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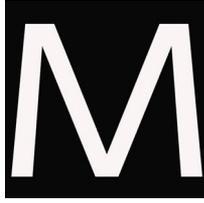
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Supported by the College of Liberal Arts and the Core Humanities Program at the University of Nevada, Reno, *The Montag* seeks to publish accessibly written, high quality work by undergraduate students that showcases the value of a liberal arts education and thoughtfully engages with the issues confronting humanity in the twenty-first century. The journal is edited and produced by an undergraduate editorial staff and published in the spring semester of each academic year. Those interested in working for *The Montag* should visit: unr.edu/core-humanities/the-montag

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Table of Contents

Contents

Volume VIII.....	1
Editor’s Note.....	6
The Human Cost of Commodified Freedom	6
Tanya Ostorga	6
Ideas of Individuals, Communities, and Institutions at the Foundations of the United States Housing Crisis.....	17
Katie Worrall.....	17
The Sharp-edged Problem of the 21st-Century	29
Ryan Gorman.....	29
The in Between.....	37
Diana Meza	37
The Changing Focuses and Demands of Feminism Throughout History.....	47
Anna Paterson	47
The American Dream Is No Longer for Everyone: A Historiographical Analysis of Immigration Throughout History	56
Benjamin Engel.....	56
<i>Works Cited</i>	63

The Second American Century: The Wind at Our Back and the Death in Our Wake	65
Jade Utterback	65

Cover Art

The front cover of this edition of *The Montag* showcases original artwork by Tyler Ewing.



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Editor's Note

In this edition of *The Montag*, we found that each essay held poignant commentary on the United States in its past, present, and future forms. By highlighting topics like immigration, feminism, technology, and infrastructure, the 2019 version of *The Montag* functions as a unique time capsule by capturing the current conversations surrounding these issues and providing fascinating analysis of why these topics matter and how they have evolved throughout history. It is my hope that by picking up and reading this journal you learn something you may not have known or are given a new lens through which to understand the issues that face the United States today.

Writing plays an essential role in preserving the thoughts and experiences of the people who existed during that moment. By publishing a diverse range of essays, *The Montag* strives to reflect some of these conversations in order to highlight student thought in the year 2019.

Claire Carlson
Editor-in-Chief
The Montag

The Human Cost of Commodified Freedom

Tanya Ostorga

Freedom imagined as a tangible object, a rival in consumption, vulnerable to lose its power if there are too many recipients, is an American phenomenon. America coupling economic power with freedom, perhaps even conflating the two, has allowed fearmongering to be amplified by strategic complicity. Economic interests, possessed by those in power, come to fruition when the masses question the conditions of their freedom in conjunction with doubts of their purchasing power. Freedom and economic vitality, despite the validity of concerns raised, serve to be digestible justifications for the public to turn a blind eye towards injustice. Historically, under such pretenses, passiveness is framed as an adequate response to racist terror. The most shameful periods of America's history are a result of economic interests prioritized over principles of equality and justice towards marginalized groups.

Beneficiaries of American capitalism naturalize the idea that economic success and freedom are synonymous. Capitalism expedited America's economic prominence, granting mobility and freedom unparalleled to the European experience. Economic prosperity gave way to freedom from

immobility's shackles, a freedom that would be granted at the expense of human beings forced under the Atlantic slave trade, effectively repainting the moral stain in the beginning stages of fading on the global economic stage, back. Decades prior to the Civil War demonstrate preference to compromise, effectively translating to being complicit of the institution of slavery in the following policy outcomes: Missouri Compromise of 1820 created a geographical divide of free and slave states; Nullification Crisis of 1832 sprung due to Anti-Northern sentiment from the South; Gag Rule barred members of Congress from introducing Anti-slavery petitions. Retrospective assumptions made on behalf of President Lincoln's political platform, in regards to a sudden heightened sense of morality, ignored the Union's interest in keeping the nation as a whole through its economic lens. Through the use of county-level census and voting data from the first and second election of President Lincoln's term, there was a 2.25% shift of Northern voters voting Republican in order to serve their manufacturing interests (Liscow). Economic interests posed by class divisions were also reflected by American political parties. Throughout every state, there existed "prosperous farmers, planters, and businessmen" and "urban workers, impoverished farmers, and individuals who felt excluded" from the economic prosperity (Egnal 30). Under the observed assumption that individuals traditionally vote for their economic interests, President Lincoln was reflective of Northern economic interests. The North was not necessarily interested in protecting the rights of those dehumanized, but rather, were seeking to secure potential subsidized lands of the West

exclusively for white Americans (Egnal 31). As President Lincoln said during his seventh presidential debate:

I am still in favor of our new Territories being in such a condition that white men may find a home—may find some spot where they can better their condition where they can settle upon new soil. (Seventh Debate with Douglas, Oct. 15 1858)

The momentum of the abolition movement served as a political facade, garnering additional constituents for political capital, in order to help promote the economic interests of the West.

The founding fathers embedded in the Constitution a fundamental contradiction, effectively counteracting what Americans have shown to desire most: freedom and autonomy. This American-defined notion did not extend to black people fleeing from the very subhuman treatment the American economy benefited from. The U.S. government's response to this human rights crisis was to enact the "Fugitive Slave Clause," grotesquely equating the same level of humanitarian concern when dealing with stolen cattle.

Economic interests eclipsing humanitarian rights were a symptom of indifference on a policy level, especially when slaves were held to the same regard as tangible objects. The South wanted the North to collaborate in an effort to return these fugitive slaves to their owners. Not only was it done because of economic interests, but also with the ideology that, like any other economic good, freedom is a rival in consumption. The possibility of former slaves

becoming part of the consumerist facet was a cause for concern for economically insecure white individuals because their racial status was the only determinant of socioeconomic status (Zinn 188). It was the unshakable belief that there was an alleged fundamental, biological difference on how people operated that was determined by race. People believed that it was pivotal to not allow “intermixing” as this might cause existing freedoms to be impeded upon. Under the pretense of this unfounded threat, the ideology based off of the fear of a lost status was strategically interwoven in institutional frameworks to ensure that economic equality was unattainable for newly freed black people.

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave is a testament to the human cost of policies implemented in America in favor of economic interests. Once the Fugitive Slave Clause was practiced, the idea of equality and justice was solidified as reserved principles to be enjoyed by those in the white hegemony. Written to Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips describes the absence of human dignity:

In all the broad lands which the Constitution of the United States overshadows, there is no single spot,—however narrow or desolate,—where a fugitive slave can plant himself and say, ‘I am safe.’ The whole armory of Northern Law has no shield for you. (232)

Supporting the fact that the move to the North was not a promise of safety for fugitive slaves, the North and

South survived on a mutual relationship facilitating economic interests through compromise. Due to established economic precedence over the extension of humanity, there was found to be no framework designed to remedy, or considered reparations for centuries of institutional crime. The Fugitive Slave Clause violated fugitive slaves' rights to lawful due process. This left black Americans vulnerable to arrest without reason or evidence. For fugitive slaves, the Constitution failed them because it was not designed for them. The reminder that America, those of the hegemony, were never interested in equality in justice for slaves is encapsulated in Douglass' writing:

So, when the holidays ended, we staggered up from the filth of our wallowing, took a long breath, and marched to the field,—feeling, upon the whole, rather glad to go, from what our master had deceived us into a belief was freedom, back to the arms of slavery. (287)

The beneficiaries were active in ensuring that justice and equality were not granted to fugitive slaves due to the lack of financial incentive and continued efforts to maintain white supremacy.

Through the layering of government regulation, the elite, white hegemony has laid the conditions of freedom to mirror the assumptions for monopoly. Enabling a government that is ruled by white, wealthy elites, the white hegemony has positioned itself as the supplier of freedom, as it has control of the design of the institutional framework.

Close substitutes for freedom do not exist when freedom is defined to not be in a state of imprisonment or enslavement. Barriers of entry are set in place to minimize the risk of competition: people outside of the hegemony entering the market, potentially redefining the conditions, which in turn would threaten the establishment's status. With similar behavior to monopolistic firms, the allotment of freedom is simulated as price discrimination when suppliers have complete discretion on how much to allot and to whom. The illusion of choice is not even granted to consumers in the market of freedom.

During WWII, American families of Japanese ancestry were deprived of realizing the American Dream simply for resembling a distant enemy. Supporters of the internment of Americans were motivated by economic interests that saw potential profits of the degraded dignified lives of their "competitors." The internment of Japanese-Americans, a shameful part of America's history, was a symptom of racism founded on white American farmers feeling threatened economically. According to the Foundation of Economic Education, the executive order signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt was largely supported by Californian farmers who carried resentment toward the Japanese presence on farms in California. In fact, there was an existence for special interests in support of the executive order. This seemingly heightened antagonism towards Japanese-Americans was not a fresh phenomenon. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, under the guise of national security, special interests were emboldened to push for anti-Japanese laws. Thirty-three years before the executive order, policies were set in place to

work against the economic success of Japanese Americans:

During the 1909 legislative session in California, at least 17 anti-Japanese bills were introduced, and the 1913 session was flooded by more than 30 anti-Japanese measures. Most proposals dealt with the holding of agricultural land. (Oyama et al. v. State of California)

On the state level, primarily in California, despite every firm being a competitor regardless of race, there were already decades of the alignment of threatened white Americans to lobby against their distinguished competitors: farmers of Japanese ancestry. While these special interests were not the sole reason for the internment of Japanese-Americans, it reveals that institutionally, there is an accommodation for legislation that is designed to keep those who are not of the economic hegemony out.

As described by Ted Nakashima in "Concentration Camp: U.S. Style," entire families were stripped of their constitutional rights without due process. Many were from college-educated backgrounds and contributed to society and to the United States with their work, factors often stated as prerequisites to be deserved recipients of American freedom. In his writing, Nakashima describes the terrible conditions as a result of the depravity of human dignity they went through; lack of adequate sanitation, food, and the feeling of justice. The complete disregard for their contributions serves as evidence of the lack of humanitarian concern when human degradation is found to maintain the hegemony's

socioeconomic benefit.

The continued trend of policies bereft from morality is reflective of today's reality. Images of Central American children being placed in cages and refugees attempting to cross the border have dominated the headlines. While the opposition shames refugees for making their journey to the United States and having the audacity to apply for asylum, what is often not asked enough is why there is such a mass exodus of individuals fleeing countries predominantly in Central America. These countries have been negatively impacted by United States intervention, which was done in the name of protecting its own economic interests. The legacy of the Cold War, an ideological war, allowed for the United States to gain concern over rising leftist groups in Central America. The United States, not wanting to jeopardize their economic state, could not afford to allow these Central American governments to start flirting with communism or socialist ideologies. This resulted in United States economic funds being invested in international matters, instilling governments that strongly opposed communism, despite these governments being right-wing, authoritarian and/or military dictatorships. This is seen in El Salvador, where 85% of the killings, kidnappings, and torture had been the work of government forces that were trained by the United States (Truth Commission: El Salvador, 2014). Weak and corrupt, these governments have failed to provide a deserving quality of life, making these countries unlivable. After years of state failure, people are fleeing due to a crisis that was a result of U.S. policy seeking to protect its own economic interests.

The current immigration crisis taking place at the

United States' southern border is a consequence of past economic policy and the opposition to lending humanity is sustained due to economic fears. However, people are more than their economic contribution. *The New Yorker* article "The Five-Year-Old Who Was Detained at the Border and Persuaded to Sign Away Her Rights" depicts the emotional toll of an immigration system that is inefficient because of economic fears of immigration. The five-year-old in the article now holds resentment as a consequence of being separated from her family for the summer (Stillman). The trauma that people endure is what the deterrence strategy is designed to maximize.

The United States has a lengthy history of refusing to show humanity because of a lack of economic incentives. The treatment of fugitive slaves was designed to deter them from seeking refuge because the North saw other economic interests. The internment of Japanese-Americans was justified through the lens of those who opposed the Japanese-American economic presence in the agriculture industry. The deportation of people seeking refuge is a consequence of American policy seeking to secure its economic interests. The "us versus them" dichotomy has served to be a blinding force used to justify moral failure in policies reflective of hegemonic economic interests.

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Ideas of Individuals, Communities, and Institutions at the Foundation of the United States Housing Crisis

Katie Worrall

Since the 2008 Great Recession, the United States has been experiencing a massive housing crisis. The elements of the housing crisis are numerous and vary by place, but they generally include increased rates of homelessness, large amounts of foreclosed homes, and a lack of affordable and public housing. Many scholars, even those outside political economy, have tried to explain the causes and roots of the housing crisis; some have analyzed it through an institutional approach; attributing it to a subprime mortgage loan crisis or placing blame on the capitalist system (Kappeler and Bigger 2010; Ivanova 2011). However, while these institutions may have played a substantial role, the ideas behind these institutions are important to analyze to reach a deeper understanding of the housing crisis. By focusing on the microeconomic or solely institutional levels of analysis of this crisis, we have neglected to take into account the experiences

and subjectivities that individuals, communities, and institutions embody. Perhaps these ideational forces have a stronger impact on political outcomes than is currently accepted. An ideational approach highlights how the differing perceptions of home and norms of domesticity, racial prejudices and anti-poor sentiments, and neoliberal ideologies have existed as the underlying cause of the current United States housing crisis.

My analysis of the housing crisis draws from various ideational scholars who have proposed directions for further ideational approaches in political economy. Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) claim that “understanding the constitution of things is essential in explaining how they behave and what causes political outcomes” (394). By understanding the ideas behind current housing policies, we will have a more holistic understanding of why the housing crisis in the United States persists (Blyth 1997). In ideational approaches, Blyth poses two questions that should be answered: “‘what are ideas’ and ‘what do they do’” (231). Through a review of ideational literature on the current housing crisis, here I synthesize the most prevalent ideas shaping perceptions of housing, housing practices, and housing policies. According to Hall (1997), “ideas only become truly influential when they are embedded in social contexts or institutionalized in the operating procedures of key organizations” (186). Then, it follows that these ideas and their impacts on the housing crisis need to be examined through Finnemore and Sikkink’s units of analysis of “the individual, the community of individuals sharing common ideas, or [and] the institutions in which ideas become embodied” (406). In other words,

through an ideational approach that addresses each of these components, we will have a better understanding of the causes and forces of the housing crisis.

Most importantly, in the context of a crisis, “ideas can be seen as both facilitators of radical policy change and a prerequisite of it” and could serve as the “necessary conditions for successful collection along agents” (Blyth 246). Stagnant housing policies have commodified the home, racialized and securitized spaces of home, and displaced people from their home; ideas that challenge these processes will have the best chance of enacting political and social change. In most of the research discussed, scholars expressed the dire need for more collective action, and indeed in some cases collective action is already being taken, calling for a change in housing policies (Camp 2012; Tighe 2010; Speer 2016). Because the nature of ideas is not grounded in objectivity, ideational approaches will find a grounding in subjective discourses, values, ideologies, and normative arguments for policy prescriptions which solve and fix these crises.

At the most simplified, individual level, notions and perceptions of what constitutes a home varies by each person’s experiences and intersubjectivities. The unique meanings of a home could be one of the most liminal engenderments of the housing crisis. The true meaning of a home is less important than is the ideational processes among people who have tried to determine it for others. For some individuals, the home has become something to strive to own as part of an identity to be part of the American Dream (Ivanova 2011). This national identity many

Americans associate with has created a culture of mass consumption of homes (Ivanova 2011). Homes are considered “as a speculative tool rather than a dwelling” and are not being constructed for living quarters or for their natural purposes (Kappeler and Bigger 2010, 988). Scholars have argued that thinking of a home as a commodity that can store capital and add to one’s wealth instead of as a part of life could be a simple cause of the housing crisis (Ivanova 2011; Camp 2012; Kappeler and Bigger 2010; Speer 2016). The notion of a house as being bought has overtaken the notion of a house as being guaranteed.

The “clash between competing visions of home” is most exemplified in Speer’s case study of homeless encampments in Fresno, California. Fresno’s large homeless population has been experiencing increasing demolition of their living spaces. For one woman “what the city characterized as trash was in fact a home” (522). These homes created and appropriated out of surplus materials are continuously torn down because they do not adhere to norms of domesticity nor accepted conceptions of the home as a commodity (Speer 2016; Ivanova 2011; Kappeler and Bigger 2010). Current norms have stemmed from a historic feminized notion of the home “as a refuge for men to return to after long hours of work” (519). For the people creating and influencing housing policies, homes are private and for-profit, and reserved for those who are working—they are not “non-propertyed homes” (520). This phenomenon is not only happening in Fresno, but all over the country. This summer in Reno, Nevada, homeless encampments along the Truckee River were taken down after intense public opposition

claiming the people living there posed a safety threat and generated “considerable trash” (Pearce 2018). Government policies and services have tried to fix the problem by providing more housing, but they are “cemented in a particular vision of domesticity” (Speer 2016, 519). Their vision is of private and isolated housing, rather than communal housing that straddles the “public/private divide” like the homes Fresno and Reno residents were used to living in (Speer 2016, 525). Housing policies have failed to solve the housing crisis because they have pushed a certain norm of domestic life and a meaning of a home that is not shared by everyone. Those who do not follow the same norms or share the same meanings have been left behind—their homes destroyed and their needs not addressed.

Coupled with these differing norms and perceptions of domestic life is an individual attitude that looks down upon those who cannot provide for themselves and seem to not be contributing to society. These ideas are stratified by socio-economic classes, with those at the top having “elite attitudes toward working class housing” (Kappeler and Bigger 2010, 989). These highly individualistic ideas have not been left at that—they have been superimposed on society at large and created a material process that displaces, racializes, and securitizes spaces of home. In actuality, notions of the home cannot be determined, yet they have remained fixed in material, spatial, and social conditions, which have been explored in the case of Fresno, and later on will be explored in Los Angeles.

As previously alluded to, these individual ideas do not stay within the individual, but transcend to communities.

Public opinion in communities around affordable and public housing has also contributed to the growing housing crisis in the United States. Often times when housing developments are being planned, city officials will try to garner public comment and opinion before moving forward with construction. When communities are expressing opposition to new affordable housing developments, this could inhibit fixing the housing crisis. Tighe (2010) highlights how not-in-my-backyard attitudes based on “fear of adverse impacts on property values, anti-government sentiment, anti-poor sentiment, and racial prejudice and segregation” have decreased the amounts of affordable housing in certain areas (4). In these communities, people have been basing their opinions off their own values, ideologies, and stereotypes, which is then translated up into policy circles. Although certain values and ideologies like freedom from government and individualism do come into play, stereotypes about the people who would be moving in as a result of affordable housing are the most prevalent among the opposition. According to Tighe, most people are supportive of building affordable housing, but when it is proposed in their neighborhoods, they acquire not-in-my-backyard attitudes. These attitudes are deeply rooted in stereotypes that portray low-income folks and people of color as driving down property values and bringing in increased rates of crime. In certain communities of ideas, prejudice and stereotyping are ever-present, and have substantially impacted prospects for building affordable housing (Tighe 2010). However, racist and classist sentiments do not only exist within nascent communities that may have a minimal degree of clout over

their elected officials; they have also been meticulously institutionalized among law-makers, policy-influencers, and think tanks. They are imposed from the top down in political, economic, ideological, spatial, and social ways.

At the core of the housing crisis are powerful elites, policymakers, influencers, and intellectuals who have propagated a neoliberal ideology that has both created and sustained the United States housing crisis. Their ideas about housing are not shaped from an experienced essence of home-ness, but from their own personal ideologies that have transformed the natural home into a commodity and financial asset (Ivanova 2011; Kappeler and Bigger 2010). Some scholars have traced the increased foreclosures, the crisis of realization, the subprime mortgage crisis, and the lack of affordable housing back to material realities, to institutions, to microeconomic forces, or to interests of bankers and policymakers (Kappeler and Bigger 2010; Ivanona 2011; Camp 2012). But, at the foundation of these crises is a complex system of ideas that is rooted in a racial, anti-poor, and neoliberal discourse that keeps these components cycling (Camp 2012; Blyth 1997). Ideas have been multidimensional in scope—from individual ideas of the meaning of a home to ideas among community members about affordable housing and the people who need it. Now we turn to the institutionalized spaces of power, the culprit ideas fueling the elements associated with the housing crisis.

Perhaps the best example of how ideas within institutions are impacting the housing crisis is by looking at what has been termed ‘Skid Row’ in Los Angeles, California, home to the largest homeless population in the country. In

'Skid Row' the situation unfolding can be largely attributed to purveyors of "neoliberal racial and security regimes" (Camp 2012, 661). Jordan Camp in "Blues Geographies and the Security Turn: Interpreting the Housing Crisis in Los Angeles" explores the impact of neoliberal ideologies that are founded on "racial discourses...that justifies economic restructuring, prison expansion, and securitization through appeals to whiteness" (657). To policymakers and think tank intellectuals, the housing crisis has become a signal to "restructure space in the interest of capital's security," which has been done by the "deployment of racialization and securitization" (Camp 2012, 659 & 656). Neoliberal ideologies have constructed a space of gentrification and displacement, massive foreclosures, and increased rates of homelessness that have disproportionately affected African Americans and Latinxs at "a rate two to three times higher than for whites" (Camp 2012, 658). In addition to analyzing race and class, security is important to analyze since it is "at the center of the political imagination" of neoliberalism (Camp 2012, 660). The securitization tactics of police against homelessness is highly racialized. As protests have erupted as a result of the housing conditions on Skid Row, people of color have become targeted by police and criminalized for homelessness (Camp 2012). Skid Row is heavily patrolled and policed because those living there have been portrayed as "symbols of violence and criminality" (Camp 2012, 660). These security efforts reflect the views of the state that these protests are "lawlessness, crime, and irrational violence," when in fact they are genuine calls for "justice, cultural dignity, and human rights" (Camp 2012, 660). Securitization and

racialization of the housing crisis are interconnected. Policy makers and think tank intellectuals, and the public who support them, have viewed these spaces crime-ridden and unworthy of assistance, and viewed the residents living there as culprits of their own struggles. Neoliberal ideologies do not acknowledge the role that institutionalized racism and anti-working class sentiments have played in the housing crisis. Policies that continue to reflect neoliberalism threaten to spiral the housing crisis out of control.

My analysis thus far has explained how ideas at various levels of analysis have caused the current elements of the housing crisis, but ideas have also proved to be hopeful in solving the crisis. The recognition for housing as a human right, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a discourse that has gained momentum among activists in the United States (Camp 2012). In response to the ongoing atrocities in Skid Row and other areas, organizations like the Los Angeles Community Action Network have been “challeng[ing] the pervasive and persistent violations of human rights experienced by homeless and poor residents” through various mediums from blog posts to direct action protests (Camp 2012, 670). Similarly, in Reno, the organization Acting in Community Together in Organizing Northern Nevada has been organizing low-income and houseless residents to make appeals to the Washoe County Commission for an affordable housing trust fund. In order to see housing policy changes that address the needs of people living in the United States, advocating for housing as a human right is essential. Human rights rhetoric directly challenges neoliberal ideologies, racial prejudices and anti-

poor sentiments, and competing norms of domesticity that are heavily institutionalized in the US government.

Through an ideational approach, we can better understand the underlying processes that have led to the ongoing housing crisis in the United States. At the most foundational level is the different meanings of a home and norms of domesticity. Housing practices have only aligned with one determined meaning of the home—one that is privatized, isolated, and following domestic norms of a working-class, nuclear family. In a dialectical process, these notions of the home are being superimposed from the top and translated back up. From the individualist ideas of the home, we moved to the ideas within a community that have stopped further plans for development of affordable housing. These ideas have similarly been involved in a hierarchical discourse in which racial prejudices and anti-poor sentiments among communities are reflected in housing policies created by lawmakers holding similar stereotypes. Finally, neoliberal ideologies among elite policy makers and think tank intellectuals have had the most noticeable impact on the housing crisis in racialized, socialized, and spatialized ways. By analyzing the underlying ideological, values-based, stereotypical, and normative discourses of the individuals, communities, and institutions, we come to a more complete understanding of the housing crisis in the United States.

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The Sharp-edged Problem of the 21st Century

Ryan Gorman

"Technological progress is like an axe in the hands of a pathological criminal." Uttered by Albert Einstein, these words give voice to the problem of the twenty-first century: the advancement and spread of technology is outpacing our capability to adapt to and control it. Whereas once we adapted the world to fit our needs, we are increasingly adapting ourselves to fit technology's needs.

Bartolomé de las Casas' account in *The Devastation of the Indies* shows how the power of Spanish technology was used against the Taino people in their conquest and pillaging. When the attacks on the Taino by the Spanish became too much, they resisted. However, as Las Casas puts it, "they took up arms, but their weapons were very weak and of little service in offense and still less in defense... and the Christians, with their horses and swords and pikes began to carry out massacres...against them" (21). In the face of the advanced European technology, the Taino were effectively defenseless. As a result, some tried to flee. The imperialistic technology of the Spaniards once again overtook their efforts: the dogs that they had brought hunted the native people down and killed those who dared to escape (Las Casas 22).

Without a way to defend themselves, the Taino were killed or put into torturous slavery to feed the Spanish desire for wealth.

The Spaniards' technology was too much for the Taino peoples. From the beginning, the Spaniards' goal was to obtain wealth from the so-called Indies. This desire for wealth was born from a type of civic technology, the monarchy and aristocracy of Spain. In the Indies, the military technology used to oppress the native people included horses, dogs, swords, and pikes. To survive, the Taino needed to adapt to the Spaniards' technological might. But without a way to defend themselves from the weaponry, the only option left was subjugation. In this way, the Taino adapted themselves to fit the needs and demands of Spanish technology, even if it ultimately almost destroyed them.

Most of the technologically advanced colonists were not fated to remain on the beneficial side of technology, and their poor descendants realized this doom. Centuries later, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* gives an account, albeit a fictional generalization, of a typical farmer's family history from the conquest of the West to the Dust Bowl. In the selection given, the main character outlines what his family had done to claim the land that was being taken from them. Grandpa, as the main character refers to him, used guns to drive off and defend against the retaliation of the American native people. This is in direct parallel to the Spaniards with their advanced weaponry to overtake and extract wealth and land from the native peoples despite the significant time and difference in methods. The native people, notably the Taino,

were overwhelmed in the face of such advanced technology with only their primitive and inadequate defenses to protect themselves. In this way, Grandpa had mastery over the gun, while the native people fled to survive it (Steinbeck 381). The family then developed the land, using agricultural technology to master nature. Through this, the family was able to live two generations off the land. It all came to a critical point when agricultural technology overtook them and financial technology entrapped them.

Steinbeck writes a story of a farming family being overcome by the world that is changing around them. It is the worst possible time for these poor farmers. Inventions like the tractor had increasingly automated farming and given a distinct edge to those who could afford them. Cash crops were favored and made in large quantities at the expense of the land's health. This ended up destroying the topsoil, leading to the ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl (379). Poor farmers were left without options as their crops, their primary food and income sources, failed. This, combined with the fact that farmers and farming companies with technology such as tractors, left the poor farmers desperate. In their desperation, they turned to a different kind of technology: banks. Banks gave them money in exchange for ownership of the land and a percentage of their profits. When the profits dried up, the banks were forced to sell the land for other purposes, which drove the farmers out (381).

The family in *The Grapes of Wrath* couldn't do anything. The technology they had relied upon to take the

land themselves was useless against the threat of the banking specter. They couldn't shoot the repossession men, they couldn't shoot the board of the bank, and they couldn't shoot the economic system which demanded this. If they tried, they would fail to protect their land and their own lives. Like the American native people before them, their only choice was to adapt to the march of technology. And eventually, like the native people, they were forced to flee for their lives: pikes and dogs in the 1700s and banks and machinery in the 1900s. Once again, an American group was overcome by technology without any recourse or safety possible.

The 1900s were not just notable for the Dust Bowl and its consequences on poor farmers. It was also a unique time for technology, especially with the advent of mechanical technology such as the dynamo. This marked a time when technology advanced far more rapidly than the average person could understand. Even Henry Adams, a Harvard educated historian, remarked as much, saying "[I] began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross...one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force" (3). While watching a dynamo during Great Exposition in 1900 with Langley, Adams discussed just how obscure the dynamo really was. It converted steam into electricity through a mechanism he could not comprehend, providing production through electricity. Langley then brings up another advancement of technology that was counter to previous science and logic: radiation, and how mass "disappeared" into it (4).

The conversation and thoughts of Henry Adams brings up the problem affecting even learned persons with technology. Radiation and the dynamo appear like magic, understandable only through equations but not through intuitive thought. They work, and people both accept and incorporate them into their lives. Knowing how they work is not something that is necessary in life, so the difficulty inherent in their invisible operations and arcane scientific explanations precludes much thought into the matter. In this way, the American Henry Adams adapts his own understanding of the world to be subservient to these wonders of science and technology. They provide force upon the world, and are accepted as such. This acceptance without comprehension is the adaptation to survive this new technology.

This lack of comprehension would come to a head in the tail end of World War II. According to President Harry S. Truman, "We were now in possession of a weapon that would not only revolutionize war but could alter the course of history and civilization" (394). These words declare the ultimate power of the culmination of Langley's irrational force: the atomic bomb. This Pandora's Box opened for the purposes of preventing a lengthy and bloody invasion of Japan. In two instants, two cities were obliterated, leaving scorched ruins and an invisible death for those who remained. There was no chance for defense, no shield that could block the splitting atoms. A technologically advanced nation was brought to its knees and overcome by a technology that most of their enemy nation didn't

understand (399). And like those before them, they didn't adapt, they capitulated.

The United States is no longer the only country to possess atomic weaponry. In a single instance, the Cold War could have turned into an atomic holocaust. For this reason, the creation of the atomic bomb represents the point where technology had outpaced the individual's and humanity's capability of controlling it. Today, the U.S. has stated that they would consider nuclear retaliation in the case of "significant nonnuclear strategic attacks . . . on U.S. or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities" (Acton 56). The U.S., in this case, uses both their nuclear and nonnuclear detection and control systems, systems which could trigger a war. It is also exacerbated by two brand new technologies: cyberwarfare and interception missiles, weapons which can disable early detection and disarm mutually assured destruction (Acton 61).

The axe of technology was once used as both a cultivating tool and a weapon against those that were deemed threatening. The native people of the Americas were almost destroyed due to the colonists who wielded it. The poorer descendants of the colonists lost their command over it, and it turned against them. Additionally, entire nations are now subject to the whims and sudden jolts of the axe as it is grasped at but never taken. Technology is progressing beyond what people and groups of people can control. This is not to suggest humanity should cease all technological progress. Lives are saved and improved by its advancement,

and the world obtains more potential with each new discovery and invention. However, all of us need to comprehend science and technology while we still can before our understanding falls too far back to catch up. We cannot keep adapting without thought to it, and we can't leave anyone behind in this understanding. The dynamo can't remain a divine, ineffable object. It and its children, from our increasingly important smartphones to the modern dynamos which give them life, must be understood and grasped with the full strength of humankind. Only then can the axe be redirected towards humanity's benefit instead of humanity's doom.

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The in Between

Diana Meza

Most people would likely agree with the statement that humans can't be trusted. This is supported by the fact that at the end of the day, both the optimistic humanist and the pessimistic monk lock their doors before they go to sleep. Whether or not people believe in the goodness of humanity is irrelevant when regarding their seemingly innate lack of trust in their neighbors. The potential danger that strangers hold has provided people with enough fear to willingly give up their rights—to a certain degree—in exchange for the promise of protection from a collective institution: the government. This exchange has never been controversy free, however, and many people contently situated in states with limited governments will happily recall Benjamin Franklin's words opposing this idea that "those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." But in their search for peace and happiness, humans have placed people in positions of power over them in hopes that when an injustice occurs, there will be a system enabled to protect them. How exactly the government *should* go about exerting its power is a more complicated concept that various prominent philosophers, such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, debated passionately. And while their ideas may be

subsequent to politics in the minds of many, at their core they are theories that seek to find the best way for people to coexist based on human nature and tendencies. Locke believes that the key to a content society is democracy, while Hobbes argues that it rests in absolutism, and although both theories contain substantial ideas, they viewed human nature in direct extremes, therefore, based on the strengths of both arguments, only in an intermediate alternative in which people can participate in creating laws while still maintaining a centralized authority that keeps them accountable, can people maintain enough peace to render them a happy society.

Both philosophers have similar arguments when it comes to the human condition. According to Hobbes, people are born equal in both the mind and body. That seems to be the very fact that causes conflict between them. Equal abilities mean equal opportunities for gain, and when “two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies” (36). He goes on to explain that therefore, because men are enemies, they’re in a constant state of war with each other. Everyone must seek to conquer others, not only to gain desired objects, but also to *keep* those objects from being taken away once acquired. This equality is what gives people the right to protect their lives as well. Still, in this situation “men have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief in keeping company where there is no power able to over-awe them all” (37). In other words, the perpetual stress of maintaining power alone is unpleasant and this is what pushes people to form societies that are

based on what Hobbes called “contracts.” These so-called contracts between people are agreements in which they decide to not hurt each other as well as to uphold relative “peace.” Despite this, people still can’t seem to be trusted to keep these contracts because the desire to maintain necessary peace for the common good (or the common good in general) isn’t a part of their natural inclination. That’s why Hobbes argues that a government is necessary, that “covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure man at all” (42). Because covenants are inherently artificial, and because humans can think intelligently within or around them, there *needs* to be a “sword” or power holding entity that through threat of punishment motivates them to keep them (43). With that said, Hobbes’ theory infers that in order for humanity to reach a better state of nature, a government is required to hold people accountable.

Locke reaches the same conclusion, but through different means. Like Hobbes, he states that “all men are naturally . . . in a state of perfect freedom [and] . . . a state of equality” (110). However, he also claims that in the state of nature humans are given one more thing: reason. His faith in human reason guide his philosophy in a different direction from Hobbes’, as he says, “reason . . . teaches all mankind . . . that no one ought to harm another in [their] life, health, liberty, or possessions” (110). Still, despite their ability to reason, Locke acknowledges that people will still act in selfish ways and hurt each other. Because of this “every man hath a right to punish [an] offender and be executioner of the law of nature [the right to protect one’s life]” (111). In this

system of *lex talionis*, people live justly but don't benefit from the advantages that come with a collective society, such as protection through numbers. In this search for the protection of their lives and property, people group together and create societies that "put men out of nature into that of a commonwealth" (115). Reason tells people they benefit from working together to uphold natural laws and this leads them to understand the need for government.

Both men draw the same conclusion; people are happier when they live in peace *together*. However, the schism occurs when it came to deciding what type of government works best at keeping that peace intact. For Hobbes, the ideal government, or common power as he calls it, is one that holds enough power over the people to ensure that the contracts formed between them are sustained and "direct their actions to the common benefit" (43). He argues that this common power works best if it is given up by the people to either a single person or a small, like-minded group. In other words, his solution was that people ought to "submit their wills, every one to [their leader's] will and their judgement to [their leader's] judgement" (43). Doing this, he suggests, would "reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will" (43). He claims that when people give up their authority over themselves to another and submit their wills to that of who is in power, everyone's beliefs and actions synchronize. People will live better, happier lives if they are like-minded and have a government that is strong enough to uphold the values and beliefs they create among themselves. This trust in their powerful government transmutes to trust

in their neighbors and the willingness to work together on tasks that will benefit *all* as opposed to only the self.

Locke's beliefs force him to support the opposite side of the political spectrum. While Hobbes favors a strong centralized power to protect the people, Locke dismisses the idea and embraces basic democracy as the correct way to lead a people. He agrees with Hobbes in that a civil society can only exist when "men unite . . . as to quit his executive power of the law of nature and to resign it to the public" (114). Unlike Hobbes, however, he believes the power that's given up should be placed in a legislature made up of rotating people that rule according to the majority's opinion (116). The government should be made up of the people themselves and this will ensure that the will that's followed is what most people both want and agree on. That way, most, though not all, people are satisfied and feel happy knowing that it's their neighbors and themselves who are making the laws that rule over them, and not a distant individual. According to Locke, this form of government is not reasonable, but given the fact that the legislature will be made up of their own neighbors, trust will eventually formulate between them. Their constant interactions and accountability to each other would promote it, and with the ability to exert some of their own power in the community by actively participating, it could limit tyranny and corruption.

So, although both arguments hold logical and important points on which type of government would produce a happy, satisfied society, neither one portrays reality perfectly. For example, Hobbes' argument assumes

that by giving one person complete power over a group of people, the contracts made among them will be upheld. However, this doesn't answer the question of how the single force of government would do that, nonetheless, nor why it would bother to do so once it has absolute power. Hobbes' theory assumes no corruption would occur in the single powerful government and it also assumes that once the society of absolutism is established, all people would submit willingly to the desires of one person *despite* differing convictions about morality or politics. Hobbes himself states that men "think themselves wiser and abler to govern the public, better than the rest" (43). Based on that logic, people would not be able to submit themselves to a single person's policies for long. Once they begin to tire from following ideas that they don't consider as "wise" as their own, they would eventually try to take back their power. Locke's argument addresses this and other risks that an absolutist government would face in its reign, for example, that given a state of nature in which all people are equal, the placing of one selfish and reasonable person into a position of complete power, not causes the natural state of equality to disintegrate, but puts the welfare of the people and the common good in the hands of a limitless individual with the power to exert complete control over others with no checks or balances (115).

But Locke's theory also fails to address other parts of human nature because he assumes that humans are always just and always reasonable; they are not. His faith in human reason assumes that when in power, people will always do

what's just and what benefits the majority, even if *they* are not part of the majority. He doesn't consider that not everyone wants to be deeply involved in the political process, nor the fact that not everyone has equal *opportunity* to be a part of the government. He also assumes people will promote fairness, since he believes men should only own what they can maintain. However, if people were truly just and fair, wouldn't the establishment of a democratic government be redundant? It would prove unnecessary. His claim that people are reasonable enough to rule over themselves falls short when considering his previous claim about placing one person in a powerful position over another. He himself states that people will naturally be corrupted by power, why does them being in groups make that corruption less likely? Yet he somehow still believes reason is enough to uphold democracy. Almost naturally, Hobbes disagree. He wrote that it is reason itself that causes complications among humans since "the art of words, by which some men can represent to others, that which is good, in the likeness of evil. . . [is what is] discontenting to men and, [troubles] their peace" (43). Politicians will argue. People's natural dispositions entail arguments, and therefore, unless everyone in a democracy maintains an aligned political agenda, they will face constant disagreements, altercations and, though not all of them, most will be left unhappy with the repeat battles that would constantly follow the legislative process.

The solution therefore must rest in the penumbra created by the two extremes. Hobbes made an important observation when he noted that people are inherently at war

with each other, however they are also undeniably prone to help others for the sake of sustaining the human race. Still, people should be expected to act selfishly, in ways that benefit their own lives first. They do have reason, as Locke points out, but they can't be trusted to always use it. If a government was created in which *everyone* was able to participate and in which developing the common good was the most important goal to be achieved by all despite individual discrepancies, then people would reach a state in which happiness were possible. A single person cannot rule over an entire civilization without becoming corrupt to at least a minimal extent, but trusting people's reason by establishing a society in which everyone rules equally also backfires because of the laws of nature that order humans to look after themselves first. All theories that seek to create a perfect society ultimately discover that although they work well on paper, human nature is complicated and can't be contained with a few assumptions and explanations. If human nature were predictable and easily manipulated, *any* theory would work in making people happy. The issue arises in humanity's stubborn tendency to be erratic. Only in a conceptual society, a "fantasy land" so to speak, would people be able to obtain true happiness because the issue isn't with the philosophies that people like Locke and Hobbes had created, instead it lies in the fact that human nature isn't designed to cater to happiness, but to survival.

So according to Locke and Hobbes, people are born equal and free; they have the right to protect and defend themselves and their belongings. Because of that state of

nature, however, people have to fight for the things they want and then again to maintain them. Overall, people work together and form societies because they become tired of fearing death and desire a substantial state of peace in which they can live comfortably. Both Locke and Hobbes offer logical solutions to how this can be accomplished, but in the end, they can't overcome human nature. The only government that would make mankind *truly* happy would be one that is capable of reprogramming people's nature to value others over themselves; where equality, fairness and the right to property would all be natural parts of life and people would not have to compromise some rights for others.

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The Changing Focuses and Demands of Feminism Throughout American History

Anna Paterson

“Feminism” is a word that is familiar to contemporary American culture, with a seemingly clear definition of “the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities” (Watson). Though a stigma still exists around the idea of feminism and its purveyors, the movement has made an enormous impact on perceptions of women, especially in the United States. Like most movements, feminism has changed and adapted throughout time, with its various stages falling into “waves” that often undertake time-specific challenges and cultural expectations. Using texts from the semester, we see that these waves’ objectives have transitioned from political enfranchisement, to economic and social fulfillment and sexual freedom, and finally to a reevaluation of whom feminism is for and whom it helps, with various transitional periods between each of these respective waves.

Before the roots of feminism were placed by the likes

of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, women were restricted by Puritanical values that belittled feminine ability and supported intellectual self-consciousness in women. No work shows this better than the poetry of Anne Bradstreet, who became the very first American poet in the 17th century. Her poem "Prologue" ironically laments the intellectual disabilities of womankind while making various allusions that demonstrate the speaker's intelligence, all the while writing in perfect iambic pentameter. Bradstreet's poetry represents the period leading up to the first wave of American feminism, a period in which women were forced to find ways to cleverly dispute the patriarchal society in lieu of any real organization or movement. "Prologue" starts with a promise that the speaker will not encroach on the subjects that male poets write of, so that "[her] obscure lines shall not so dim their work" (line 6). The speaker regrets her womanhood, since all women have "a weak or wounded brain" (line 24), but a change occurs in the poem that not only indicates an irony to the speaker's dismissal of her own intelligence, but also acts as a critique of the way that women's intellectual abilities and capacity are belittled. She states her distaste for critics who say that "[her] hand a needle better fits" and says that when women do succeed, their achievements are attributed to theft or luck: "they'll say it's stol'n, or else it was by chance" (line 30). The speaker's main point, however, comes when she seems resolved to the perceived superiority of men, but pleads for them to "grant some small acknowledgement of ours" (line 42). "Prologue" establishes the very beginning of the feminist movement, and

also demonstrates the meager privileges that women had to be satisfied with before the first wave of feminism and the fight for equality began.

The theme of feminine intelligence continues in Sojourner Truth's "Ar'nt I a Woman?" Given after the first wave of feminism officially began at the Seneca Falls Convention, Truth's speech asks what intellect has to do with the acquisition of equal rights, and also demonstrates early intersectionality between issues of race and gender. She describes how she "work[s] as much and eat[s] as much as a man" and still conforms to what a woman should be, yet she is still treated as less of a woman because she is African-American (line 8). Her arguments for women's and black rights tackle the stupidity of anti-equality views; she brings up the lack of logic in these views by pointing out that men's rights won't be taken away if women receive more rights: "if my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half-measurement full?" (lines 14-15). In her speech, Truth also warns that women have the power to "turn the world upside down" and that "the men better let them" (lines 19-21). Though another text, like the "Declaration of Sentiments" of the Seneca Falls Convention, may illustrate the principles of first wave feminism better, Truth's speech demonstrates the growing intersectionality between race and gender and also warns of incoming change for women; that feminism will turn society on its head before long. It also shows that marginalized people were realizing the implications of the "all men are created equal" statement found in the

Declaration of Independence, and applying this to mainly political struggles in order to fight for equality.

Truth's speech, prophesizing a revolution led by women, is especially applicable to works like Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Women and Economics*. Though the idea of economic independence for women may seem basic now, it was revolutionary in a time when the finances of women were traded off by patriarchal figures (from father to husband, for example). It's also during this time that history sees a pushback against the concept of the "angel of the home," essentially opposing the idea of women as submissive housewives. As *Women and Economics* was written in 1898, it also shows the burgeoning push towards equality that doesn't necessarily revolve around political suffrage; this movement would come to fruition in the 1920s with the dawn of the "new morality." Before that time, however, Gilman frames an argument that lies the foundations for 1920s economic feminism, focusing not only on the economic environment of women, but delving into issues like sex-distinction and gender roles. She says that "men, in supporting women, has become her economic environment" (9), and we see here a transition from the political focus of, say, the Seneca Falls Convention, to a more nuanced look at the patriarchal nature of economic and social systems. Using the economic system as an example, Gilman also describes some social issues that arise during the coming-of-age years in which boys are encouraged to show feelings and actions that are appropriate to their sex. It's possible to consider Gilman's work to be transitional, even

though it falls within the time frame of the first wave of feminism, due to its progressive economic and social commentary.

The so-called “new morality” of the 1920s led to feminism that focused on economics and sexuality, and how these topics affected gender and opportunity in the United States. This focus came after the 19th Amendment but before the dawn of “housewife culture” in the 1950s and 60s and led to the realization that political suffrage is a small step to equality. Beatrice Hinkle’s “The New Morality” chronicles this transition from political to economic/social while also describing the breakdown of traditional “feminine” values. Unlike previously examined feminist work, Hinkle describes the disintegration of the social status quo with optimism for the present and future, saying that “the present is the first time in our historical period in which there has been any general opportunity for women as a whole to think for themselves and to develop in new ways” (26). Hinkle cites economic emancipation as a source for this new morality, and connects it to sexual freedom from patriarchal standards as well.

The second wave of feminism emerged in the 1960s along with various other movements for equality, and tended to focus on a wider collection of issues, including sexuality, employment, reproductive rights, and a woman’s place in society, home, or otherwise. The waves of feminism are useful in that they tend to reflect the issues of a specific time, and we certainly see this with the second wave, begun during a time of suburban growth, nuclear families, and the

idea of housewife as the ideal female position. It's interesting that there seems to be a return to the basic idea of the "angel of the home" which works like *Women and Economics* disputed and worked against. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* describes not only a contemporary "angel of the home," but also focuses on the consequences this role has for women, firmly cementing herself in the canon of second wave feminism. Friedan offers the poignant question of "is this it?" as a demonstration of the unhappiness that housewives often faced. It's interesting that we see a sort of return to traditional values during this time; the second wave feminists had to deal with the fact that "a century earlier, women had fought for higher education; now girls went to college to get a husband" (60). The second wave feminists were faced with the daunting task of managing the consequences of political equality without economic or social counterparts, and it's clear from works like *The Feminine Mystique* that women lacked fulfillment in their lives as housewives. It appears that in between the first and second waves of feminism, rigid expectations of femininity were reinforced: "[women] learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights" (62), and beauty standards mandated that women were skinny and blonde. The task of feminism during this time was to combat the idea that the suburban housewife "was the dream image of the young American woman" (62) and that she "had found true feminine fulfillment" (62), because it was obviously being used as a manipulative tactic to propagate the idea of women as submissive, yet content, homemakers.

The third (or fourth, depending on your definition) wave of feminism is probably the one most accessible to people now; though “feminist” is still considered somewhat of a dirty word, the newest wave seeks to create a more inclusive definition of whom feminism is for and whom it can help. The answer to these questions, per Emma Watson’s speech “Gender Equality is Your Issue, Too,” is quite simple. Watson asks, “how can we affect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feels welcome to participate in the conversation?” (lines 87-89). Here she is referencing the way that men are often either not included in the conversation surrounding feminism or too scared to share their feelings in a way that will be deemed un-masculine. Watson also says that “it is time that we all perceive gender on a spectrum, not as two opposing sets of ideals” (lines 119-121). In this way, she shows the ways in which third wave feminism tries to embrace sexuality movements and the changing ideas of what gender is. The speech also demonstrates how feminism as a movement is being spread; Watson’s platform as a UN speaker is possible because of media and the film industry, and the message of feminism is infinitely easier to spread due to the advent of social media.

Various movements have risen up from within the social inequality of America, but few have seen as many transitions or stages as feminism. At first, there was a reluctant acceptance of man’s so-called superiority, with a plea for men to at least acknowledge the abilities of women. As time went on, political demands were made and a focus on women’s suffrage dominated the conversation

surrounding women's rights. Next, there was a switch to more economic and social issues, including financial emancipation from men. Social issues continued in the second wave, where feminists tackled a wider range of issues like gender roles, employment, etc. Finally, the third wave emerged, which focuses on feminism for everyone (including men), the use of social media in the movement, and the intersection between gender and sexuality.

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The American Dream Is No Longer for Everybody: A Historiographical Analysis of Immigration Throughout American History

Benjamin Engel

Even before its official founding, the United States of America has relied on immigrants. From colonists breaking from the British Empire to form the aforementioned country, to those fleeing from religious persecution, to immigrants attempting to find economic opportunity, the United States has been built on the backs and workings of a variety of immigrants. The story of an immigrant coming to America and starting his or her life over coincided quintessentially with the “American Dream” and the idea of rugged individualism embedded in American culture for much of the country’s history. However, the idea of a foreign immigrant as the “other” has slowly made the “American Dream” harder for immigrants to obtain in the modern day.

By analyzing John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity," Emma Lazarus's "The New Colossus," and Antonio Alarcon's "My Immigration Story," a clear rise in xenophobia and progression from immigrants being seen as opportunistic to immigrants being seen as the "other" in eyes of American citizens, making harsh immigration enforcement a clear problem of the twenty-first century.

Immigration to America even before America's founding had an idea of rugged individualism and beginning anew, especially when it pertained to religious freedom. John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" contains signals not only to how immigration was seen when it was written in 1630, but how immigration would be viewed in the future. As Winthrop spoke to his fellow Puritan migrants aboard the ship *Arbella*, freedom from religious persecution is a key point throughout his speech, saying "the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, as his own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways" (27). In the eyes of God, the New World is the only place where the Puritan way of life can not only survive, but flourish. However, the majority of Winthrop's speech is dedicated to a major theme seen throughout immigrants' stories: the idea of hard work and putting the community before yourself. Winthrop explains that in order for their new community to succeed in the New World, the individual must go away and put all efforts towards the community as a whole. While this idea does not align with the individualistic nature of American immigrants, the idea of beginning anew in America can be inferred throughout Winthrop's speech.

While Puritans should “do good to all, especially to ‘the household of faith’,” God had “given [them] leave to draw [their] own articles” (26, 27). Even God was in favor of his followers having the chance to start over again. This clearly showcases the idea of immigration was not only freeing, but righteous in the eyes of God.

While immigration was good in the eyes of God and his followers, Winthrop alludes to immigrants being viewed as the “other” near the end of his speech in what is often viewed as his most uplifting message: the idea of a “city upon a hill” (27). Winthrop views immigration to America as a risk to him and his followers because “the eyes of all people are upon [them]” (27). If the Puritans fail in building their utopian society in the New World, the world’s view on not just Puritan migrants but all American immigrants will be seen in a negative light. Those that fail to achieve the “American Dream” will not be thought of as worthy of the “American Dream” in the eyes of Winthrop. By creating this idea of a City-Upon-A-Hill, Winthrop unintentionally alludes to how immigrants will be viewed in later American history. Being seen as a hard-working American can only be achieved if your story ends with your own City-Upon-A-Hill, your own success story. However, when an immigrant fails to achieve the “American Dream,” they are only seen as someone who has not earned their right to be an American.

Moving into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, immigration became less about escaping religious persecution and more about economic opportunity. Immigrants were travelling from across the globe—

predominantly Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe—to America during “a time of rapid industrialization and urbanization,” for, like Winthrop, a chance to start a better life than what they were experiencing in their former country. This idea is exemplified in several lines of Emma Lazarus’s “The New Colossus.” By describing the Statue of Liberty “Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,” Lazarus is telling her readers that America is completely breaking away from European culture. Like Winthrop, Lazarus is describing America as a utopian community where anyone can reinvent themselves into what their ideal self in this new country. The people Europe might consider “tired” and “poor” are not tired and poor to America, according to Lazarus. Immigrants are only tired and poor to Europe because Europe cannot see them any other way. Because of this, European immigrants come to America because, in their eyes, America sees opportunity in them just like they see opportunity in America. No matter where they come from, they will be greeted kindly by Lazarus’s “Mother of Exiles,” as they approach the “sea-washed, sunset gates,” of the United States.

Despite the romanticized portrayal of immigrants in “The New Colossus”, the reality of immigration during this time period was not as Lazarus’s poem depicted. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, immigrants were seen as the “other” to many Americans. The year before “The New Colossus” was written, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress in 1882, banning Chinese laborers from entering the United States. Additionally, immigration

quotas were established in the 1920s, meaning that only a certain number of a nationality could immigrate to the country legally. As the government continued restricting immigration due to racial biases, the “American Dream” was becoming much more difficult for immigrants to achieve. Essentially, it was becoming harder for immigrants, especially minority immigrants, to open the “golden door,” to the City-Upon-A-Hill (Lazarus).

As the twenty-first century progresses, stories like Antonio Alarcon’s “My Immigration Story” are heard all too often. By closely reading the text, it can be inferred that the theme of community in the two previous texts has been replaced with the theme of separation. While Winthrop and Lazarus write about immigration in terms of joining America, Alarcon chooses to focus on the people that he loses because of wanting to be an American. First, he loses his younger brother because he “was too young to make the dangerous border crossing” (230). He loses his grandmother twice: when he first crosses the border, and when she dies (231). Finally, he loses his parents when “they decided to return to Mexico to take care of [his] younger brother” (231). Due to harsher immigration enforcement in the twenty-first century, Alarcon cannot go back to Mexico to see his family. Not only does the theme of separation appear when concerning Alarcon’s family, but Alarcon feels separated from America itself. He identifies himself as a DREAMer, “young people who were brought to the United States as children without documentation. These are young people who are American in every way, except on

paper” (Hildreth). Despite regarding America as “a land of freedom and opportunities,” he feels isolated from his country due to his status as an undocumented immigrant and the xenophobia he views in his daily life and the legislation that affects him (232). Discrimination against immigrants is nothing new in American history, going all the way back to the eighteenth century with the 1790 Naturalization Act. Alarcon’s text clearly shows a shift in opinion concerning immigration. Instead of immigration being a chance at achieving the “American Dream,” coming to the United States is “full of...uncertainty, and sorrow” (231).

Since the Trump administration took power in 2016, the topic of immigration has become even more polarizing due to several immigration policies being viewed as xenophobic. President Trump’s “Muslim ban” was declared unconstitutional because it “violates the most basic guarantee of religious freedom” (Amdur). Additionally, Trump’s immigration policies concerning Central and Southern American immigrants, such as his southern border wall and repealing DACA, have brought about many critics saying “in the last year...demonization has turned into outright persecution” (Minhaj). However, the problems America faces today concerning immigration did not start with President Trump. In 2003, the Department of Homeland Security—the same department that handles antiterrorism—took over immigration duties from the Immigration and Naturalization Services and the

Department of Justice, meaning “we inextricably linked immigration with terrorism...and it has led to some truly inhumane treatment” (Minhaj). By thinking of immigrants as the “other” in American legislation and society, Americans have ostracized immigrants because “concerns that immigration might dilute national identity are widespread” (Hainmueller 4). While reverting to xenophobic views of immigrants could be considered taking away the American Dream from certain people, it cannot be denied that prejudiced immigration policies have been around in America since its inception. This makes harsh immigration enforcement a clear problem not just in America’s past, but also a challenge for the present.

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The Second American Century: The Wind at Our Back and the Death in Our Wake

Jade Utterback

“There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm.”

—Walter Benjamin, “On
the Concept of History”

(1940)

In his Keynote Speech at the 2012 Republican Convention, Governor Chris Christie stated:

I want [my children] to live in a second American Century of strong economic growth...where real American exceptionalism is not a political punch line, but is evident to everyone in the world...just by watching Americans live their lives.

This steadfast belief in American exceptionalism is not Christie's alone. Within the last decade, American political leaders and economists have hypothesized a dramatic financial upheaval that might turn the 21st century into the second American Century. The term "American Century" was coined by Henry R. Luce, who, in 1941, proposed that U.S. internationalism would solidify American power and leadership across the entire globe. Through wealth, prestige, and the realization of the United States as "The Good Samaritan" of the Earth, Luce proposed that America could assert itself on other nations while simultaneously "[spreading ideas] throughout the world and [doing] their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels" (68). Although Luce envisioned America as the beloved leader of the free world, he overlooked the imperialism and violence written into the genetic makeup of expansionism and consequently overestimated the extent to which the rest of the planet held the United States in esteem.

This elicits the question: if the second American Century is indeed afoot, has America replicated the violence and heavy-handedness which arose in Luce's first American Century?

According to Henry R. Luce, America's claim to the rest of the world resides in the idea that "it is the manifest duty of this country to undertake to feed all the people of the world who as a result of this worldwide collapse of civilization are hungry and destitute" (67). The principle of "Manifest Duty" in this context is reminiscent of its predecessor "Manifest Destiny." In his painting *American Progress* in 1872, John Gast depicts both the phenomenon and catastrophe of colonial westward expansion in the United States. Represented by an angelic female figure, Manifest Destiny moves west across the land, bringing with her technology, education, and innovation. During the late 1800s, the culture of colonial America was considered a development that could civilize and improve the Native American way of life. In his work, Gast recreates the feeling of terror that descended upon the tribes of America; he uses a dark color palette and shows Native Americans fleeing from Manifest Destiny to represent the desolation and oppression they experienced during westward expansion. In contrast to Gast, who conveys both the idealization and darkness of Manifest Destiny, Henry R. Luce neglects to consider the force needed to Americanize other nations. If birthed from "Manifest Destiny," violence was written into the genes of Luce's "Manifest Duty," and has historically proven to precipitate an imperialist, forceful reputation that now defines the United States of America on the world stage.

This reputation emerged in the 1900s. As America went offshore in search of land and economic growth, it also exerted powerful forces over other, smaller nations who began to question what Mark Twain called “The Blessings of Civilization.” In his 1901 essay “To the Person Sitting in the Darkness,” Mark Twain satirically compares America to other domineering powers that claimed to be working for the people while simultaneously oppressing them, such as the Kaiser and the Czar. He focuses on the American presence in the Philippines, stating:

... As for a flag for the Philippine Province, it is easily managed. We can have a special one—our States do it: we can have just our usual flag, with the white stripes, painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and cross-bones. (60)

Twain asserts that the United States, though a great liberator in the eyes of her own people, looks very different to those it’s trying to Americanize. His hypothesis rings true in the words of Queen Lili’uokalani, who, in her letter to the House of Representatives, protests against “the assertion of ownership by the United States of America of the so-called Hawaiian Crown Lands... and... especially... such assertion of ownership as a taking of property without due process of law and without just or other compensation” (40). Queen Lili’uokalani expresses the resentment of her people and many other peoples against the movement of the United States into their lands. It is these colonized people who see

the American flag as the “skull and cross-bones” because to them, it represents the loss of their culture and potentially their lives, despite the claim of economic growth and democracy offered by United States colonization. During the Filipino occupation, Filipino losses were far greater than the United States’ (Twain 58). This does not portray America as the harbinger of peace officials that Henry R. Luce claimed it to be. Twain uses sarcasm to suggest that there is an extreme dichotomy between how the United States views itself, and how it is perceived by others. His explanation:

There must be two Americas: one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive’s new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on; then kills him to get his land. (56)

The United States solidified its disassociation from the “Good Samaritan of the World” when it dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. According to President Harry S. Truman, “it would be even more important to us to bring about a surrender before we had to make a physical conquest of Japan” (396). Indeed, General Marshall estimated that avoiding warfare on Japanese soil could potentially save half a million American lives (Truman). By determining more worth in the American life than the Japanese life, Truman made the decision to bomb Japan so that the lives of U.S. troops would be preserved. Because of this, he sacrificed the lives of over 160,000

Japanese civilians. This hardly sounds like the “Good Samaritan” of Luce’s imagination. Truman’s decision echoes Luce’s assertions of American exceptionalism as justification for expanding overseas: although noble in intention, ultimately Luce is claiming more value in the American way of life than in other cultures, which was Truman’s motivation to use this new, all-powerful weapon the United States now possessed. America’s dropping of the atomic bomb was an exercise of extreme power intended to threaten and intimidate the rest of the world. In addition, it pushed the boundaries of formerly conceived war etiquette by targeting civilians. In this way, the bombing cemented America’s role on the world stage, not as a model of goodness and democracy, but as an imposing, war-driven country willing to do anything to enhance its position in the global hierarchy.

One might find it difficult to argue with Truman’s logic since the Japanese government was given two chances to surrender prior to the usage of atom bombs, and because the event was estimated to have saved the lives of U.S. soldiers. However, this does not nullify the desolation wrought upon the Japanese populace in the aftermath. Likewise, it is difficult to argue against U.S. military presence in Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Two years later, in 2003, the United States entered Iraq in response to the threat of alleged weapons of mass destruction. Now, nearing two decades later, the war in Afghanistan not only continues but is on the rise under the Trump Administration. Iraq has become a fertile breeding ground for the terrorist group ISIS, which has laid waste to a land the U.S. infiltrated

under the guise of bringing stability. In his tape to Al Jazeera in 2001, Osama bin Muhammad bin Awad bin Laden commented on the recent U.S. exploits, stating:

Hundreds of thousands, young and old, were killed in Japan... And today, in Iraq, the same applies... God has struck America at its Achilles heel and destroyed its greatest buildings. What America is tasting today is but a fraction of what we have tasted for decades. (104)

While Bin Laden's statements reflect those of radical Islamic groups, American interference and "reconstruction" in Iraq and Afghanistan is met with increasing opposition in the eastern hemisphere and in the States. Even so, America still exerts physical, political, and economic influence in these areas.

Chris Christie claimed in his Keynote Speech at the 2012 Republican Convention that America is entering the second American Century. Such a statement was reiterated by Joel Kurtzman, an American economist whose novel, *Unleashing the Second American Century: Four Forces for Economic Dominance*, focuses on U.S. globalization. Kurtzman convincingly suggests the best time for the United States is not the past, but the present. According to Kurtzman, twenty-one to twenty-three percent of the entire globe's gross domestic product is provided by the U.S. economy, with American businesses sitting on potential investments of four trillion dollars. He concludes, "To build on Henry Luce's

famous phrase, we are heading into the second American Century, and the wind is at our backs” (xxiii). But, history has proven that the American Century often means death and hardship to those with less power, fewer resources, and less military strength. When “Manifest Destiny” urged colonists to expand west, they did so at the price of countless Native American tribes, who lost their livelihoods and relationships, along with what was once their land. Later, when called upon by Luce’s “Manifest Duty,” the United States took to the seas to bring “Blessings of Civilization” to nations in the Pacific uninterested in assimilating American lifestyle and used a weapon the likes of which the world had scarcely conceived. Now, the United State persists in Afghanistan and Iraq with plans to increase American military presence as the President promises to loosen restrictions on combat, despite rising civilian casualties in Afghanistan. Though the wind is at our backs, it is important for the denizens of the United States to realize that violence and imperialism are inherent in expansion, and that we *will* leave people in our wake if we continue to blindly follow the belief in American Exceptionalism instilled in us since the West was deemed that shining city upon a hill so long ago.

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