been argued that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's poem "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" (1797), with its "spirits that I called," may have been inspired by the golem. This argument was first proposed by Jewish authors of the 1840s and undoubtedly conveyed the high esteem that Goethe enjoyed among acculturated Jews. But Goethe's work also formed an obvious model for subsequent narrative embellishments of the golem. Following Jakob Grimm's publication of Arnold's tale in 1808,⁷ Grimm's publisher Achim von Arnim would become the first to extensively fictionalize the golem in his novella *Isabella of Egypt* (1812). Von Arnim's hostility to Jews is well documented; his German-Christian *Tischgesellschaft*, a conservative dining club, formed an early example of racial antisemitism by banning not only Jews, but also Jewish converts and their offspring from membership. In Arnim's novella a female golem makes her first appearance. Created by a Polish rabbi (i.e. Arnold) in the image of the later Habsburg Emperor Karl V's beloved Dutch-gypsy hybrid Isabella, golem Bella is proclaimed the spitting image of her greedy Jewish maker: hypersexualized, duplicitous and

succinctly racialized, anticipating the modern stereotype of the Jewish femme fatale.⁸

And indeed, the Romantic conception of the monstrous and silent golem prefigured nineteenth- and twentieth-century antisemitism with its idea of the Jew's essentialized physical, spiritual and mental corruption. The Jew, the German composer Richard Wagner would claim in his 1850 essay "Judaism in Music," could only imitate rather than create German culture due to his deformed speech organs, his "creaking, squeaking, buzzing snuffle"⁹ being the sign of his flawed intellect. And in 1903, the Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger would conceive of modernity as the most Jewish of all eras in his *Sex and Character*, at precisely the time when the golem was proliferating in an unprecedented manner.¹⁰

II. Jewish Folklore Writing

Meanwhile, a Jewish tradition of writing on the golem was emerging in Prague. The tales created here from the 1830s onwards follow the basic outline of Arnold's, Emden's and Grimm's accounts: a rabbi creates a golem which is animated through a ritual of words. The golem helps with profane tasks until one day it gets out of control. But this golem is now attributed to the sixteenth-century historical figure of Rabbi Löw, who lived in the city of Prague, then the capital of the Habsburg Empire and the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The writers, who were young Jewish reformers and intellectuals, thereby linked the rabbi and his golem to a distinctly German-speaking tradition in the vein of the Enlightenment.¹¹

In Wolf Pascheles's 1846 *Sippurim*, a collection of Prague Jewish folktales, which are best read in the context of Johann Gottfried von Herder's and the Grimm brothers' folk collections, the Bohemian-Jewish physician and folklorist Leopold Weisel

⁸ Achim von Arnim, *Isabella von Ägypten, Kaiser Karl des Fünften erste Jugendliebe* (Stuttgart, 1997).

⁹ Richard Wagner, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, vol. 3, trans. William Ashton Ellis (London, 1894), 75-122 (79).

¹⁰ Otto Weininger, *Sex & Character* (London, 1906).

¹¹ Peter Demetz, "Die Legende vom magischen Prag," *Transit. Europäische Revue*, 1994. Hillel J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry. National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia, 1870-1918*, 1st ed. (New York / Oxford, 1988).

Figure 2. Mikoláš Aleš, “Rabbi Loew and the Golem” (1899). Ink on paper. Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.



12 Wolf Pascheles, *Sippurim, eine Sammlung jüdischer Volks-sagen, Erzählungen, Mythen, Chroniken, Denkwürdigkeiten und Biographien berühmter Juden aller Jahrhunderte, insbesondere des Mittelalters* (Prague, 1870), 52.

13 *Ibid.*, 46.

14 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Prometheus,” in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche: Gedichte 1756-1799*, 40 vols., vol. 1 (Frankfurt a.M., 1987), 203-204. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (London / New York, 1994).

portrays Rabbi Löw as “a skilled mechanic who made himself an automaton, which is the golem.”¹² Conveying the optimistic Enlightenment vision of reason and technological progress, the rabbi remains unharmed by his creation. Weisel’s subsequent story about the medieval Spanish-Jewish scholar Maimonides takes a darker turn when Maimonides subjects a young disciple from London (the latter pretending to be deaf and mute, a golem of sorts) to a “Promethean” experiment in which the student is killed, dissected and then reassembled in a lab, where he grows into a thing of horror.¹³ Consumed by guilt and misfortune, Maimonides is murdered at the end of the story. Through obvious references to Goethe’s “Prometheus” (1785/1789) and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), this story appears to raise the dangers of an unchecked modernity in the world of Christian-Jewish interaction.¹⁴ (The intellectual debate about whether Goethe and Shelley borrowed from the golem tale or vice versa continues.)

With the disappearance of ghetto culture during the nineteenth century, Jewish folk collections and, with them, the golem increasingly figured as an important clue when exploring the idea of the Jews’ racial essence, typically epitomized by the “Eastern Jew.” The intensifying cycle of supposedly

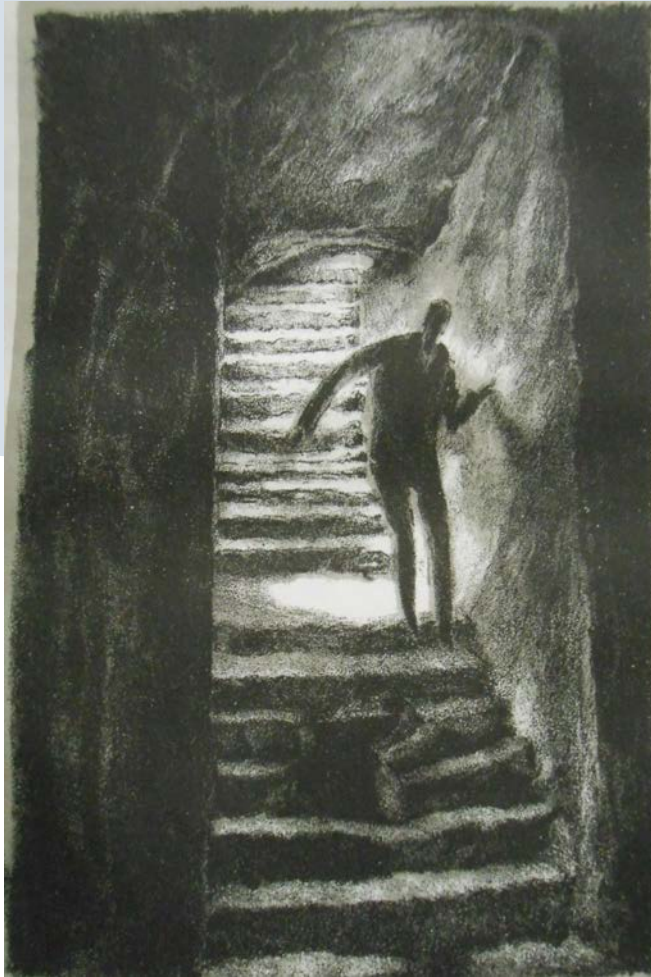


Figure 3. Hugo Steiner-Prag, Illustration for Gustav Meyrink's *Der Golem*, 1915.

originary and fictitious golem accounts, each spinning off the other, conveys the impending collapse of the imaginary German-Jewish dialogue. Yudl Rosenberg's (1908) and Chaim Bloch's (1920) fiction cycles on the Prague golem, which both misleadingly claim to originate from Yiddish folktales, were likely inspired by the 1858 Yiddish translation of the Prague *Sippurim*.¹⁵ Rosenberg's and Bloch's fictional works, in turn, underpinned the purportedly Jewish folktale origins of subsequent golem versions, through which early twentieth-century authors constructed their vision of the Jews' racialized difference.

Gustav Meyrink's 1915 *The Golem*, which remains the most instantly recognizable golem account today, was the first extended novelization of the Jewish artificial anthropoid. In

¹⁵ Yudl Rosenberg, *The Golem or The Miraculous Deeds of Rabbi Leyb*, 1st ed., trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York, 2006). Chajim Bloch, *Golem: Legends of the Ghetto of Prague*, trans. Harry Schneiderman (Mila, MT, 1997). Wolf Pascheles, *Sipurim: Eyne zammlung: Yidisher folkszagen, mithen, legenden, kroniken...* (Prague, 1858).



Figure 4. Film poster for *The Golem: How He Came into the World* (1920), directed by Paul Wegener.

¹⁶ Gustav Meyrink, *The Golem* (Sawtry, 2008), 57-58.

conveying the golem as “a completely unknown person, . . . with a yellow complexion and mongoloid features,”¹⁶ the novel, complete with Jewish artist Hugo Steiner-Prag’s illustrations, conveyed the stereotype of the “Eastern Jew.” Appearing in the midst of the First World War, Meyrink’s work reflected the sense of an imminent apocalypse arising from the destructive potential of modernity, with the Jew as its sign.

Meyrink’s novel is often assumed to have provided the blueprint for Paul Wegener’s 1920 film *The Golem, How He Came into the World*, which followed Wegener’s previous two stabs

at a golem film in 1915 and 1917. But Wegener was likely, at best, to have been inspired by the success of Meyrink's work, as the film's plot largely follows the stories related in Chaim Bloch's pretend folktale cycle, which was itself plagiarized from Yudl Rosenberg's fiction. Wegener's filmic images widely popularized the alleged folktales around the Prague golem, such as the golem chopping wood and defending the ghetto (the latter a more recent motif), the romance between the Jewish woman and Christian knight, and the golem running amok. At the same time, Wegener's 1920 version is far more than a visual reimagination of purported Jewish folktales. It brings to the fore – via the Faustian figure of Rabbi Löw – Wegener's vision of the film artist in the still youthful form of film, which Wegener envisioned as “kinetic poetry.” As Wegener states:

Film's actual poet is the camera. The spectator's ability to constantly change perspectives, numerous tricks such as split screen, mirroring etc., in short: . . . here [in *The Golem*] everything hinges on the image Rhythm and tempo, light and darkness play the same role in film as indeed they do in music. I envisioned a kind of kinetic poetry which finally relinquishes the image of objective reality as such.¹⁷

Wegener's images suggest the myth-making powers of film, such as in the projection of the figure of the Wandering Jew, but also film's ability to critically expose stereotypes, as suggested in the revealing shots of demeaning Christian spectators. Akin to Meyrink, Wegener's ambivalent construction of the Jew as the proponent of the new medium of film suggests the uncanny nature of modernity. Framed by technological progress in the form of the cinematic medium, the atavistic essence of the human still breaks through, both volatile in their own way.

What, then, happens when the age-old golem, whose medieval connotations signify the perceived atavistic nature of the Jew, fully morphs into a sign of technomodernity? 1920, the year in which Wegener's *Golem* was released, also saw the publi-

¹⁷ Paul Wegener, “Die künstlerischen Möglichkeiten des Films,” in *Paul Wegener: Sein Leben und seine Rollen. Ein Buch von ihm und über ihn*, ed. Kai Möller (Hamburg, 1954), 102-113 (110-111).

18 Karel Čapek, *R.U.R.* (London, 2015).

19 Norma Contrada, "Golem and Robot: A Search for Connections," *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts. Special Issue on The Golem – Rabbi Loew and His Legacy: The Golem in Literature and Film*, 7, nos. 2/3 (26/27) (1995): 244-254 (251).

20 Cited in <https://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/sf/r.u.r.html>, accessed 13 May 2001.

21 E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The Sandman* (London, 2016); Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (Germany, 1927).

22 E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Die Geheimnisse* (Frankfurt a.M. / Leipzig, 1996).

cation of Czech author Karel Čapek's dystopian play *R.U.R.*¹⁸ Made for the purpose of providing slave labor, Čapek's robots revolt and kill their masters. But like Wegener's golem, they also have emotional stirrings and erotic desires. At the end of the play, they are proclaimed masters of the world by the last surviving human. Today, Čapek is considered a pioneer of AI, not least because he invented the word "robot" for his play, drawing on the Czech word "rabota," meaning "work" or "servitude." The connections between Čapek's robots and the golem are manifold, and Čapek himself stated in later interviews about the play that "the Robot is the Golem made flesh by mass production,"¹⁹ and that

[t]hose who think to master the industry are themselves mastered by it; Robots must be produced . . . *because* they are a war industry. The product of the human brain has escaped the control of human hands. This is the comedy of science.²⁰

From E.T.A. Hoffmann's automaton Olympia in his story "The Sandman" (1816) through to Fritz Lang's cyborg Maria in *Metropolis* (1927), modern culture rarely imagined the automaton doppelgänger – especially in its female shape – as more than an ambivalent creation.²¹ Both pieces, each in its own way, reflect Romanticism's racialized conception of the doppelgänger in its close entwinement with the Jewish golem, as featured in Hoffmann's later tale "Secrets."²² Lang's film, then, can be read as a modernist reimagination of Romantic doppelgänger figures, including Achim von Arnim's highly sexualized golem Bella (1812) and the mechanical nature of E.T.A. Hoffmann's automaton Olympia, whom her creator Rotwang, whose name bears implicit Jewish connotations, brings to life in a Frankenstein-type electrical experiment.

Whereas *Metropolis* ultimately upholds the binaries between nature and artifice and re-establishes the traditional order of gender (and implicitly race) through the cyborg's destruction at the end, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), which opens with a visual homage to *Metropolis*, suggests far deeper ambiguities regarding the essence of the human at the dawn of a

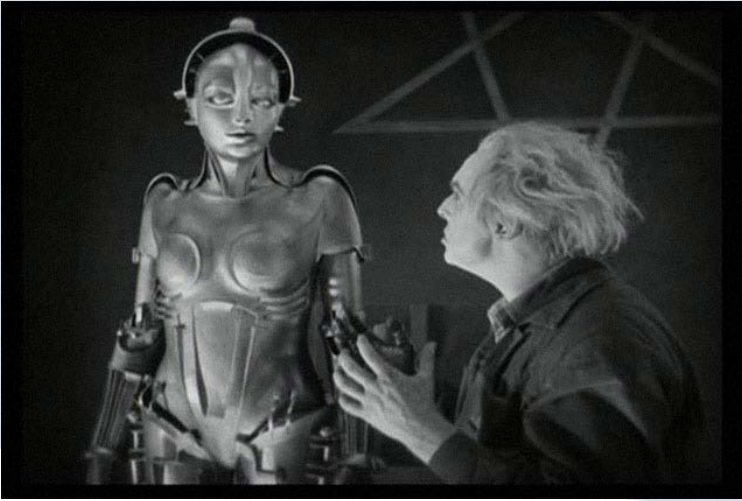


Figure 5. The cyborg Maria in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927).

new android age.²³ In resisting determinability, Scott's replicants break down the Romantic dichotomies of nature and artifice, human and machine. The echoes of Weimar's racialized uncanny emerge in *Blade Runner's* many Asian protagonists amidst the decaying cityscapes, and the film's numerous nods to Weimar film's themes and styles, which had themselves borne reference to a destructive Jewish modernity.

23 Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner* (USA, 1982).

In addition to chiaroscuro lighting, Scott's homage to Weimar cinema includes the darker-toned femme fatale with her Jewish associations, here present in her older tragic form as the replicant Rachael. Like Shelley's *Frankenstein*, *Blade Runner* probes the key questions of feelings and empathy which had already concerned Romantic writers on the artificial anthropoid. In order to detect and "retire" a group of bioengineered anthropoids on the run, Deckard's testing device seeks to pinpoint signs of empathy (or the absence thereof). But the physical and emotional boundaries of the human become increasingly blurred in the film, such as when Deckard is saved twice by his replicant victims, suggesting their capacity for empathy, and when it is suggested that he himself is a replicant.

Such explorations of ideas about naturalized origins found nourishment and in turn nourished postmodern theories seeking to de-essentialize the biologized binaries inherited from Enlightenment debates. Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985) was a milestone in the now enthusiastic reception

Figure 6. The replicant Rachael in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (USA, 1982).



24 Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, ed. Donna Haraway (New York, 1991 [1985]), 149-181.

of the artificial anthropoid and its apparent rupture of essentialism.²⁴ For Haraway, the cyborg signals humanity's utopian release from the essentializing Enlightenment binary of nature / artifice as well as those related to gender, sexuality, race and class, which Haraway sees as closely linked to the emergence of capitalism. This postmodern conception of the cyborg has furthered textual constructions of the cybernetical golem, variously aiming at gender, racial and sexual indeterminability on the one hand, while simultaneously furthering such previously oppressed particularities on the other. In doing so, conceptualizations of the postmodern golem continue to straddle the divides of universality and particularity that have marked modern discourses on the Jews and their golem.

In a clear attempt to wrest the golem back from its negative Christian inscriptions of decadence, Gershom Scholem, who in a 1915 poem had precisely lamented those inscriptions in Gustav Meyrink's *Golem*, in 1965 resignified the golem as a constructive sign of Jewish technomodernity when he named Israel's first computer at the Weizmann Institute of Science the "Golem of Rehovoth," stating that it could "well compete with the Golem of Prague." As Scholem argued in his dedicatory speech, both the golem and the computer had

a basic conception in common The old Golem was based on a mystical combination of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which are the elements and building-stones of the world. The new Golem is based on a simpler, and at the same time more intricate, system. Instead of twenty-two elements, it knows only of two, the two numbers 0 and 1, constituting the

binary system of representation. Everything can be translated, or transposed, into these two basic signs, and what cannot be so expressed cannot be fed as information to the Golem. I dare say the old Kabbalists would have been glad to learn of this simplification of their own system. This is progress.²⁵

In a similarly optimistic vein, Boaz Golany, Professor at the Technion (Israel Institute for Technology) more recently pronounced the Prague golem as a metaphor for AI in a speech to visiting students from Prague's Technical University.²⁶

If anything, Jewish writers and artists have continually sought to wrest back the golem as an autonomous symbol of Jewish culture, sometimes together with portrayals of a productive technomodernity, with its ubiquitous promise of social equality. Marge Piercy's cyberpunk novel *He, She and It* (1991) features a cybernetical golem, Yod, created to defend a small freetown of ethnically heterogeneous Jews from hostile corporations.²⁷ But when Yod embarks on a sexual relationship with one of the townswomen, he develops into much more than just the perfect fighting machine, becoming a perfect lover and surrogate father. Following Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto," Piercy's postmodern conception of Jewishness imagines through the cyborg the utopian transcendence of the old, naturalized binaries of gender, race and sexuality in the industrial and post-nuclear wastelands left by rampant corporatism and sectarian violence.

Stanley Kubrick's supercomputer HAL 9000 in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), which seems to evoke the Golem computer at Rehovoth and is shown here in the heart-rending scene of its deactivation, reflects – along with Ridley Scott's replicants, Marge Piercy's cyborg and more recently Kazuo Ishiguro's Artificial Friend Klara in the novel *Klara and the Sun* (2021) – the encroaching borders wars between humans and artificial intelligence, in which the latter often appear to be more human than humans themselves.²⁸ These creations, who may or may not look like us, end up surpassing us in what we believe to be our essence: namely, our supremacy above all other beings

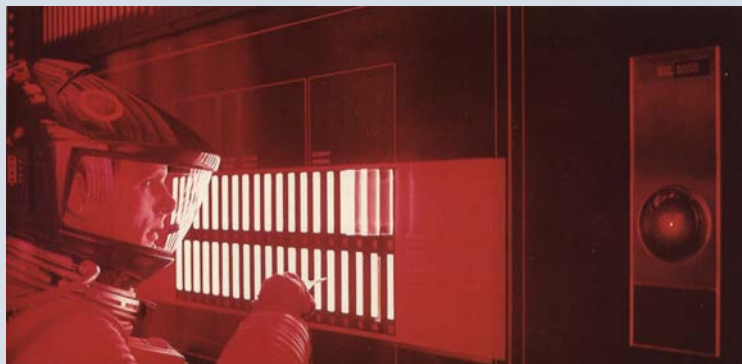
²⁵ <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/gershom-scholem/the-golem-of-prague-the-golem-of-rehovoth>, accessed 13 May 2021.

²⁶ Thomas Jelinek and Alan Rosenbaum, "From the Golem of Prague to Artificial Intelligence: Czech-Israeli Cooperation in the Sciences is Booming," *The Jerusalem Post*, 30 November 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/international/from-the-golem-of-prague-to-artificial-intelligence-650713>, accessed 13 May 2021.

²⁷ Marge Piercy, *He, She and It* (Greenwich, CT, 1991).

²⁸ Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (USA, 1968); Kazuo Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun* (London, 2021).

Figure 7. Still from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (USA, 1968).



29 Immanuel Kant, "To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch," in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*, trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, 1983), 107-144.

30 Suzanne Andrade, *Golem* (UK, 2014).

due to our capacity for reason, sapience and sentience. The dystopian vision painted in these texts rests at least partly on the human refusal to treat their creations with empathy and as equals; in other words, not to partake in Immanuel Kant's cosmopolitan vision of universal rights as outlined in his 1795 essay "Perpetual Peace,"²⁹ a project which, as we know, is fundamentally incomplete in human society.

But will this vision indeed come true in a world beyond biologized border wars? The British theatre duo 1927's multimedia production *Golem* (2014) explores our ambivalent relationship with cutting edge technology, which itself provides the form for the production's own stunning multimediality.³⁰ Its overlapping visual and sound media, including live theatre, video projection and musical performance, warn of the loss of individuality through ubiquitous technologies that have grown into extensions of the self – the production targets our ongoing love affair with smartphones – and which provide opportunities for constant surveillance. This, the production suggests, is a universal predicament of the current age. While abstaining from any mention of Jews, the signifiers of an uncannily perceived Jewish modernity are recycled throughout the production, from its references to early cinema to the font of the vaguely Hebrew-themed lettering of the title word "golem" on a yellow background.

The demonic implications of the golem cannot be made to go away because they are deeply ingrained in our popular culture, which formally transcends yet thematically often reinforces ideas of ethnic particularity, whether subtly or explicitly. Mean-

while, many see in the golem an originary Jewish sign of the Jews' cultural and physical survival in a hostile gentile world. Fusing the templates of the Chelm and Prague golem, Doron and Yoav Paz's recent Israeli horror film *The Golem* is set in the world of seventeenth-century Eastern European Jews, where a barren Jewish woman makes a golem child to defend her community against a Christian mob.³¹ But her multiple transgressions – of female creatorship, rebelling against male-defined Jewish tradition and seeking to control her own sexual destiny – combine into a piece of “gynaehorror,” which projects a monstrous perception of female reproduction as her creature begins to slaughter Jew and non-Jew alike, leaving her village in flames.³² Not unlike Paul Wegener's golem, then, film both explores and proposes the Jewish woman's Otherness within Judaism, which is configured through the golem.

³¹ Doron Paz and Yoav Paz, *The Golem* (Israel, 2019).

³² See Erin Harrington, *Women, Monstrosity and Horror Film: Gynaehorror* (London, 2018).

III. Conclusion

From its medieval origins as a man from clay to its modern and postmodern conception as robot and cyborg, the golem has straddled the multiple border wars of humanity. From a Jewish ritual for unlocking the secret of divine creation it has turned into a Christian sign of the negatively conceived physical, spiritual and cultural essence of the Jew before becoming a metaphor for technological progress. The golem's enigmatic quality derives from its ability to signify Jewish particularity together with universalist predicament; myth and history simultaneously. Our fascination with the golem no doubt stems from its historic function to assert the Jew's essential difference, which is deeply engrained in our cultural consciousness.

Animated through a ritual of words emulating divine creation, a fractured reflection of divine creation, the golem at least partly upholds a humanistic vision of AI as empathic equals, our (rival) siblings and rebellious children in kind. Will AI indeed remedy our intellectual, emotional and physical fallibility as humans and erase social inequalities rooted



Figure 8. Janelle Monáe, “Many Moons” (USA, 2008).

33 Janelle Monáe, “Many Moons” (USA, 2008). See also Meina Yates-Richard, “‘Hell You Talmbout’: Janelle Monáe’s Black Cyberfeminist Sonic Aesthetics”, *Feminist Review* 127, no. 1 (2021), 35-51.

in gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race, disability and class? What happens when the related deep-seated histories of oppression and annihilation are erased in this idealized vision of AI, a process which is critiqued in Black cyberfeminist Janelle Monáe’s sonic piece “Many Moons”?³³ Is it possible, even likely that AI, the child of a new era of accelerating capitalist exploitation, will only enshrine these historic fault lines more deeply? At the dawn of the third industrial revolution, our questions about the nature of AI inherently reflect on the potential of humankind itself.

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The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics, 1849-1910

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Around the turn of the last century, some half-dozen countries enacted laws that prohibited Chinese immigration.¹ These countries constituted an arc that ranged from the Americas across the Pacific to Australasia; and then across the Indian Ocean to South Africa. The American political scientist Aristide Zolberg called it the Great Wall against China.² The conventional explanation for Chinese exclusion is that Euro-American workers in the receiving countries feared competition from cheap Chinese labor. And indeed, this perception was widespread. But there was something special, something more, about the Chinese Question that emerged in the late nineteenth century: it carried an unmistakable whiff of racism, and it appeared to be a global problem. But how Chinese immigration became a global race problem has not been adequately explained.

¹ This essay is an expanded version of a keynote address the author delivered on June 7, 2021, at the conference "Mobilities, exclusion, and migrants' agency in the Pacific realm in a transregional and diachronic perspective," held at the German Historical Institute's Pacific Office in Berkeley. This expanded version is based on the author's chapter in *Global History of Gold Rushes*, edited by Stephen Tuffnell and Benjamin Mountford (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 109-136. It is published here with the kind permission of the University of California Press.

² Aristide Zolberg, "The Great Wall against China," in Jan

Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, eds., *Migration, Migration History,*

History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives (Bern, 2005 [1997]).

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3 Total world production of gold from 2000 BCE (Egypt) through the mid-nineteenth century has been estimated at 10,000 metric tons. Gold production from the 1848 rush in California through the opening of the goldfields in Yukon Territory in 1891 totaled 13,540 metric tons (435.32 million ounces). "Gold Production through History," <http://www.goldfeverprospecting.com/goprthi.html>; David Zurbuchen, "World's Cumulative Gold and Silver Production," Jan 14, 2006, <http://www.gold-eagle.com/article/worlds-cumulative-gold-and-silver-production>

At one level, we might note the obvious – that global ideas emerge in a global environment. And to be sure, the period between 1875 and the First World War was one of unprecedented global integration – achieved through the increased circulation of people, capital, trade and ideas. But, we might pause and ask, why do some ideas become global, and not others? How do ideas acquire global force?

There were, of course, general stereotypes about China that had circulated in the West since the early nineteenth century, Orientalist constructions about the “stagnation” and “despotism” of the East that served to define the “progress” and “vigor” of the West, were perhaps most famously expressed by Hegel in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, published in 1805. But in the late nineteenth century, these ideas were too general, too vague to have political force on the ground. In important ways, the local was the generative site of politics, to paraphrase Tip O’Neill’s famous dictum. But politics also travel, as it were, and borrow from and copy the ideas and policies of others. There is a dynamic interplay between local and global politics. My research is directed toward understanding that relationship.

The origins of the Chinese Question may be found in the gold rushes of the nineteenth century and the broader context of the globalization of trade, credit, labor and the rise of Anglo-American power. The gold rushes both expanded the world and brought it closer together.³ The sudden increase in world gold production in the late nineteenth century resulted from Anglo-American settler colonialism and capitalist development. Sustained exploration and extraction required capital investment, deep-mining technology, mass labor migration and long-distance transportation.

The gold rushes also launched into motion hundreds of thousands of people from the British Isles, Continental Europe, the Americas, Australasia and China. The goldfields were fluid, inter-

national contact-zones on the peripheries of the world's core societies; they marked the advent of settler colonialism and the "congealing" of the frontier.⁴ Notably, the gold rushes were the first occasions of large-scale contact between Euro-Americans and Chinese. In California and the Australian colony of Victoria, Chinese comprised upwards of 25 percent of the mining population in the 1850s and 60s, but until fairly recently they were marginal actors in most gold rush histories. Euro-American gold seekers became idealized by their descendants for their democratic and entrepreneurial spirit and have been considered foundational in national histories. Without exception, these polities excluded the Chinese.

⁴ Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 2014), p. 370.

But, the global Chinese Question did not emerge fully formed, like Athena from Zeus's head. In my research, I have been struck by differences in the Chinese Question on the ground, especially during the gold rush period. The Chinese Question shifted and evolved as it moved across and shaped the Pacific world, and over time acquired the status and force of a global idea, which idea was intricately connected to the rise of Anglo-American hegemony.

I. California

We start in California, where the discovery of gold on the north fork of the American River in January of 1848 drew prospectors from the eastern and southern United States; from Hawaii, Mexico and Chile; from Great Britain, Europe and Australia; and from China. In the early, fevered days of the rush, white Americans found nativism a convenient weapon of competition; "it's all for 'us' and not for you," a crude expression of American Manifest Destiny. By 1850 they had already successfully driven from the goldfields Mexicans, South Americans and many Europeans. British colonists from Australia received a particularly cool welcome in California, though on the whole Americans were recep-

⁵ Malcolm Rohrbough, *Days of Gold* (Berkeley, 1997); Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp* (New York, 2000); Stacey Smith, *Freedom's Frontier* (Chapel Hill, 2014).

⁶ See for example, Mining Records of Calaveras County, 1854-1857, California State Library. In this district, 44 percent of Chinese claims comprised partnerships of 2-3 men.

⁷ For example, see *Eighth Annual Report of the California State Mineralogist* (1888), enumerating Chinese river claims along the Klamath River in Siskiyou County. According to the report, there were some 1,000 Chinese mining in the county, and that they owned and worked some of the richest river claims in the county, with an estimated income of at least \$365,000 a year. Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California, 1850-1880: An Economic Study* (Madison, WI, 1963), 25, 30-1.

⁸ Sue Fawn Chung, *In Pursuit of Gold: Chinese American Miners and Merchants in the American West* (Urbana, IL, 2011), 17-8.

tive to British and German gold seekers, whom they regarded as their ethnic kin. Anti-foreign sentiment then focused on Chinese, who were now arriving in large numbers. Notably, the Chinese appeared on the scene just as placer mining (sifting for gold in the gravel of riverbeds) was beginning to give out, so anti-foreign feeling now mixed with the bitterness of dashed hopes.⁵

By 1852 the argument against Chinese took on a special cast, with white Americans accusing them of being indentured workers, or coolies, imagined as slaves or semi-slaves. In fact, Chinese miners worked in a variety of ways, the least common of which was under contract. They worked mostly as independent prospectors and in small cooperative groups, as well as for wages for white-owned companies. Many of these formations were common to miners generally, regardless of ethnicity. Like American partners, Chinese partners were often close relatives or from the same hometown, indicating kinship as the medium of trust.⁶ Chinese also worked for small companies, in which the principal investor was a local merchant, who bought or leased the claim and furnished the equipment.⁷ Most Chinese companies operated on a share basis, in which the merchant-investor typically took a portion of the output and the miners shared the rest. The merchants also supplied the miners' provisions.⁸ Chinese also worked in small cooperatives, especially in river-placer mining. These usually comprised as few as five men (and rarely more than ten), working smaller claims with low-tech equipment like rockers and sluice boxes. Cooperatives also worked on shares, but with equal shares for both profits and expenses, and they typically had no boss or headman.⁹

⁹ *Eleventh Census of the United States* (1890), "Report on Mineral Industries in

the United States: Gold and Silver," p. 109. In Calaveras County, 38 percent of

the claims belonged to 4-10 men. Mining Records of Calaveras County, 1854-57.



Chinese miners also worked for white employers in return for wages. In the southern mines Chinese worked “shoulder to shoulder” with Cornish miners in John Frémont’s mines at Mariposa. The U.S. mining commissioner, Rossiter Raymond, reported “whole shifts of brawny pig tail wearers” working in deep mines in Mariposa, Merced and Tuolumne counties from the late 1850s, for as long as ten to fifteen years. By 1870, Chinese miners earned from \$39 to \$50 a month, nearly the rate of white miners. Chinese also worked as unskilled laborers in the quartz mills, feeding the giant stamping machines that crushed the tons of rock dug up from the earth to release the gold from the veins within.¹⁰ A more extensive practice was the hiring of Chinese by hydraulic mining companies, who used giant high-pressure water hoses to blast away the sides of mountain ridges to mine auriferous gravel from the ancient riverbeds; and by water companies, who delivered water to the former from mountain lakes and reservoirs. Chinese worked on wages both in construction and in the mining operations.¹¹

If Chinese were not actually indentured, the larger fiction that they were a “coolie race” overwhelmed any inconvenience

Figure 1. Head of Auburn Ravine, 1852. Attributed to Joseph B. Starkweather. California State Library.

¹⁰ Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California*, 34-37; Allan Nevins, *Frémont, the West’s Greatest Adventurer* (New York, 1928), vol. II, 525; Rossiter Raymond, *Statistics of Mines and Mining* (Washington, 1870), 4.

¹¹ Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California*, 36-8.

12 “Coolie” is a pidgin word that was used in European colonial port cities in Asia. It probably derived from the Tamil word “kuli” for wages and generally referred to lowly workers, like porters and domestics. By the mid-nineteenth century it came to refer more narrowly to Indian and Chinese indentured workers who were sent to European plantation colonies (Mauritius, the Caribbean, Natal, etc.) and became a pejorative term associated with degraded unfree labor.

13 Arthur Quinn, *The Rivals: William Gwin, David Broderick and the Birth of California* (New York, 1994); William Henry Ellison, *A Self-Governing Dominion: California 1849-1860* (Berkeley, 1950), 308-11; Scott McArthur, *The Enemy that Never Came: The Civil War in the Pacific Northwest* (Caldwell, Idaho, 2012), 17. For more on Gwin’s expansionist vision, see Rachel St. John, “The Unpredictable America of William Gwin: Expansion, Succession, and Unstable Borders in Nineteenth Century North America,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, 1 (March 2016): 56-84.

of fact.¹² Anti-coolieism imagined Chinese as innately servile, without individual personality or will, regardless of their actual condition. It was a racial shorthand that drew on two comparisons. First, it recalled the so-called “coolie trade” of indentured Asian labor to the former-slave plantation colonies. Second, and much closer to home, it associated Chinese labor with African slavery in the American South. That second association positioned Chinese immediately as a racial threat to free labor.

The coolie trope was actually not invented on the goldfields but in Sacramento, as a weapon in the first chapter of California state politics. As early as 1850, some Californians were promoting grandiose visions of developing a new empire along the Pacific slope, one that potentially stretched from Alaska to Chile. One aggressive booster was U.S. Senator William Gwin, a pro-slavery Democrat. Gwin believed enslaved African Americans and imported native Hawaiians would provide the labor needed to develop California.¹³

Others saw Chinese labor as a potentially unlimited labor supply and one more readily accessible (before the building of the transcontinental railroad) than labor from east of the Rockies. Some drew inspiration from the practice of importing indentured Chinese and Indian labor to the British plantation colonies of the Caribbean after the abolition of slavery. In January 1852 two California legislators, George Tingley and Archibald Peachy, introduced bills into the state senate and assembly respectively, to enable the recruitment of foreign workers under contract into the state, primarily for agricultural development. The contracts would be, in principle, voluntary; but they set terms of five years to ten years, which exceeded anything in the Caribbean or elsewhere, and a minimum wage of \$50 a year, a pathetically low amount. Workers who broke their contracts could be punished with imprisonment and fines, penal sanctions that recalled the master-servant laws that had been dead letter among white

Americans since the 1820s.¹⁴ Initially the coolie bills received support from both Whigs and Democrats, and the assembly passed the Peachy bill. But opposition to the Tingley bill gathered force from Free Soilers, and Tingley was outmaneuvered in the senate, which defeated the bill, 16 to 2. Without a senate bill, the Peachy bill died in the assembly.¹⁵

Opponents of the coolie bills were not necessarily against Chinese immigrants in general. The *Daily Alta California* supported free immigration and thought the principle applied to all, regardless of origin. The California goldfields were open and free to all comers. But the *Alta* opposed the coolie bill as bringing a system of servitude to California. It warned that recent experience with the “labor contract system in the English Colonies” (such as Jamaica, Guyana and Mauritius) showed that the work “in which these menials engage, though voluntary, is hard and sometimes cruel.” It reminded readers that: “Already this physical bondage is classed by the press of the country as slavery, of the most iniquitous species.”¹⁶

The distinction made by the *Alta* between free and indentured Chinese emigrants quickly blurred. Governor Bigler himself was largely to blame for the obfuscation. Although the coolie bills were dead, the governor could not help but give the issue another kick.¹⁷ On April 23, 1852, Bigler issued a “special message” to the legislature, his last address before the close of the session. The sole subject of the message was the Chinese Question. Bigler raised alarm over the “present wholesale importation to this country of immigrants from the Asiatic quarter of the globe,” in particular that “class of Asiatics known as ‘Coolies.’” He cited over 20,000 Chinese currently leaving China for California and warned there would soon be 100,000 in the state. He declared that nearly all were being hired by “Chinese masters” to mine for gold at pitiable wages, with their families in China held hostage for the faithful performance of their contracts. The Chinese, Bigler alleged, dug up gold and removed it from the country; they had no interest in becoming citizens, caring not to “avail themselves of the blessings of free government”; and they

¹⁴ “Labor Contract Law,” *Daily Alta California*, March 21, 1852. On Tingley, see Oscar T. Shuck, ed. *History of the Bench and Bar of California* (Los Angeles, 1901 [2007]), 590. See also Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom’s Frontier: California and the Struggle Over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, 2013), 99-100.

¹⁵ “Legislative Intelligence,” *Daily Alta California*, April 24, 1852. On Senate opposition see Minority Report of the Select Committee on Senate Bill No. 63, for “An Act to Enforce Contracts and Obligations to Perform Work and Labor,” March 20, 1852, in *Journal of Third Session California Legislature* (1852): 669.

¹⁶ “Chinese Immigration,” April 26, 1852, *Daily Alta California*; “The Cooley Trade,” *Daily Alta California*, May 4, 1852.

¹⁷ “Legislative Intelligence,” *Daily Alta California*, April 24, 1852.

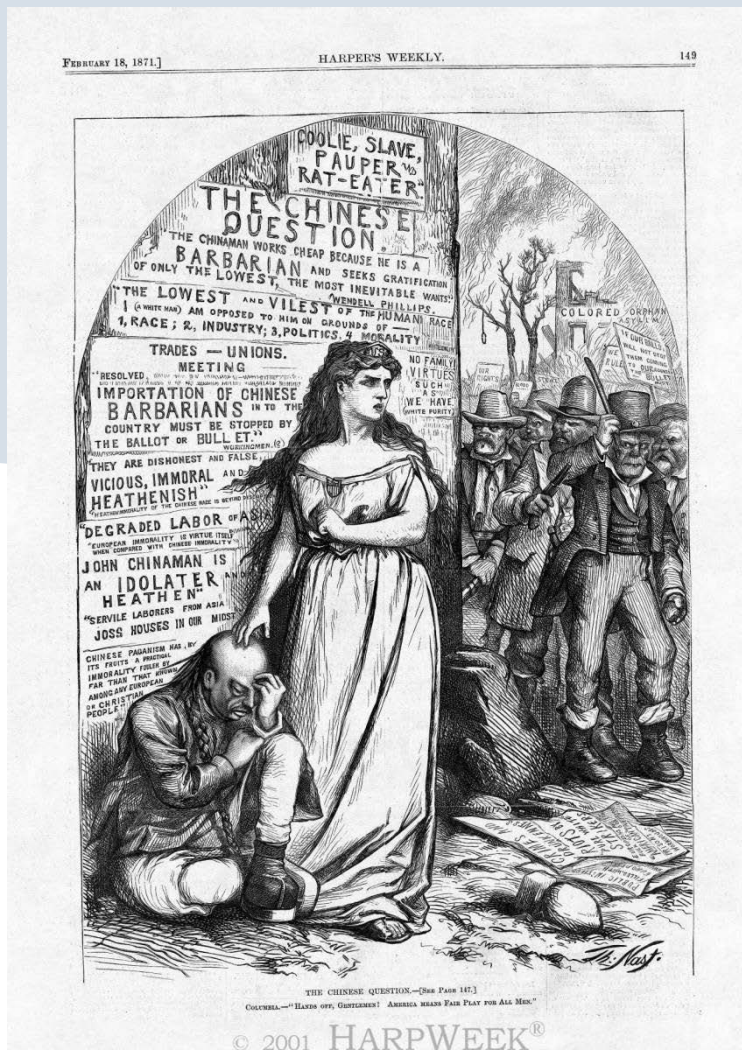


Figure 2. Thomas Nast, "The Chinese Question," *Harpers Weekly* February 18, 1871. © 2001 Harp-Week®

18 "Governor's Special Message," April 23, 1852, *Journal of Third Session California Legislature* (1852): 373.

were a menace to public safety. Bigler called upon the legislature to impose heavy taxes on the Chinese to "check the present system of indiscriminate and unlimited Asiatic immigration," and to pass a law barring Chinese contract labor from California mines.¹⁸

The coolie bills were dead and Chinese in California were not contracted or indentured labor, but Bigler saw political potential in the Chinese Question. He had won his first election in 1851 by a mere thousand votes. In 1853 he would be running for re-election and he needed to excite the mining districts to his side. The Forty-Niners were restive, as the placers were rapidly giving out and a diligent miner could now make only \$5 a day. Many were already working on wages for others, earning about the same. By

tarring all Chinese miners as “coolies,” Bigler found a racial trope that compared Chinese to black slaves, the antithesis of free labor, and thereby cast them as a threat to white miners’ independence. Bigler’s message was dutifully published in full in the *Alta*; the governor also had it printed on “small sheets of paper and sent everywhere through the mines.”¹⁹ As he had intended, Bigler roused the white mining population. Miners gathered in local assemblies and passed resolutions banning Chinese from mining in their districts. At a meeting held in Columbia, Tuolumne County, in May, miners echoed Bigler’s charges. They railed against those who would “flood the state with degraded Asiatics, and fasten, without sanction of law, the system of peonage on our social organization,” and voted to exclude Chinese from mining in their district. Other meetings offered no reasons but simply bade the Chinese to leave, or to “vamoose the ranche.” Sometimes they used violence to push Chinese off their claims. Bigler would win his re-election. He would be the first American politician to ride the Chinese Question to elected office.²⁰

The use of Chinese gang labor, first seen in the construction of mining infrastructures and later in building the transcontinental railroad, further confirmed white Americans’ beliefs that Chinese were held in bondage. In fact, ethnic gang labor can be traced to the contracting of Irish workers to dig canals in northern states, from the building of the Erie Canal from the late 1810s through the 1840s. In the antebellum north, contemporaries considered Irish navvies to be rough and intemperate – but they did not accuse them of being “slaves,” which they obviously were not. But after the Civil War, contracted labor assumed an ambiguous place in American political culture, which had drawn a bright line between servitude and slavery, on the one hand, and free labor on the other. As free labor came increasingly to mean waged work and not independent farming or artisanship, drawing a line against contracted ethnic labor was a way for native white workers to address their own sense of precarity. The association of ethnic and racial others with unfreedom enabled this construction, which otherwise was not so clear cut.

¹⁹ Chun Aching and Tong Achick, “To his Excellency, Gov. Bigler, from the Chinamen,” May 16, 1852, in “An Analysis of the Chinese Question. Consisting of a Special Message of the Governor and, in reply thereto, Two Letters of the Chinamen and a Memorial of the Citizens of San Francisco,” (San Francisco, 1852).

²⁰ “Governor’s Special Message,” *Daily Alta California*, April 25, 1852; “Meeting at Columbia,” *Daily Alta California*, May 15, 1852; “Anti-Chinese Meeting at Foster’s Bar,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 3, 1852; “Sacramento News” (on miners meeting in Centreville, El Dorado), *Daily Alta California*, May 15, 1852. See also Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California*, 13, 15; Rodman Paul, “Origin of the Chinese Issue in California,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 25 (Sept. 1938): 190.

21 Sundry claims in Register of Mining Claims, Sandhurst Division, vol. 2, VPRS 6946/P0/1-11, Public Records Office of Victoria (hereafter PROV), North Melbourne, Victoria; Register of Mining Claims, Daylesford, vol. 1 (1865-68), VPRS 3719/P0/1, PROV, Ballarat, Victoria.

22 William Young, "Report on the Conditions of the Chinese Population in Victoria," March 2, 1868, pp. 40, 42-3, reprinted in Ian McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria: Official Reports and Documents* (Ascot Vale, 1985). On small share companies see also, Barry McGowan, "The Economics and Organization of Chinese mining in Colonial Australia," *Australian Economic History Review* 45 (July 2005): 121, 123. A puddling machine was a wooden tub with a rotating blade that one turned by hand to break up gold-bearing clay. The remainder of the Chinese mining population in Bendigo worked as individual "fossickers," rewashing old claims and tailing.

23 Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851-61* (Melbourne, 1963), 321.

Indeed, race obfuscated the ambiguities in concepts such as free labor, voluntary migration and, especially, the contract. As freedom of contract became the watchword of free labor under laissez faire capitalism, the contract remained associated with indenture and servility for Chinese. Anti-coolieism remained foundational in the 1870s and 1880s as the urban workingmen's movement and state party politics drove the Chinese question to national exclusion legislation in 1882.

II. Victoria

In the British colony of Victoria in Australia, conditions were similar to those in the American West – an international rush following the discovery of placer deposits in 1851, then a shift to capitalized quartz mining. As in California, Chinese miners in Victoria engaged in independent prospecting; small companies and egalitarian cooperatives; waged work for European-owned companies; and organized themselves into the same kinds of hometown associations and brotherhood societies. Victorian gold district registers of mining claims show Chinese individuals and small partnerships of two or three men with small claims.²¹ According to a census of the Chinese population in the Victoria gold districts conducted in 1868 by the Reverend William Young, more than half of the 2,200 Chinese miners in Bendigo worked in small companies ranging in size from six to over ten men. Three hundred worked in companies with puddling machines and 800-900 in small companies washing tailings, which were likely cooperatives.²² Small groups also worked together to achieve economies of scale. According to historian Geoffrey Serle's seminal history of the Victorian rushes, the "most typical form" of work for Chinese was "paddocking," in which "gangs of one hundred or more [would] lift and wash the soil of gullies from end to end, working either cooperatively or as companies of employees."²³

In the Victoria claims registers, individually owned claims with substantial acreage or equipment indicate small



companies.²⁴ Chinese companies favored sluicing, which required moderate investment and drew from Chinese agricultural experience with water engineering. In December 1878 the *Bendigo Advertiser* reported Chinese sluicing companies working in three shifts, around the clock, using three million gallons of water a week.²⁵ Egalitarian cooperatives similar to those found in California, are numerous in the Victorian mining registers.²⁶ Testimony given before a coroner's inquest held after two Chinese gold miners died in a fight shows the working of a cooperative located at Portuguese Flat near the town of Creswick. It comprised eight "mates," including at least two who were cousins. They held equal shares in the claim, each worth £3 to £4. One member, Ah Yung, kept the group's gold and books, and paid out weekly earnings to the members, about thirty shillings. The men lived in separate tents but ate breakfast together and divided among them chores, such as cooking and collecting firewood.²⁷

27 Testimonies of Ah Su and Ah Ter, Inquest held upon the body of Ah Yung at Creswick, VPRS 24/P0/124, PROV, North Melbourne. Ang Hui, a

member of the group, killed Ah Yung after a quarrel over the weekly payout. Ang Hui later killed himself, using the same knife. According to Lovejoy,

thirty shillings a week was the average Chinese earnings through the 1860s and 1870s. "Fortune Seekers of Dai Gum San," 159.

Figure 3. Chinese travelers on a Cobb & Co coach near Castle-maine, c. 1865-1871, Creswick Museum.

24 For example, August 25, 1865, Register of Mining Claims, Daylesford, vol. 1, 1865-1868, VPRS 3719/P0/1, PROV, Ballarat; April 8 and June 22, 1863, at Spring Gully, Register of Mining Claims, Sandhurst, vol. 1 (1862-65), VPRS 6946/P0/1-11, PROV, North Melbourne.

25 Quoted in Valerie Lovejoy, "Fortune Seekers of Dai Gum San: First Generation Chinese on the Bendigo Goldfield, 1854-1882" (Ph.D. thesis, La Trobe University, 2009), 157-8.

26 For example, no. 155, Ah Toy, Ah Quio, Ah Sing, Ah Wah, sluicing claim, two acres, Deep Creek Feb. 13, 1868, Register of Mining Claims, Daylesford, vol. 1.

28 E-Tu Sun Zen, "Mining Labor in the Ch'ing Period," in A. Feuerwerker, R. Murphy and M. Wright, eds., *Approaches to Modern Chinese History* (Berkeley, 1967). According to Sun Zen, Qing-era mining merchant-investors allotted as much as 40 per cent of the profits to their workers. See also David Valentine, "Chinese Placer Mining in the United States: An Example from American Canyon, Nevada," in S.L. Cassel, ed., *The Chinese in America: A History from Gold Mountain to the New Millennium* (Walnut Creek, 2002), 37-53; Alister Bowen, "The Merchants: Chinese Social Organization in Colonial Australia," *Australian Historical Studies* 42, 1 (2011): 25-44.

29 Robert Gardella, "Contracting Business Partnerships in Late Qing and Early Republican China," in Madeline Zelin, Jonathan Ocko and Robert Gardella, eds., *Contract and Property in Early Modern China* (Stanford, 2004), 329.

30 Mary Somers Heidues, *Goldiggers, Farmers and Traders in the Chinese Districts of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY, 2003); Mary Somers Heidues, "Chinese Organizations in West Borneo and

Both companies and cooperatives were similar to mining organizations found in China and Southeast Asia. In southern China, placer techniques were used to mine tin and iron-sand deposits, and also drew from agricultural water-irrigation practices. Mine operators sometimes hired local farmers during the slack season, but there were also small companies of full-time miners, often comprised of landless and socially marginal types, who worked for shares under a manager-investor. These companies had minimal internal hierarchy and generous share division, reflecting the difficulty in holding labor.²⁸ The practice of share division also drew more generally from a tradition of partnership arrangements – a feature of late-Qing business organization.²⁹ The cooperatives in California and Victoria bear a canny resemblance to the famous Chinese "kongsi" (*gongsi*) of the West Kalimantan (West Borneo) gold mines of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. These began as small, egalitarian share partnerships, as evidenced by their names, e.g. *shiwufen* (fifteen shares), *xinbafen* (new eight shares). As mining developed, some of these cooperatives joined together into federations; a few became extremely powerful and acted as though they were sovereign states. Not surprisingly, the larger they became, the less egalitarian they were, with newly recruited credit-ticket workers at the entry level and share partners at the top. The power of the West Kalimantan kongsi derived from the position of the Chinese as a force between the native population and Dutch colonizers.³⁰ Those conditions, of course, did not exist in the

Bangka: Kogsi and Hui," in David Ownby and Mary Somers Heidues, eds., *Secret Societies Reconsidered: Perspectives on the Social History of Early Modern South China and Southeast Asia* (Armonk, NY, 1993), 34-88; James

C. Jackson, "Chinese in the West Borneo Goldfields: A Study in Cultural Geography," *Occasional Papers in Geography* No. 15 (Hull, 1970). Chinese mining kongsi were also prevalent in tin mining on the Malaysian peninsula.

Anthony Reid, "The Chinese on the Mining Frontier in Southeast Asia," in Eric Tagliacozzo and Wenchin Cheng, eds., *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia* (Durham, 2011), 29.

United States or Australia, so Chinese cooperatives in New World goldfields remained primitive.

Importantly, all of these formations – mining companies in southern China, cooperatives in Borneo and their counterparts in California and Australia – were associated with sworn-brotherhood societies. In southern China, these brotherhoods practiced elaborate and secret ritual oaths, ceremonies and exercises that cemented their solidarity. They could be both protective and predatory, engaged in mutual aid for their members and thievery among the general population. In late-seventeenth-century southern China, the *Tiandihui* (heaven and earth society) and *Hongmen* (vast family), the largest societies, assumed an anti-Qing political orientation. During the Taiping Rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century, many activists fled China to Southeast Asia and beyond.³¹ In the 1850s exiles formed a group called the *Zhigongdang* (in Cantonese *Chee Kong Tong*, Active Justice Society) throughout the Chinese diaspora. From the early 1850s the *Zhigongdang* had branches in California and throughout the nineteenth century was especially prevalent in the mining districts. In Australia, the *Zhigongdang* was known as *Yixing* (in Cantonese *Yee Hing*). It became the most powerful Chinese association in Victoria, and its members would gain respectability in white society by explaining themselves as Chinese “freemasons.”³²

Finally, Chinese in Victoria in the late 1860s and 1870s also found employment with quartz-mining companies. Young’s 1868 census reported some seven hundred Chinese working for whites on wages in the Ovens district. Smaller numbers were employed at European claims in Ballarat.³³ Although some Chinese worked underground, it was more common for them to work inside the mills, feeding and running the stamping machines.³⁴

31 David Ownby, *Brotherhoods and Secret Societies in Early and Mid-Qing China: The Formation of a Tradition* (Stanford, 1996); Dian H. Murray in collaboration with Qin Baoqi, *The Origins of the Tiandihui* (Stanford, 1994); Ownby and Huedes, *Secret Societies Reconsidered*.

32 Sue Fawn Chung, “Between Two Worlds: The Zhigongtang and Chinese Funerary Rituals,” in Cassell, *The Chinese in America*, 217-38; Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change* (Chicago, 2001), 111-2. On Australia and *Yee Hing* see Cai Shaoqing, “From Mutual Aid to Public Interest: Chinese Secret Societies in Australia,” in Couchman, John Fitzgerald and Paul Macgregor, eds., *After the Rush: Regulation, Participation and Chinese Communities in Australia, 1860-1940. Special edition of Otherland*. 9 (Dec. 2004): 133-52; John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie*, 69-76; Kok Hu Jin, *Hung Men Handbook* (Bendigo, 2002).

33 Young, “Report on the Conditions of the Chinese Population in Victoria,” 33-43.

34 These include mining for Chinese-owned quartz companies, which

were several, if not large; and European companies, such as the Reform

Mining Co. near Ballarat, which leased its number-one shaft to Chi-

nese on tribute. Lovejoy, “Fortune Seekers of Dai Gum Sam,” 160.

35 Barry McGowan, "Economics and Organization of Chinese Mining," 121; Rohrbough, *Days of Gold*, 125.

36 Serle, *Golden Age*, 73. See also Ronald Limbaugh, "Making Old Tools Work Better: Pragmatic Adaptation and Innovation in Gold Rush Technology," in J. Rawls and R. Orsi, eds., *A Golden State: Mining and Economic Development in Gold-Rush California* (Berkeley, 1999), 24-51.

If it surprises us to find independent prospecting, share companies, egalitarian cooperatives, and waged labor among Chinese miners in California and Victoria, that surprise perhaps indexes our resistance to seeing Chinese labor in a flexible and diverse manner, or to see similarities with the economic organization of Euro-Americans.³⁵ Miners of all nationalities drew from their respective cultural backgrounds and learned from each other to devise methods of work that suited the demands of alluvial-gold mining. Working in small groups enabled miners to work more efficiently, to take turns at the more arduous tasks and to share costs and rewards; hence Serle's observation that "in its early years the [Victorian gold] industry was almost exclusively worked by thousands of tiny cooperative groups."³⁶ But if cooperation was common among all national and ethnic groups and, indeed, celebrated by whites as the quintessence of fraternity among free men, it was the Chinese not the Europeans whose cooperative practices endured. Chinese cooperatives, built upon solidarities of native-place and kinship, might be considered a kind of refuge from, even resistance to, capitalist-wage relations. Europeans and Americans did not have analogous cultural resources to sustain independent mining. Thus, when the quartz companies came to dominate the scene, Euro-Americans traded their autonomy for the relative security of a job or quit mining altogether.

The variety of Chinese mining practices also highlights the problem of thinking about labor in apposite categories of "free" and "unfree." The point is not to simply move Chinese miners from one column to the other. At a certain level, of course, Chinese miners were not "unfree" – they were not held as chattels, unremunerated for their labor, or prohibited from quitting or moving, the normative conditions of bound labor. Miners who worked solo, with partners, and in egalitarian cooperatives had considerable if not complete autonomy, though it must be noted that the economic rewards of independent mining grew increasingly meager as the placers

diminished. Working for proportional shares and for wages, whether on skilled underground work or in construction gangs, involved elements of both of coercion and volition.³⁷ Similarly, the corporatist social forms observable among Chinese miners – native-place associations and sworn-brotherhood societies – should also not be considered in terms of Orientalist binaries. They are better understood as early modern social formations that facilitated overseas trade and migration, and which operated along vectors of both solidarity and control.³⁸

Racism toward the Chinese on the Australian goldfields was more inchoate than in California. There was racial tension and conflict, and a few anti-Chinese riots, some of which may have been instigated by Americans. But white miners aimed their ire chiefly at the colonial government, which required an expensive miner's license and policed the goldfields to enforce compliance. Although many Europeans disdained the Chinese, they did not allege that the Chinese were indentured or enslaved. The legacy of unfreedom in the Australian colonies was not racialized African slavery but convict transportation of the English and Irish poor. More important in their perceptions of Chinese were fears generated by their location at the fringes of the British Empire. The Melbourne *Argus* explained, "Geographically, we are nearer the pent-up millions of China than any other large tract of country occupied by the white man. ...We are still but a handful of men and women and children."³⁹ Australians obsessed over their fragile hold on the continent and their vulnerability in a larger contest in Asia between two empires, British and Chinese.

In Victoria anti-Chinese agitation clashed with official colonial policy of equal protection. This principle, enshrined in

37 Robert Miles, *Capitalism and Unfree Labor: Anomaly or Necessity?* (London, 1987); Thomas Brass and Marcel van der Linden, eds., *Free and Unfree Labor: The Debate Continues* (Bern, 1997); Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage and the Market in the Era of Slave Emancipation* (New York, 1998); Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane*; Carolyn Brown and Marcel van der Linden, "Shifting Boundaries between Free and Unfree Labor: Introduction," *International Labor and Working Class History* 78 (Fall 2010): 4-88.

38 On origins of *huiguan* in late sixteenth-century cities see Him Mark Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (Walnut Creek, 2004), 41; S. F. Chung, *In Pursuit of Gold: Chinese American Miners and Merchants in the American West* (Urbana, IL, 2014), 19. Kwee Hui Kian credits these associations for Chinese economic success throughout Southeast Asia. They provided a mechanism for pooling capital and labor and channeling "market information, credit facilities, and other forms of assistance." Kwee Hui Kian, "Chinese Economic

Dominance in Southeast Asia: A Long Duree Perspective,"

Comparative Studies in Society and History 55 (Jan. 2013): 8.

39 Editorial, *Argus*, January 6, 1879, p. 4.

40 Kathryn Cronin, *Colonial Casualties: Chinese in Early Victoria* (Melbourne, 1982); Mae Ngai, "Chinese Miners, Headmen and Protectors on the Victorian Goldfields, 1853-1864," *Australian Historical Studies* 42, 1 (2011):10-24.

41 Andrew Markus, *Australian Race Relations*, 65-6; Memorials, interviews and accounting of compensation paid to Chinese storekeepers [Buckland], VPRS 1189/P0/502/A57-5519, PROV, North Melbourne.

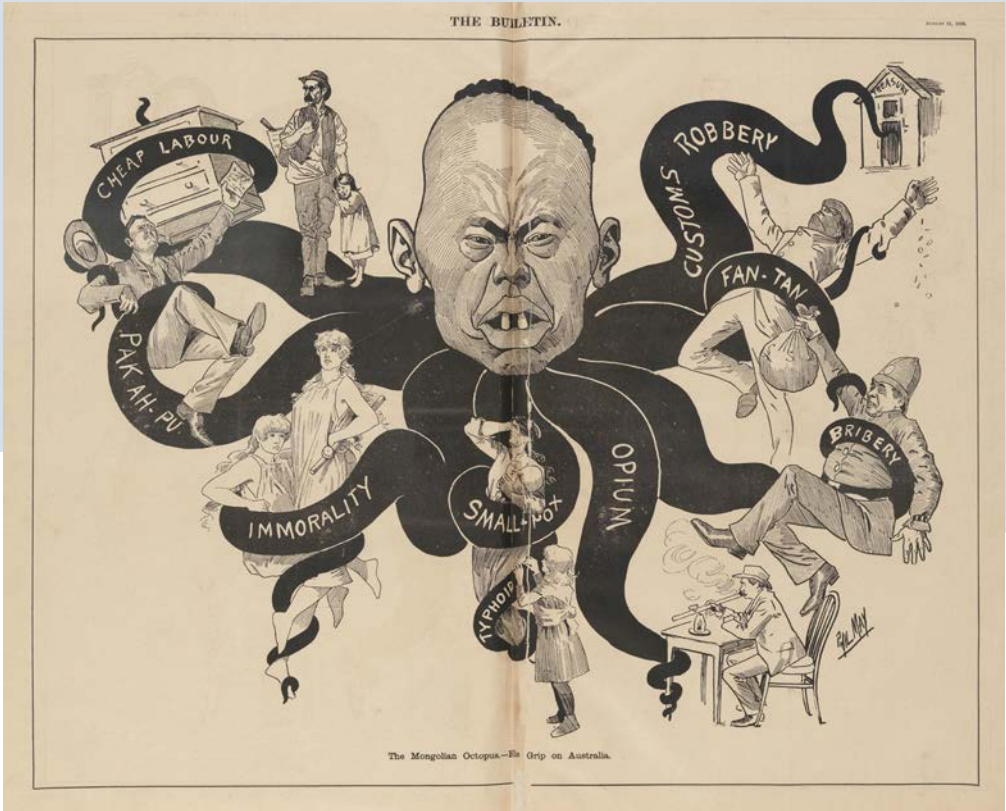
42 Editorial, *Melbourne Argus*, Jan 6. 1879, p. 4

43 "Sticking to the Chinese! The Capitalists' Conference Decides to Put White Labour Down—if Possible," *Queensland Worker*, March 21, 1891; see also Warwick Anderson, "Coolie Therapeutics," *International Labor and Working Class History* 91 (Spring 2017).

precepts of Enlightenment liberalism, was a conceit belied by Britain's vast empire acquired through violence and dispossession. In general, the authorities at Melbourne conceded to and protected European interests.⁴⁰ But the colonial government did oppose individual and group violence against Chinese. Police were more likely to arrest and prosecute Europeans who committed crimes against Chinese in Victoria than in California; and the colonial government compensated Chinese for losses suffered during a riot in the Buckland River Valley in 1857.⁴¹

The coolie trope did not enter Australian politics until the late 1870s and 1880s, and it came not from the goldfields of Victoria or New South Wales, but from the so-called "Top End," where controversy grew over the use of Asian and Pacific Islander contract labor in Queensland and the Northern Territory. White Australians, at least for a time, conceded the use of colored labor in the tropical far north, where, as one observer put it, white men fell "victim to malaria and fever ... under the fierce sun and amid the marshes."⁴² The climate theory of race, though it was influential at the time, was spurious, of course, since enslaved and indentured workers also suffered from tropical diseases, not to mention arduous plantation labor. In any event, the problem in Australia was that the tropical areas were not separate islands, like Jamaica or Mauritius, but contiguous to the temperate zones, which Europeans had staked out for themselves. By the late 1870s and 1880s whites in Australia were becoming increasingly alarmed at the growth and mobility of the Chinese population in the far north. The *Queensland Worker* targeted pastoralists – that colony's most powerful capitalists – for their "determination to make Queensland and Australia as much like Fiji and Hindustan as possible."⁴³

The Chinese Question was a core element of an emergent Australian nationalism, which viewed racial homogeneity and free labor as conditions for democracy. It was a new ideological formation, at once democratic, masculinist and racialist.



Anti-Chinese leagues sprung up in big cities like Melbourne and Sydney, even though the Chinese urban population was tiny and economic competition was negligible. In 1878 the seamen's union struck the Australian Steam Navigation Company to protest its use of Chinese sailors on its vessels, a reminder of the racial stakes in the Pacific world.⁴⁴ References in the Australian press to the California exclusion movement were frequent and explicit. Many made direct comparisons between the ruinous effects of Chinese immigration on California and Australia.⁴⁵

By the 1880s and 1890s most of the Australian colonies had enacted some restrictions on Chinese immigration. Still, British imperial policy prohibited categorical exclusion. Historian Benjamin Mountford has argued that the Chinese Question in Australia was really two questions involving different interests, a colonial or local question about immigration and an imperial question about British commerce and diplomacy with China. In the 1880s and 1890s these two questions

Figure 4. Phil May, "The Mongolian Octopus – His Grip on Australia," *The Bulletin*, August 21, 1886. State Library New South Wales.

⁴⁴ Marilyn Lake, "Challenging the 'Slave Driving Employers': Understanding Australia's 1896 Minimum Wage through a World-History Approach," *Australian Historical Studies* 45, 1 (2014): 87-102.

⁴⁵ For example, "The Labor Movement in California," *Argus*, February 5, 1878; "The Chinese in California," *Queenslander* (Brisbane), December 14, 1878.

46 Benjamin Mountford, *Britain, China, and Colonial Australia* (Oxford, 2016).

47 Markus, *Australian Race Relations*, 74; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Color Line*, 137-65.

48 Mae Ngai, "Trouble on the Rand: The Chinese Question in South Africa and the Apogee of White Settlerism," *International Labor and Working Class History* 91 (Spring 2017). See also Tu T. Huyhn, "'We are not a Docile People': Chinese Resistance and Exclusion in the Reimagining of Whiteness in South Africa," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 8 (2012): 137-168; Rachel Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa: Race, Violence and Global Spectacle* (London, 2005); Peter Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords: The North Randfontein "strike" of 1905," 2, 2 *Journal of South African Studies* (1976): 151-177.

became increasingly at odds, straining both Anglo-Australian and Sino-British relations.⁴⁶ It was only with federation and self-governance in 1901 that White Australia came fully into its own. The new parliament quickly passed legislation that excluded Asian immigration, as well as laws to deport Pacific Islanders and exclude aboriginal peoples from the franchise.⁴⁷

III. Transvaal

Just a few years after Australian federation, across the Indian Ocean, Chinese miners began arriving in the Transvaal colony of South Africa, which had been recently annexed to the British Empire. This novel experiment was aimed at reviving the gold mines of the Witwatersrand ("the Rand," then, as now, the largest gold producing region in the world) and addressing a shortage in native African labor in the wake of the South African War. Between 1904 and 1910, the Transvaal Chamber of Mines imported over 60,000 Chinese for work on the Rand. The scheme was a ticking political time bomb in the postwar context, as South Africa's racial politics were still in flux. The basis for reconciliation between whites, British and Afrikaners remained unresolved, as did the future of policy in regard to native Africans.

Unlike Chinese miners in North America and Australia, the Chinese mine laborers went to the Rand under contracts that set their wages and hours; forbade them from working in any other occupation or industry and from owning or leasing property; and required them to return to China at the conclusion of the contract. But if Chinese mining laborers were indentured, they were not docile. They rioted, went on strike, and passively resisted, by simply refusing to drill more than the daily minimum number of inches required of them. Desertion was common, especially for a day or two, but also for weeks and even months at a time. Within six months the program faced a crisis of labor discipline and social control.⁴⁸ Between 1904 and 1907, nearly 25,000 Chinese laborers, more than one-third of the total number of Chinese to work on the



Figure 5. Roll call of Chinese laborers at the Simmer and Jack Mine, Transvaal, ca. 1899. Photo courtesy of Hilton Teper.

Rand, were convicted of various offenses, including refusing to work, rioting, staging work actions, deserting the compounds, as well as assault, manslaughter and murder.⁴⁹

The importation of Chinese labor for the Rand soon developed into a major political issue in South Africa and across the British Empire. There were sensational accounts in the Transvaal about Chinese mine deserters roaming the countryside and attacking Afrikaner farmsteads and, in Great Britain, about floggings meted out to those who refused to drill the minimum number of inches and other conditions alleged to be “akin to slavery.” In 1906 the Superintendent of the Transvaal Foreign Labor Department, James Jamieson, despaired that supervising Chinese mine laborers was a “hopeless” endeavor, an assessment that signaled the impossibility of satisfying mine production goals and local demands for public safety without the labor system looking like slavery.⁵⁰ The crisis assumed the incendiary symbolic force of the Chinese Question, building upon a half-century of European experience with Chinese emigration to New World settlements. Not coincidentally, the white, English-speaking, skilled miners and artisans in the Transvaal included many Australian and Cornish workers who traversed the Anglo-American goldfields. The President of the Witwatersrand Trade and Labor Council, Peter Whiteside, was originally from Ballarat, Australia. Tom Matthews, who founded the Miners Association on the Rand, was a Cornish miner who came to South Africa by way of Montana, where he had been a miner and a Socialist state legislator.⁵¹

⁴⁹ British Parliamentary Papers (hereafter BPP) (1905) Cd. 2401; BPP (1905) Cd. 2563; BPP (1907) Cd. 3338/app. 2; BPP (1907) Cd. 3528.

⁵⁰ Jamieson to Solomon, March 6, 1906, Foreign Labor Department, Vol. 24, AG 32/06, Transvaal Archive Depot, National Archives of South Africa (Pretoria).

⁵¹ Ngai, “Trouble on the Rand.”

52 Charles Van Onselen, "The Main Reef Road into the Working Class," in *New Babylon New Nineveh: Everyday Life on the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914* (Johannesburg, 2001), 309-26.

53 On South Africans' reliance on the state, see Ivan Evans, *Cultures of Violence* (Manchester, 2009).

The Chinese Question on the Rand emerged as a key issue in two major political elections in 1906, the general elections in Britain and the elections for responsible government or home rule in the Transvaal. Both elections spelled the speedy demise of the Chinese labor program and set broader political trajectories into motion. In the Transvaal, the Chinese Question brought to the fore long-simmering controversies over the mine labor shortage and the economic security of South African whites, whose relationship to the mining industry had been problematic since the discovery of gold in the 1880s. To be sure, gold had opened a range of economic opportunities on the Witwatersrand, but only a minority materially benefited to any significant degree.⁵² The postwar reconstruction policies of Lord Alfred Milner, the first governor of Transvaal and Orange River Colony and high commissioner of Southern Africa, had done little to improve the economic situation of white Afrikaners, especially those of limited education and without training for a trade. The general view that the state was responsible for ensuring that all whites benefited from white supremacy substantively, not just symbolically, informed Afrikaners' approach to economic policy in general and the Chinese question in particular.⁵³

The so-called Randlords, the capitalists who controlled the mining industries in Witwatersrand, believed that using white labor in unskilled jobs was simply too costly for mining to be profitable but, lest this appear too self-interested, they emphasized that the further development of mining would increase the absolute number of skilled positions for whites on the mines and, moreover, that increased prosperity of the colony would generate more jobs for whites in the towns. The argument had carried the day in 1903, when the proposal for using indentured Chinese on the mines was first debated. But even as the industry again prospered, white unemployment remained a serious problem. By 1905-06, Afrikaners had lost what little patience they had had with the promise that Chinese labor would increase white employment. They became more firmly

committed to the belief that the state served the greed of the mining magnates at the expense of the white population.⁵⁴

In this view they were joined by the South African trade union movement, which was dominated by British workmen. The trade unions had their own grievances against the Randlords. Employment of skilled whites on the mines fluctuated with the general business cycle as well as seasonal variations in the native labor supply. Skilled workers also resented efforts by the mining companies, led by their engineers, to wrest from them control over the point of production and to increase productivity. Like artisans and craftsmen everywhere, they mightily resisted these incursions against their autonomy.⁵⁵

In the event, the Chinese Question served to unify Afrikaner politics, which after the South African war comprised diverse and conflicting perspectives. The Afrikaner Het Volk party, formed in 1904 by the former Boer commandos Jan Smuts and Louis Botha, rode the Chinese Question to power in the 1907 elections for home rule. That would set the course that would lead the colonies to federate as the Union of South Africa in 1910, under the banner of radical white supremacy and racial segregation. South Africa joined Canada, Australia and New Zealand as self-governing Dominions of the British Empire, all based on white-settler rule, native dispossession and Asiatic exclusion.

In Britain, the Chinese Question helped the Liberal Party overturn twenty years of nearly unbroken Conservative rule in 1906.⁵⁶ At the same time, it galvanized the British trade union movement and helped it to secure increased representation in parliament. The core of the Liberal-Labour opposition to Chinese labor in South Africa was the view that the Chinese had been brought to South Africa under conditions “akin to slavery.” In their view, it represented a stain on the honorable tradition of British abolitionism, a tradition held dearly by both radicals and religious nonconformists in the Liberal Party. They found in the Chinese Question a blunt instrument

⁵⁴ Selborne to Lyttelton, November 11, 1905, enclosure with resolutions from public meeting held Potchefstroom, Oct 4, 1905, BPP (1906) Cd. 2819/06.

⁵⁵ John Higginson, “Privileging the Machines: American Engineers, Indentured Chinese and White Workers in South Africa’s Deep-level Gold Mines, 1902-1907,” *International Review of Social History* 52 (2007): 1-34.

⁵⁶ See also AK Russell, *Liberal Landslide: The General Election of 1906* (Hamden, CT, 1973).

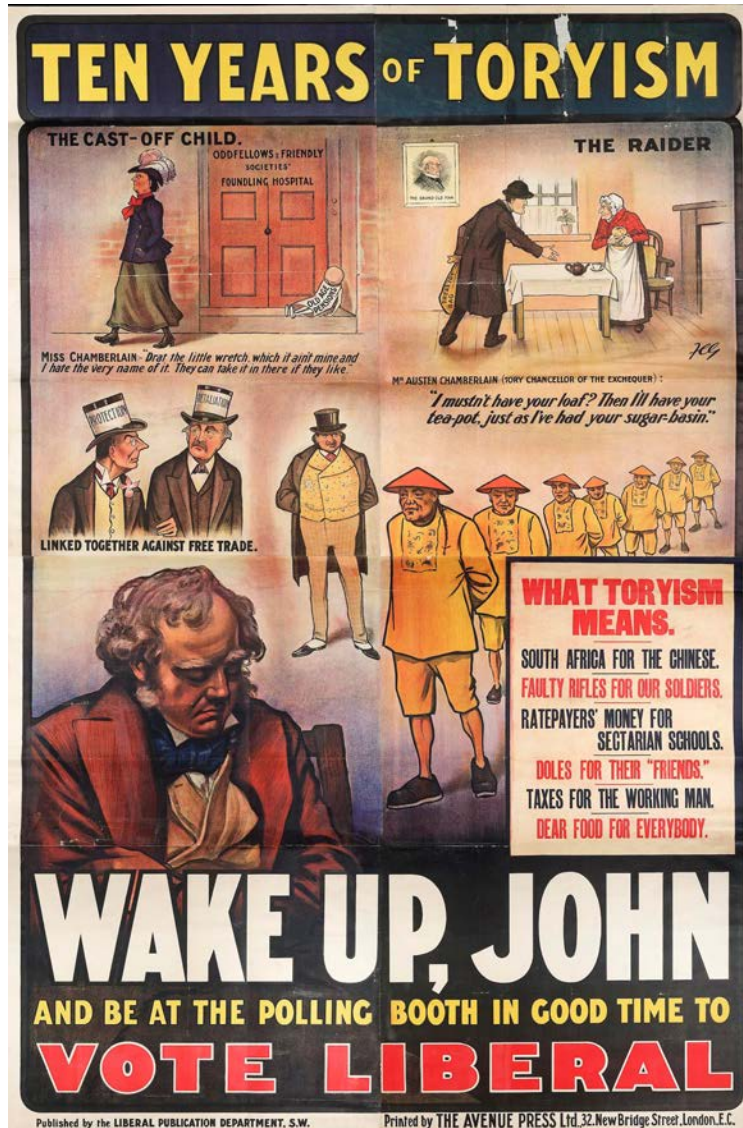


Figure 6. "Ten Years of Toryism," Liberal Party election campaign poster, 1906. Library of the London School of Economics and Science.

57 Central Federation of Trade Unions, "White Labour or Yellow Slaves? Analysis of Division," March 9, 1904, Center for Research Library, dds-22478.

to attack the Conservative government by linking the moral tradition of abolitionism to the recent sacrifices made by British soldiers (50,000 casualties) and taxpayers (£250 million spent) in the war against the tyrannical Boer republics. The trade unions readily adopted the antislavery refrain. As early as March 1904, the British Trade Union Congress denounced the importation of Chinese labor to the Transvaal as a violation of the principles of Trade Unionism and of the "previous splendid record of our race" in "freeing the civilized world from slavery."⁵⁷

Criticism of the program reached a crescendo of outrage in the fall of 1905, after revelations emerged of floggings of Chinese laborers on the one hand, and of Chinese desertions and crimes committed against white farmers, on the other.⁵⁸ The Liberal Party connected the two developments in a single indictment of a disastrous policy: “We brought the Chinamen into the mines and we cannot prevent them from being at once the victims and authors of lawlessness.”⁵⁹ To be sure, a precise definition of slavery eluded the Liberal and Labour election campaigns; their writings and speeches were studied with phrases like “general tenour,” “feeling of slavery,” “conditions akin to slavery,” and “partaking of slavery.” When pressed to define “slavery,” the Radical Liberal MP John Burns resorted to citing the United States experience as evidence of the impossibility of free Chinese immigration, which brought the concept of Chinese comprising a “coolie race” full circle.⁶⁰

Conservatives attacked the Liberals for hypocrisy and for using the Chinese Question for partisan purposes. They fought back with a deluge of newspaper reports and pamphlets of their own, with photographs of clean quarters in the compounds, while also invoking the protections of the contract. They warned that the withdrawal of Chinese labor would ruin the colony’s future prosperity.⁶¹ Their charges of Liberal hypocrisy and partisan opportunism were not far off the mark. Liberals may have opposed “slavery” but they did not oppose racism; they did not support Asian free labor, free immigration or equal rights in the settler colonies. Liberals’ moral opposition to “Chinese slavery” in the Transvaal conceded to the argument made by the trade unions – that British working men were, by their own rights of empire, entitled to populate, work, and prosper in the settler colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Moreover, they were convinced that they could exercise that right only if Asians were altogether excluded.

The politics of white imperial laborism had been in the making since the 1880s and 1890s in Canada and Australia; both

⁵⁸ The most incendiary was the article by Frank Boland, “The Price of Gold,” published in the *Morning Leader*, September 6, 1905. See also *John Chinaman on the Rand* (London, 1905).

⁵⁹ “The Government and Chinese Labour,” *Speaker: The Liberal Review*, June 16, 1906: 240

⁶⁰ J. Burns, “Slavery in South Africa,” *Independent Review*, May 19, 1904.

⁶¹ For example see, “South Africa and Party Politics,” *Saturday Review*, February 24, 1906, 224; “Chinese Labour. Five Reasons for Supporting the Government on Chinese Labour,” *Imperial South Africa Association Pamphlets no. 60* (1904), Center for Research Libraries.

62 On Canadian exclusion of Chinese and Indians, see Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections* (Berkeley, 2012); Lisa Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era* (Oxford, 2010); on Australia, see Ann Curthoys, "Men of all Nations, Except Chinamen"; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Color Line*.

63 Marilyn Lake, "Challenging the 'Slave-Driving Employers'"; J. Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia and South Africa Before the First World War," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, 4 (Dec. 1999): 398-421.

64 Charles A. Pearson, *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (London, 1893). See also Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Color Line*, esp. chapter 3; Sascha Auerbach, *Race, Law and the Chinese Puzzle* (Basingstoke, 2012), 20.

65 M.A. Stobart, "The Asiatic invasion of the Transvaal," *Fortnightly Review* (1907).

66 Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class Makes itself 'White'." Hyslop writes that white laborism traveled along three vectors: Australian trade unionists, Cornish miners, and the union of mining engineers.

borrowed heavily from the rhetoric of the Workingmen's Party of California to make the case against Chinese "coolieism."⁶² In Australia trade unionism established an ideological and material structure of labor rights based on high wages and Asiatic exclusion. To many white South Africans, Australia offered a model "militantly egalitarian polity, backed by an interventionist state."⁶³

The conflict between white laborism and capital was, at one level, over the distribution of resources and power within the context of the white settler state. At another level, racial nationalism expressed the view that racial entitlement unified national identity and purpose across class lines. Charles Henry Pearson, the Oxford historian and later Victorian colonial administrator, did much to distill and disseminate this notion through his influential *National Life and Character* (1893). Pearson warned that the "temperate zones" were the last and only hope for the white race, under population pressure from Africans and Asians. If not excluded by force of law, the argument went, Asiatics would inundate and overwhelm the white settler colonies with cheap labor and commerce. Set in a global context, Australia was the central battleground between two races, the European and Chinese, for domination.⁶⁴ Pearson's analysis was rehearsed tout court in Britain during the election season. For example, M.A. Stobart wrote that at stake was the "existence of [Transvaal] as a Colony of Great Britain or as a dumping ground for Asia."⁶⁵

Another "vector" of white laborism operated through the Cornish diaspora, a far-flung network of skilled workers who circulated throughout the mining regions of the empire, from California and the North American West to Australia and New Zealand, to southern Africa and often returning to Cornwall.⁶⁶ Adding to these loops, white South Africans also traveled around the settler colonies and back to the metropole. Frederick H.P. Creswell, a former mine manager who argued that gold could be profitably mined with unskilled white labor, stumped in England during the election season, speaking at

trade union rallies, Liberal Party meetings, and received wide coverage in the press.⁶⁷ The secretary of the White League, F.R. MacDonald, also an Australian emigrant, toured Australia, New Zealand and Britain in 1906.⁶⁸

The seemingly fortuitous timing of the Chinese Question's arrival in the metropole was no accident. Labor in the colonies had not been an election issue in the past, but in 1904-06 the Liberals astutely sensed its importance – if they hoped to align with the labor movement against the Unionist government. Around the turn of the twentieth century, with the United States and Germany overtaking Great Britain in industrial output, the British trade unions grew more interested in emigration as a hedge against economic insecurity. They were receptive to the arguments made by the Australian and South African unions, and they became alarmed when stories circulated back to England about British emigrants living in abject poverty on the streets of Johannesburg, their unemployment supposedly the result of Chinese labor.⁶⁹ Emigration was not as central to the British labor movement's vision as were demands for government social welfare (which many laissez-faire Liberals opposed). But racial protectionism in the colonies was another kind of statist reform, a government guarantee that the peripheries of the empire would be reserved for white settlement. In fact, emigration between 1903 and 1913 rose to unprecedented levels, with 3,150,000 people leaving England for the Dominions.⁷⁰

In the colonies, white labor gave popular support to elite political interests, which in a sense were rather parochial insofar as they sought power over their particular node of the Empire. The Chinese Question gave them common cause and a global stage. For Great Britain, white-settler autonomy was the price of developing Australia and South Africa inside the Empire and not, like the United States, outside of it – as Lord Selborne, Joseph Chamberlain's undersecretary for the colonies and later the British high commissioner for Southern Africa, summarized. The Dominions got to have their cake and

⁶⁷ "Liberals and Chinese Labour," *The Times*, February 28 1906: 10; F.H.P. Creswell, "Unskilled White Labour In the Transvaal," *The Times*, March 27, 1906, 8; *Daily Telegraph*, February 8, 1906, 6.

⁶⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, September 28, 1906.

⁶⁹ For example, see "Yellow v. White Labour. Protest from Johannesburg," *Western Daily Press*, January 2, 1906, Farrar Album.

⁷⁰ <http://english-emigrationtocanada.blogspot.com/> (accessed March 17, 2016).

71 Lawrence Neame, *The Asiatic Danger in the Colonies* (New York, 1907), 7.

72 Neame, *Asiatic Danger*, 4.

eat it, too. They would be self-governing, but they would still receive the Empire's protection from the proximate threats of the yellow peril and black Africa.

Conclusion

At this point, one may detect a certain completion in the circumnavigation of the Chinese Question, its contours forged in crucibles of nation building on the frontiers of empire. From diverse local conditions emerged a common global discourse, which cast all Chinese as a "coolie race" and as "slaves" regardless of their actual status or condition. The South African polemicist Lawrence Neame cogently summarized its thesis in 1907. Neame wrote that Asiatics were a danger to the colonies because they would always "under-live and under-sell" the European, dragging down their wages and beating them at commerce, to boot. He perpetuated the coolie fiction that Asians were naturally servile and lacked normal human desires for economic sufficiency and improvement; and he ignored, of course, the historical and political reasons for China and India's impoverishment.⁷¹ But Neame also adopted a more alarmist tone than had been heard previously. Like the Randlords who had not anticipated unruly Chinese coolies on the mines, Neame nervously noted "an awakening of Asia, a movement which involves a keener resentment than obtained in the old days... There is a vague yet growing sense of commercial power. The idea is gaining ground that a weak spot has been found in the armour of Europe." In the shadow of the Russo-Japanese War, Neame perceived a contest between the surplus populations of Europe and Asia over control of the temperate zones of the global south. Without strict barriers to Asiatic immigration, he feared that Europeans would lose this contest, lose by the numbers, lose by the cheapness of servile Asian labor, and, in something of a contradiction, by the cleverness of Indian and Chinese at business.⁷²

We should not forget the role of the United States in the coming of the global Chinese Question. Not only was the coolie

trope born in the American West. For white-settler colonials in Australia and South Africa, the United States after the Civil War was, broadly speaking, an object lesson in the folly of racial equality – witness the consequences of unchecked Chinese immigration and postwar reconstruction. But then white America came to its senses and offered solutions in racial management – Chinese exclusion and Jim Crow segregation—that inspired like-minded policies in White Australia and segregated South Africa. If the first bricks of the Great Wall against China were laid by the United States, that wall grew and promoted the development of the American West, Australia and South Africa as so-called White Men’s Countries.

The Chinese Question as a theory of racial danger and exclusion as state policy emerged as constitutive elements of nationalist politics across the Anglo-American world. It was already abloom in the mid-nineteenth-century United States, in racialized notions of continental expansion and the meanings of free labor. In the British settler colonies, the coolie trope emerged later, as a central element of Australian nationalist ambition and the fashioning of the British Dominion.

Chinese exclusion laws were also as part of a dynamic interplay between Anglo-American expansion and Chinese containment. Imperialism’s footprint in China was set down with opium, gunboat diplomacy, unequal treaties and war indemnities, yes — and also from the exclusion laws. The wall protected and advantaged American and British territorial and economic expansion, which depended on control over land, resources, markets, labor and, not least, gold, the foundation of credit.

These policies served to contain China’s position within the global economy: Free immigration invariably begets commercial and cultural exchange. An open door, yes, but one that swings only one-way – that was the strategy of the West. Henceforth, Chinese labor emigration and settlement would remain regionally concentrated, in Southeast Asia and Manchuria, areas that were also entangled with European and

Japanese colonialism. Of course, it could not last forever. After World War II, decolonization loosened the regimes of exclusion; and the end of the Cold War hastened a new era of global economic integration. A different world informs the Chinese Question in our own time. Today's anxieties about China's economic power as a new "yellow peril" are generated by contemporary issues of global economy and politics. But they also draw from a deeper history of ideas and forces that powered their circulation and their rise to the status of the global, dynamics that had their origin in the gold rushes of the Anglo-American world in the nineteenth century.

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Aviation History and Global History: Towards a Research Agenda for the Interwar Period

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By the mid-1930s, over 400,000 kilometers of air routes spanned the globe, transporting an annual total of over 1.2 million passengers; the overwhelming majority of them traveling within Europe and North America. By contrast, the volume of transcontinental air travel was low as the over 100,000 kilometers of transcontinental air routes saw only 5.4 percent of all passengers.¹ The cargo volume of transcontinental air services remained equally low: in 1934, for instance, only 1,200 tons of air cargo were transported, a negligible number compared to the tonnage of the global shipping industry at that time.² Accordingly, British politician Bolton Eyres-Monsell, who had first served as First Lord of the Admiralty and later as a member of the British Continental Airways directory board, calculated that it would require 2,000 planes to replace one single steamer between Australia and the British Isles.³

In the 1920s and 1930s aviation as a transport technology was still in its infancy. And yet, despite its obvious inferiority compared to transport by ship, it was the promise of connecting metropolises and colonial territories (or in the case of Australia:

¹ Carl Pirath, *Der Weltluftverkehr. Elemente des Aufbaus* (Berlin, 1938), 2.

² Carl Pollog, "Der Weltluftverkehr im Jahre 1934/35," *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 44 (1936): 183–213, here 203.

³ V. Gadow, "Die britische Flotte im Zeitalter der Luft," *Zeitschrift für Politik* 29/5 (1939): 365–367, here 365.

4 Daniel Headrick, *The Tools of Empire. Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York/Oxford, 1981).

5 See, Peter Ewer, "A Gentlemen's Club in the Clouds. Reassessing the Empire Air Mail Scheme, 1933–1939," *Journal of Transport History* 28/1 (2007): 75–92.

6 See, for instance, Sacha Markovic, "Le rôle de l'Etat dans la naissance de l'aviation commerciale française (1918–1933)," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 78/3 (2000): 969–991; Marc Dierikx, *Blue in the Sky. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, 1919–1999* (The Hague, 2000); Marc Dierikx, "Routes Versus Revenues. Pioneering Commercial Aviation in Holland 1919–1940," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 78/3 (2000): 889–911; Guy Vanthemsche, *La Sabena. L'aviation commerciale belge, 1923–2001* (Brussels, 2002); Federico Caprotti, "Visuality, Hybridity, and Colonialism. Imagining Ethiopia Through Colonial Aviation, 1935–1940," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101/2 (2011): 380–403; Lutz Budrass, *Adler und Kranich. Die Lufthansa und ihre Geschichte* (Munich, 2016).

a dominion) across continents that made long-range flying appear as a future "tool of empire" (Daniel Headrick) in the interwar years.⁴ Beginning immediately after the First World War, different empires fostered the development of air transport in order to facilitate communication with their far-flung colonies and dominions.

State-sponsored airlines, so-called "flag carriers," existed in all Western states with major imperial ambitions. The Dutch KLM, for instance, was founded as early as 1919 and pioneered civil aviation to Southeast Asia. The British government initiated the establishment of the commercial airline Imperial Airways in 1924. Its incorporation into the heavily subsidized "Empire Air Mail Scheme," according to which all "first class" mail within the empire was to be shipped by air, greatly expanded the airline's financial means.⁵ By the late 1930s, the company operated air links from London to Southern Africa, the Persian Gulf, India, and Australia. The Belgian airline Sabena operated routes within the Belgian Congo from 1925 on and opened a Europe–Africa service a decade later. The planes of different French airlines, some of them merged into Air France in 1933, regularly touched down in Saigon, Antananarivo, Casablanca, and Dakar. From there, they also crossed the South Atlantic, flying to Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. South America was also among the destinations of Pan American Airways flights, the United States' flag carrier, whose network reached across the Pacific region and the Atlantic with the first air link to Europe opened in 1939. Besides these airlines, a plethora of companies with only regional significance as well as airlines originating from non-imperial states or would-be empires (such as Germany's Luft Hansa) ploughed the skies.

Academic writing since the 1960s has explored the histories of these different airlines and their world-spanning networks in some detail.⁶ Especially the flagship airlines of Great Britain and the United States have received particular attention

in the historiography. Marylin Bender and Selig Altschul were the first to provide a comprehensive history of Pan American Airways, written for a general audience. Their notion of the airline as the United States' "chosen instrument" was later questioned by Erik Benson, whose research has suggested that Pan American Airways often followed its own business interest rather than state directives.⁷ Still, as Jenifer van Vleck's meticulously researched study *Empire of the Air* (2013) has demonstrated, commercial aviation did indeed play an important role in establishing and maintaining U.S. hegemony in the Western Hemisphere.⁸

Regarding British imperial aviation, Robin Higham, in the 1960s, and Robert McCormack, in the 1970s, were the first to study the history of British overseas airlines.⁹ Gordon Pirie's various contributions to the field, in particular his seminal study *Air Empire* (2009), have carried this research further.¹⁰ Pirie traces the social history of civil aviation in the British empire, studying the development of imperial air routes and passenger movements as well as the construction of ground facilities and the representation of flying in imperial discourse. Chandra Bhimull's book *Empire in the Air* (2017) likewise studies British imperial aviation. Focusing on the Caribbean, she explores how "airline travel reshaped the composition and experiences of empire"¹¹ and draws our attention to notions of race and racial hierarchies in early airline travel.

While aviation infrastructure in the interwar years has thus been the subject of a number of studies, there is one shortcoming common to most of the existing literature: in almost all of the above-mentioned studies the transcontinental networks of different airlines appear as detached from one another. Because the authors usually cover one single national airline in their writing, most explore the formation of long-distance air routes in a national framework, often treating interactions or commonalities with other airlines as a side

⁷ Marylin Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument. Pan Am, Juan Trippe, the Rise and Fall of an American Entrepreneur* (New York, 1982); Erik Benson, "The Chosen Instrument? Reconsidering the Early Relationship between Pan American Airways and the U.S. Government," *Essays in Economic and Business History* 22 (2004): 97–110.

⁸ Jenifer van Vleck, *Empire of the Air. Aviation and the American Ascendancy* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

⁹ Robin Higham, *Britain's Imperial Air Routes, 1918–1939. The Story of Britain's Overseas Airlines* (Hamden, CT, 1961); Robert McCormack, "Airlines and Empires. Great Britain and the 'Scramble for Africa,' 1919–1939," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10/1 (1976): 87–105.

¹⁰ Gordon Pirie, "Passenger Traffic in the 1930s on British Imperial Air Routes. Refinement and Revision," *Journal of Transport History* 25/1 (2004): 63–83; Gordon Pirie, *Air Empire. British Imperial Civil Aviation, 1919–39* (Manchester, 2009).

¹¹ Chandra D. Bhimull, *Empire in the Air. Airline Travel and the African Diaspora* (New York, 2017).

12 This is not to say that these studies are entirely ignorant of the existence of other carriers. Pirie, for instance, points to the role of KLM as a competitor of Imperial Airways, while Bhimull's book touches upon the joint operations of Imperial Airways and Pan American Airways in the Caribbean.

13 Marc Dierikx, "Struggle for Prominence. Clashing Dutch and British Interests on the Colonial Air Routes, 1918–42," *Journal of Contemporary History* 26/2 (1991): 333–351. For competition in the field of law making, see also Alan P. Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare. The United States, Britain, and the Politics of International Aviation* (Oxford, 1991).

14 As an introduction to the themes and methods of global history, see Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, NJ, 2016); and Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Globalgeschichte schreiben. Eine Einführung in 6 Episoden* (Konstanz, 2017).

15 Conrad, *Global History*, 11.

16 *Ibid.*, 4.

note.¹² Marc Dierikx, to name one exception, has illuminated the importance of competition between Imperial Airways and the Dutch KLM in the development of the air routes to Asia.¹³ But apart from his work, no study has investigated the many fields of cooperation and coordinated planning, or the potential conflicts, between the airlines and authorities of different empires and nation states. And so far, no author has investigated the entangled history of multiple imperial airlines systematically.

In this article, I am proposing a research agenda for a global history of interwar aviation. Since the early 2000s, global history has emerged as a research perspective for studying historical phenomena and processes in their global interaction (rather than in isolation) and against a global background.¹⁴ Being, as Sebastian Conrad contends, "a heuristic device that allows the historian to pose questions and generate answers that are different from those created by other approaches,"¹⁵ global history provides a lens through which we can study different eras and geographical contexts. This lens helps explore processes of exchange, transfer, and interaction between and across world regions. Most importantly, global history writing decenters and overcomes what Conrad calls "the two unfortunate birthmarks of the modern disciplines,"¹⁶ meaning Eurocentrism and the nation-state as an analytical container.

A global history of imperial aviation thus ventures beyond national frameworks and engages hitherto neglected questions of similarities, entanglements, and transfers in the formation of global transport infrastructure systems. The aim of the present article is to develop a set of questions and to identify research foci for conducting such a comprehensive historical analysis. Ultimately seeking to demonstrate that the development of transcontinental air routes from the 1920s to the early 1940s did not merely run parallel but was a shared project of different imperial formations, I will outline three potential avenues of studying aviation history as global history.

Following an overview of the historical context in which the airplane emerged as an imperial technology in the wake of

the First World War, I will discuss three central aspects of my research project: first, a transimperial approach that will facilitate an understanding of how empires and their actors engaged with one another; second, a multilayered approach to aviation history that emphasizes the micro-analytical level; and finally, the question of global connectedness. In line with recent trends in global history writing, I propose to address this question by simultaneously looking at both connections and their absence. My concluding thoughts will draw together the article's key arguments.

I. The global context

After the First World War, Europe's empires were trapped in what historian Robert Gerwarth has called an "imperial paradox": they were at the same time expanding and in a state of dissolution.¹⁷ Britain and France reached the greatest physical extent in consequence of the war, when the League of Nations mandated them rule over the former German and Ottoman colonies.¹⁸ Other imperial powers, too, expanded their spheres of influence. According to Christopher Bayly, the Japanese attack on China (1937) as much as Italy's war against Ethiopia (1935–7) and Germany's expansionist ambitions in Eastern Europe all bear testimony to what he calls the "Third Age of Imperialism," the expansion of imperial formations in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁹ In addition, President Franklin Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor policy" towards Central and South American countries heralded the U.S. "market empire" (Victoria de Grazia) in the Americas. By the eve of the Second World War, the United States' formal empire comprised 13 inhabited overseas territories with a total population of almost 19 million people.²⁰

Imperial history in the interwar years was, however, also "une histoire d'un divorce" (Jacques Marseille), as anticolonial agitation and revolts in many colonies threatened Europe's established empires.²¹ British rule faced opposition in Ireland, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, and

17 Robert Gerwarth, "1918 and the End of Europe's Land Empires," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (Oxford, 2017), 27–42.

18 Martin Thomas, *The French Empire between the Wars. Imperialism, Politics and Society* (Manchester, 2007), 1; Sarah Stockwell, "Britain and Decolonization in an Era of Global Change," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (Oxford, 2017), 65–84, here 67.

19 C.A. Bayly: *Remaking the Modern World 1900–2015. Global Connections and Comparisons* (Hoboken, NJ, 2018), 95.

20 A.G. Hopkins, *American Empire. A Global History* (Princeton, NJ, 2018), 15. See also Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection. Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *American Historical Review* 116/5 (2011): 1348–1391; Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire. America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

21 Jacques Marseille, *Empire colonial et capitalisme français. Histoire d'un divorce* (Paris, 2005).

22 Robert Gerwarth and James E. Kitchen, James E. (2015): "Transnational Approaches to the 'Crisis of Empire' after 1918: Introduction," *Journal of Modern European History* 13/2 (2015): 173–182, here 174.

23 Sarah Stockwell, "Britain and Decolonization;" Frederick Cooper, "Decolonization in Tropical Africa," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (Oxford, 2017), 317–332, here 318.

24 Gerwarth and Kitchen, "Transnational Approaches," 174; Thomas, *French Empire*, 211; Hopkins, *American Empire*, 537.

25 Thomas, *French Empire*, 1.

26 Eda Kranakis, "European Civil Aviation in an Era of Hegemonic Nationalism: Infrastructure, Air Mobility, and European Identity Formation, 1919–1933," in *Materializing Europe: Transnational Infrastructures and the Project of Europe*, ed. Alexander Badenoch and Andreas Fickers (Basingstoke, 2010), 290–326, here 293.

27 Dierikx, "Struggle," 333.

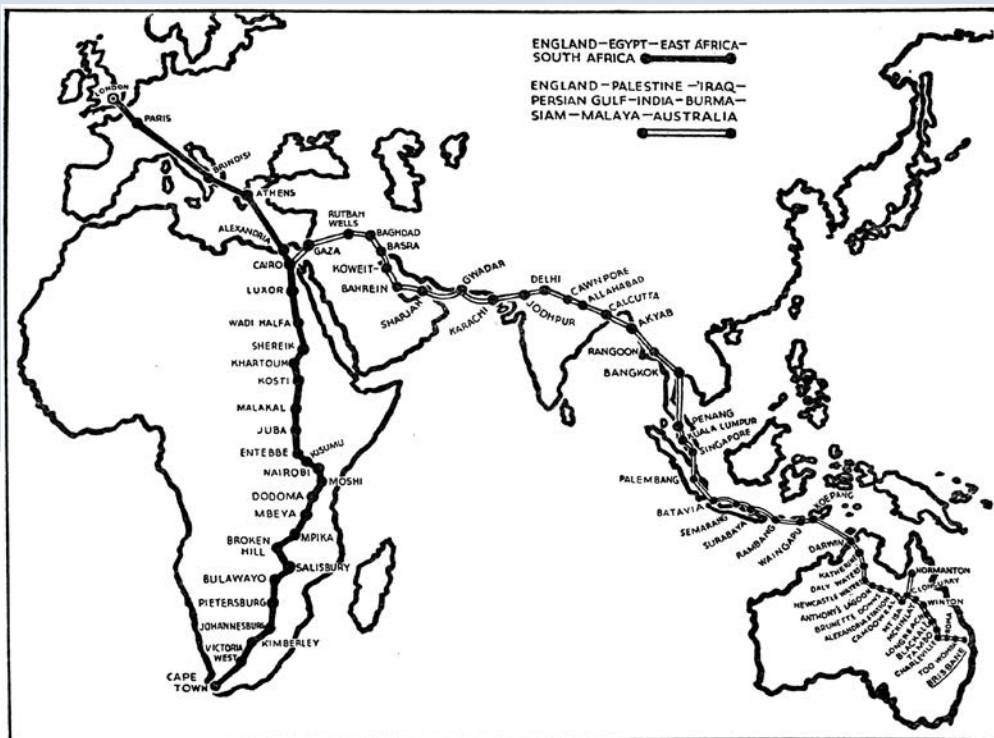
Burma.²² The empire acknowledged Egyptian independence in 1922 after three years of revolutionary struggle, although Britain retained the de-facto power afterwards. Waves of strikes and urban riots in the 1930s further unsettled the British empire in the West Indies and Eastern Africa.²³ At the same time, the French faced revolts in Algeria, Syria, Vietnam, Morocco, and French Equatorial Africa, while the United States saw themselves confronted with anticolonial movements in Hawai'i and Puerto Rico and had to grant the Philippines, Cuba, Haiti, and Panama greater political independence.²⁴ At the zenith of their territorial expansion empires were losing their grip on their overseas possessions.²⁵

It was in this situation that aircraft technology came of age. While colonial armies made use of the new technology in suppressing unrest — the British used aerial bombing for the first time in 1919/20 in Somaliland — commercial aviation, too, was expected to serve the empires' interests.²⁶ Different governments established or appointed commercial airlines as flag carriers and subsidized their operations, either through direct investment or through air mail contracts and remuneration for the transportation of mail.²⁷

Air routes were expected to bring colonies and European capitals closer together, thus reinforcing the empires' grip on their overseas possessions.²⁸ In 1933, Imperial Airways general manager Harold Burchall described this function for the British empire, arguing that "air transport is essentially the vehicle of Management. It is the business letters, the State documents, the Government officials and the men of high standing in the commercial world who are best served by the aeroplane, which enables so great an increase of work to be done in a given time."²⁹ According to the journalist and

28 Teresa Crompton, *British Imperial Policy and the Indian Air Route, 1918–1932*, PhD thesis, Sheffield Hallam University, 2014, 28.

29 Harold Burchall, "Air Services in Africa," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 32 (1933), 55–73, here 56.



conservative politician Harry Brittain, Imperial Airways' long-distance air routes not only helped sustain British rule, but also reinforced connections within the imperial sphere and thus strengthened the colonial settlers' allegiance to the motherland. "At Khartoum, in the Sudan," he wrote, "Britishers are now in rapid communication with London. In the Grand Hotel which looks upon the Nile, English exiles may read their newspapers and the activities of London life within a few days of their happening. [...] Uganda and Tanganyika, with their white settlements once isolated by many weeks from London, are now brought within a few days of the Empire's capital."³⁰

Aircraft possessed the ability to link not only metropolises to colonies but also colonial territories among themselves as hitherto inaccessible places could now be connected with major settlements, which were often located along coastlines.³¹ Regarding French aviation in the colony of Indochina (comprising today's Laos, Cambodia, as well as parts of China and Vietnam), an article in 1930 stressed the importance of this process, explaining that "the objectives of our aeronautic program in Indochina are in accordance with our wider political agenda: the strengthening of peace and security; the establishment of rapid

Figure 1. Imperial Airways air routes. Source: Harry Brittain, *Wings of Speed* (Hutchinson, 1934).

³⁰ Harry Brittain, *Wings of Speed* (London, 1934), 95.

³¹ Kranakis, "European Civil Aviation," 297.

32 Pierre Cordemoy, "L'Indochine et l'aéronautique," *Bulletin de l'Agence Economique de l'Indochine* 3/26 (1930), 37–45, here 37. All translations are my own. See also Gregory C. Seltzer, *The Hopes and the Realities of Aviation in French Indochina, 1919–1940*, PhD thesis, University of Kentucky, 2017, 1.

33 McCormack, "Airlines," 88. For the notion of "tyranny of distance," see Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (Melbourne, 1967).

34 van Vleck, *Empire*, 6.

35 "Reason for Optimism," *Pan American Airways Africa News Letter* 1/16 (1942): 1.

and regular postal communication; the extension of French influence to the inside and the outside of the colony."³² In both major European empires, the French and the British, the promise of aviation infrastructure was to maintain and strengthen intra-imperial ties by bridging the "tyranny of distance" (Geoffrey Blainey) with hitherto unheard-of speed.³³

While the role that imperial planners and lobbyists in the French and British empires envisaged for aviation seems predictable, the case of Pan American Airways in the U.S. empire requires further explanation. The airline was founded in 1927 at the instigation of the U.S. government and, with the aid of the state, built an extensive network in the Americas and the Pacific region. By 1937, ten years into its existence, it could claim to operate over 50,000 miles of air routes. Pan American Airways blatantly exhibited all features of an imperial airline. Not only was it founded with the aim of ensuring the hemispheric dominance of the United States in the American skies, but it also functioned as an air link between the continental United States, its formal colonial possessions in the Pacific, and the Philippines. More than that, the airline also promoted the informal U.S. empire and its economy abroad, thus "creating an ostensibly extraterritorial 'empire of the air,' [through which] the airplane appeared to offer the United States an empire without imperialism — an empire for the American Century, based on markets rather than colonies, commerce rather than conquest,"³⁴ as van Vleck observes.

Pan American Airways was not shy in displaying these imperial roots. When the airline established its transatlantic air route to Liberia, for instance, its officials described this feat in typical colonial language and stressed the American contribution in the long-running inter-imperial project of African colonization: "For centuries Europeans have apparently had the controlling hand in Africa. Actually, Africa has always been the winner. [...] But our men were different [...]. They took Africa by the corners and shook it into shape — adjusted it to themselves."³⁵ The air route across the northern Atlan-



Figure 2. “Fly to South Sea isles via Pan American” (1938). Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

tic, first inaugurated in 1939 between the U.S. and France and shifted to West Africa during the war, filled one of the last blank spaces on the map of international aviation.³⁶ By the early 1940s, the networks of European and American imperial airlines had circled the entire globe.³⁷ In the following section, we will take a closer look at these global infrastructure networks and provide an overview of the entangled patterns of connectivity, cooperation, and competition in their formation and operation.

³⁶ Deborah Wing Ray, “The Takoradi Route. Roosevelt’s Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere,” *Journal of American History* 62:2 (1975), 340–358; Gordon Pirie, “Winging it across the Atlantic. Pan Am and Africa, 1940–1990,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 19 (2021), 72–98.

³⁷ van Vleck, *Empire*, 140.

38 See Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. idem (Oakland, CA, 1997), 1–56; David Lambert and Alan Lester, "Introduction. Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects," in *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire. Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. idem (Cambridge, 2006), 1–31.

39 Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Heé, "Transimperial History. Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition," *Journal of Modern European History* 16/4 (2018): 429–452, here 429.

40 *Ibid.*, 433.

41 *Ibid.*, 430.

II. Connectivity, cooperation, and competition

In the historiography of imperialism, it has often been argued that metropole and colony should be understood as one interconnected imperial sphere, across which people, ideas, or commodities traveled. Placing colonies and imperial centers within the same analytical framework, a great number of studies since the 1990s have traced these flows within the spheres of different empires.³⁸ Connections between and across different empires as well as actors and practices transcending them, by contrast, have not been investigated in much detail; as Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Heé have observed in a recent essay, "[t]he paradoxical effect [of this neglect] has been that empires have often ended up being nationalized."³⁹ Existing literature on interwar aviation confirms this observation: almost all studies remain within the analytical framework of one single empire and its respective airline.

Addressing what they perceive as the shortcomings of "nationalized" imperial history writing, Hedinger and Heé propose a new framework for researching what they call the "transimperial" history of modern empires. Historians, they contend, should bring different empires into the same analytical field. Understanding imperialism as a shared project in which "empires had similar 'politics of comparison' in common, be it to cooperate with or combat against one [an]other,"⁴⁰ they suggest three "C's" along which a study of different empires' mutual engagement could proceed: connectivity, cooperation, and competition.⁴¹ Adopting this approach, in this section I explore potential avenues for researching the transimperial history of air networks in the interwar period and investigate how imperial formations, their flagship airlines, and aviation experts interacted with one another as well as with other states and their airlines and experts.

Connectivity, to begin with, is found in scientific and technological networks across national and continental boundaries. The development of aircraft technology took place in

a transimperial sphere, although the invention and production of aircraft appear very nationalized at first. Paying heavy subsidies for the operation of air routes, different governments — for instance in Britain or Germany — expected their major airlines to use only nationally produced aircraft, thus supporting domestic manufacturers. Imperial Airways, for instance, was bound to Hertfordshire-based Handley Page and exclusively used its HP42 aircraft on the empire routes before the airline switched to flying boats produced in Rochester.⁴² Aircraft manufacturing, however, was never a purely national affair. Components developed abroad were often produced by local licensees. BMW, for instance, produced Pratt & Whitney engines, developed in the United States, for the German Luft Hansa fleet.⁴³

Moreover, the development of heavier-than-air aircraft in different countries did not just run parallel but was an entangled process, marked by knowledge exchange and technology transfers. Beyond the narrative of aeronautical development as a history of national pioneers, research taking account of shared innovations has the potential to illuminate the scientific communities and transnational networks involved in producing and transforming aviation knowledge. To make the flows of practices, knowledge, and its producers across different empires and continents visible, this research has to follow the circulation of specific objects and innovations, such as the all-metal frame, which was originally introduced by German manufacturer Hugo Junkers in 1919 and soon became the international standard after the Junkers F 13 plane met with huge success.⁴⁴ Over a decade later, to give another example, manufacturers in all major aircraft-producing countries began to develop flying boats, airplanes with a boat hull that allows them to land on water.

A cursory examination of aerodynamic research from the turn of the century to the 1930s illustrates how knowledge circulated on a global scale. The question of “streamlining,” meaning the reduction of drag on aircraft by optimizing its

42 Kranakis, “European Civil Aviation,” 318.

43 Budrass, *Adler und Kranich*, 250, 306.

44 Stefan Rinke, “Die Firma Junkers auf dem lateinamerikanischen Markt, 1919–1926,” in *Grenzenlose Märkte? Die deutsch-lateinamerikanischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen vom Zeitalter des Imperialismus bis zur Weltwirtschaftskrise*, ed. Boris Barth and Jochen Meissner (Münster, 1995), 157–184. See also Eric Schatzberg, *Wings of Wood, Wings of Metal. Culture and technical choice in American airplane materials, 1914–1945* (Princeton, NJ, 1999), 40–42.

45 John Anderson, *A History of Aerodynamics and its Impact on Flying Machines* (Cambridge, 1997), 310.

46 *Ibid.*, 342,

47 Akira Iriye, *Global Community. The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Oakland, CA, 2004), 22.

48 Kranakis, "European Civil Aviation," 295.

49 "Convention Relating to the Regulation of Aerial Navigation," Paris, October 13, 1919, printed in *Journal of Air Law and Commerce* 1/1 (1930): 94–104, here 94.

shape, connected scholars on different continents. The first wind tunnel was developed in 1908 by Ludwig Prandtl in Göttingen. In 1920, his disciple Max Munk moved from Germany to the United States to work for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA). Munk and his colleagues at NACA studied the characteristics of over 600 airfoil shapes from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy.⁴⁵ According to historian John D. Anderson, "[t]he airfoil data from those studies were used by aircraft manufacturers in the United States, Europe, and Japan during the 1930s,"⁴⁶ with the Boeing 247 being the first airliner to make full use of this aerodynamic knowledge.

Connectivity coexisted with two other "C's," competition and cooperation. Their interplay becomes evident from the juridification of air space and the conflicts arising from it. After the First World War, the League of Nations became the first large-scale intergovernmental organization. Its foundation, as Akira Iriye has remarked, resumed a process of internationalization that had begun in the nineteenth century but had been interrupted by the war. Still, "[a]s was suggested by the fact that the League of Nations started with thirty-two member countries, more than half of which were outside Europe, international organizations now were far more global in scope than before the war."⁴⁷

It was in the context of this internationalist moment that aviation first became subjected to a legal framework. This international framework, the so-called Paris Convention of 1919, however, reinforced national borders.⁴⁸ Defining the sky as part of a state's territory, it stipulated that "every Power has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the air space above its territory. [...] [T]he territory of a State shall be understood as including the national territory, both that of the mother country and of the colonies, and the territorial waters adjacent thereto."⁴⁹ For imperial governments signing the agreement, this implied that in order to establish air routes to their colonial outposts, they had to negotiate overfly rights with all

independent states, big and small, as well as with the colonial territories of other imperial powers, lying *en route*.

The international convention fostered competition since the nationalization of air space allowed governments to become veto players in the planning of imperial air routes. It enabled them to grant or withholds access rights based on their own agendas. In Persia, modern-day Iran, the government refused Imperial Airways air access until the British company would include Persian cities as intermediate stops on its air route. The Persian state had already proven its receptiveness to the new technology by commissioning the operation of air links to the German aircraft manufacturer Junkers in 1927, who was to operate an airline within the country. With its demands on Imperial Airways, the state apparently sought to climb on the bandwagon of a growing global infrastructure network. Yet, instead of seeking diplomatic solutions, Imperial Airways shifted its operations to the Arabian Peninsula, where the empire successfully negotiated the construction of an aerodrome.⁵⁰

On the same air route, from England to India, the airline faced a second diplomatic challenge. Italy had locked British airplanes out of its air space, causing travelers to touch down in Paris and board trains in the direction of Brindisi in southern Italy, from where they continued their journeys on flying boats after a two-day train ride. It was only after the mid-1930s that both countries reached an agreement, and the entire distance between London and its imperial outposts was opened for air travel.⁵¹

In the Americas, competition over air space arose after the mid-1920s between Pan American Airways and SCATDA. This Columbian airline had been founded in 1919 by German immigrants and had since established a network within Columbia, using Junkers F 13 planes.⁵² When the airline ventured to expand its field of operation beyond Columbian borders northwards, however, U.S. officials became increasingly concerned with its supposed German allegiance. They per-

⁵⁰ Gerald Butt, *History in the Arab Skies. Aviation's Impact on the Middle East* (Nicosia, 2011), 88–98.

⁵¹ Higham, *Air Routes*, 137; McCormack, "Airlines," 93.

⁵² See Rinke, "Junkers."

53 van Vleck, *Empire*, 64–65; Benson, “Chosen Instrument,” 99–100; David Haglund, “De-lousing Scadta. The Role of Pan American Airways in U.S. Aviation Diplomacy in Colombia, 1939–1940,” *Aerospace Historian* 30/3 (1983): 177–182, 187–190. For a detailed analysis of U.S. aviation politics in the Americas, see Wesley Phillips Newton, *The Perilous Sky. U.S. Aviation Diplomacy and Latin America 1919–1931* (Coral Gables, FL, 1978).

54 Benson, “Chosen Instrument,” 107.

55 “PANAIR–SCADTA,” *Pan American Air Ways* 1/2 (1930), 15.

56 Kranakis, “European Civil Aviation,” 300.

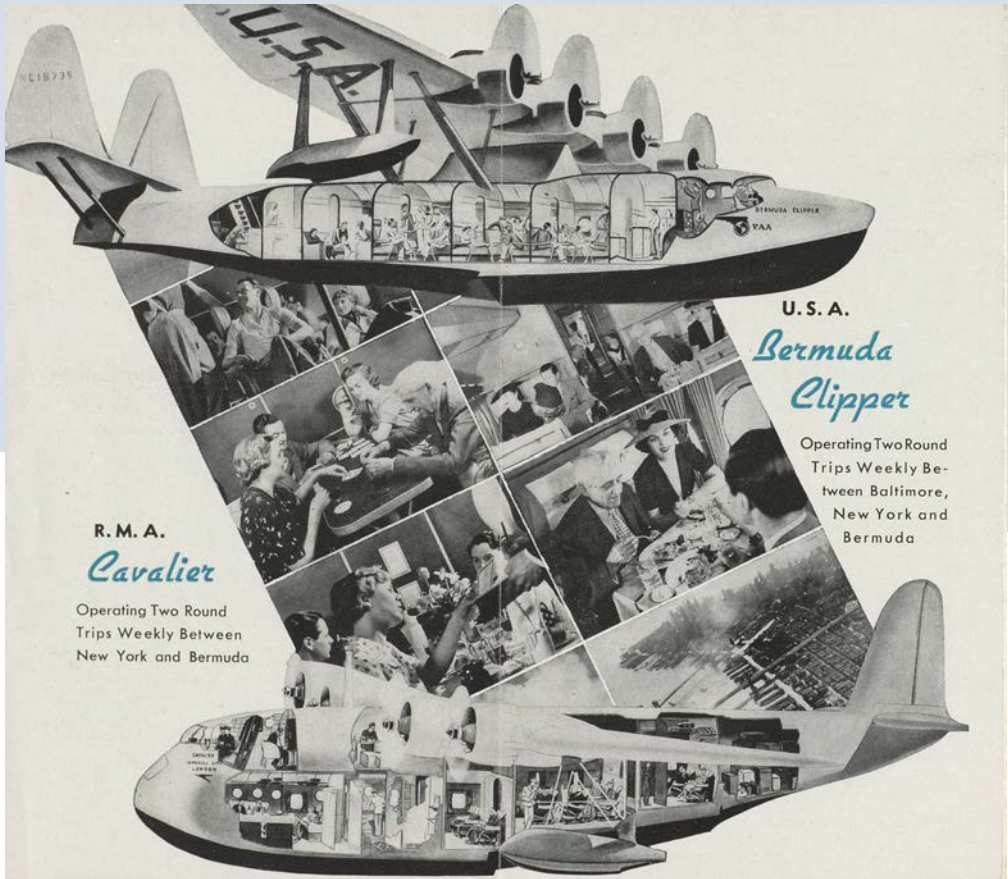
57 Caprotti, “Visibility,” 388.

ceived SCATDA’s ability to fly over Panama as a threat to the Canal Zone, an U.S. overseas possession. To contain SCADTA’s influence, U.S. officials applied a two-pronged strategy. First, they obstructed the Colombian airline’s economical ambitions to transport airmail between North and South America by denying it landing rights in Florida. Secondly, they encouraged the foundation of Pan American Airways as a counterweight that could monopolize the Central American air space.⁵³

The outlined cases provide ample evidence of conflicts between different states, imperial formations, and their respective airlines. Especially the case of SCADTA and Pan American Airways, however, also hints at simultaneous collusion hidden beneath apparent competition. In February 1930, Pan American Airways secretly bought up the Columbian airline but allowed SCADTA to continue its operations.⁵⁴ Both airlines entered into an agreement according to which they cooperated in the transfer of passengers, baggage, and goods. SCADTA was allowed to make use of Pan American Airways’ radio stations, and both airlines agreed to share all airports and seaplane anchorages along their routes.⁵⁵

The U.S. American–Colombian cooperation was not unique but a typical feature of interwar aviation. Airlines of different nations pooled their flights or operated specific routes together. This made particular sense on empire routes on which distances were naturally very long.⁵⁶ A joint Africa route, for instance, was operated by British and Italian aircraft. Despite the ongoing competition over Italian air space, an agreement was signed in 1935 between Imperial Airways and Ala Littoria, the Italian national airline, according to which the British carried Italian mail and passengers from Brindisi to Khartoum. From there, the Italian carrier operated its own trunk route to Asmara and Addis Ababa, the centers of the newly formed colony of Italian East Africa.⁵⁷

The French imperial administration, on the other hand, used its sovereignty over air space to make their (metropolitan and colo-



nial) neighbor Belgium share in the costs of operating air routes in Africa. In 1930, the French government allowed Belgium to open a route across French overseas territories to the Congo but made it a precondition that this route was to be operated as a joint Franco-Belgian venture and would expand to Madagascar, the French colony in the Indian Ocean.⁵⁸ Another joint venture was the U.S.–British service to the British colony of Bermuda in the Atlantic. The Hamilton–New York route was operated twice a week by Pan American Airways and Imperial Airways, using the flying boats of both companies.⁵⁹

In addition to what would today be called “code sharing,” the major airlines of different imperial and non-imperial states also engaged in the international standardization of practices and materials, often with the aim of mitigating expenses and friction. The International Air Traffic Association (IATA) was formed as a nongovernmental organization in 1919 by airlines from Germany (which had not been invited to sign the

Figure 3. *New York - Bermuda in 5 hours: Timetable-tariff of Pan American Airways and Imperial Airways (1938).* University of Miami Libraries Digital Collections.

⁵⁸ Marc Dierikx, *Clipping the Clouds. How Air Travel Changed the World* (Westport, CT, 2008), 12–13; Jean Demangeot, “La construction du faisceau de transport aérien France-Archipel malgache,” *Cahiers d’outre-mer* 18 (1965), 369–405, here 369.

⁵⁹ Bhimull, *Empire*, 101–122.

⁶⁰ Kranakis, "European Civil Aviation," 299; Ralph S. Cohen, *IATA. The First Three Decades* (Montreal, 1949).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 41, 49.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 64.

Paris Convention), Britain, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Later, airlines from different countries joined the trade association, including France and Belgium.⁶⁰

One main objective of the IATA was to support common standards for both safety and equipment. To minimize the risk of fire hazards, for instance, the organization recommended a specific smoke detector system to its members. Within its forums, airlines also exchanged information on accidents and technical innovations for their prevention. Regarding standardized equipment and practices, the IATA championed standardized pipe connections and fueling equipment so that any aircraft could use it.⁶¹ Coordination was the IATA's second pillar besides standardization. A combined IATA ticket and baggage check became standard in 1934 and a committee sought to coordinate and smooth out the timetables of its members so that connections between different airlines were possible and uneconomical competition was avoided.⁶²

The different instances of competition, cooperation, and connectivity outlined in this section confirm Hedinger's and Heé's argument that empires were not detached from one another but engaged in multiple intersecting processes. Already the examples provided in this section suggest that entanglements between different airlines were not isolated cases but a ubiquitous phenomenon. A systematic review of these interactions which takes into account a number of airlines and regional settings is thus necessary to identify patterns of commonality in the evolution of global aviation networks. Studying the three "C's" of aviation reveals the interconnectivity of seemingly separated networks.

III. Global history in local perspective

The networks resulting from the transfers and interactions between and across imperial formations sketched out above are best characterized as transimperial, transcontinental, or global. Yet processes of global integration seldom took place exclu-

sively on the macro-level. Rather, global entanglements were often informed by processes on a more local scale, which they also shaped in return. As Sebastian Conrad reminds us: “[h]istory must be understood as a multilayered process, in which the different layers follow, to some extent, each its own respective logic.”⁶³ Only through a constant back and forth, Conrad argues, can we comprehend how global connections were shaped by local contexts and vice versa. In line with Conrad’s observation, in this section I propose a multilayered research framework to the study of aviation infrastructure. Because a global perspective on the formation of long-distance air routes seems natural, on the following pages I focus on the micro-level and argue the case for a “grounded” look at flying.⁶⁴

Interwar aviation provides an appealing subject for adding local layers to the study of global networks because it was, surprisingly, firmly rooted on the ground. Aircraft in the 1920s and 1930s could only fly for short distances (at least in today’s terms) and only during daylight hours. Moreover, unlike today, airplanes were not meant to immediately connect two distant cities but, like railroads, made scheduled intermediary stops. The journey from London to Cape Town, for instance, was accomplished in 33 separate stages in 1935.⁶⁵ While this *modus operandi* required landing facilities along all routes, airline networks were even more extensive than the flight schedules suggested: additional emergency airfields and refueling stations in-between these stops ensured that aircraft could fly safely in all regions.⁶⁶ Pan American Airways, for instance, operated a total of 250 airfields across Central and South America as well as the Caribbean by the late 1930s.⁶⁷ Taking these different sites — intermediate stops usually comprising landing strips (or launches for flying boats), crew facilities, hotels, and fuel depots — as analytical microcosms, a close examination of how airborne infrastructure was operated on a day-to-day basis is capable of generating more nuanced interpretations of imperial globalization in the interwar decades.

⁶³ See Conrad, *Global History*, 137.

⁶⁴ For different notions of “groundedness” in imperial air travel, see Liz Millward, “Grounded. The Limits of British Imperial Aeromobility,” in *Empire and Mobility in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Lambert and Peter Merriman (Manchester, 2020), 195–215, esp. 208.

⁶⁵ Lucy Budd, “Global Networks Before Globalisation: Imperial Airways and the Development of Long-Haul Air Routes,” *Globalization and World Cities Bulletin* 253 (2007): <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/4666> [accessed March, 29, 2022].

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Jonathan Ruano de la Haza, *The Rise of the United States’ Airfield Empire in Latin America, North Africa, the Middle East and Southern Asia (1927–1945)*, PhD thesis University of Ottawa, 2012, 2.

68 For a review of the recent literature, see Jonas van der Straeten and Uta Hasenöhr, "Connecting the Empire. New Research Perspectives on Infrastructures and the Environment in the (Post)Colonial World," *NTM Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik und Medizin* 24/4 (2016): 355–391.

69 Stephen Graham and Nigel Thrift, "Out of Order. Understanding Repair and Maintenance," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24/2 (2007): 1–25, here 7.

70 Higham, *Air Routes*, 321.

71 Nicholas Stanley-Price, *Imperial Outpost in the Gulf. The Airfield at Sharjah (UAE), 1932–1952* (Brighton, 2012), 76; Pirie, *Air Empire*, 226.

Recent scholarly works on infrastructure in the colonial world have ventured beyond now-classic narratives of colonial infrastructure as omnipotent "tools of empire" and have, instead, illuminated the importance of local conditions and actors and how they negotiated, contested, and appropriated different technological interventions, such as automobiles and electricity networks. Furthermore, a growing number of studies explore the permanent demand for maintenance, repair, and tinkering in the operation of imperial infrastructure systems.⁶⁸ An analysis of the microcosm of imperial airline's ground facilities will add to both research strands by shedding new light on two interrelated aspects: first, it will reveal fissures within seemingly flawless global connections; secondly, it will help to re-assess the effects of imperial infrastructure on colonized societies and the spaces they inhabited.

Regarding the first aspect, there is the question of interruption and breakdown. In their influential essay "Out of Order" (2007), Stephen Graham and Nigel Thrift call for an analytical shift: away from how systems work to how they do not work, writing that beyond assembly "there are good reasons to think that, in the overall scheme of things, disconnection and disassembly are just as important [...]: failure is key."⁶⁹ This is particularly true for the airplane which, as a relatively new technology, was prone to failure in the 1920s and 1930s. Occasional fatal accidents were the most shocking demonstration of its incapacities. According to historian Robin Higham, during this time span accidents on Britain's imperial air routes cost 108 lives.⁷⁰ Failure, however, did not only occur in these exceptional events but on a daily basis. The flight schedules of all airlines were regularly disrupted by heavy rains, winds, fog, rough seas (in the case of flying boats), or technical problems, resulting in delays and cancellations.⁷¹

A shift in analytical scale provides new perspectives on how airlines coped with the threat of mechanical failure on the scene. So far, little is known about the organization of maintenance and repair works. Routine checks and refueling were



often performed during layovers or while passengers and crews were sent on sightseeing trips. In Pan American Airways' Latin American network, major nodal points such as Brownsville, Texas, and Cristóbal, Panama, served as maintenance bases in the early 1930s. Repair parts were kept in stores at these sites as well as in Mexico City and potentially other places. From there, pilots distributed parts and mechanics to outlying stations when they were needed, using Ford and Fokker airplanes.⁷² The system of Pan American Airways provides a first insight into how the broader "meta-infrastructure" necessary for the operation of air routes functioned.

The inner workings of this "meta-infrastructure" are yet to be explored in full detail. A close examination of the everyday interaction on a variety of airfields will help further explore patterns of commonality and shared practices in the repair networks of different airlines, while also being attentive to regional differences and tailor-made adaptation strategies. Such an examination will help to answer a range of questions: how, for instance, was fuel brought to airfields in inaccessible areas? Did different aircraft operators share and exchange spare parts? Were repair parts stored on-site or could they be shipped around the globe immediately to prevent further delays? What was the role of improvisation and tinkering in keeping the system running? A passenger on Imperial Airways' London-Cape Town route, for instance, described in 1932 that the crew of his flight had to use a bicycle pump to fix a flat aircraft tire in Atbara, Sudan, because there were still

Figure 4. Havana (Cuba), maintenance on airplane, 1930. Photo: Frederick Gardner Clapp. UWM Libraries, AGSL Digital Photo Archive – North and Central America.

72 S. Paul Johnston, "Thunderbird's Nest," *Pan American Air Ways* 4/1 (1933): 25.

73 M.A.U. Heathcote, "By Air Mail to Kenya," *Geographical Journal* 79/6 (1932): 502–506, here 504. For this trip, see Gordon Pirie, "Incidental Tourism: British Imperial Air Travel in the 1930s," *Journal of Tourism History* 1/1 (2009): 49–66.

74 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London/New York, 2008), 7–8.

75 Stanley-Price, *Imperial Outpost*, 134–135.

76 Pirie, *Air Empire*, 240.

77 *Ibid.*, 236.

no other tools available.⁷³ Was this an exception or part of the daily routine of aviators? What was the role of local labor and expertise in the maintenance of global infrastructure?

This last question points to a second aspect of imperial aviation that can only be addressed through a close examination of the micro-social level: indigenous activity and initiative. Landing sites were "contact zones," in the words of Mary Louise Pratt: "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, dash, and grapple with each other."⁷⁴ On these spatial conjunctures, globally circulating commodities and technologies intersected with each other as well as with "local" or vernacular patterns of mobility and exchange. Actors of different status and with different backgrounds came into contact; aviators, dispatched engineers, colonial officials, business travelers, and tourists on the one hand, workers and local residents on the other. The overwhelming majority of staff was recruited locally and assigned tasks such as guarding facilities, maintaining landing strips, or operating fuel pumps.⁷⁵

A focus on indigenous labor provides new avenues for re-evaluating the transformative power of imperial infrastructure — and imperial dominance built on it. For British aviation, Gordon Pirie has identified airfields as sites of micro-colonialism, writing that "[i]n some secluded places British ground crews, aircraft and airfield facilities were the Empire."⁷⁶ To be sure, imperial aviation and its local manifestation differed from empire to empire and from region to region. Still, zooming into different local contexts may help to reveal practices shared by multiple empires and their airlines. One example is the utilization of forced labor in the construction of airfields. In Britain's African colonies, ground facilities were constructed with the aid of the respective colonial authorities, often involving involuntary labor. Construction was performed by tax defaulters or *corvée* workers, who were also responsible for the maintenance of airfields after the rainy season, when grass and thornbush usually covered the landing strips.⁷⁷



Figure 5. Sudan. Malakal. Shiluks refueling the plane, 1936. Matson Photo Service. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

While Imperial Airways drew on the colonial state apparatus, Pan American Airways usually had to construct airfields and marine terminals on its own. Still, the company could make use of labor coercion. Labor for construction work was recruited locally, often from among the indigenous population. According to Marilyn Bender and Selig Altschul, the airline's representatives in southwest Bolivia allied with the local police force to conscript indigenous men for the construction of an airfield in the town of Uyuni.⁷⁸ This episode suggests that the coercive power underlying the U.S. airline's foreign mission was not necessarily less significant than that of European airlines operating in parts of their formal empires. Moreover, construction projects in Liberia, an independent state with strong ties to the United States, suggest that the intermediary actors supporting these efforts were very similar to those in formal colonial settings: as a chronicle compiled by the company in 1944 reported, at the planned seaplane base at Lake Piso in western Liberia it was a missionary station that helped the U.S. company obtain its African labor force.⁷⁹

Further research is needed to determine how common patterns of involuntary labor and forced recruitment for the purpose of airfield construction and maintenance were in different geographical settings, colonial or not, and for the benefit of different airlines. To what extent, for instance, did Pan American Airways' operation in formal parts of the U.S. empire, such as Hawai'i or American Samoa, differ from

78 Bender and Altschul, *Chosen Instrument*, 164.

79 University of Miami Library, Pan American World Airways Records, ASM0341008730, "History of Pan American World Airways," 70.

80 Marc Augé, *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London, 1995).

81 Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, "Introduction. What Do Science, Technology, and Innovation Mean from Africa?" in *What Do Science, Technology, and Innovation Mean from Africa?*, ed. idem (Cambridge, MA, 2017), 1–27, 2.

that in independent states or territories of other empires? Meticulous study of the available archival evidence is also required to assess the capabilities of labor regimes at airfields and the contestation of foreign power. How did those pressured into work react to coercive regimes? Did they refuse to engage with the infrastructural arrangements, for instance by neglecting their duty to clear airfields? What impact might such refusals have had on the route networks at large? Could the subaltern contestation of infrastructure on the scene affect flight schedules and eventually lead to delays or even the shutdown of entire long-distance routes?

These questions make the need for multilayered analyses particularly evident. Studying the engagement of actors on (and from) the spot with aviation infrastructure is pivotal for understanding how global and local layers intersected in the process of its construction and operation. Far from being "non-places," a term anthropologist Marc Augé uses to characterize modern airports, these facilities were firmly rooted in the surrounding environment and the lives of its inhabitants.⁸⁰ As a global history of aviation can show, it was through their activities at airfields that vernacular actors, those people usually identified as immobile and often being prohibited from entering an airplane, became a part (or a spanner in the works) of global networks of mobility. Looking at the micro-level thus allows us to understand non-European actors not as passive recipients or victims of technology transfer but as agents; or, in the words of Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, "not as outsiders looking in but as coauthors."⁸¹

IV. Global connections revisited

In this section, I introduce a third avenue for studying the global history of air transport, that is, the question of global integration and exclusion through the expansion of airline networks. The interconnectedness of the globe is a

long-established topos in scholarly research on the modern era. In his book *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1990), geographer David Harvey argues that in the twentieth century global integration sped up with such rapidity that “the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us.”⁸² To visualize what he calls “time-space compression,” Harvey’s book contains an illustration entitled “The shrinking map of the world through innovations in transport which ‘annihilate space through time.’” It depicts a series of four images of planet Earth, each smaller than the previous one. The globe is shrinking through accelerated means of transport: from the large Earth of “1500–1840,” when the “best average speed of horse-drawn coaches and sailing ships was 10 mph” to the 1950s (“propeller aircraft: 300–400 mph”) and 1960s (“jet passenger aircraft: 500–700 mph”).⁸³ Remarkably, similar visual depictions of the “ever-shrinking world” had already been used by Pan American Airways’ marketing department as early as the 1930s.⁸⁴

Harvey’s illustration is both correct and incorrect. It is correct in that it emphasizes the key role of transport infrastructure in forging geographical links. But contrary to Harvey’s understanding, geographer Scott Kirsch has argued that new technologies did not in fact annihilate space. According to Kirsch, technological innovation instead “create[d] spaces, making heretofore isolated lands accessible to more rapid and expansive networks of exchange.”⁸⁵ This observation certainly holds true for the expansion of air links in the 1920s and 1930s. In the first two sections of this article, I have already pointed to crucial factors that shaped global connections, namely, the desire to bring imperial outposts closer to the motherland and to dominate the skies for geostrategic reasons, but also the veto power of different states to grant or deny access to air space. To these factors we can add another factor that determined which places were to be connected, namely, the range and technical capabilities of aircraft, their unique ability to bridge not only great distances but also difficult terrain with relative ease.

⁸² David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity. An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 240.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁸⁴ “This ever-shrinking world,” *Pan American Air Ways, Supplement ‘The Yankee Clippers Sail Again’* (1939), 16.

⁸⁵ Scott Kirsch, “The Incredible Shrinking World? Technology and the Production of Space,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13/5 (1995): 529–555, here 542.

86 Percy Groves, "The Influence of Aviation on International Affairs," *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8/4 (1929): 289–317, here 307.

87 Emily S. Rosenberg, ed., *A World Connecting, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

Aviation therefore created economic and social spaces that remained barred to other means of transportation. In 1929, Royal Air Force strategist Percy Groves proclaimed that "[p]laces which were of great importance geographically under the old values have now, perhaps, lost much of it, and other places which were of no special value in the old days have become exceedingly important as fuelling depots or points on lines of communication."⁸⁶ This was particularly true in scarcely populated tropical regions, in which automobile traffic was seldom fully developed by the 1930s. Instead, transport away from the coastlines was often done by porters, carts, or railroads. Railroad tracks, however, involved great expense, were static, and sometimes could not traverse difficult terrain, such as mountainous regions. The airplane, by contrast, possessed the ability to connect peripheral regions to one another and to urban centers.

However, there is a second layer to the process of global and imperial integration, which reveals where Harvey's above-mentioned earth projection is wrong. His model oversimplifies integration by means of infrastructure extension because it obscures inequalities and suggests a straightforward, teleological process. The technological possibility of connecting distant places did not necessarily mean that actors actually connected them. Moreover, access to global networks, in the interwar period as much as today, is not distributed equally but based on power relations and supposed racial hierarchies. In the remainder of this article, I will propose an analytical framework designed to take account of both increasing global interconnectedness and exclusion in the interwar period.

Studying the interconnectedness of the modern world is, perhaps, the primary objective of global history writing. However, while the focus on "a world connecting," as the title of an outstanding book in the field reads, has become a paradigm for many studies, global historians are increasingly wary of the dangers underlying a positivistic view on connectedness.⁸⁷ Sebastian Conrad has urged us to go beyond the study of global connections as a guiding principle, warning that

connections are not uniform but of varying quality and intensity and thus often have only limited impact upon historical actors.⁸⁸ Roland Wenzlhuemer has gone one step further and suggested that historians give limited connections, missing links, and what he calls “disconnections” the same historiographical attention that they give the ubiquitous connections.⁸⁹ Indeed, exclusion and interruption were important aspects in the formation of global aviation networks, and we can think of them in at least two ways: people and places.

Regarding people, the world clearly did not shrink for everybody. Access to airplanes was regulated along the lines of race, class, and gender.⁹⁰ Interwar flying, as Marc Dierikx has underlined, “was a white man’s business.” On the Dutch air routes to Indonesia, which he studied, up to 95% of passengers were European, the rest were Chinese, and only a very few were Indonesian.⁹¹ Being European, however, was not sufficient to qualify for air travel. High ticket prices resulted in low passenger numbers. The list of frequent flyers was thus reduced to colonial officials, business travelers, military personnel, diplomats, and upper-class tourists. On the eve of the Second World War, Imperial Airways still counted less than 10,000 passengers per annum on its intercontinental routes.⁹²

These passengers from Europe or North America did not regard the inhabitants of their flight destinations as potential co-travelers. Rather, in the eyes of tourists, entrepreneurs, or colonial officials, these populations were an immobile “other” that was to be gazed upon.⁹³ In western discourse, flying signified modernity and thus the antithesis of the lives of the people over whose heads airplanes traveled. With regards to Pan American Airways’ African operations Jenifer van Vleck has thus concluded that “[a]viation itself became an important signifier of racial difference. Africans’ lack of familiarity with airplanes, which often manifested as fear or bewilderment, marked them as uncivilized in the eyes of U.S. observers.”⁹⁴

Such representations notwithstanding, the skies were not completely closed to non-white travelers and their busi-

88 Conrad, *Global History*, 90.

89 Roland Wenzlhuemer, “Connections in Global History,” *Comparativ* 29/2 (2019): 106–121; Wenzlhuemer, *Globalgeschichte*, 73–78.

90 Pirie, *Air Empire*, 240–241.

91 Dierikx, *Clipping the Clouds*, 33.

92 Pirie, “Passenger Traffic,” 68; Bhimull, *Empire*, 75.

93 Bhimull, *Empire*, 84–85.

94 van Vleck, *Empire*, 160.

95 Caprotti, "Visual-ity," 396.

96 Ibid.

97 For this observation, see also Nicholas Stanley-Price, "Flying to the Emirates: The End of British Overseas Airways Corporation's Service to Dubai and Sharjah in 1947," *Journal of Transport History* 39/3 (2018): 333–354.

98 For the history of the airfield, see Stanley-Price, *Imperial Outpost*.

99 Ibid., 74.

nesses. As Federico Caprotti has shown for Ala Littoria's flights to Ethiopia, "East African dignitaries and local officials did, at times, utilize the airline, especially on the internal East African network."⁹⁵ Their presence made white passengers complain bitterly and eventually led to the segregation of the cabin.⁹⁶ A closer examination of how airlines and state legislation administered access to aircraft will help illuminate the unevenness of global connections. This approach also has the capability of exploring the ways in which colonial subjects transgressed these racial boundaries and made use of the new technology.

Turning to the question of geographical "disconnections," it is perhaps obvious that while some places were connected, others remained excluded. What is perhaps less expected is that recently established connections were sometimes unmade in the process of infrastructure extension. Interruption occurred when air technology advanced.⁹⁷ The development of seaplanes and their use on long-distance routes from the late 1930s through most of the 1940s rendered previously erected land-based airfields superfluous. This was the case in Sharjah in today's United Arab Emirates, where an airfield was constructed in 1932 by the Royal Air Force and Imperial Airways. From 1933, the airline stopped weekly at the airfield on the route to and from Karachi, and in 1935 air traffic was increased to twice-weekly arrivals in both directions.⁹⁸ In the same year, however, Imperial Airways made a decision that sealed the fate of Sharjah airfield for the next two decades: the airline purchased 28 flying boats from the manufacturer Short Brothers, whose S23 C Class (or Empire Class) seaplanes soon became the preferred aircraft on empire routes.⁹⁹

With their introduction, ground facilities shifted from land to the sea, and destinations without adequate access to water were excluded from flight schedules. The new British air route to India thus went from Alexandria via Tiberias, Baghdad, Basra, Bahrein, and Dubai to Karachi while the airline abandoned its former stops in Gaza and Sharjah. In Sharjah, the local creek was not found suitable for landing operations.

Instead, the British moved westward to Dubai, where the first commercial flying boat landed in 1937.¹⁰⁰ While the rest facilities in Sharjah were still occasionally used for passengers arriving in Dubai, commercial services at the airfield stopped and the Royal Air Force remained its sole user. It was only in the 1950s that passenger traffic at the Sharjah airfield was revived, albeit only for regional airline activities. In 1975, the airfield was given up due to its proximity to the fast-growing city. Its runway was transformed into a regular urban street, and a new airport was constructed outside of the city limits.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 81.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 177.

Whether intended or not, exclusion was a by-product of innovation and of the very process of global interconnection itself. This brief sketch of how some places and people were excluded while others were included underlines that connection and isolation were not mutually exclusive but entangled processes, whose simultaneity reflected technological change as much as power relations and global unevenness. Only a balanced focus on both aspects can do justice to the ambiguous process of global integration. Moreover, a study that pays close attention to the meandering patterns of connectivity and contextualizes connections can also provide a methodological contribution to the growing academic field of global history writing.

V. Concluding remarks

In this article, I have sought to develop a conceptual template for studying the global history of aviation. Three core aspects of the proposed research agenda venture beyond traditional historical frameworks. First, its transimperial approach not only facilitates the exploration of the competition between different empires and states, but also helps to highlight more hidden fields of interaction and cooperation in the extension of infrastructure across borders. Second, zooming in on the local trajectories of global infrastructure “grounds” aviation in its application in everyday life. Addressing the question of how aviation transformed not only air space but also terrestrial space, a study of the ground level illuminates how

infrastructure systems played out on the spot in different geographical settings and how local conditions and actors created ruptures in these sophisticated networks. Third, moving beyond merely identifying global connections by exploring weaknesses in global links and processes of disentanglement will bring to the fore the contradictions inherent to globalization processes.

Applying a global history perspective to the study of airborne infrastructure means overcoming a national framework and instead searching for entanglements, shared practices, and patterns of commonality but also for regional differences. Such a research agenda is particularly fruitful in aviation history, which is still often written as a history of daring national pioneers or specific national airlines. Beyond the study of aviation, the research agenda outlined in this article proposes an innovative perspective on processes of global and imperial integration in the twentieth century. The study of imperial airlines in interaction with one another not only underscores that imperialism was a shared project of different states. Shifting the analytical scale from the macro-level to the micro-level and back also reveals the challenges that imperial globalization faced in the interwar decades.

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In Global Transit: A New GHI Research Focus

Interview with Simone Lässig

Since 2018, the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI), together with its Pacific Office in Berkeley, has organized several international conferences and workshops that have used the term “transit” to explore flight, expulsion, and emigration from Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied European countries, focusing on the global dimension of this forced migration. This series of meetings has given rise to a new research focus at the Institute, which GHI Director Simone Lässig discusses in this interview. The interview was conducted in German by Nora Hilgert and translated into English by Casey Sutcliffe.

Nora Hilgert: Let’s begin with a basic question: What does the term “transit” mean to you?

Simone Lässig: The term “transit” stands for phases in the lives of migrants in which they are on the move – mostly unintentionally and without a long-term plan – between different cultural, political, and geographical spaces. In these phases, they leave behind most of what is familiar to them and encounter a great deal that is new. Much of their experience in this phase

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is so fragile, uncertain, and unpredictable that they find it difficult to develop trust in the future or even to plan for it. Transit is a fluid space characterized by tremendous uncertainty and contingency, especially for refugees. Yet it is also distinguished by the limited agency it gives them. The category of “transit” is characterized by the intersection of space and time, two core concepts of historical studies, as well as structure and agency. Therefore, the transit perspective provides an analytical lens that forces historians to more carefully examine the times and spaces after people leave places where they long felt at home and before they arrive somewhere they can settle. This approach encourages historians to view these times and spaces as separate phases of – often forced – migration. The factors that prompt people to move and manage their lives in transit range from poverty, hunger, and environmental disasters to war, persecution, expulsion, and genocide, all the way to voluntary factors such as following labor opportunities or family members or hoping for a better life. Although such motives and circumstances have played a role in all epochs of human history, they reached a new level in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in terms of the number of people moving and the spaces they traversed, often extending across entire world regions. Most recently – and tragically – we can see this with millions of refugees fleeing the Russian war on Ukraine; we saw it already in 2015 with refugees from Syria, fleeing by stages from one point of arrival to another. Transit is, thus, a historical phenomenon that has particular salience and meaning within the history of forced migration and flight.

Before we dig deeper into your perspective and the potential it offers, let’s talk about the activities the GHI Washington has organized under the banner of “In Global Transit.” Could you tell us about them?



Figure 1. Dutch soldiers check the papers of Javanese women in a transit camp of the Seventh December Division near Tandjong Priok (or of another division from Camp Doeri on Batavia), 1946. Photo: C.J. Taillie, Collectie Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Wikimedia Commons.

The history of flight and forced migration has been a research focus for the German Historical Institute Washington since 2015. Deepening our study of transit was the logical continuation of research we had already begun. In this context, the GHI, together with external partners both inside and outside of the Max Weber Stiftung (MWS), organized a series of conferences that explored the long-neglected global dimension of the flight of Jews from Nazi Europe and also mapped this out for the regions in which the conferences were to take place. Together with the GHI London and its India Branch Office (IBO), represented by Andreas Gestrich and Indra Sengupta, we held a conference in South Asia – in Kolkata – in 2018 on “Jewish Migrants from Hitler’s Europe in Asia, Africa, and Beyond.” The second conference, “Forced Migration of Jews and Other Refugees (1940s–1960s),” followed in 2019 at the Pacific Office of the GHI Washington in Berkeley. Organized together with Swen Steinberg and supported by Francesco Spagnolo in Berkeley and Wolf Gruner in Los Angeles, it not only brought the U.S. West Coast and the greater Pacific region into our “transit” perspective but also expanded its timeframe and conceptual underpinnings.

Just as we had come up with a concept for the third conference in the series, to be held at the new MWS branch office in Beijing, China, the Coronavirus pandemic disrupted our plans. Therefore, instead of heading to East Asia, we met on Zoom. At that time, two of our own research fellows, Anna-Carolin Augustin and Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş, joined the core group

of scholars working on this topic. In the scholarly exchange that we engaged in via the Internet, we found ourselves confronted with a specific “transit” experience: suddenly and for the foreseeable future, our scope of action had become severely restricted. We soon tried out new strategies that enabled us to resume some activities. We also had to deal with involuntary and random stops along our “path,” which took a form rather different from what we had anticipated. In December 2020, the GHI Washington, with its Pacific Office in Berkeley, held the online workshop “Jewish Refugees in Global Transit: Spaces – Temporalities – Interactions.” We utilized this opportunity to initiate a more general discussion of “transit” and to fully develop the conceptual and theoretical groundwork for this approach. The fourth event in the series – the online workshop “Archives of Global Transit: Reconsidering Jewish Refugees from Nazi Europe” held in October 2021 – built on the previous meetings and continued our discussion of fundamentals, with a focus on methodological issues and available sources for approaching transit; we also emphasized the experience of being “in between.”

All in all, these events brought together more than sixty international scholars and helped them form a network. A third of them took part in two or more events in the series that the GHI Washington organized with various partners, which included, for example, the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the University of California in Berkeley and the USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research in Los Angeles.

Now, with a variety of researchers from numerous countries having participated in these events, a Standing Working Group has formed, consisting of scholars with a predominantly historical focus, to regularly discuss various aspects of “global transit.” How do you explain the remarkable response that this GHI-initiated topic has generated?

I see several reasons for this: Although most of the scholars we have brought together work on similar topics, they often feel committed to different research areas – specifically, Jewish Studies or refugee and exile research. The “transit” perspective, that is, focusing on migrants’ phases of in-betweenness, has enabled participants to rethink their topics and, above all, consider their sources in a new and different way. In addition, our new conference and workshop formats have enabled innovative forms of scholarly exchange that have made the development of this new field of research truly collaborative, sometimes extending beyond disciplinary boundaries. And participants have taken up these new formats with great enthusiasm. Many first met others through our conferences, and these connections were reinforced when particular researchers repeatedly joined in. A whole series of events fosters deeper connections and more sustainable scholarly exchange than individual large conferences do – many people had not had such experiences before.

The positive response to this concept, which we have refined during the pandemic, can also be explained by the breadth of our approach: From the beginning, we were not only interested in the well-researched escape routes in the northwestern hemisphere but also in lesser-known ones, especially in the Global South. In addition, we wanted to discuss the subject of transit broadly with a view to the sources available for researching it. In our events, for example, museum and collection curators took part alongside historians, and historical images and objects figured prominently, as did methodological challenges related to oral history and the memory of transit. Moreover, we sought to go beyond the research boundaries of Jewish history and Holocaust studies, which, for pragmatic reasons, tend to be narrower.

Last but not least, I interpret this positive response as a consequence of how closely the subject of transit relates to our current global realities and the different refugee movements of our time. After all, as historians, we investigate the past

again and again as if looking in a mirror and realize that a large number of our questions about history also derive from our present.

In your first answer, you spoke more generally about the importance of your perspective on transit for the history of flight and forced migration. Transit, you said, points to open questions, especially in historical migration research. How does your research focus fit into this?

We want to reconsider existing findings – for example, those in historical Migration and Mobility Studies but, above all, in the relatively new field of refugee history – by concentrating on phenomena and representations of life in “in-between” or “liminal” spaces. These spaces have not yet been adequately studied because migration research long remained stuck in the dichotomy of emigration and immigration or in the concept of the nation-state, where people without status or papers were simply not visible, often due to the available sources. Although approaches to historical migration research based in macrostudies or systems theory addressed people in transit, they merely gathered quantitative data. Exile research, for its part, did indeed deal with people in these “liminal spaces” but only focused on specific social groups, especially intellectual ones – also due to the available sources. Diaspora research, in turn, always looked at “liminal spaces” but usually only those where migrants had arrived or settled down, and less those from before or after.

Yet it was precisely in these physical and mental “liminal spaces” that migrants found it difficult, if not impossible, to figure out where they belonged; in them, people were forced to come to terms with “transitions” of all kinds – biographical, cultural, economic, geographic, generational, and social. Migration rarely ever proceeds in a linear fashion from the point of departure to the point of arrival. Tony Kushner has pointed out that, both legally and practically, transit was an

ever-recurring part of migrants' experiences. This applied especially to refugees in the twentieth century, who were confronted with unprecedented uncertainty and contingency, fear and confidence, hopelessness and new opportunities; they also had to redefine questions of belonging and identity. Refugees, until today, navigate within these different political, legal, and cultural frameworks but continue to face similar sorts of challenges and opportunities.

What are some of the concrete research questions and research spaces that you have addressed in your Standing Working Group?

Older exile and diaspora research focused primarily on countries of emigration that were among the most attractive to those forced to emigrate – if one can speak of attractiveness at all in this context. Above all, these included the United States, the United Kingdom, and Palestine. Aside from Shanghai, a relatively well-researched place of refuge, which provided around 18,000 Jews with a safe haven, we know surprisingly little about transit experiences in countries like Australia, India, and Kenya. In these countries, Jews who were racially persecuted in Germany were seen as “whites” – or obliged by the British to behave as such. That is, they looked like the European colonial elite and thus were construed as part of a privileged race and culture. This, in turn, fueled reservations, resistance, and antisemitism among long-established but socially disadvantaged groups in British India and British Kenya, for example. After the war began, Jews who had found refuge among the Allies suddenly found themselves identified as “Germans” again and, thus, as potential enemies classified as enemy aliens; some were interned, for example, in Australia and India. And the situation was different again for those who found themselves in nations under the influence of Western powers or in the context of anti-colonial movements – as in Shanghai.

In general, these extremely fluid colonial and postcolonial spaces of transformation seem to us to be especially important for the phenomenon of transit in the 1930s and the following decades. Interesting alliances were formed in this context: Refugees who, for example, were grateful for their survival in India nonetheless vehemently rejected British colonial rule. They had drawn political conclusions from their own experience of injustice. Naturally, they were limited in the extent to which they could translate these conclusions into political action because their legal status was precarious, and some of them were interned and thus immobile. This shows how transit functions as a lens that can shed new light on the entanglement of migrant and colonial or postcolonial history.

In the conferences, workshops and the resulting Standing Working Group, you concentrated primarily on groups of people who had fled from National Socialist Europe. Why did you focus on this specific period and on these actors? How do you think this focus uncovers the scope and potential of the new research field?

Our “In Global Transit” conferences and workshops fit within recent global historical studies that have researched people who were forced to live (or survive) in transit situations from different spatial, temporal, and methodological perspectives. Our discussions focused on Jews and political exiles who found refuge in colonial regions or countries of the Global South. Turning to still little-known emigration countries such as Iran, India, China, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Kenya inspired us to assume new points of view on several levels: First of all, in researching transit to these countries, historians rarely encounter prominent emigrants – such as artists, scientists, or entrepreneurs – whose careers are already well researched nearly as frequently as in Western countries. Therefore, this perspective lends itself better to exploring the “exile of the ordinary people” and their everyday experiences.



Figure 2. "Refugees who had been refused permission to stay in England figured in a distressing scene at Croydon airport yesterday. They were so distraught that the pilot of their plane thought it unwise to leave, and they will be sent to Copenhagen by train and boat." *The Guardian*, 31 March 1939, p. 10, Photo: AP/World Wide Photos, Wikimedia Commons.

Second, it was precisely the refugees who made their way to these far-off countries who had to live in transit for a particularly long time. While young Jews like Guy Stern, Stefan Heym, and Henry Kissinger returned to Europe in 1944/45 as American citizens and as part of the Allied troops, those who were stranded in Shanghai or India or who had been deported to the East by the Soviet occupiers of Poland had to start all over again in many respects. They were far from truly arriving: They had to look once again for countries that would accept them; this search, in turn, had a global dimension for many of them. In this respect, the historical actors you mentioned in your question provide a good analytical lens for our purposes. They inspired us to cross fixed historical turning points such as that of 1945.

What does this “crossing” look like, and what is its appeal for scholarship?

The end of the National Socialist dictatorship and of the Second World War is undoubtedly a significant turning point in world history. However, the experience of Jews who had found refuge in the Soviet Union or in countries of the Global South and had to renew their search for a home in 1945 shows the relevance of their biographies. In 1948, about 10,000

Jews were still stuck in Shanghai, for example. Some of them made it to the U.S., either permanently or on their way elsewhere; others had to return to those European countries they recalled primarily as places of horror, so they largely experienced them as places of renewed transit.

We find the temporal and spatial dimensions of our research focus on “transit” particularly appealing for historical scholarship. For one thing, as some refugees had to traverse several continents to find a home, they spent a prolonged period in a liminal space or even in several transit spaces. Many Jews who emigrated as children only found a firm footing as adults. Against the background of current challenges, we are enormously interested in the implications this had and the knowledge they absorbed, translated, and generated themselves in this long and specific migration situation.

The second aspect is that Jews and political refugees fleeing National Socialism were no longer the only ones living in global transit: After the end of the war, more people than ever before were homeless and migrating between very different geographical and political areas. The displacement of ethnic, religious and/or national groups that had begun in the interwar period now became a global phenomenon. In Europe millions of people were living in transit – estimates suggest up to 60 million – but not only there. Territorial shifts and subsequent population transfers, refugee movements, and expulsions shaped postwar history in other, mostly colonial regions of the world as well; Palestine and India/Pakistan are among the best-known examples. And only after the Holocaust and under the impression of these large refugee movements did a system of international refugee policy emerge. We are interested in the role Jewish actors played in this context, but beyond this, we are concerned with the question of how suitable the history of Jewish emigration is for addressing *fundamental* questions of transit. I am thinking here, among other things, of

how migrants dealt with contingency and uncertainty and of how knowledge formed in the “liminal spaces” of their movement later became socially significant – the development of concepts for dealing with statelessness is just one of many examples. The ambivalence migrants felt between simply wanting to survive, on the one hand, and planning for the future in new, unknown, and sometimes uncertain contexts, on the other, is another experience that was likely shared by other groups in addition to the Jewish refugees.

“Experience” seems to be a crucial concept for you. How far can such a subjective approach really take us?

Researching structures in the historical process remains an important task for historical scholarship – no question about it. With our approach, however, we are trying to get closer to the everyday life of long-term migrants by turning to their experiences. We are particularly interested in which coping strategies people found in transit and how they transformed them into knowledge and passed them on. In other words, we see not only the states and the societies that took them in but also the migrants themselves as historical actors endowed with agency. They used their agency – often curtailed from the outside – individually in different ways. We ask how migrants dealt with insecurity and hardship: What kind of knowledge, for example, did they need to master the many bureaucratic hurdles they faced? Sometimes these hurdles were ordinary, but sometimes they were life-threatening, and the migrants initially had no approach nor cultural capital for overcoming them. We are also interested in how migrants used structures or created them to maintain their capacity to take action in their exceptional circumstances: they utilized and built up family networks, often with transnational mobilization strategies, refugee self-help organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as informal, sometimes clandestine or illegal structures of refugee assistance,

which always generated winners and losers. In general, people in transit were confronted with specific relationships of dependency and power; at the same time, however, one can always find examples of self-empowerment and mutual support among people who meet in transit. Pictures and objects also bear witness to this. Whether photographs or drawings, letters, diaries or calendars, everyday objects and mobility infrastructures – material artifacts, together with the people who created and used them, are part of the knowledge and migration history that we want to write.

The knowledge history and migration history of migrants points to some of the potentials and synergies that the transit perspective presents for our work here in North America. I already mentioned that the history of flight and forced migration has been one of the GHI's fields of research since 2015. The international network "Migrant Knowledge" initiated at our Pacific Office in Berkeley also connects the history of knowledge with the history of migration, with the transit aspect naturally playing an important role. Consequently, our research focus "In Global Transit" fits not only into historical research on people in migrant transition phases but also further develops the research interests of the GHI Washington. At the same time, however, it also benefits from medium-term reorientations and expansions we made in 2021 – toward historical Mobility Studies and, within this field, specifically toward researching infrastructures that enabled, promoted, or thwarted migration and mobility. This orientation opens up new questions and networks that stimulate our research focus on transit and vice versa.

**What further plans do you have for "In Global Transit"?
What is next?**

I don't want to give everything away just yet, but we do have some promising ideas and plans. I can say this much already: We will expand the purview of this research focus and turn to



Figure 3. Examination room in the U.S. Immigration Station at Angel Island in San Francisco, probably before 1914. Photo: Hart Hyatt North, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Public domain, Wikimedia Commons.

the global transit of other refugee and migrant groups from other time periods. This broadened perspective has considerable potential to bring historical refugee research into dialogue with new approaches in historical mobility research but also with disciplines close to history. I am thinking, for example, of sociology, literary studies, political science, or ethnology because in these fields, too, researchers study the phenomenon of “being in-between” – just with different methods, questions, or sources. In addition, as I already hinted at in some of my answers, we have classified the transit experiences already identified in our intensive international discussions as very long-term. For this reason, we can relate the transit experience in refugee camps in the 1940s to that in the 1960s or compare experiences different refugees or other migrants had in specific transit locations or with specific transit infrastructures. In the second half of the twentieth century, airplanes and airports gained importance alongside ships and ports, to name just one example. How did spatial and structural shifts, but also changed national and international legal frameworks and knowledge resources, impact forms of transit and the people acting within it? These are some of the questions we address in our international “In Global Transit” Standing Working Group and in our GHI research fellows’ projects. We wish to pursue these questions with the community of international experts in the field in the future – for

example, in summer schools, on conference panels, and joint publications. Initiating and continuing this dialogue and conducting basic research from a historical perspective will be the core elements of the research focus “In Global Transit” at the GHI Washington in the coming years.

Simone Lässig is director of the German Historical Institute Washington and Professor of Modern History at Braunschweig University (currently on leave). Her main fields of research are modern Jewish history, the history of knowledge, digital history, and biography as a historical genre. Her publications include *Refugee Crises, 1945-2000: Political and Societal Responses in International Comparison* (co-edited, Cambridge UP, 2020), *The World of Children: Foreign Cultures in Nineteenth-Century German Education and Entertainment* (co-edited, Berghahn Books, 2019) and *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital und sozialer Aufstieg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004).

Nora Hilgert is a historian and is currently working in the field of academic communication. She previously worked at the GHI Washington and the German Association of Historians.

The background features abstract geometric shapes. A dark blue triangle points downwards from the top left. A light blue triangle points upwards from the bottom left. The remaining space is white.

Conference Reports



Migration and Racism in the United States and Germany in the Twentieth Century

Virtual conference, April 22-23, 2021. Co-sponsored by the German Historical Institute Washington and the Research Institute Social Cohesion, Technical University of Berlin. Conveners: Maria Alexopoulou (Research Center Social Cohesion, Technical University of Berlin) and Elisabeth Engel (GHI Washington). Participants: Payal Banerjee (Smith College), Ismael García Colón (City University of New York), Levke Harders (University of Bielefeld), Anna Holian (Arizona State University), Nadja Klopprogge (University of Gießen), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Katharina Leimbach (University of Hanover), Rudolf Leiprecht (University of Oldenburg), Helma Lutz (University of Frankfurt), Ms. Madhu (University of Dehli), Lili Rebstock (University of Dresden), Léa Renard (Free University of Berlin), Arvid Schors (University of Cologne), Adam R. Seipp (Texas A&M University), Lauren Stokes (Northwestern University), Till van Rahden (University of Montreal), Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington), Anne-Kathrin Will (Humboldt University, Berlin), Andrew Zimmerman (George Washington University).

Both U.S. and German history are marked by migration and racism. Throughout history, some groups in both societies have been racialized and marginalized. After the end of National Socialism in Germany and segregation in the United States, exclusion and othering continues. Commonalities in the construction of these “others” can often be identified, but differences in migration histories and contexts also exist. In order to analyze the interlinkage of these phenomena, scholars were invited to present their research projects in a two-day conference. A year after the original on-site workshop was postponed, the video conference was condensed

to lightning talks and a more extended overall discussions at the end of each day.

In her opening words, GHI Director Simone Lässig stressed the importance of transnational research exchange in the comparative field, as binational comparison cannot be drawn from a national perspective. Referring to the recent Black Lives Matter movement, convener Maria Alexopoulou then went on emphasizing the deep entanglement of migration, racism and anti-racism in Germany and the United States, stating, together with co-convener Elisabeth Engel, the need for a better academic understanding of these phenomena.

Anne-Kathrin Will started the conference with a presentation on the relationship between statistical surveys, categorization and concepts of (non-) belonging. Her research focuses on the population censuses of the Bundesstatistikamt in Germany, which has been compiling data on the German population since 1953. Specifically, she examined those categories that were introduced to differentiate between “Germans” and “non-Germans.” Since these categories were pre-defined and respondents had to classify themselves within them, belonging or non-belonging resulted from the categories defined by the authority. Thus, Will can show that the analysis of categories such as “foreign-language” or “national origin” reveal hierarchies and bring to light prevailing notions of belonging and non-belonging.

Following Anne-Katrin Will, Léa Renard presented an insight on the empirical analysis she conducted for her PhD thesis. Focusing on the construction of otherness through statistical knowledge production between the early years of the German Empire and the outbreak of World War I, Renard identified two guiding principles of classification: the national and the colonial principle. According to Renard, the former was applied on the territory of the German Empire,

first distinguishing between citizens and foreigners on the basis of citizenship. Second, categories like “language” and “birthplace” were used to promote the image of a mono-ethnic German nation since 1900. Simultaneously, on colonial territory German authorities introduced a racist binary classification between a perceived “white population” on the one hand and a perceived “colored population” on the other. Within this process, people who would formerly assume a role in between were forced into the “colored” category.

Migration scholar Payal Banerjee contributed the main aspects of her actual research on modern eugenicist thinking shaping U.S. and European immigration policies. Adopting a transnational perspective, Banerjee analyzes the historical and ongoing preference of the U.S. migration office for white European immigrants as guided by an underlying yet not openly expressed racist and eugenicist thinking. At the basis of modern migration laws in the U.S. and in Europe, Banerjee identifies the category of usefulness being applied to aspiring immigrants. This modern form of eugenicist thinking continues to distinguish between worthy and worthless people while simultaneously using racist categories to identify those who are deemed of use for the future nation and those who presumably are not.

Adam Seipp provided an insight into the intersection of racism and state sovereignty in postwar Germany. In this regard, Seipp studies the stationing of African-American G.I.s in Germany in the 1940s and 1950s. As part of the Allied military forces, they enjoyed more freedoms in Germany than they did in the U.S. South. At the same time, they also experienced racism in Germany. Thus, American and German concepts of race and racism interacted, creating what Seipp calls a “toxic stew of racism.” In addition, Seipp examines the power relationship between Germany and the U.S. Elaborating on two disputes over the stationing of African-American soldiers in Germany in the 1950s, Seipp shows that the ability of a state

to institutionally act out racism (by declaring who can stay in the state's territory) depends on a state's sovereignty.

Similar to Seipp, Arvid Schoers shared his findings on a specific group of G.I.s. Approximately 30,000 German-speaking Jews were forced to leave Germany or Austria in the 1930s and returned to Germany in the 1940s as soldiers of the Allied forces. What Schoers calls a "remarkable transition" can be observed in their changing roles from victims of persecution to actors in power positions. At the same time, they also experienced antisemitism in the U.S. and were subject to suspicion because of their German origins. Despite this ambivalence, Schoers points out that the contemporary U.S. was always perceived as a safe haven for German and Austrian Jews.

Building on her PhD thesis on intimate histories of African-Americans and Germans since 1945, historian Nadja Klopprogge elaborated on the cases of six African-American soldiers who applied for asylum in the GDR in order to settle down and marry their white West German girlfriends. Klopprogge showed how in these cases, migration was motivated by the desire of domesticity, which was considered a sign of integration, but remained precarious due to racist notions of a presumed white German and a black African-American nationhood. Their asylum claims were reformulated by Stasi officials in order to turn the former G.I.s into socialist fighters eventually ready to relocate "home" (the U.S.) in order to advance the cause of socialism and simultaneously eliminate racism. Nevertheless, all six of these African-American G.I.s managed to stay in Germany for the rest of their lives.

Anna Holian opened day two by presenting her research project on discourses surrounding antisemitism in postwar Germany. Eastern European Jews arriving in West Germany were associated with smuggling and the shadow economy. Jewish foreigners were seen as a danger to the German economy because they were believed to be evading taxes.

German authorities acted aggressively against Jewish businesses with searches, deportations, fines and raids. This created an increasingly hostile environment, which had a massive impact on the lives of Jews living in postwar Germany.

As second speaker of the day, anthropologist Ismael Garcia-Colón elaborated on the intersection between labor migration, racism and colonialism based on his latest publication on Puerto Rican farm labor migration to the United States. Garcia-Colón explained the difficult status Puerto Ricans occupy within the U.S. citizenship system. Due to Puerto Rico's colonial status, Puerto Rican labor migrants are seen as racialized others within the U.S. However, they are also non-deportable U.S. citizens. Treated rather similar to migrant workers, their non-deportability is conceived as an obstacle by white U.S. farm owners. Therefore, the introduction of an increasing corpus of laws discriminating against Puerto Rican farm workers can be observed, favoring labor migration of deportable migrant groups.

Lauren Stokes presented the core thesis of her first book. She examined social science research on guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s. While comparing Germany and the U.S., the scholars she discussed drew analogies from the situation of guest workers in Germany to that of African-Americans and Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Thus, these scholars categorized African Americans and Puerto Ricans (both U.S. citizens) as racialized foreigners. Stokes emphasized that this racialization process as well as the concept of race is never mentioned in the German social science of the time since race as a term was delegitimized.

Historian Madhu spoke on the criminal justice system as a tool historically and currently used by the U.S. government to enforce deportation and therefore manage migration. In two examples, Madhu showed how migration law and criminal law have historically been connected in order to justify

the deportation of migrants long before the Patriot Act following 9/11. The systematic criminalization as witnessed today can be traced back to the treatment of migrant workers from China in the late nineteenth century as well as Mexican migrants in the 1920s. What connects these policies seems to be the racist ascription of criminal acts to migrant groups as well as the creation of laws specifically targeting migrants.

Radicalization prevention and the conventional security studies are the object of investigation of Katharina Leimbach. She explained how the focus of German security authorities lies on preventing jihadism while neglecting right-wing extremism. Through interviews with prevention experts, she shows that the German extremism prevention system perceives jihadism as a problem by conceived "others." For many experts, the dividing line between Islam, Muslims and jihadism becomes blurred. In the fight against terrorism, they reinforce racism by perceiving a large population group as a potential risk while right-wing extremism, a phenomenon of mainstream society, is downplayed.

In her talk, Lili Rebstock focused on the nexus of migration and racism in the GDR, particularly taking into account the experiences of contract workers in the 1980s. In addition to the racist violence many contract workers faced, Rebstock closely explored institutionalized forms of racism against contract workers, especially concerning their housing, working and living conditions. She identifies the state practice of deportation in case of pregnancy as an institutional racist and sexist practice which denied basic human rights to the workers, reducing them to the use of their labor only. In another case, she outlines the colonial resemblance of many Mozambican workers' experiences, whose wages were partially or entirely used to pay the debt of the Mozambican state to the GDR. Additionally, Rebstock sees the GDR's official anti-racist self-image as an obstacle to efficiently addressing racist practices on the personal as well as on the state level.

In the conference's final presentation, Rudolf Leiprecht and Helma Lutz urged German scholars to apply an intersectional use of the term racism. Because the term race was avoided after the Shoah, Leiprecht and Lutz clarified, "culture" was brought in as a terminological hiding place. While acknowledging the differences between antisemitism, colonial racism, and anti-Muslim racism, they also argued for recognizing the commonality that lies in the construction of the "other."

At the end of both days, all participants were invited to enter into an open discussion. A central topic was the divergent understanding of race and racism in the U.S. and Germany. This is largely due to the different historical development and current use of the terms in both countries. Especially in the white German public, the term race is still closely related to antisemitism and the Nazi regime. Therefore, racism is oftentimes believed to have disappeared after the defeat of National Socialism. However, some participants argued in favor of using race as an analytical category in German academia and fostering the analysis of systemic dimensions of racism in Germany. Regarding the relation between racism and migration, participants argued that the categorization as migrant in both countries is still largely influenced by racist thinking. Therefore, researchers are asked to reflect on how they apply the term "migrant" in their work. Furthermore, it was noted that with the global movement of migrants knowledge about racism travels as well. This is largely enhanced by the rise of digitization, which allows the global sharing of anti-racist knowledge and practices as well as racist ideas and practices. Finally, participants identified anti-racism as a separate research field. They agreed on the need to further include the categories of class, power status, and gender into the analysis of both racism as well as anti-racism.

Tanja Gäbelein and Joseph Wilson
(Technical University Berlin)

Mobilities, Exclusion, and Migrants' Agency in the Pacific Realm in a Transregional and Diachronic Perspective

Virtual conference organized by the Pacific Office of the German Historical Institute Washington, on June 7–9, 2021, in cooperation with the German Historical Institute Moscow and the German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo (DIJ) as part of the Max Weber Foundation's collaborative research project "Knowledge Unbound," submodule "Interaction and Knowledge in the Pacific Region: Entanglements and Disentanglements." Cosponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Institute of European Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Conveners: Albert Manke and Sören Urbansky (both GHI Pacific Office, Berkeley). Participants: Payal Banerjee (Smith College), Sarah Beringer (GHI Washington), Benjamin Beuerle (GHI Moscow), Nan-Hsu Chen (Washington University in St. Louis), Monica Cinco Basurto (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana – Iztapalapa), Andre Kobayashi Deckrow (University of Minnesota), Luise Fast (Bielefeld University), David Scott Fitzgerald (University of California, San Diego), Kristie Flannery (Australian Catholic University), Sonja Ganseforth (DIJ Tokyo), Fredy Gonzalez (University of Illinois), Evelyn Hu-DeHart (Brown University), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Chrissy Yee Lau (California State University – Monterey Bay), Jeffery Lesser (Emory University), Kathy Lopez (Rutgers University), Ricardo Martínez Esquivel (University of Costa Rica), Mae Ngai (Columbia University), Christoph Rass (Osnabrück University), Gabriel Terol Rojo (University of Valencia), Christina Till (Max Weber Foundation, China Branch Office), David Wolff (Hokkaido University), Kank-

an Xie (Peking University), Elliott Young (Lewis and Clark College), Yufei Zhou (DIJ Tokyo).

This conference brought together historians and scholars from related disciplines to revisit the exclusion of migrants and their agency in coping with exclusion in light of mobility dynamics in the Pacific realm. The participants focused on the ways in which migration, exclusion, and racism have influenced government policies, perceptions of migrants in host societies, and migrants' agency in that region since the nineteenth century.

After introductory remarks by GHI director Simone Lässig, Sören Urbansky, and Albert Manke, the conference started with Mae Ngai's keynote lecture "The Chinese Question: Chinese Migration and Global Politics in the Nineteenth Century" (which is published in this issue of the GHI Bulletin). Ngai investigated the local contexts of transnational anti-Chinese racism in the American West, Canada, Australia, and South Africa during and after the Gold Rushes when "the Great Wall against China" led to the almost simultaneous exclusion of Chinese migrants in white settler societies from the 1870s to the pre-World War I era. She showed that the majority of Chinese gold miners were independent prospectors or worked in small cooperative groups or egalitarian enterprises. The production of difference and exclusionary policies was to a large extent the result of white labor's appeal to their governments to protect them from both capitalism and colored races. Ngai further put the "Chinese question" into the broad panorama of the history of capitalism at the turn of the twentieth century and interpreted the metaphor of the "Great Wall" as a symbol of the global Anglo-American expansion and China's containment, which took the form of gunboat diplomacy and unequal treaties imposed on China as well as of exclusionary laws against Chinese migrants in the white settler societies around the Pacific Rim. In the end, Ngai tackled the current anxiety about China's ascent

to an economic power and the nineteenth century origin of present-day anti-Asian xenophobia. In her comments on the keynote, Payal Banerjee reinforced the importance of abandoning the nation state as unit of analysis and proposed to reconsider race-based social differentiation, identity, and legal infrastructures in light of global capital accumulation. She further proposed applying new technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence to study the intertwined relations of racial issues and capitalism.

The first panel addressed the topic “Regulating Space and Place in Late Qing China.” Nan-Hsu Chen portrayed the Taiwan of the 1860s and 1870s as a contested territory, where imperialist powers, most predominantly Qing China and Meiji Japan, sought to incorporate the frontier societies into their own sovereignty. He argued that frontier people’s choices for subjecthood or statelessness highly depended on the local context and significantly shaped the political development of larger political entities. Christina Till traced the odyssey of the multilingual Manchurian Archive from Qiqihar to various places in Russia, until parts of it returned to China. Through the lens of the changing archival practices concerning the Manchurian Archive, she showcased the complexity of governing the multiethnic and multilingual communities in the border region of Heilongjiang, and the conflicting claims of sovereignty over the region posed by China and Russia throughout the twentieth century. Elliott Young challenged the ordinary narratives of humanitarians that paint Chinese coolies as weak, vulnerable, and powerless victims. Based on an analysis of newspaper articles and reports on Chinese indented labor in Cuba, he came to the conclusion that the majority of Chinese coolies signed their contracts voluntarily due to various personal reasons and thus an oversimplified victim narrative prevents people from grasping the in-depth historical reality. In his commentary, Gabriel Terol Rojo positioned the three presentations in the context of the internal political unrest caused by the Western interference at the

dawn of the Manchu Empire. Echoing Mae Ngai's keynote speech, he emphasized that unequal economic and diplomatic relations between the British Empire and the Qing, and transpacific coolie trafficking were in fact two sides of the same coin.

The second panel was dedicated to "Cultural Encounters and Exclusion along the Pacific Rim." Kristie Flannery analyzed the first forced mass migration in the Pacific World and the continuity with later mass expulsions in Southeast Asia. Between 1769 and 1772, several thousand Chinese *Sangleys* were deported to China, following Spanish royal orders. Flannery centered her paper on Chinese agency and reactions to this brutal treatment: from flight in early years and appealing to the King's grace to elusion and suicide. Luise Fast underscored the vital role interpreters (most often Creoles or Native Americans) played in everyday life in nineteenth-century Russian America (Alaska). She reflected both on the silence historians are confronted with in the sources and on the importance of metaphors used by historians. Kankan Xie presented the story of two competing Chinese school systems in the Dutch East-Indies (1900-1942). While the Dutch-Chinese school system represented a remarkable difference to Sinophobe policies in other countries, its existence vis-à-vis a nationalist-minded Chinese school system eventually contributed to incrementing the existing antagonisms between different Chinese groups and to alienating the Chinese from the Malay-speaking natives. In her comments, Evelyn Hu-DeHart stressed that the papers demonstrated the vastness of the Pacific Ocean and its Rim or Edges, speaking to the spatial and temporal dimension of its peoples' histories. Citing exclusionary Spanish colonial policies and practices, she suggested that the history of exclusion stretches back even further, to the beginning of the European expansion in Asia. In view of the resilience and prompt recovery of expelled Chinese migrants, she proposed to reframe "forced mass migration" as temporary deportation.

Panel three discussed “Hemispheric and Transpacific Approaches Toward Regulating Mobility.” Ricardo Martínez Esquivel traced the ambiguous history of eight decades of Costa Rican legislation directed against Chinese immigration and of discriminating against Chinese migrants. In recent years, a Chinese-financed national stadium and the project to build a new Chinatown in San José underline how much the official mood has changed. However, even though many Costa Rican descendants of Chinese have earned recognition for their diligence and efforts to integrate, Chinese descendants in Costa Rica are still regarded as “other.” Kathy Lopez followed with a comparative view on U.S. anti-immigration policies against Chinese and Eastern European Jewish and Southern European immigration to the Americas in the 1920s. Both often used Cuba as a transit destination for easier access to the U.S.; a significant number stayed in Cuba and integrated in the more open Cuban society – a development supported by restrictive U.S. immigration authorities. Chrissy Yee Lau told the story of Masao Dodo, a young Japanese immigrant in the interwar period, exemplifying a type of “New Man” and the transformation of ideals of masculinity within a changing American and international context. Like others in his generation, Dodo converted to Christianity, propagated Japanese imperialism and found refuge in education after the U.S. 1924 Immigration Act. Likewise, he changed from propagating a Japanese–U.S. alliance in the Pacific to a pan-Asian solidarity under Japanese leadership. In his comments, sociologist David FitzGerald traced similarities between Costa Rica and the U.S. in their restrictive policies against certain immigrant groups and found continuities in contemporary Latin American policies concerning extracontinental irregular migrants, including asylum seekers. He also advocated for a more precise use of generalizing terms like imperialism, (settler) colonialism, and gender as the main category, leading to a vivid discussion of frameworks, stakeholders, and actors of mobility in and to the Americas.

In the fourth panel on “Exclusion, Redemption, and Knowledge,” Kevin Escudero argued that the implementation of U.S. immigration laws in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific should be considered in the context of U.S. imperialism and militarism. While Mariana lands are consumed by U.S. military bases and operations, this recent expansion of federal power not only puts into question local livelihoods and derails individual life courses, but also encroaches on indigenous sovereignty. The shifting relationship between federal and regional regimes of migration regulation were also a central theme in Andre Kobayashi Deckrow’s study of anti-Japanese immigration law in 1930s Brazil. While Japanese state-sponsored companies facilitating the mass emigration of poor Japanese migrants to Brazil had established strong ties to certain regional governments, the inclusion of new immigration quotas in the constitution not only signified a national project, but also reflected the influence of transnational “expert” knowledge pushing an anti-Asian and anti-immigrant agenda. Displacement and forced migration during the turmoil and wars of the first half of the twentieth century formed the background of the two remaining contributions. Tracing the escape routes of “White Russians” in the wake of the Russian revolution, first to East Asia and later, fleeing invading Soviet troops, southwards to the Philippines and finally the U.S. and Australia, David Wolff highlighted the importance of migrant knowledges and intricate and racialized identity politics, as “White Russians” faced anti-Russian (anti-Communist) as well as anti-Asian (antisemitic) discrimination. Aiming at deconstructing the myth of a diasporic community, Yufei Zhou showed in her presentation on the collaboration of émigré scholars from Europe and China in the U.S. how xenophobic and racist structures in academia and differences in personal backgrounds as much as political and academic convictions led to the failure of a large-scale research project on Chinese history. In his commentary, Jeffrey Lesser stressed the need for new methods and approaches to

rethink the concept of “communities,” to make visible structures engendering racism, oppression, and exclusion, and to go beyond hierarchical demarcations and inclusively embrace the coexistence and interplay of individual and institutional actors at different scales and spatialities.

The last panel on “Agency, Exclusion, and Belonging from the Cold War to the 21st Century” started with Fredy González’s illustration of the fate of the Hongmen (Chinese Freemasons) chapters spreading in various countries during the Cold War era. Drawing primarily on original publications by Hongmen members, he argued that the radicalized ideological rivalry and the division of China into two regimes substantially hampered the networking among Hongmen chapters in different locations. Monica Cinco focused on the history of stigmatization and exclusion of the Chinese population by Mexican authorities and the public during the last century. Based on a chronological narrative of events and discourses directed against Chinese residents and their relatives, she shed light on the historical and political background of the 2012 campaign of the Mexican Chinese descendants to recover the memory of Sinophobia, which was met with a national reconciliation project in 2019. In his commentary Christoph Rass claimed that by emphasizing the processual character of the concept of “diaspora,” scholars of migration can more flexibly grasp the fate of people, organizations, and institutions transcending borders against the background of changing political, economic, and social conditions. He further discussed the importance of dialogue between academic history of transnational migrant organizations and the public/oral history of diaspora communities.

**Benjamin Beuerle (GHI Moscow),
Sonja Ganseforth (DIJ Tokyo),
Albert Manke (GHI Pacific Office), and
Yufei Zhou (DIJ Tokyo)**

26th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century German History

Virtual Seminar, June 16-19, 2021. Co-organized by the German Historical Institute Washington and the BMW Center for German and European Studies at Georgetown University, in cooperation with Villa Vigoni – German-Italian Centre for the European Dialogue. Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University) and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI). Faculty Mentors: Monica Black (University of Tennessee, Knoxville), Jürgen Dinkel (University of Leipzig), and Joe Perry (Georgia State University). Participants: Alexandra Fergen (University of Oxford), Sara Friedman (University of California, Berkeley), Katharina Friege (University of Oxford), Eric Grube (Boston College), Matthew Hershey (University of Michigan), Sheragim Jenabzadeh (University of Toronto), Tamar Kojman (Hebrew University), Jonathan Lear (University of California, Berkeley), Aileen Lichtenstein (University of Glasgow), Annalisa Martin (Birkbeck College, University of London), Alexander Petrusek (Rutgers University), Michael Rösser (University of Erfurt), Johnathon Speed (Vanderbilt University), Michael Weaver (University of Toronto).

The twenty-sixth Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History once again brought together doctoral students from North America and Europe, all of whom are working on dissertations in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German history. Since last year's seminar was canceled due to the pandemic, this year's seminar combined two cohorts of participants. Although we had hoped to be able to meet in person in Washington DC in June 2021, the seminar ended up having to take place virtually due to continuing travel

and public health restrictions. Taking place over four days, the seminar was organized in seven panels, featuring two papers each, which opened with two comments by fellow students, followed by discussion of the precirculated papers.

The seminar started with a panel on the nineteenth century with two papers probing questions of national identity. Tamar Kojman's paper "Music as an Analogy for the Apolitical German" examined the unprecedented preoccupation with music's aesthetic properties among the German educated classes beginning in the 1840s. Music's indeterminateness as a medium and its perceived otherworldliness, Kojman argued, served as a compelling analogy for the German "spirit" and came to play a central part in teleological narratives asserting the Germans' role in world history. Michael Weaver's paper "Political Friendship and State Power, 1850-1858" charted the development of a network of "political friends" in the German Confederation between 1851 and 1858, when the failure of the Revolutions of 1848/49 inaugurated a new campaign of government repression against the liberal network. In this context, Weaver explored how these friends expressed emotion in order to build trust, check political non-conformity, and enforce the reciprocation of professional favors.

The second panel tapped into the global turn in German history to examine questions of space, migration, and networks. Aileen Lichtenstein's paper "A Transatlantic Revolutionary Moment? The Dynamics of Cross-Border Activism in Europe and Beyond" examined the transatlantic connections of the German anarchist movement between 1878 and 1914. By tracing anarchist mobility and settlement patterns across borders, with a special focus on the exile communities in London and New York, the paper revealed the ideological, cultural, and financial continuities of the movement and thus showed that German anarchism matured into a serious movement in the relative safety of exile from where

it was able to facilitate a resurgence in Germany after 1890. Michael Rösser's paper "Economies of Skill? Craftsmen and Office Clerks at the Central Railway in German East Africa" focused on Indian (indentured) labor at the central railway in German East Africa from 1905 to 1914. Since the manpower of Indians, who were predominantly employed as skilled workers (craftsmen or office clerks), was in high demand, the paper argues, they held a comparatively privileged position in the colonial labor market, which was revealed in colonial discourses.

The third panel focused on the First World War and its aftermath. Matthew Hershey's paper "Inclination Toward Death: Suicide and Sacrifice in First World War Germany" examined the spectrum of suicidal behaviors in the German Army at the outbreak of World War I. Hershey argued that the soldiers' suicides of August 1914 constituted a largely unrecognized harbinger of the mass shattering of socio-emotional ties and moral certainties that would ultimately destroy the *Kaiserreich*. Those signals, he observed, were obscured by the staggering combat death rates and simultaneous solidification of the "spirit of 1914," which reframed personal self-destruction as national sacrifice. Sara Friedman's paper "'There is no Censorship': Film and the November Revolution" traced the ramifications of Germany's lifting of federal censorship following the armistice that ended World War I. Arguing that censorship's abolition in the case of film was largely symbolic, Friedman contended that the abolition of censorship simultaneously gestured towards a possible future of artistic freedom and re-ignited prewar morality debates.

The fourth panel examined trends regional and transnational aspects of German history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Johnathon Speed's paper "A 'Child Export': the Swabian Children at the Austro-German Border, 1897–1914" studied the labor migration of Austrian children to

Swabia. Inspired by a long-brewing moral panic, from the first decade of the twentieth century provincial state actors in the Alps began to subject the so-called “Swabian Children” to enhanced oversight via state surveys and forced extraditions. These interventions, Speed argued, marked the moment at which the national categories of German and Austrian finally supplanted regional ones of Tyrol, Vorarlberg, the Oberinntal, the Vintschgau. Eric Grube’s paper “Two *Brudervölker*, Two *Bruderreiche*, Two *Führer*” analyzed the Austrofascist engagement with Nazism. From 1936 to 1938 Nazis and Austrofascists engaged with each other as friends worthy of fraternal participation in fascist visions of *großdeutsch/völkisch* projects and, at the very same time, as adversaries in the midst of a fratricidal war of assassinations and street brawls. Austrofascist vacillation between “appeasement” and punishment of their Nazi rivals, Grube concluded, stemmed from the outgrowth of a constitutive contradiction between regionalism and nationalism.

The fifth panel explored postwar West German social and cultural history. Jonathan Lear’s paper “Struggling for Survival during and after Nazism: The Case of Anton Zischka” analyzed the writings of Anton Zischka, a prolific Austrian-born journalist and science writer, who first achieved fame during the Third Reich and later became one of West Germany’s most influential nuclear advocates. The concept of energy, Lear argued, helped Zischka erase the Nazi past, while also reflecting modes of thought that had previously serviced Nazi Germany’s wartime goals. Annalisa Martin’s paper “Commercial Sex and Crime in West Germany, 1960-1980” examined the association of commercial sex with crime by probing the relationship between morals police officers and women who sold sex in the 1960s and 1970s in Hamburg, Cologne and West Berlin. Criminal law and morals policing, Martin argued, combined to code women who sold sex as both victims and perpetrators. These overlapping interpretations restricted institutional help for women

who sold sex and often pushed them to find other sources of safety and protection.

The sixth panel studied the interwar period from two different transnational perspectives. Sheragim Jenabzadeh's paper "A Revolution of Youth: 'The Hope of Iran' Student Association and the Journal *Farangistan*" examined a group of Iranian students who studied in interwar Berlin and formed the Hope of Iran Association. The Weimar Republic, Jenabzadeh argued, provided these Iranians with a working model of the successes and failures of a nascent republican system. Based on their observation of the Weimar Republic and life in Berlin, these students came to view themselves as a collective youth tasked with inciting a "moral revolution" among the youth of Iran and paving the way for a progressive Iranian future through the organ of their association, *Nameh-e Farangistan* (Letters from Europe). In her paper "Fernweh and the 'Neue Frau' Abroad: German Female Journalists in Pursuit of Adventure, c. 1930-1940" Katharina Friege studied a small number of German female journalists and photographers who sought adventure abroad during the 1930s and 1940s. Arguing that their pursuit of adventure was predicated on an effort to wield autonomy over their lives, Friege explored how these women rendered otherwise abstract concepts, such as technology, gender, or nationhood, concrete through their subjective travel experiences.

The seventh and final panel returned to postwar German history. Alexandra Fergen's paper "Liberty on Trial: Stern, Sexism, and the Dignity of Women" focused on a 1978 lawsuit filed by ten West German women against *stern* magazine for sexist cover images. Examining how the court case unfolded, how it was received by the public, and which implications it had, Fergen argued that the court case played a key role in driving public discourse on gender equality and testing the meaning of West German liberalism. Alexan-

der Petrussek's paper "Limits of the Socialist Metasystem: Growth, Pollution, and Ideal Authority in the GDR, 1961-1982" examined the development of East German reform economic programs of the 1960s as the GDR's last utopian project. Focusing on how ideals were drawn from a social imaginary and practiced as policy and activism, Petrussek argued that this last utopian project simultaneously signaled the party-state's abdication of its ideal authority as the GDR's environmental crisis worsened in the 1970s.

As many noted during the final discussion, even though the seminar was not able to convene in person, the group generated an atmosphere of collegiality, constructive critique, and engaging debate that made these four days a truly remarkable experience. Several participants mentioned that even though preparation for the seminar had been quite demanding (precirculated paper plus preparation of a comment), it had been the most inspiring conference they had attended. The wide-ranging final discussion touched on the situation of doctoral students and junior scholars during the pandemic, including the impact of archive closures, the isolation from regular contact with peers, and the difficult funding situation. On several of the meeting days, informal virtual socializing continued after the panels; the group also held a follow-up meeting a month after the seminar to discuss a wide range of issues of concern to doctoral students and early-career scholars. The completion and publication of the excellent dissertation projects presented at the seminar is eagerly awaited.

Richard Wetzell (GHI Washington)

Fifth Annual Bucerius Young Scholars Forum Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives

Workshop held virtually on October 18-20, 2021, organized by the Pacific Office of the GHI Washington at the University of California, Berkeley. Sponsored by ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius. Conveners: Franziska Exeler (Free University Berlin/University of Cambridge) and Sören Urbansky (Pacific Office of the GHI Washington). Participants: Roi Ball (Tel Aviv University), Annika Bärwald (University of Bremen), Ulrike Bialas (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity Göttingen), Eriks Bredovskis (University of Toronto), Ulf Brunnbauer (Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg), Kateryna Burkush (European University Institute, Florence), Stacy Fahrenthold (University of California Davis), Peter Gatrell (University of Manchester), Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş (GHI Washington), Larissa Kopytoff (University of South Florida), Fabrice Langrognet (University of Paris 1/Global Public Policy Institute Berlin), Phi Nguyen (HEAD-Genève), H. Glenn Penny (University of Iowa), Fabio Santos (University of Aarhus/Free University Berlin), Andrey Shlyakhter (YIVO Institute for Jewish Research), Abraham Trejo-Terreiros (independent scholar).

“Knowing refugees” has a double meaning, as Peter Gatrell explained in this year’s Bucerius Lecture titled “Knowing Refugees, Historically Speaking”: while it denotes the knowledge produced by institutional actors to control refugee migration, it also alludes to the refugees’ own knowledge that enables them to frame their displacement experience

and navigate the institutional frameworks. Starting from this fruitful juxtaposition, the lecture highlighted different dimensions of knowledge shaping refugee regimes and their relevance to historical research. Peter Gatrell reminded historians of the existence of refugees who remain unknown because they died, became lost in transit or stayed underground. Besides obliterating those fates, many historical sources and archives also tend to turn most refugees into unknown numbers or contextless cases in files. Moreover, by defining who counts as a refugee and who does not, states and international organizations produce unrecognized and thus unknown refugees. Against this backdrop, Gatrell invited migration researchers to critically question their own (sources of) knowledge and reflect on the blind spots of archives and historical material. Besides making a case for highlighting refugees' voices and individual contexts, Gatrell also suggested that historians should go beyond studying institutional and migrants' knowledge about regimes of legal recognition and instead write histories that help acknowledge refugees not only as refugees but as humans, worthy not through legality or eligibility but "by virtue of their humanity." In the following conversation moderated by Stacy Fahrenthold, Gatrell also emphasized that methodological approaches and normative choices are intimately linked.

Reflections on source gaps and the researcher's role in building analytical bridges between institutional developments and migrants' experiences continued during the following three-day Bucerius Young Scholars' Forum. This year, the forum's central theme was borderlands. Eleven early career researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds and academic institutions on both sides of the Atlantic met online to discuss questions of migration, everyday lives, and knowledge production in and about borderlands in various world regions. An especially rewarding feature of the forum were the intense discussions. Instead of presentations, each panel started with peer comments on the pre-circulated

papers, followed by further debates between all contributors, chairs, and the senior scholars who contributed to the forum with their expertise.

The first panel focused on historical connections between Germany and the wider imperial world, highlighting how those connections contributed to mental boundaries and otherness. Annika Bärwald, in her paper “The Port City as Borderland: Hamburg, Its Non-European Migrants, and the Production of Difference, 1750-1840,” argued that the presence of Black and Asian laborers and seamen turned Hamburg into a contact zone between the German hinterland and the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. Utilizing institutional sources on local conflicts and crime, she argued that Hamburg was both a contact and a border zone. The combination of phenotypical differences and poverty made non-Europeans prone to discrimination and deportations. In the second paper, “Germany’s Color Line: The United States, the German Foreign Office, and the ‘Yellow Peril,’” Eriks Bredovskis used diplomatic sources to analyze how local German consulate staff perceived the discrimination of Asian immigrants in North America. Understanding their perceptions as part of a broader German discourse on the “global color line,” his paper engaged with German imperialism beyond its own *Reich*. In the following discussion, the participants picked up the issue of source gaps and unknown actors raised in the Bucerius lecture. In the latter case, some of the diplomats decided not to share their knowledge about local anti-Asian incidents with the foreign office in Germany, thus creating a silence in the archives; in the former case, the migrants’ own perspectives are suppressed while only the institutional knowledge is preserved in the state archives. As Glenn Penny remarked, both papers illustrate that historians sometimes must identify and deal with “gatekeepers of knowledge.”

The second day started with a panel on cross-border migration in German imperial and Soviet history. Roi Ball’s paper

"Transnational Farming Families and Agrarian Settlement in Imperial Peripheries: A Preliminary Exploration between Württemberg and Prussian Poland, and Ottoman Palestine, 1860-1914," followed the transnational settlement of Swabian pietist families at German imperial frontiers. Roi Ball used local village and church archives in Southern Germany as a starting point for a bottom-up history of imperial globalization. He investigated local, family-based colonization and community-building and its relationship with empire-making and nation-building. Kateryna Burkush's paper on "Seasonal Migration: Problem or Solution? Soviet Initiatives of Stimulating and Managing Seasonal Labor Migration in the 1950s-1980s" revealed the permeability of borders in the late Soviet Union, as thousands of seasonal laborers from Transcarpathia frequently moved to more eastern parts of Ukraine and the wider USSR to improve their income and acquire material resources. Showing that the state was unable to gain control over these autonomous mobilities, Kateryna Burkush's paper challenged the image of the Soviet state as one that was able to keep a tight regime over borders and economic migration. Both papers proved that focusing on the local roots of migration can open new, bottom-up perspectives on larger state-driven projects like imperialism or planned economies. And, as Eriks Bredovskis also implied in his comment, the papers cast doubt on the usefulness of traditional classifications in migration studies, namely the distinction between internal and external migration, which easily blurs in imperial contexts.

States' attempts to maintain borders as lines of exclusion was one of the main themes that connected the papers presented during the following two panels. Abraham Trejo-Terreros' paper, "Migrants in Transit and Human Smuggling in the 1920s U.S.-Mexico Borderlands," showed how state measures to control migration such as taxes, medical inspections, and tests not only led to a growing professionalization of traffickers but also increased corruption on the part of the border guards. He thus made a historical argu-

ment to complicate the binary image of human smugglers as those who subvert and state agents as those who enforce the border regime. Based on an empirically rich survey, Andrey Shlyakhter, with his contribution "Back to the USSR: Explaining the Growth of the Soviet Border Guard, 1917-1939," challenged the idea that the main task of Soviet border forces was to imprison the population. Especially in the interwar period, as Shlyakhter showed, the Soviet state authorities' main concern were not escaping citizens but cross-border threats like irregular fighters, spies, and smugglers, leading him to argue that the state's response to those threats, as a side effect, reinforced its repressive capacity.

Inner borderlands were another common theme that linked the papers presented on the second and third day, which focused on cities and microhistories of identity and boundary-making in everyday life. Larissa Kopytoff's paper, "Borderlands at the Center: Mobility, Space, and Citizenship in French Colonial Senegal," shed light on the inner boundaries separating the commune Saint-Louis, whose inhabitants received French citizen rights in 1916, from the hinterland, thus transcending the distinction between nation and colony. Kopytoff showed that Africans from the commune's banlieues and the wider colony used the lack of knowledge and control on the part of the colonial authorities to traverse the boundary and obtain access to legal and infrastructural opportunities available in the enclave. In his paper "Boundary-Making Far from the Border: Migrant Citizenship in a Paris Suburb in the Early Twentieth Century," Fabrice Langrognet investigated the production of nationality-based difference in a postmigration setting. Boundaries were reinforced and altered every day via bureaucratic practices, citizen obligations, and social rights such as military conscription, welfare, and voting. Fabrice Langrognet highlighted the agency of individual immigrants who, through negligence, conscious strategies, or social interactions, undermined the nationality divide and contributed to shaping hybrid forms of integration. In her paper "Devout Land-

scape – Migrant Placemaking through the Afterlife in Hué, Vietnam,” Phi Nguyen showed how in the city of Hué, which was shaped by a history of cross-border conflicts, colonialism, and displacement, religious buildings represent past mobilities and make them coexist in the present. Phi Nguyen argued that material structures symbolically connect multiple places and temporalities, producing a form of social belonging that transcends time, borders, and uprootedness. All in all, the papers and subsequent discussion made visible the extent to which borderlands act as physical divides and examples of material space-making. On the other hand, symbolical, legal, and social practices are not necessarily tied to specific places.

The last panel of the forum addressed the (il)legalization and deportability of migrants in Germany and French Guiana. Ulrike Bialas’ study “Forever 17: Young Asylum Seekers and the Struggle for Minority” traced the precarious situation of adult male asylum seekers in present Germany who pass as underaged youths to avoid deportation (*Abschiebung*) and extend their legal status. As Bialas showed, this classification pressure can cost the migrants their autonomy and increase paternalism from administrative and care institutions. The formal change of age can even affect people’s identities, as Bialas argued, especially as it generates a paradoxical dichotomy between the journey to Europe, which is often seen as a rite of passage to male adulthood, and the infantilized life as a minor in Germany. In the second paper, “‘Europe’ in ‘Latin America’”: Illegalized Mobilities, Deportable Bodies, and Contested Sovereignties in the French-Brazilian Borderland,” Fabio Santos addressed unequal and forced mobilities in the overseas territory French Guiana. These are symbolically manifested by a large bridge across the border river that connects Latin America with the European Union, while also marking a stark contrast to the discreet and dangerous river crossings by migrants. Elaborating on the long history of asymmet-

ric mobilities in the former French penal colony, Fabio Santos emphasized the significance of (post)colonial exclaves and special zones as laboratories for state measures aiming at illegalization and deportation. Both papers, as Andrey Shlyakhter highlighted in his comment, draw our attention to seemingly natural borders to which states attach meaning and legal potency, implicitly underscoring how the creation of environmental/topological knowledge and biological knowledge supports migration regimes.

This year's Bucerius Young Scholars Forum vividly demonstrated how fruitful it can be to use state boundaries, borderlands, and enclaves as methodological observation posts for investigating migration processes. The result were locally grounded, rich micro-historical papers that made everyday conflicts over immigration, state security, national identity, and belonging visible. Ambiguous and permeable as they are, borderlands also make us aware of the analytical boundaries of a state-centered framework: while borders are sites sustained by state knowledge about migration, security, and control, they also turn the spotlight on migrants and their knowledge resources that help them to undermine spatial and social borders. In the concluding discussion, Peter Gatrell directed the conversation towards another boundary—that between the knowledge we create as scholars and the broader public including (former) migrants and refugees. Who do we write for? How do we communicate our findings? Can our research gain surplus value beyond our academic networks and careers? Transatlantic venues like the Young Scholars Forum thus also encourage us to think about joint efforts to reach broader, non-academic audiences – thereby more firmly connecting historical analyses of borders, borderlands and migration to present-day public discussions on global migration currents.

Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş
(GHI Washington)

First Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies

First Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies, held in Essen, Germany, on October 12-15, 2021, co-organized by the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE), the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) and the National History Center, Washington DC (NHC), in cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Center for Integration and Migration Research (InZentIM), the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI), and the Center for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21). Conveners: Jan C. Jansen (University of Duisburg-Essen), Dane Kennedy (George Washington University), and Simone Lässig (GHI Washington). Participants: Victoria Abrahamyan (University of Neuchâtel), Lennart Bollinger (Humboldt University, Berlin), David De Boer (University of Amsterdam), Delphine Diaz (University of Reims), Mitchell Edwards (Northwestern University, Chicago), Edidiong Ekefre (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg), Peter Gatrell (University of Manchester), Dimitra Glenti (University of the Aegean, Lesvos), Nicolás González Quintero (University of Texas, Austin), Sabine Hanke (University of Duisburg-Essen), Salma Hargal (University of Lyon 2), Baher Ibrahim (University of Glasgow), Jannik Keindorf (University of Duisburg-Essen), Sarah Knoll (University of Vienna), Susanne Lachenicht (University of Bayreuth), Olivier Lamon (University of Geneva), Fabrice Langrognet (Princeton / University of Oxford), Lynton Lees (Columbia University), Charlotte Lysa (Oslo University), Thomas Mareite (University of Duisburg-Essen), Megan Maruschke (University of Duisburg-Essen), Egemen Özbek (KWI); Anne Schult (New York University), Ana Joanna Vergara Sierra (University of Minnesota).

The purpose of this seminar, hosted by the KWI in Essen, was to provide a historical perspective on the study of refugees in order to overcome the presentist prism through which they often tend to be considered. The seminar gathered a group of sixteen junior scholars to give historical depth to the study of refugee populations and diverse “refugee regimes,” which often differed from the contemporary refugee regime born out of the Geneva Convention (1951) and its extensions.

The first session proposed a reflection around epistemological and conceptual issues regarding the notion of “refugee”. Fabrice Langrognet stressed some of the problematic implications of an uncritical reliance by scholars on artificial distinctions forged by institutions between “refugees” and “migrants.” Langrognet called for a more active dialog between refugee history and migration history in order to overcome the academic entrenchment of this false dichotomy between the two labels. In so doing, Langrognet explored the tension inherent to the field of “refugee history” between a quest to historicize particular refugee movements and to shed light on what constitutes refugee experiences beyond individual cases. Anne Schult explored how, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both academic and popular discourses relied on the widespread use of metaphors of waves, tides, and floods to refer to the arrival of refugee populations in the United States of America. Schult’s contribution underlined how the statistical impulse for numbering and visualizing refugee movements revealed moral panics about foreign newcomers as a demographic and political threat. Besides, Schult revealed how such desire for quantification underpinned a vision of the “refugee” as an object of policy-making and problem-solving, giving it a deceiving appearance of measurable objectivity.

The second session addressed European refugee experiences, focusing on humanitarian aid and asylum policies. David De Boer argued that humanitarian aid and long-distance compassion existed before the so-called Humanitarian

Revolution linked to the European Enlightenment. Against the backdrop of religious persecutions and forced migrations of confessional groups in early modern Europe (c.1550-1750), De Boer showed how humanitarian aid connected refugees and non-refugees alike, while overcoming strict confessional and national boundaries. De Boer further argued that an inclusive rhetoric of relief connecting diverse religious groups helped forge a secularized understanding of human suffering. Olivier Lamon discussed in his paper the ambivalence of Switzerland's refugee policies during the 1848 Revolutions. Lamon stressed inconsistencies and points of divergence between cantons and the Swiss central authorities about asylum policies, and especially focused on the control of refugees' political activities. Lamon showed how occasional group expulsion and common policies of "internment" (relocating refugees away from border areas and settling them down in alien cantons, in terms of language and culture) clashed with the image of a self-styled *land of asylum*.

In his keynote lecture, "Learning by Doing: Reflections on Refugee History," Peter Gatrell analyzed the emergence of the contemporary refugee regime and reflected on some of the implications of its extension to the "Global South" from the 1960s onwards. Gatrell assessed what state and non-state institutions dealing with refugees "learned" in the process, and what kind of expertise they gained while expanding and integrating this global refugee regime. In turn, Gatrell also focused on experiences of refugeedom, with a particular emphasis on refugees' strategies; their own agency in navigating a refugee regime built around the verification of eligibility criteria as well as their capacity to claim and (re)forge identities beyond the mere label of "refugees." Finally, Gatrell's lecture addressed the institutionalization of refugee history over the last three decades, in particular the ways in which the field built on previous work by anthropologists, human geographers, political scientists, and culture studies scholars on refugees.

The third session focused on asylum policies and the settlement of refugees in the Ottoman Empire and mandate Syria. Salma Hargal analyzed the status of Algerian refugees in the Ottoman Empire between 1830 and 1914 by exploring the genealogy and usage of the term “muhajir / muhācir.” She discussed evolutions in understandings of the term, from designating religious pilgrims to a more secularized figure of the refugee. Hargal thus showed how the Tanzimat reforms of the Ottoman Empire added an ethnic- and class-based principle to the formerly confession-based organization of resettlement of refugees and new subjects through colonization. Victoria Abrahamyan focused on Armenian refugees in Syria during the time of the French mandate system (1920-1946). Abrahamyan argued that the French mandatory authorities’ eagerness to host and (re)settle Armenian refugees (viewed by these authorities as Christian and pro-French “others”) in Syria in turn led the Syrian population to form an excluding Muslim-Arabian “self.” The Syrian host society increasingly perceived that behind such welcoming asylum policies lay a danger to the newly forming Syrian nation.

The fourth session dealt with refugees in African history. Mitchell Edwards presented a paper on pre-colonial concepts and practices in North-Central Uganda (c.1720-1850), which incorporated oral histories and interviews. Edwards raised questions about “refugee work” with a focus on local ideas and practices that have become overshadowed by other notions of relief overtime. Though gaps in recovering this past remain, Edwards stressed how these older notions continued to influence local practices overtime and shape responses to asylum seekers today. Edidiong Ekefre discussed the child-refugees evacuated out of Nigerian Biafra during the late 1960s. Ekefre emphasized the importance of looking at Africa not only as a source of refugees who flee to Europe but also as the continent that hosts the most refugees from other African societies, and even from Europe during the Second World War. Eke-

fre highlighted weaknesses in the action of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Western aid agencies and the significance of African international refugee networks as other African countries hosted these refugees.

The fifth thematic session focused on refugees across Spanish America during the Age of Revolutions. Contributions by Nicolás González-Quintero and Ana Joanna Vergara Sierra explored the social and political experiences of exiled people seeking refuge from the wars for independence raging across Spanish America in both Spanish and non-Spanish Caribbean possessions. González-Quintero highlighted how loyalist refugees settling in Cuba and Puerto Rico sought to shape a broad interpretation of the Spanish nation uniting *Americanos* and Peninsular Spaniards and mobilized a language of imperial loyalty in order to receive assistance from colonial authorities. Vergara Sierra explored how informal and formal trading networks linking Dutch, Danish and Swedish free ports across the Caribbean to present-day Colombia and Venezuela turned into escape routes for both loyalist and revolutionary refugees from the early 1810s onwards. Vergara Sierra's contribution revealed how both sides of the conflict politicized the experience of exile, and stressed the crucial role played by these refugees in the military and political developments that defined the wars for independence on the Spanish Main.

The sixth thematic session focused on the contemporary Mediterranean and Middle East. Dimitra Glenti showed how Lesbos, a place synonymous with refugees since 2015, has a long history as a site of refuge – at least since the massive influx of refugees fleeing persecution in 1922, a decade after Lesbos was annexed to Greece. Glenti discussed how the local reception of refugees and their integration took place against the backdrop of new forms of societal organization, that is, from imperial to national frameworks, without losing sight of the local nature of the settlements.

She further reflected on what the memory of having been a site for hosting refugees means in Lesvos during the current “refugee crisis.” Charlotte Lysa explored the governing of refugees in Saudi Arabia in a *longue durée* historical perspective. To do so, she used a variety of written sources as well as interviews to understand the Saudi approach to refugee protection and its relationship to labor needs. Lysa further discussed historical legacies of asylum practices from Islam to territorializing empires in the region to nation-state-based policies. Both papers demonstrated the necessity of *longue-durée* approaches to understanding current asylum policies and practices of refugee assistance.

Egemen Özbek presented the work of the Academy in Exile, a joint initiative of the Institute for Turkish Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, the KWI Essen and the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin. The Academy in Exile offers scholars coming under threat in their home countries because of their academic or civic engagement the opportunity to resume their research abroad. Özbek highlighted the possibilities offered by the initiative as well as the struggles it faces, especially regarding the selection process of the applicants, in which their status of political persecution needs to be evaluated, and administrative challenges related to the uniqueness of the German university system.

The penultimate session focused on the role that institutional expertise played in constructing an administrative refugee category. Baher Ibrahim discussed interpretations of refugeedom in the mental health profession after the Second World War and highlighted how uprooting, confinement, and trauma became central psychopathological themes for defining a “refugee.” The paper showed how this interpretation became the cornerstone of mental health programs during the “refugee crises” of the 1990s, while social and cultural aspects were not taken into account. Sarah Knoll presented a paper on the interconnections of aid organi-

zations with states. Focusing on UNHCR in Austria during the Cold War, Knoll showed how international aid organizations influenced the government's asylum and refugee policy, thereby contributing to Austria's self-perception as a humanitarian country. However, the paper underlined the contested nature of the refugee category as the Austrian government changed its policy and increasingly sought to prevent refugees from entering the country.

The last session of the seminar investigated the relationship between refugee relief and the management of refugees for geopolitical or territorial interests. Lynton Lees presented a paper on how the British government and charities tried to train and resettle Jewish refugee children as agricultural workers in settler colonies during the Second World War, echoing older, imperial approaches to solving refugee crises. At the same time, however, the rise of new forms of individualist child welfare saw the refugee children challenging these imperial forms of humanitarian intervention and refugee management. Lennart Bollinger showed how the militarization of societies conquered by African military units extended to refugee women and children. Bollinger's contribution examined the experiences of refugees who came under the authority of the South African Defence Force (SADF) during the apartheid era. The unique situation in which the military became a humanitarian actor of sorts saw the formation of a militarized refugee community shaped by gendered, racialized, ranked, and nationalized relationships.

The discussions resulting from this dynamic conference, which spanned world regions and several centuries, raised big questions. First, the contributions asked us to reevaluate the relationship between the past and the present. Refugee movements are often described in relation to short term crises that require rapid responses. However, the papers showed how the past shaped later receptions of refugees and how long-term challenges lead people to flee; we must

therefore reevaluate the ruptures and continuities in refugee history to ask to what extent histories are useful for thinking through current challenges. Second, the papers called into question a range of terminologies and categories not only to describe people on the move, such as in the distinction between refugees and migrants, but also types of societal organization (types of empires, states, communities, cities) and the shifting meanings of borders. That is, it was also necessary to talk about space and the multiple geographies of asylum. This attention to categories and terminologies is vital to making the distinction between the terms used in historical sources and case studies and the analytical terms used by the historian. But the term “refugee” is very often loaded with moral questions. This raised the third point about moral imperatives in the field. Categories like refugee and migrant have frequently been deployed to differentiate distinct types of mobilities with shifting positive and negative connotations. The terms often relate to concerns about class, race, and gender, too. Many participants felt that one of their important contributions was to humanize their subjects, many of whom were labeled refugees in the past but do not fit clearly into sympathetic categories: French planters fleeing Saint-Domingue; Huguenots discriminating against Irish Catholics; Holocaust survivors who become settler colonists; and the militarization of some refugee communities. Though the field of refugee history seems to have an ideological component, when sticking to the complexity on the ground in various case studies of the past, this history is perhaps less ideological than we thought, even while addressing moral arenas of debates both in the past and the present. These reflections sparked cooperation among this year’s participants and will lead to a fruitful continuation of the Refugee History Seminar with its second annual meeting in Washington DC in 2022.

**Lena Filzen, Jannik Keindorf,
Thomas Mareite, and Megan Maruschke**
(University of Duisburg-Essen)

Contested Meanings of Migration Facilitation: Emigration Agents, Coyotes, Rescuers, and Human Traffickers

Virtual symposium held on November 15-16, 2021, organized by the Pacific Office of the German Historical Institute Washington and co-sponsored by the Leibniz-Science Campus "Europe and America in the Modern World" in Regensburg and the Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley. Conveners: Ulf Brunnbauer (Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg) and Sören Urbansky (GHI Pacific Office). Participants: Deborah A. Boehm (University of Nevada, Reno); Michael Buschheuer (Sea-Eye, Regensburg); Fabienne Cabaret (Fundación Justicia, Mexico City); Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera (George Mason University); Julia Devlin (Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt); Andreas Fahrmeir (University of Frankfurt); Gerald Knaus (European Stability Initiative, Brussels/Berlin); Nicolas Lainez (CESSMA / Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Paris); Akasemi Newsome (University of California, Berkeley); Milena Rizzotti (University of Leicester); Cristina Santoyo (Fundación Justicia, Mexico City); Anastasiia Strakhova (Emory University); Yukari Takai (York University and International Center for Japanese Studies); Sallie Yea (La Trobe University, Melbourne).

The topic of migration facilitation is not merely one of academic interest but is also extremely important for lawmakers, activists, and humanitarian workers who seek to help ensure safe passages for migrants. As migration into the countries of the Global North is on the increase and the trips undertaken turn ever more perilous, new scholarly knowledge and historical contextualization become more pertinent.

In his introductory remarks, Ulf Brunnbauer discussed the motivation behind the symposium. In his research for a connection between migration and innovation, the facilitation of migration appeared to be particularly salient. While governments since the nineteenth century have enhanced their capacity to trace their citizens' movements and control entry and exit across the state border, migrants and their helpers developed new ways of circumventing these rules and restrictions. Borders, in their physical but also administrative dimension, represent the space where migration innovation is constantly produced: in a relationship of mutual causation, the innovation of migration control is inherently connected with practices from "below" aimed at bypassing, undermining, contesting, and overcoming them. This can lead to strange combinations and bedfellows when, for example, a dictatorship cooperates with travel agencies and human traffickers to pressure a neighboring country (i.e., the current situation in Belarus). Brunnbauer pointed to the two main sets of questions that this interdisciplinary symposium was to address: first, how did forms and practices of migrant facilitation, and the public image of them, change since the nineteenth century? Second, which ethical dilemmas were faced by those who helped migrants achieve their migration goals?

The symposium kicked off with a keynote lecture by Andreas Fahrmeir, who presented the crucial context factors of migration facilitation, such as distance of the envisioned journey, cost, information, and regulations. Aiding migrants in reaching their destination can be a well-regarded and potentially lucrative profession, an official project, or a criminalized activity – and sometimes both at the same time. The boundaries between "brokers of migration" and "human traffickers" have shifted back and forth and are highly contentious. However, official and public attitudes towards the brokers of migration changed in the early twentieth century, with hardening official stances towards immigration

and emigration. At the same time, intensifying migration restrictions could only increase the demand for help in the facilitation of migration. After 1945, migration facilitation also increased because of the expansion of transportation infrastructure and cross-border links. As a result, today, many more officials are employed in the prevention than the support of migration. Studying such restrictive efforts helps to understand which migrants are considered desirable and which are not and how “illegality” is socially constructed. One significant change in migration restrictions since the end of the Cold War in Europe is the fact that today, physical and administrative border fences are mainly constructed to keep people out, not in – and this has impacted the activities and images of migration brokers a lot, who might have once been seen as agents of liberty. At the same time, they are now accused of endangering migrants’ lives and state sovereignty.

The first panel on “The Changing Faces of Migrant Facilitators” opened with Yukari Takai, who presented an unknown history of Japanese immigrant hotel owners and housekeepers as migration facilitators. Based on two case studies of Honolulu and Vancouver, Takai showed that immigrant hotel owners were critical agents in the transmigration process from the 1880s to the 1920s, i.e., the period which saw an increase in exclusionary migration laws and regulations. Immigrant hotel owners were either collaborating with or acting in opposition to the local government and the influential sugar plantation owners, encouraging migrants to move to the continental United States. This profitable enterprise saw immigrant hotel owners frequently cross the lines of solidarity and exploitation multiple times over as they tried to maneuver between government, business, and migrant interests, as well as pursue their profits. The story also clarified the importance of ethnicity as a bond of trust linking migrants and their brokers.

Deborah A. Boehm presented a more contemporary story of migration facilitation as activism in the current U.S. context. Yet she, too, examined alternative methods of migration facilitation, namely those created in response to new restrictive government measures in the twenty-first century. Boehm focused on the idea of “accompaniment” as activists increasingly participate in migrants’ journeys to assist them. Accompaniment includes directly traveling with the migrants for a part of the journey, meeting them at borders, crossing the borders with them, or even tending to them in prison, helping ensure their release, and, in case of deportation, safe passage home. Boehm argued that accompaniment is a form of “radical presence” and that activism is not merely humanitarian and individual but also aims at abolishing the structures that impede movement across borders, putting an end to detentions and deportations.

The third panelist, Anastasiia Strakhova, looked at Jewish women as agents assisting emigration in Late Imperial Russia, introducing a gender dimension into migration facilitation. Legal emigration was effectively impossible, and people had to rely on underground routes and transnational connections, such as family ties in Austria or Prussia. Even though illegality made it a highly dangerous enterprise, Strakhova discovered a very high degree of women’s involvement in the process and decided to recover their voices in mass migration. The widespread perception of women as naive and innocent in a patriarchal society enabled them to avoid arrest much more easily than their male counterparts and accomplices. Not only were they less likely to get arrested, they were also very effective at getting their male business partners released from prison by petitioning the authorities.

The final panelist, Julia Devlin, presented a paper on “Zionist underground railways,” which supported Jewish refugees from early postwar Poland. The so-called “Bricha,” estab-

lished in 1944 by Jewish partisans and Zionists, facilitated the migration of Jewish Holocaust survivors to Palestine to escape from antisemitic violence in Poland after the Second World War. In her analysis, Devlin drew mainly on survivors' narratives, studying how the Bricha was presented in these memories. She found that the recollection of the support by the Zionist network lacked emotional attachment. Very little is said about personal contacts, while at the same time, the Bricha organization depended for its success on the very tight network from Poland on the route towards Palestine. However, refugees saw it as something functional and "normal," while Bricha activists portrayed themselves as righteous fighters for a good cause. The refugees did not share their Zionist zeal but mainly wanted to escape unsafe environments.

The second panel, dedicated to ethical dilemmas and moral economies, began with a presentation by Nicolas Lainez and Sallie Yea. They suggested a critical look at discourses of debt bondage, often demonized as a form of quasi-slavery. Yea and Lainez looked at salary deductions, one of the two forms of debt-financed migration, the other being upfront payments. Salary deductions imply that one's migration costs are gradually paid off by employers reducing a migrant's salary in the new place of residence. It is a form of debt bondage and thus also related to human trafficking and contemporary slavery issues. However, it has attracted little scholarly attention despite how widespread it is. Lainez and Yea presented the case study of Vietnamese migrant sex workers in Singapore and Filipina migrant entertainers in Singapore and South Korea. They argued that the liberal attempt to regulate salary reductions through bilateral agreements does little to alleviate the predicament of migrant workers. That debt is a product of the uneven development of global capitalism and can empower mobility.

Milena Rizzotti presented some findings of her recently defended doctoral dissertation on Nigerian sex workers in

Italy. She interviewed both women convicted of trafficking and those who were their victims and found that their perceptions of trafficking do not neatly fall into the “Western” dichotomy of trafficker-victim. Rather, from the perspective of Nigerian women, both the traffickers and victims are seen as migrant sex workers operating within the same system of migration. Both groups see this as the last step in the process of a successful move to the Global North, and that step entails paying off the travel debt. Rizzotti proposed abandoning the victim-trafficker dichotomy and the criminalization it entails, and instead considering all these women as part of the “Immobilized Global Underclass,” which aims to achieve geographical and social mobility.

The final presentation, given by Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, was a paper she co-wrote with Jaime Scott. It is a story of two Cuban men and their perilous journey through twelve countries of Latin America before reaching the United States, only to be detained at the U.S.-Mexican border. Their journey lasted almost a year, during which they faced constant perils, from human traffickers to drug dealers and corrupt government officials. All of these were, in a way, facilitators of migration, and many of them extorted the two men along their journey. Despite high mortality rates on such routes, especially in places like the Darién Gap, they managed to survive and make it to Mexico. However, they were detained indefinitely by Donald Trump’s zero-tolerance policy, which seems to have continued into the new administration and with a whole new set of challenges posed by the pandemic. While their fate is unknown, Correa-Cabrera considers it implausible they entered the U.S. legally, and the amount of money paid to transport them across the border could have risen to several thousand dollars under the new circumstances.

One of the core questions discussed in the two panels was how we should conceptualize migration facilitators along the routes

taken by migrants and find a non-normative language not overburdened by moral judgments. It became clear that the analysis of migration facilitation helps to decenter political and epistemological hegemonies. However, the challenge is to prevent downplaying structural inequalities and the constraints under which migrants and their brokers pursue their often minimal agency.

Such dilemmas were also addressed by a practitioners' round table, which gathered three representatives from migrant rescue and support organizations and a well-known European migration expert. Cristina Santoyo and Fabienne Cabaret from the Mexican NGO "Fundación Justicia" spoke about the difficulties of providing legal assistance to migrants and their brokers in a context where the state authorities and public opinion usually frames them in criminal terms. Especially drug trafficking is often equated with migration facilitation. Such persecution can become a self-fulfilling prophecy when desperate migrants are forced to seek help from actual criminals. The authorities in Mexico are not interested in providing humanitarian assistance to migrants either. Michael Buschheuer, the founder of the Regensburg-based maritime rescue organization Sea-Eye, highlighted the perils migrants face when crossing the Mediterranean. He criticized the EU and European governments for reducing sea rescue efforts, which are often left to humanitarian organizations such as his, who face opposition from state authorities. Buschheuer suggested ways in which Europe could stop building more walls and find ways to open secure channels for immigration. He also elaborated on the importance of humanitarian efforts, which have one "simple" mission: to save lives. He articulated his frustration that there no longer was any consensus in Europe, even on this issue. Gerald Knaus, from the think tank European Stability Initiative (Brussels/Berlin), started his remarks by pointing to the drama at the Belarus-Poland border, which encapsulated many of the inconsistencies of the EU's approach to

(im)migration. It seems that the EU has agreed to ignore asylum law while insisting a hostile dictator must not blackmail it. Knaus highlighted what is at stake: how to convince European governments that there are ways to maintain control over borders while at the same time opening legal channels of immigration and refugee acceptance. If only the EU were to take in proportionally the same number of refugees as Canada, considerably fewer people would be exposed to the perils of dangerous routes to Europe. Knaus argued that a human refugee resettlement policy could garner majority support, even though many believe building walls works, thus betraying the founding principles of the European Union.

Stefan Gužvica
(University of Regensburg)

The background features abstract geometric shapes. A dark blue triangle points downwards from the top left. A light blue triangle points upwards from the bottom left. A grey triangle points upwards from the bottom right. The text 'GHI News' is centered in the white space.

GHI News



GHI Washington Receives Positive Evaluation; Pacific Office in Berkeley Made Permanent

The evaluation of the GHI Washington and its Pacific Office at the University of California (UC) at Berkeley by an external commission – which is conducted every seven years under the auspices of the Max Weber Foundation (MWS) – took place in July 2021. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the evaluation had been postponed and was then conducted in a virtual format. These obstacles did not, however, diminish the success: The GHI Washington was very positively evaluated by the commission and all its research foci as well as current and planned projects received positive reviews. The Board of Trustees of the Max Weber Foundation confirmed the evaluation commission's assessment. It is particularly noteworthy that, as a result of this positive evaluation, the GHI's Pacific Office in Berkeley has now been made permanent. Our research-driven location in Berkeley has thus become an integral part of the international landscape of academic institutions of the MWS. The permanent establishment of the Pacific Office offers considerable structural advantages and possibilities for German, European, and North American historical scholarship, as the Pacific Office offers historians important new opportunities for cooperation, exchange, and research. These new opportunities include new fellowship programs on the history of Latin America and the Pacific, new fellowship formats such as the Tandem Program funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, as well as a variety of conferences and workshops on the West Coast of the Americas. The Pacific Office will thus complement and expand the activities of the GHI Washington in terms of both research content and geographical reach.

The GHI's successful evaluation is primarily due to the commitment and competence of our staff in Washington and Berkeley, but also to our supporting North American partners such as the Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley. The positive evaluation also confirmed the fundamental research foci that the GHI Washington and its Pacific Office have pursued since 2021:

expanding our already established migration history focus to include aspects of mobility and infrastructure history as well as a transpacific and hemispheric inter-American perspective. One area of special interest is spatial mobility and its social effects and asymmetries; multiple and uneven mobilities in particular offer the opportunity to explore global and transregional continuities and ruptures. GHI projects in this area include the conceptual expansion and consolidation of the research focus “In Global Transit,” which combines the history of forced migration with approaches in mobility studies to explore the spatiality and temporality of escape routes. Other current GHI research projects and related conferences as well as publications examine transportation networks, focusing on the materiality of infrastructures and on how complex, mostly transnational networks were managed locally. The international standing working group “In Search of the Migrant Child” examines global mobility from the perspectives of age, generation, and gender. In this way, the GHI Washington and the Pacific Office in Berkeley continue to address recent global historical trends and link them to research already anchored and successfully evaluated at the Institute.

Expanding its transatlantic perspective, the GHI Washington is also renewing its focus on the connections between the history of technology and social history and – in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic – examining the history of public trust in science. The contemporary relevance of research at the GHI Washington and its Pacific Office was explicitly recognized in the positive evaluation of both locations.

2021 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize

The 2021 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which is awarded annually by the Friends of the German Historical Institute for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university, was awarded to Richard Calis (Princeton University). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the award ceremony was held online. The selection committee

members were: Frank Biess (chair, University of California, San Diego), Daniel Riches (University of Alabama), and Lisa Todd (University of New Brunswick).

The committee's prize citation for Richard Calis' dissertation, "Martin Crusius (1524-1607) and the Discovery of Ottoman Greece" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, advised by Anthony Grafton) reads:

Richard Calis' dissertation, "Martin Crusius (1524-1607) and the Discovery of Ottoman Greece," is a remarkable and stunning achievement. In the best tradition of Natalie Zemon Davis and Carlo Ginzburg, Calis' global microhistory succeeds in using the figure of a relatively obscure Tübingen Professor of Greek to open up a unique window into different geographical, intellectual and cultural worlds. While Crusius was known among specialists for his study of Ottoman Greece, the *Turcograecia* published in 1584, Calis' dissertation reveals the rich ethnographic work on which this study was based. He analyzes, for instance, the massive notes that Crusius collected from his encounters with many Greek visitors who stayed in his home and with whom he engaged in extensive conversations. Crusius' dissertation reveals a far-reaching culture of migration and knowledge transfer from the different parts of Ottoman Greece to a small South German university town. Early modern knowledge transfer, he argues, occurred not primarily through travel but mainly through reading and face-to-face conversation. This process allowed Crusius to become an expert in all things Greek without ever visiting Ottoman Greece.

Calis' dissertation also unearths the global ambitions of early modern Lutheranism. While Catholic missionary activities and the emergence of a global Catholicism have received increasing scholarly attention in recent years, Calis' dissertation challenges the notion of a relatively provincial Lutheranism. He demonstrates how Crusius' scholarly efforts were motivated by an urgent desire to convert Orthodox Christians as well as by a sense of Christian brotherhood against Muslims. Crusius' missionary fervor originated from the fact he was among the first generation of those who were born into the Lutheran faith. In this dissertation, the small university town of Tübingen – a prototypical

example of Mack Walker's *German Hometowns* – does not appear as isolated and provincial but rather integrated into vast networks of migration and knowledge. The dissertation also makes several additional contributions. Calis' close reading of Crusius' extensive marginalia points to a history of reading and scholarship. His analysis of Crusius' household and of the important roles that his three wives played in hosting so many visitors demonstrates the gendered basis of Crusius' scholarly endeavors.

Calis' dissertation is based on vast empirical research, particularly on a close analysis of Crusius' diary, nine thick leather-bound volumes that have remained largely untapped as a historical source for the last 500 years! Calis succeeds in linking his close reading of primary sources to many of the most important strands of the historiography on early modern Europe. In particular, he questions the current historiographical obsession with transregional connections and challenges us to analyze the nature of these connections more closely, calling for a more nuanced approach to the local contexts within which the "global early modern" manifested itself. The result is a work that, when published, will undoubtedly make a seminal contribution to several subfields in the scholarship of early modern Europe, including the history of cross-cultural encounters, the social and cultural history of knowledge, and the history of global Protestantism. The dissertation is also beautifully written, it is nuanced and theoretically sophisticated, yet without resorting to jargon and always accessible to a non-specialist audience.

The prize committee is pleased to award – enthusiastically and unanimously – this year's Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize to Richard Calis.

Franz Steiner Prize: Call For Submissions

The Franz Steiner Verlag and the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) award the Franz Steiner Prize in Transatlantic History every two years to an outstanding work of historical scholarship in the field of North American or transatlantic history from the early modern period to the present. The monetary prize of €3,500 will next be awarded in 2023.

The prize-winning manuscript will and must be published in the series Transatlantic Historical Studies (THS), which the GHI has published in collaboration with the Franz Steiner Verlag since 1992. The prize will not be awarded to a manuscript that is already under contract with a publisher or is set to appear in another book series. The winning manuscript will be professionally edited, with the GHI assuming the costs of publication at the Gold Open Access level. This means that the book will immediately be available for free download upon publication.

Recently completed book manuscripts in German and English at the doctoral or higher level are eligible for consideration. The prize committee will make a decision on the basis of reviews by American and German scholars. The prize will be presented at the annual meeting of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Amerikastudien/German Association for American Studies (DGfA) in June 2023.

To have your manuscript considered for the Franz Steiner Prize, please submit your manuscript, a one-page abstract, your CV, and an evaluation of your manuscript, for example, by your doctoral adviser, via our online portal.

For the June 2023 award, the deadline for submissions is September 15, 2022. Questions may be directed to the THS series manager Casey Sutcliffe: sutcliffe@ghi-dc.org.

New Staff Publications

Monographs

Manke, Albert. *Coping with Discrimination and Exclusion: Experiences of Free Chinese Migrants in the Americas in a Transregional and Diachronic Perspective*. Trier: WVT / New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2021.

Roesch, Claudia. *Wunsch Kinder: Eine transnationale Geschichte der Familienplanung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2021.

Urbansky, Sören. *An den Ufern des Amur. Die vergessene Welt zwischen China und Russland*. München: C.H. Beck 2021.

Edited Volumes and Special Issues

Lässig, Simone, ed. "Digital History." Special Issue, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 47.1 (2021).

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

Bondzio, Sebastian. "Doing 'Volksgemeinschaft'. Wissensproduktion und Ordnungshandeln der Gestapo." *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 47.3 (2021): 43-379.

Bondzio, Sebastian et. al.: "Die Osnabrücker Ausländermeldekartei 1930-1980: Potenziale als Quelle der Stadt- und Migrationsgeschichte." *Osnabrücker Mitteilungen* 126 (2021): 137-194."

Bouwman, Bastiaan. "Between Dialogue and Denunciation: The World Council of Churches, Religious Freedom, and Human Rights during the Cold War." *Contemporary European History* 31.1 (2021): doi:10.1017/S0960777321000503.

Greiner, Andreas. "Bio-Engineering across Empires: Mapping the Global Microhistory of Zebra Domestication in Colonial East Africa." *Journal of World History* 32.1 (2021): 127-159.

Greiner, Andreas. "Revisiting a Colonial Landmark: Caravanserais as Tools of Urban Transformation in Early Colonial Tanzania." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 15.4 (2021): 685-706.

Guidi, Andreas. "School Protests and the Making of the Post-Ottoman Mediterranean: Pupils' Politicization in Rhodes as a Challenge to Italian Colonialism, 1915-1937." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, First View (Dec. 2021): doi.org/10.1017/S0020743821000891

Guidi, Andreas "Démarcation générationnelle et divergence mémorielle: Sur l'émigration des juifs et des Grecs de Rhodes vers les États-Unis au long du XXe siècle." *Slavica Occitania* 52 (2021): 233-260.

Guidi, Andreas. "Who Made Fascism in Zadar? Activist Trajectories as an Interpretative Key for Post-Imperial Politics." In *The Eastern Adriatic between the Collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Creation of New States*, edited by Ante Bralić and Branko Kasalo, pp. 243-272. Zadar: University of Zadar, 2021.

Keck, Jana. "Let's Talk Data, Bias, and Menstrual Cramps: Voicing GerWOMANness in the Nineteenth Century and Today." *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 68 (Spring 2021): 61-86.

Klotz, Anne-Christin. "The Warsaw Yiddish Press and their Struggle Against the Persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933-1935." *Gal-Ed: On the History and Culture of Polish Jewry* 26-27 (2021): 103-130.

Lässig, Simone. "Digital History: Challenges and Opportunities for the Profession." In "Digital History," edited by Simone Lässig. Special Issue, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 47.1 (2021): 5-34.

Liebisich-Gümuş, Carolin. "Airborne Asylum: Migration by Airplane in (West) Germany, 1945-1980s." *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington* 68 (2021): 39-60.

Liebisch-Gümuş, Carolin. "Nation und globalgeschichtliche Narration. Neue Narrative über Nationsbildung und Nationalismus." In *Narrative und Darstellungsweisen der Globalgeschichte*, edited by Gabriele Lingelbach, pp. 83-100. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021. doi 10.1515/9783110743067-005

Peters, Mario. "Automobile Tourism, Road Building, and Nature in the United States and Brazil, c. 1915-1935." *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 68 (2021): 19-35.

Roesch, Claudia. "Nach Belgrad, London oder Den Haag: Abtreibungsreisen westdeutscher Frauen in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren." *Ariadne: Forum für Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte* 77 (2021): 122-137.

Roesch, Claudia. "Silent No More! – Narrative des Entscheidens in Kampagnen der Befürworter und Gegner legaler Abtreibungen in den USA der 1980er Jahre." In *Semantiken und Narrative des Entscheidens*, edited by Susanne Spreckelmeier et. al., pp. 466-81. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021.

Stoneman, Mark and Kerstin von der Krone. "Blogging Histories of Knowledge in Washington, D. C." In "Digital History," edited by Simone Lässig. Special Issue, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 47.1 (2021): 5-34.

Urbansky, Sören. "'Kitaiskaja čuma'. Sinofobskie diskursy vo Vladivostoke, San-Francisko i Singapore v kontse XIX-načale XX veka." In *Regiony Rossijskoj imperii: Identičnost', reprezentacija, (na)značenie*, edited by Ekaterina Boltunova, Willard Sunderland, pp. 269-294. Moskau: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2021.

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Wetzell, Richard. "Rosa von Praunheim, Martin Dannecker und das Verhältnis der deutschen Schwulenbewegung zur homosexuellen Subkultur, 1971-1986: Von *Nicht der Homo-*

sexuelle ist pervers . . . zum Streit in der Aids-Krise." *Inver-
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(2021): 95-135.

Wetzell, Richard. "Penal Reform in Imperial Germany:
Conflict and Compromise," in *The Limits of Positivism: The
Movement for Criminal Law Reform in the West, 1870-1940*,
ed. Michele Pifferi (London/New York: Routledge, 2022),
42-73.

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Bondzio, Sebastian. "Why the History of Knowledge Matters
in a Digital History of Migration," *Migrant Knowledge*, Sep-
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19/history-of-knowledge-and-digital-history-of-migration/](https://migrantknowledge.org/2021/09/19/history-of-knowledge-and-digital-history-of-migration/)

Bondzio, Sebastian and Lukas Hennies. "The Logistics of
Mass Murder: Calculating Distances from the Mittelbau-Dor-
ra 'Book of the Dead,'" *NGHM@UOS*, October 12, 2021.
<https://nghm.hypotheses.org/3199>

Buller, Robin. "Cafés as Sites of Migrant Knowledge Exchange:
The Case of Ottoman Jews in Interwar Paris." *Migrant Knowl-
edge*, October 21, 2021, [https://migrantknowledge.org/2021/
10/21/cafes-as-sites-of-migrant-knowledge-exchange/](https://migrantknowledge.org/2021/10/21/cafes-as-sites-of-migrant-knowledge-exchange/)

Buller, Robin. "Ottoman Jews in Pari.," *Newsletter of the Ho-
locaust Educational Foundation*, Northwestern University,
2021. [https://hef.northwestern.edu/about/newsletters/hef-
nu-newsletter-summer-2021-final.pdf](https://hef.northwestern.edu/about/newsletters/hef-nu-newsletter-summer-2021-final.pdf)

Burkhardt, Daniel and Jana Keck. "Expanding Migrant
Knowledge: Contemporary and historical perspectives." *Con-
necting Research and Society*, October 10, 2021. <https://coeso.hypotheses.org/533>

Keck, Jana. "Introducing 'Migrant Connections': A Digital
History Research Hub for Learning and Participatory Activi-
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Keck, Jana. "Conference Report: HT 2021: Mobilität und Konnektivität: Quellen, Methoden und hermeneutische Deutungskämpfe im Spannungsfeld von analoger Quellenkritik und digitaler Forschung, 05.10.2021 – 08.10.2021 hybrid (München)," *H-Soz-Kult*, December 11, 2021. www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-9218

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Liebisch-Gümüş, Carolin. "Symptoms of the Jet Age: Global Air Mobility and Disease Control in the 1960s." *History of Knowledge*, February 16, 2021. <https://historyofknowledge.net/2021/02/16/symptoms-of-the-jet-age/>

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Roesch, Claudia. "Freedom through Knowledge: Liberalism, Censorship, and Public Health in Early Planned Parenthood Campaigns." *History of Knowledge*, March 24, 2021. <https://historyofknowledge.net/2021/03/24/freedom-through-knowledge/>

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Sutcliffe, Patricia C. "The Dr. Seuss Controversy and the Serious Business of Curating Knowledge of the World for Children." *History of Knowledge*, June 21, 2021. <https://history-ofknowledge.net/2021/06/21/dr-seuss-controversy/>

New Institute Publications

1. Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge University Press)

Moritz Föllmer and Pamela E. Swett, eds. *Reshaping Capitalism in Weimar and Nazi Germany*.

2. Transatlantische Historische Studien (Steiner Verlag)

Patrick Gaul. *Ideale und Interessen: Die mitteleuropäische Wirtschaft im Amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg*.

3. Worlds of Consumption (Palgrave Macmillan)

Paul Lerner, Uwe Spiekermann, Anne Schenderlein, eds. *Jewish Consumer Cultures in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Europe and North America*.

In memoriam: Mack Walker (1929–2021)

The German Historical Institute Washington mourns the death of Mack Walker, Professor Emeritus of History at Johns Hopkins University and a long-time member of the Institute's first Academic Advisory Board. Walker was one of the leading American historians of Early Modern German history. Within the profession, he was well-connected and a mentor to many gifted students. He had a special interest in the history of Southern

Germany and therefore knew that German history consisted of more than the problematic legacy of Prussia. He wrote a number of most influential books, for example *Germany and the Emigration, 1816 – 1885* (1964), *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648 – 1871* (1971), and *Johann Jacob Moser and the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation* (1981). His book *The Salzburg Transaction: Expulsion and Redemption in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (1992) was also published in a German translation.

That an eminent historian like Mack Walker had decided to support the newly established GHI Washington was an important message within the profession of American historians as well as an enormous help for me personally as the Institute's first director. Together with Vernon Lidtke, Mack Walker attended many of our events, and there were always opportunities to talk and exchange ideas. In one of our first conversations, in the fall of 1987, Mack pointed out how important it would be for me to attend the professional meetings of American historians, in particular the annual meetings of the German Studies Association and the Conference Group for Central European History (CGCEH, now CEHS) of the American Historical Association. A few months later, Mack introduced me to the members of the Conference Group. Due to Mack's good advice, I was thus able to present the plans for the new Institute to American colleagues shortly after the Institute's official opening. These early contacts were the beginning of a productive scholarly cooperation with many American historians and opened up wonderful opportunities for meeting resourceful colleagues. As a result, within a year after we had come to Washington, the Institute was able to organize sessions and be present both at GSA and CGCEH/AHA meetings. This way, the German Historical Institute, which had yet to gain a profile as an academic institution, had the chance to become, step by step, part of a larger transatlantic scholarly network.

Mack became a member of the Institute's Academic Advisory Council. He spoke only rarely. Rather, he enjoyed listening to the arguments of his German colleagues, some of whom

were not shy in expressing their opinions. When Mack did speak, his comments were always constructive and helped the Institute grow as an academic institution with a special scholarly profile and a unique mission. I always listened carefully to what he had to say, as it was always the Institute's success that he had at heart.

From the beginning, the Institute's Academic Advisory Council consisted of nine members: Seven Germans and two Americans. After discussions about how to give American historians a stronger presence within the Institute, Mack Walker and Konrad Jarausch took the initiative and helped to create the Friends of the German Historical Institute. In the past decades, leading American historians have joined the Friends. The annual meeting of the Friends in November has become an integral and important part of the Institute's program, and the Friends have significantly strengthened the exchange of ideas between American and German historians.

When I left Washington in 1993, Mack and I parted as good friends. When we met in the following years on various occasions, it was always a joy. It was with sadness and sorrow that I heard of Mack's death in February 2021. The German Historical Institute in Washington and I personally have lost a very dear friend to whom we will always be grateful.

Hartmut Lehmann, founding director
of the GHI Washington, 1987–1993

Staff Changes

Josh Seale, event coordinator at the GHI since 2019, left the institute in February 2022 in order to take up a position as editor and staff writer at the Embassy of Austria.

Bénédicte Pillot-Bechtold joined the GHI as administrative assistant and receptionist in February 2022. Before joining the GHI, she worked at the University of Bonn as a foreign secretary at the Institute for International Economic Policy.

GHI Fellowships and Internships: Call for Applications

Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships

The GHI awards short-term fellowships to European and North American doctoral students as well as postdoctoral scholars to pursue research projects that draw upon primary sources located in the United States. We are particularly interested in research projects that fit into the following fields: German and European history, the history of German-American relations, the role of Germany and the USA in international relations, and American history (European doctoral and postdoctoral scholars only). The proposed research projects should make use of historical methods and engage with the relevant historiography. We especially invite applications from doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars who currently have no funding from their home institutions. The fellowships are usually granted for periods of one to five months.

The GHI also offers a number of other long-term doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships with more specific profiles to strengthen key research interests at the institute, including: the history of knowledge, the history of race and ethnicity, the history of religion and religiosity, the history of family and kinship, the history of migration, and North American history. In addition to these opportunities, the GHI also offers the following fellowships: The Binational Tandem Research Program for “The History of Knowledge” and “Global and Trans-regional History,” and the Gerda Henkel Postdoctoral Fellowship for Digital History. For further information about these programs and current application deadlines, please check our website at www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships.

GHI Internships

The GHI Internship Program gives German and American students of history, political science, and library studies an

opportunity to gain experience at a scholarly research institute. Interns assist individual research projects, work for the library, take part in the preparation and hosting of conferences, and help with our publications. They receive a small stipend. The program is very flexible in the sense that the GHI tries to accommodate the interns' interests, abilities, and goals. A two-month minimum stay is required; a three-month stay is preferred. There is a rolling review of applications. For further information, please check our website at www.ghi-dc.org/internships.

GHI Fellowship Recipients, 2021/22

Long-term Visiting Fellowships

Bastiaan Bouwman (Freie Universität Berlin)

Between States: Christian Humanitarianism, Postwar Displacement, and the Formation of the International Refugee Regime, 1943-1951

Andreas Guidi (Universität Konstanz)

Transatlantic Smuggling between Mobility and Surveillance: The Mediterranean and the United States, 1930-2000

Nisrine Rahal (University of Toronto)

Love is Political: The Political and Cultural history of Christian Love as a Revolutionary Emotion in German-Speaking Europe

Jana Schmidt (Bard College)

Futures Not Yet: Jewish Exile, Black Politics

Anne Schult (New York University)

Counting the Countless: Statistics, Demography, and the Modern Refugee, 1920s-1960s

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Nikolas Dörr (Universität Bremen)

"A Plan to End Welfare as We Know it?" Social Policy Knowledge and Policy Transfers between the United States, Great Britain, and Germany since the 1980s

Julie Keresztes (Boston University)

Biography of Heinrich Hoffmann

Sabrina Lausen (Universität Paderborn)

Der 'Faktor Mensch': Der Wandel im Mensch-Maschine-Verhältnis in der internationalen Zivilluftfahrt in den 1950er bis 1980er Jahren

Sabrina Mittermeier (Universität Kassel)

A History of Unmade Queer Television in the United States and (West) Germany

Aleksandra Pomiecko (Stockton University)

Bandits, Outlaws, and Robin Hoods in Postwar Europe, 1917 - 1925

Jean Michel-Turcotte (Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz)

Limiting Inhumanity in Warfare: Western Military Officers, Humanitarianism and the Making of the Geneva Conventions, 1864–1949

Doctoral Fellowships

Bertille James (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

The Relationship between China and the European Community (1978-1992)

Till Knobloch (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Research on the Outbreak of World War II

Alwin Jasper Cubasch (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

Food Knowledge and Its Actors: NASA's Food & Nutrition Branch in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Charlotte Hoes (Universität Göttingen)

“Gefesselte Wildnis”: Zur Zirkulation von Tieren im 20. Jahrhundert

Constantin März (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

In Zeiten ‘undenkbarer’ Zukunft: Produktion, Charakter und Funktion von Nuklearkriegsszenarien als Kontingenzmanagement in den USA des Kalten Krieges (1957 - 1987).

Lea Kröner (Freie Universität Berlin)

Indigenous Missionaries in the Pacific Northwest during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

Pai-Li Liu (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

Ländliche Armut, Armutswissen und Armutsbekämpfung: Transnationale Entwicklungsarbeit Westdeutschlands in Südostasien in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren

Tabea Nasaroff (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg)

Das Demokratische vermessen: Politikwissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit in der Bundesrepublik (1949–1989)

Alexander Obermueller (Universität Erfurt)

On the Right Side: Identity Politics and Contested Democracy since the 1970s

Hauke Petersen (Universität Mainz)

Delinquenz während der amerikanischen Rheinlandbesetzung 1918-1923

Tim Schinschick (Universität Heidelberg)

Computer im Unterricht: Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem digitalen Wandel an allgemeinbildenden Schulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1980-1995

Dorothee Schwieters (Universität zu Köln)

(Un-)Officially Zoned for Industrial Pollution: Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice on the East Side of Houston, Texas since the 1970s

GHI RESEARCH SEMINAR AND COLLOQUIUM, SPRING & FALL 2021

- February 17** **Heathrow and the Making of Neoliberal Britain**
James Vernon (UC Berkeley)
- February 18** **Foreign Bodies: Race, Sexuality, and the Globalization of East German AIDS Science**
Johanna Folland (GHI Washington)
- February 24** **Seeing Like a State? Caravan Transport and Mobility Management in Late 19th-Century East Africa**
Andreas Greiner (GHI Washington)
- March 4** **Theater of Humiliation: Germans, Jews, and Poles in Western Poland**
T. Fielder Valone (GHI Washington)
- March 31** **Revisiting the Language of Class in the German Lands, 1776-1848**
Benjamin P. Hein (Brown University)
- April 1** **Researching German Migration to the United States by Mining Historical Big Data: The Castle Garden Immigration Center's Database in Digital History**
Sebastian F. Bondzio (GHI Washington/Roy Rosenzweig Center for New Media and History)
- April 7** **"A Boatload of Knowledge": The Circulation of Social Reform Knowledge in the Atlantic World, 1812-18488**
Claudia Roesch (GHI Washington)

- April 15** **Black Power and the Spirits: Activists' Turn to African Diasporic Religions**
Martina Schaefer (GHI Washington/Vanderbilt University)
- June 24** **Von Planeto-Cometen und planetarischen Fragmenten: Die Himmels-Polizey**
Janna Müller (Intern, GHI Washington)
- Women Suffrage, Nurses and the Influenza 1918**
Marietheres Pirngruber (Intern, GHI Washington)
- Die "Eß-Elite": Ernährung als Klassenfrage in *essen & trinken* (1972-1997)**
Yella Nicklaus (Intern, GHI Washington)
- Forschungsreisen und ihre wissenschaftliche Aufarbeitung: eine Analyse der Arbeitsweise von Alexander von Humboldt**
Miriam Ristau (Intern, GHI Washington)
- September 9** **Constitutional Patriotism Avant La Lettre: Toward a New Paradigm of Weimar (Democracy) Studies**
Manuela Achilles (University of Virginia)
- September 23** **The Oceanic Anthropocene: Asia's Role in Global Offshore Oil Development and its Transpacific Origins**
Stefan Hübner (National Singapore University)
- October 7** **Immigrants, Remittances, and the Courts, 1900-1930**
Atiba Pertilla (GHI Washington)

- October 28** **Beringia: Ancient Migration and Data Election Practices in the History of Scientific Knowledge Formation**
Catherine Brooke Penaloza-Patzak (University of Vienna/University of Pennsylvania)
- November 4** **A History of the Antimalarial Drug Lariam and Global Health Practices**
Tanja Hammel (University of Basel)
- November 18** **Decolonization in Flight: Global Air Travel at the End of Empire**
Jessica Pearson (Macalester College)
- December 16** **Emancipation and Agricultural Technologies: The Chesapeake Tobacco Cropscape in Three Periods**
Barbara Hahn (Texas Tech University)

DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE DC (VIRTUAL) MEETUP #DCHDC, 2021

March 23 **Memory, Preservation, and the Role of Public Spaces**

May 25 **Digital Audio Preservation: Approaches to Access**

David Seubert (UC Santa Barbara), Allison McClanahan (Indiana University), Yuri Shimoda (UCLA), Miles Levy (Smithsonian Channel)

October 19 **The Present & Future of Transcription**

Lauren Algee (Library of Congress), Atiba Pertilla (German Historical Institute Washington), Hannah Storch (Pixel Acuity)

SPRING LECTURE SERIES 2022

Not the Usual Suspects: Everyday Agents of Globalization in the Twentieth Century

Organized by Andreas Greiner and Mario Peters

This lecture series reassesses globalization from a bottom-up perspective. Globalization processes have typically been associated with intergovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and NGOs. Less known are the “everyday” agents of economic, cultural, and political globalization: historical actors who initiated and promoted connection and exchange (intentionally and unintentionally) across world regions through their day-to-day activities. Backpacking tourists in postwar Europe, for instance, redefined the very idea of Europe with their cross-border itineraries and the many interactions with their host communities. The lecture series shines a spotlight on these and other drivers of globalization at the micro-social level. The different lectures discuss the activities of individual and group actors since the 1920s, covering a truly global range of geographies including the Middle East, East Asia, and the Caribbean. By applying an actor-centered approach to the study of twentieth-century globalization, the lecture series highlights the significance of globalization agents not usually suspected of playing this role.

**March 31
(virtual) Empire’s Mistress: The Labor of Love in Imperial Circuits**

Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez (University of Hawai’i)

**April 14
(virtual) Doing Utopia and Communal Living in South Africa, Japan, and Jamaica, 1900-1950**

Robert Kramm (LMU Munich)

April 21 Backpack Ambassadors: How Youth Travel Integrated Europe

Richard Ivan Jobs (Pacific University Oregon)

May 5

**Reaching the People: American Globalism
and the Quest for Universal Literacy**

Valeska Huber (University of Vienna)

GHI CALENDAR OF EVENTS, 2021/2022

2021

- September 13** **Transatlantic Data Feminist Debating Club: Comparing Data Ethics in Germany and the United States**
Virtual Event | Organizers: Jana Keck (GHI Washington), Emily Kuehbach (GHI Washington), Janna Müller (GHI Washington)
- September 16** **In the Mood for Nostalgia: Hong Kong's Colonial Legacy in Transition**
Virtual Lecture | Speaker: Claudia Lillge (Freie Universität Berlin)
- September 17** **Discussing the Seven Seas of DH: A Global Fishbowl**
Online Event (Zoom) | Organized by the Working Group Digital Humanities of the Max Weber Foundation
- September 23** **Garbage Dump of the West": Re-examining the Origins of East Germany's End**
Virtual Lecture | Speaker: Thomas Fleischman (University of Rochester)
- September 30-
October 3** **12th Medieval History Seminar**
Seminar at GHI London | Conveners: Paul Freedman (Yale University), Bernhard Jussen (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main), Simon MacLean (University of St Andrews), Fiona Griffiths (Stanford University), Len Scales (Durham University), and Dorothea Weltecke (Goethe University Frankfurt) | Organized by the German

Historical Institute London in co-operation with the German Historical Institute Washington

- September 30-
October 4** **Sexuality and the Law in German-Speaking Europe**
Seminar at the 45th Annual Conference of the German Studies Association, Indianapolis, Indiana | Conveners: Martin Lücke (Freie Universität Berlin), Veronika Springmann (Freie Universität Berlin), and Richard F. Wetzell (German Historical Institute Washington)
- October 1** **Confluences: Ilija Trojanow in Conversation with Chunjie Zhang**
Virtual Panel Discussion | Speakers: Ilija Trojanow and Chunjie Zhang
- October 12-
15** **Historicizing the Refugee Experience, 17th - 21st Centuries**
First Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies at the KWI in Essen | Organized by The University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE), the German Historical Institute in Washington (GHI) and the National History Center of the American Historical Association (NHC), in cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Center for Integration and Migration Research (InZentIM), the Institute for the Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21)
- October 18-21** **Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives**
Fifth Annual Bucerius Young Scholars Forum at the Pacific Office of the GHI Washington | Conveners: Franziska Exeler

(Department of History, Free University Berlin; Centre for History and Economics, University of Cambridge) and Sören Urbansky (GHI Pacific Office)

- October 18** **Knowing Refugees, Historically Speaking**
4th Bucerius Lecture | Speaker: Peter Gatrell (University of Manchester); Panelist / Discussant: Stacy Fahrenthold (UC Davis) | Sponsor: Institute of European Studies
- October 22** **Fictions of Origins: Saša Stanišić in conversation with Lilla Balint, Djordje Popović, and Damion Searls**
Virtual Panel Discussion | Speakers: Saša Stanišić, Lilla Balint, Djordje Popović, and Damion Searls
- October 25-26** **Archives of Global Transit: Reconsidering Jewish Refugees from Nazi Europe**
Workshop | Conveners: Anna-Carolin Augustin, Simone Lässig, Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş (all GHI Washington) and Swen Steinberg (GHI Pacific Regional Office / Queen's University)
- October 26** **Borderless and Brazen: May Ayim's Internationalism**
Lecture (Virtual) | Speaker: Tiffany N. Florvil (University of New Mexico)
- November 10** **No Birthday Party this Year: Kristallnacht within the Memories of Shanghai Jewish Refugees**
Virtual Lecture on Zoom | Speaker: Kevin Ostoyich (Valparaiso University / Senior Fellow GHI Pacific Regional Office);

Moderator: Robin Buller (Tandem Visiting Fellow, GHI Pacific Office)

- November 11** **Asking the Impossible: The Hunger for the Unknowable in 20th-Century US & European Thought**
35th Annual Lecture of the GHI Washington (Virtual) | Speaker: Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen (University of Wisconsin - Madison); Comment: Michael Hochgeschwender (Ludwig Maximilians Universität München)
- November 15-16** **Contested Meanings of Migration Facilitation: Emigration Agents, Coyotes, Rescuers, and Human Traffickers**
Annual Academic and Policy Symposium: Innovation through Migration at GHI PRO | Conveners: Ulf Brunnbauer (Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies & Regensburg University) and Sören Urbansky (GHI Washington Pacific Office)
- November 15** **When, Where, and Why do “Mobility Brokers” Become “Migrant Traffickers”? States, Markets, Infrastructures**
Virtual Lecture on Zoom | Speaker: Andreas Fahrmeir (Goethe Universität Frankfurt); Moderator: Ulf Brunnbauer (University of Regensburg)
- November 19** **The Power of Multilingualism: Olga Grjasnowa in Conversation with Elisabeth Krimmer, Karina Deifel and Yasemin Yildiz**
Virtual Event

December 1 Competing Memories? Inter|National Debates about Remembering the Holocaust and Colonialism

Panelists: Frank Biess (UC San Diego), Robert Heinze (DHI Paris), Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Center for Research on Antisemitism, Berlin), and Esra Ozyurek (University of Cambridge, London) | Moderators: Rita Chin (University of Michigan) and Akasemi Newsome (UC Berkeley)

December 1-3 Climate Change, Energy, and Sustainability in the Pacific Region

Virtual Publication Workshop | FRIAS (Freiburg) and Online

December 2-3 In Search of the Migrant Child: Pieces and Bits from the Past. Children's Agency in Migration

Virtual Workshop | Conveners: Friederike Kind-Kovacs (Hannah-Arendt-Institute for Totalitarianism Research, Dresden), Sheer Ganor (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis), and Swen Steinberg (Carleton University, Ottawa / German Historical Institute Washington). Organized by the GHI Washington with its Pacific Office.

December 6 Voluminous Ventures: Writing World History in the 21st Century

Virtual Panel Discussion | Speakers: Christoph Cornelißen (Univ. Frankfurt/Main) and Wolfgang Schwentker (Osaka Univ.); Comment: Harald Fischer-Tiné (ETH Zurich), Quentin Deluermoz (University of Paris), Merry Wiesner-Hanks (Univ. Wisconsin-Madison), and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (Paris Diderot University)

- December 7** **Resisting Persecution: Jews and their Petitions during the Holocaust**
Virtual Lecture | Speaker: Wolf Gruner, University of Southern California; Moderator: John Efron (UC Berkeley)
- December 9** **The Idea and Ideology of Empire in the Middle Ages**
Virtual Panel Discussion | Speakers: Jennifer Davis (Catholic University of America), Wolfram Drews (Münster University), Alexander Lee (University of Warwick), and Eva Schlotheuber (Heinrich-Heine University, Düsseldorf)
- December 13-15** **Antisemitism and Sexuality Reconsidered**
Conference at the Center for Research on Antisemitism, TU Berlin | Conveners: Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Center for Research on Antisemitism, TU Berlin), Anna-Carolin Augustin (GHI Washington), Sebastian Bischoff (Paderborn University), Kristoff Kerl (University of Copenhagen), in cooperation with the GHI Washington and the Center for Research on Antisemitism, TU Berlin

2022

- January 12** **Provincializing Realism: Why the History of an Atlantic Foreign Policy Tradition Matters Today**
Lecture | Speaker: Matthew Spector (University of Pennsylvania); moderated by John Connelly (University of California, Berkeley)

- January 21** **Homeland as Nightmare: Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah in Conversation with Jon Cho-Polizzi and Deniz Göktürk**
 Panel Discussion (Virtual) | Speakers: Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, Jon Cho-Polizzi, and Deniz Göktürk
- January 26** **The Transatlantic Origins of the Modern Research University**
 Virtual Lecture | Speaker: Emily Levine (Stanford University); moderator: Matthew Specter (UC Berkeley)
- January 27-28** **Laboratories of the Social: Utopian Settlements and Reform Movements in the Long 19th Century**
 Virtual Workshop | Conveners: Anne Kwaschik (Universität Konstanz) and Claudia Roesch (GHI Washington)
- February 10** **Ottomans After Empire: Sephardi Immigrant Space and Daily Life in Interwar Paris**
 Virtual Lecture | Speaker: Robin Buller (GHI Washington Pacific Office)
- March 4** **Whiteness and Collective Trauma in the Rearview Mirror**
 Virtual Lecture | Speakers: Alice Hasters, Mohamed Amjahid, Akasemi Newsome
- March 16** **Foreign Policy and the New German Government**
 Panel Discussion on Zoom | Panelist: Charles M. Huber (Former Parliament Member, CDU 2013-2017), Sudha David-Wilp (Deputy Director, Berlin Office of the German Marshall

Fund of the United States), Oliver Schramm (Consul General, German Consulate General San Francisco); Moderators: Sören Urbansky (GHI Washington Pacific Office) and Akase-mi Newsome (Institute of European Studies)

- March 18** **Blind Spots in Shared Memory: Jenny Erpenbeck in Conversation with Lilla Balint and Kurt Beals**
Panel Discussion | Speaker: Jenny Erpenbeck, Author Moderators: Kurt Beals (Washington University); Lilla Balint (UC Berkeley) | Sponsors: Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley, Department of German at UC Berkeley, Goethe-Institut, German Consulate General San Francisco
- March 23** **Launch of New Digital Research Infrastructure: Migrant Connections**
Launch Event | Hosted by Axel Jansen and Atiba Pertilla (German Historical Institute Washington) and Vera Beutin (Embassy of Germany in the United States)
- March 29** **The War in Ukraine, the Post-Cold War Order, and European Security**
Panel Discussion on Zoom | Panelists: Jonas J. Driedger (Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, D.C.), Liana Fix (Koerber Foundation in Berlin), Katherine Kjellström Elgin (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) in Washington, D.C.), and Kristina A. Spohr (London School of Economics and Political Science); Moderator: Daniel S. Hamilton, (Brookings Institution)

- March 30** **Objects, Cultural Heritage, and Belonging**
Virtual Lecture | Speakers: Mirjam Brusius, Duane Jethro, Isabel Richter | Series: Conversations on Memory Culture in Contemporary Germany | Organized by the Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley, the Pacific Office of the German Historical Institute Washington, and the Goethe-Institut of San Francisco
- March 31** **Empire's Mistress: The Labor of Love in Imperial Circuits**
Lecture (Zoom) | Speaker: Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez (University of Hawai'i)
- April 4-5** **Knowledge on the Move: Information Networks During and After the Holocaust**
International Workshop at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles | Conveners: Robin M Buller (GHI Washington Pacific Office), Wolf Gruner (USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research), Anne-Christin Klotz (GHI Washington Pacific Office) | Co-organized by the Pacific Office of the German Historical Institute Washington and the USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research
- April 14** **Doing Utopia and Communal Living in South Africa, Japan, and Jamaica, 1900-1950**
Lecture (Zoom) | Speaker: Robert Kramm (LMU Munich)
- April 21** **Backpack Ambassadors: How Youth Travel Integrated Europe**
Lecture at GHI Washington | Speaker: Richard Ivan Jobs (Pacific University Oregon)

- May 5** **Reaching the People: American Globalism and the Quest for Universal Literacy**
Lecture at GHI Washington | Valeska Huber (University of Vienna)
- May 19** **New Research on and beyond Social Movements in Cold War Germany:**
Roundtable Discussion (Virtual) | Panelists: Tiffany Florvil (University of New Mexico), Samuel Clowes Huneke (George Mason University), Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University), Craig Griffiths (Manchester Metropolitan University); Moderators: Kerstin Brückweh (Berliner Hochschule für Technik) and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington)
- June 2-4** **Datafication in the Historical Humanities: Reconsidering Traditional Understandings of Sources and Data**
International Conference and Workshop at GHI Washington | Conveners: German Historical Institute Washington in collaboration with Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH), Chair of Digital History at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Consortium Initiative NFDI4Memory, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, and Stanford University, Department of History
- June 14-17** **27th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar: German History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**
Seminar at GHI Washington and BMW Center, Georgetown University | Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University) and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington)

- July 13-16** **Historicizing the Refugee Experience, 17th-21st Centuries**
 Second Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies | Organized by The University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE), the GHI Washington and the National History Center of the American Historical Association (NHC), in cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Center for Integration and Migration Research (InZentIM), the Institute for the Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) and the Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21)
- September 8-10** **Roads to Exclusion: Socio-Spatial Dynamics of Mobility Infrastructures since 1800**
 International conference at the GHI Washington | Organized by Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş (GHI Washington), Andreas Greiner (GHI Washington), Mario Peters (GHI Washington), and Roland Wenzlhuemer (LMU Munich)
- September 25-30** **Environments of Inequality: Crises, Conflicts, Comparisons**
 International Summer School at the Maria Sibylla Merian Center for Advanced Latin American Studies (CALAS), Guadalajara, Mexico | Organizing Committee: Cornelia Aust (Bielefeld University, SFB 1288), Sarah Beringer (GHI Washington), Olaf Kaltmeier (CALAS), Albert Manke (GHI Washington Regional Office), Mario Peters (GHI Washington), Ann-Kathrin Volmer (CALAS)
- September 30** **Beyond Work for Pay? Basic-Income Concepts in Global Debates on Automation, Poverty, and Unemployment (1920-2020)**

Conference at the German Historical Institute Washington | Conveners: Manuel Franzmann (Sociology, Kiel), Axel Jansen (GHI Washington), Alice O'Connor (History, University of California, Santa Barbara)

**October
10-13**

Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives

Sixth Annual Bucerius Young Scholars Forum at the GHI Washington's Pacific Office | Conveners: Frithjof Benjamin Schenk (Department of History, University of Basel) and Sören Urbansky (Pacific Office of the GHI Washington)

**November
3-5**

German Migrants and Migrating Knowledge in Latin American History

Conference at GHI Washington | Conveners: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Mario Peters (GHI Washington), H. Glenn Penny (University of Iowa), Stefan Rinke (Freie Universität Berlin)

GHI Library

The GHI library concentrates on German history and transatlantic relations, with emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition to providing essential literature for scholarly research, the library fulfills an important cultural mission: no other library in the United States offers a similarly condensed inventory of modern German history. The library offers access to about 50,000 books, DVDs, CD-ROMs, microfiches, and 220 print journals. In addition, we offer access to about 500 e-books and 100 online journals.

The collection includes books on American history written by German authors as well as historical literature of the institute's past research foci: global history, religious studies, exile and migration studies, environmental history, and economic history. The collection includes only print materials, mostly secondary literature; there are no archival holdings.

The GHI library offers free access to scholars as well as the general public; appointments or reader cards are not necessary. The library does not lend materials but visitors may consult material from the entire collection in our beautiful reading room, which also offers access to a variety of databases for journal articles, historical newspapers, genealogical research, and bibliographical research.

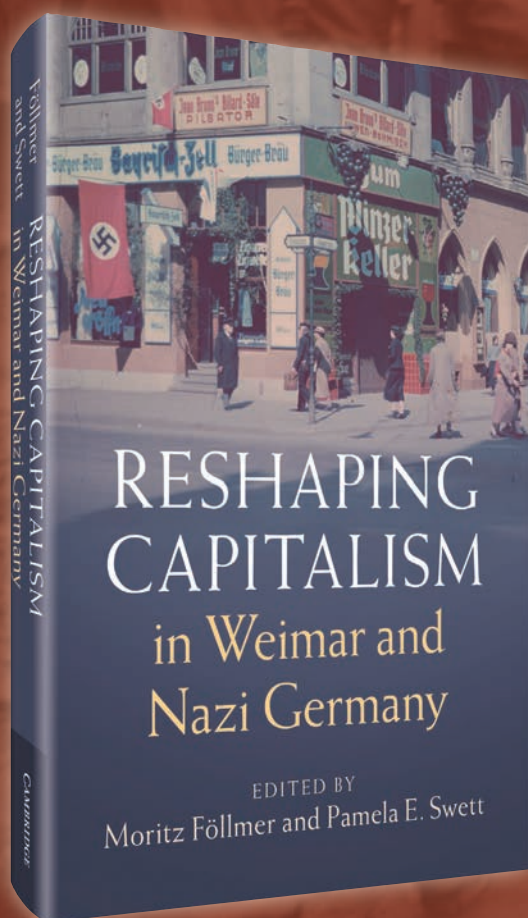
For the library catalog or a list of our databases, please visit <http://www.ghi-dc.org/library>. Or send an email to library@ghi-dc.org for any further questions.

The **library hours** are Monday to Thursday from 9 am to 5 pm, Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm, and by appointment.

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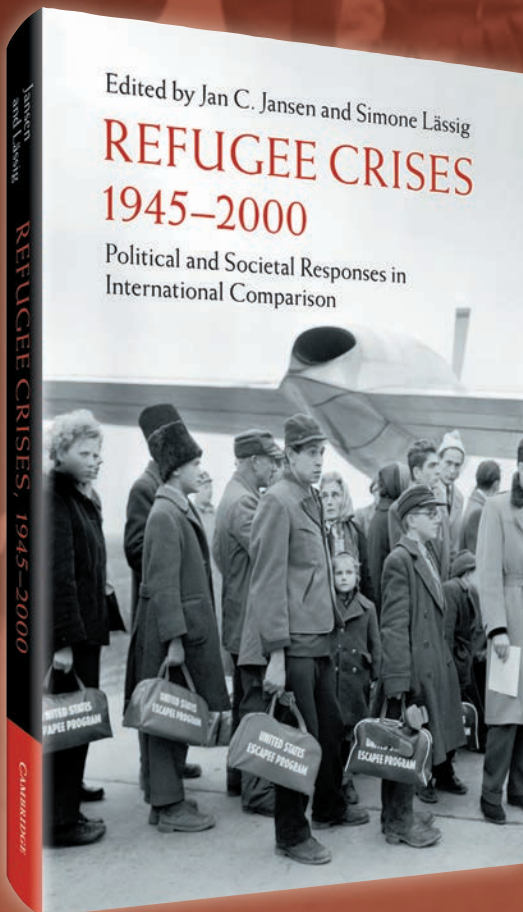
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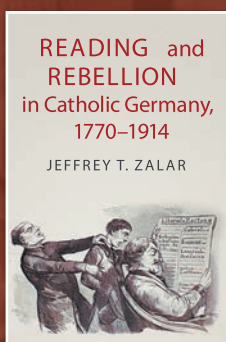
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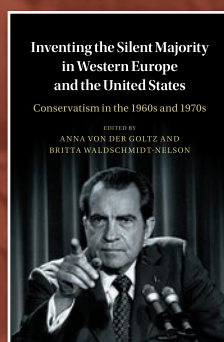
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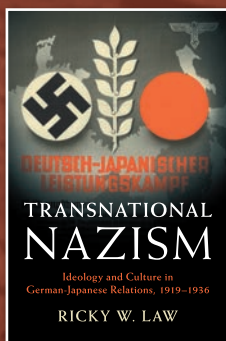
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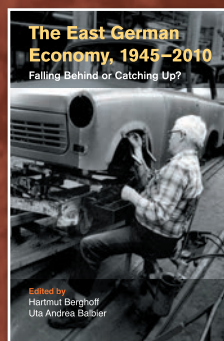
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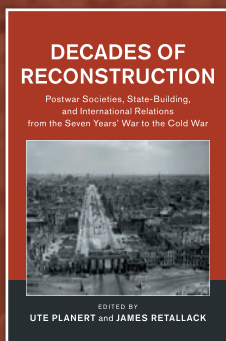
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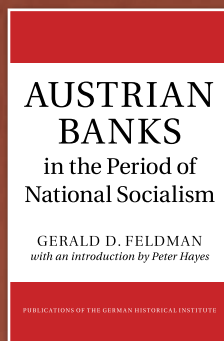
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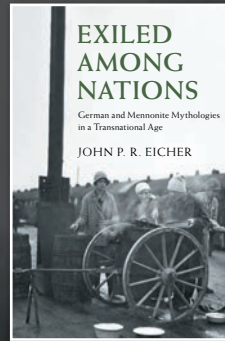
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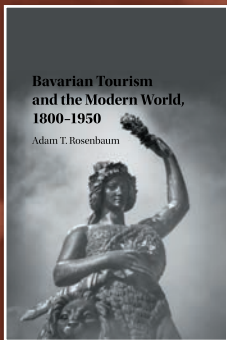
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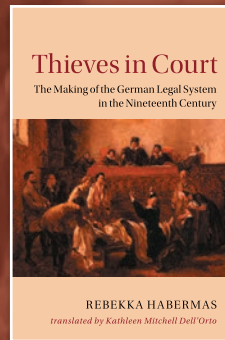
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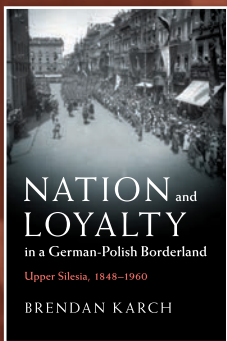
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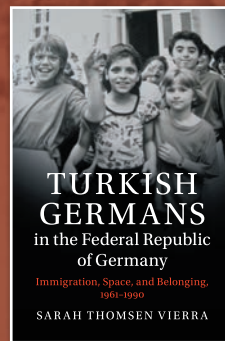
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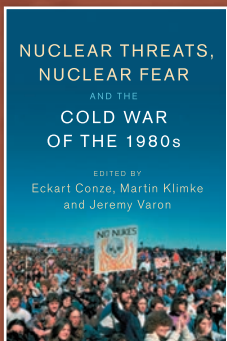
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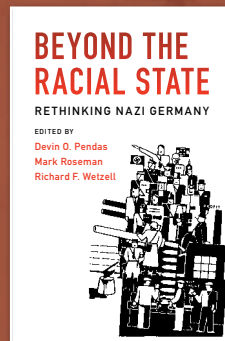
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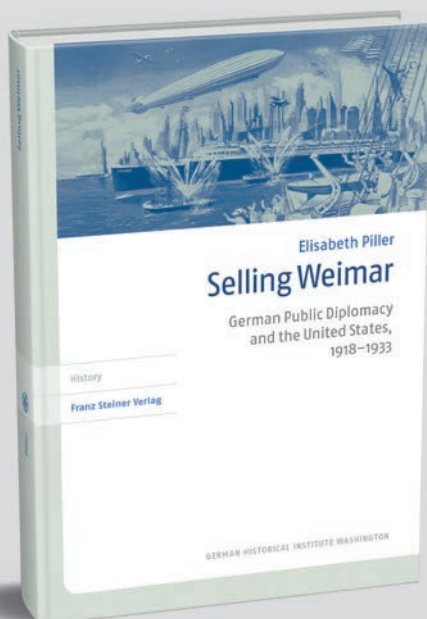


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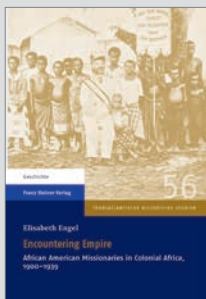
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In *Encountering Empire*, Elisabeth Engel traces how black American missionaries – men and women grappling with their African heritage – established connections in Africa during the heyday of European colonialism. Reconstructing the black American ‘colonial encounter’, Engel analyzes the images, transatlantic relationships, and possibilities of representation African American missionaries developed for themselves while negotiating colonial regimes. Illuminating a neglected chapter of Atlantic history, Engel demonstrates that African Americans used imperial structures for their own self-determination. *Encountering Empire* thus challenges the notion that pan-Africanism was the only viable strategy for black emancipation.

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After a successful career in the Weimar Republic’s cultural industry, German director William Dieterle accepted a contract offered him by the US film company Warner Bros. Pictures in 1930. There, he succeeded in building a network of German-speaking artists, including Max Reinhardt and Fritz Kortner and made films that contributed to the fight against National Socialism and to representing a “different Germany” in emigration. In this German-language book, Larissa Schütze describes Dieterle’s integration into the institutional structures of Warner Bros. Studios and reconstructs the production history of the films he made there on the basis of the company’s documents.



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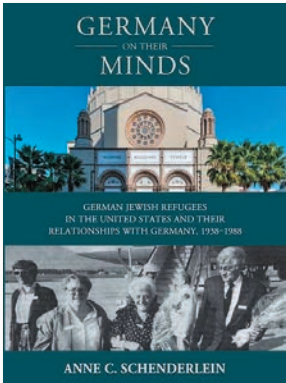
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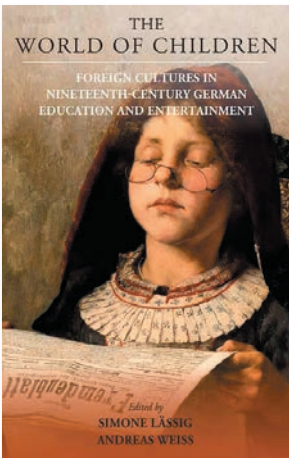
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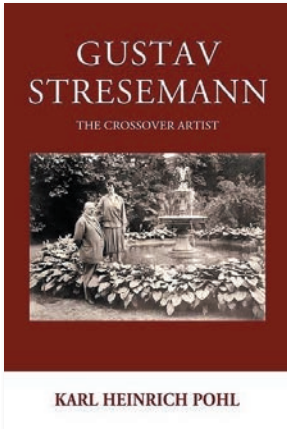
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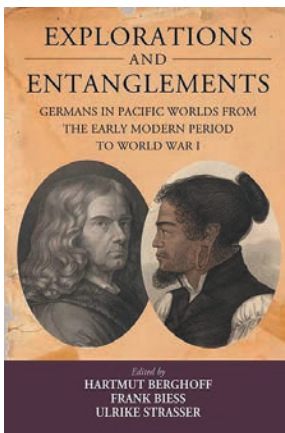
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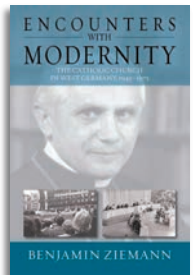
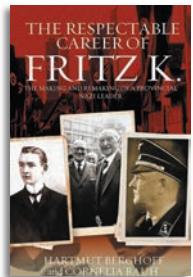
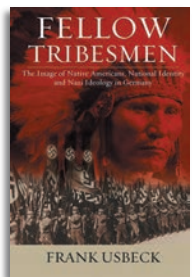
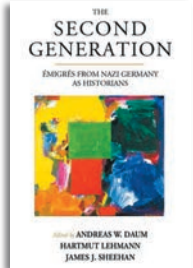
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History of the Americas (19th and 20th centuries), transatlantic history, mobility studies, history of knowledge, environmental history, urban history and housing research

Dr. Claudia Roesch, Research Fellow

History of the family; history of migration; gender and sexuality; transatlantic exchanges; history of knowledge

Dr. Sören Urbansky, Research Fellow

Global and transnational history; microhistory; Russia, the Soviet Union and China (18th to 20th centuries); Chinese diaspora in the Pacific; borders and infrastructures

Dr. Richard F. Wetzell, Research Fellow and Editor of the GHI Bulletin

Modern European history; modern German history; intellectual and cultural history; legal history; history of science and medicine; history of sexuality

Dr. Thomas L. Hughes, Senior Visiting Research Fellow

Dr. Robert Gerald Livingston, Senior Visiting Research Fellow

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Daniel Burckhardt, Technical Developer

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Dr. Kelly McCullough, Project Manager

Ralph Miller, IT/Systems Manager

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Rebekka Sherman-Loeffler, Assistant to the Director

Dr. Swen Steinberg, Acting Head of Strategy & Communications

Dr. Patricia Casey Sutcliffe, Editor

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