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Editors’ Note

Now in its sixteenth year, Herodotus annually celebrates academic exploration and scholastic achievement by undergraduates in the Department of History. The number of papers submitted for review, five times as many as could be included and each one of the highest quality, speaks to the passion and excitement with which students approach the study of history here at Stanford.

The six papers selected for inclusion in this volume cover a wide range of topics and time periods, examining phenomena from cultural, artistic, and political angles from the early modern period through the later parts of the last century. With a tremendous variety of sources and close, thoughtful consideration of all the possibilities they present, we felt these papers demonstrate the wide range and top tier insight of historical analysis taking place on campus.

Though Herodotus is entirely student-run, it would have been impossible to produce this volume without the dedicated and enthusiastic support we received from Margo Richardson and Monica Wheeler. We also wish to recognize and thank the Carl F. Brand Fund for the financial backing that allows us to print the journal.

We invite and encourage feedback or questions about this volume and the journal as a whole. Please address comments to Andrew Ardinger (ardinger@stanford.edu) or the staff of the Department of History.

We hope you find the following essays fascinating and enlightening.
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When Israel Sieff, future developer of the British retail store Marks and Spencer and lifelong Zionist, first met Chaim Weizmann towards the end of 1913, he immediately realized what made this man so unique. Sieff had long known of Weizmann's growing stature in the Zionist world, but it was not until a dinner given by a family member that he saw for himself the statesman's seductive charisma:

I was struck by his personality before I had taken in the details of his appearance. It was magical, overwhelming, irrevocable. He was not above middle height, had a dark, small pointed beard, and a rather unusually youthful pinkish face for one who was clearly a Central European Jew. His eyes were full of life but they were somber . . . The introductions were made . . . I had been a Zionist for seven years . . . I had known a good deal, therefore, about Dr. Weizmann, before I met him. But the moment I met him he became my master.¹

It was actually quite common for Weizmann to have this kind of impact on someone. The Russian Jewish chemist had an enthralling, irresistible presence which largely helped him persuade members of the British government to offer a statement of support for a “Jewish Palestine” in 1917 in the famous Balfour Declaration. After leading world Jewry’s first diplomatic victory in over 2,000 years, Weizmann would then act as head of the Zionist Organization for over two decades and finally be named Israel’s first president in 1947.

The historiography of the Balfour Declaration has largely focused on issues of high diplomacy, and, with much justification, Weizmann has dominated this literature.² He used the fortuitous intersection of his chemistry work with politics to his advantage and utilized his contacts in the Ministry of Munitions brilliantly to parlay British strategic and spiritual connections to Zionism into a public statement of support for his cause. Most of the studies of the Declaration have naturally focused upon the most important actors in the story—Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, David Lloyd George, Arthur Balfour and C.P. Scott.

And as a result of the style in which this particular diplomatic exchange has been written, the place of a group of young, university-trained English Zionists who worked with Weizmann in this period has been lost in the annals of history. Though Weizmann has been described as
largely working alone in matters of diplomacy, he in fact actively sought out allies during his first few years in England. Gradually, Weizmann established for himself a base of support in Manchester which constituted his only real followers both before and during the negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration. Future Ahad Ha’am biographer Leon Simon, along with Harry Sacher, Israel Sieff, Simon Marks, Albert Hyamson and Samuel Landman, none of them well-known Zionist figures before Weizmann took them under his wing, ended up assisting Weizmann’s efforts in 1917, especially in the realm of writing materials and the text of the declaration itself. These men were the primary reason why Weizmann, whose initial professional career choices forced him away from the action of Zionist activity in London, would find a springboard for his Zionist career in the provincial community of Manchester.

This group formed steadily and was solidified prior to World War I: it included Sacher, a proficient journalist and barrister; Simon, a classicist, Hebrew translator and eventual follower and close companion of Ahad Ha’am; Hyamson, a longtime English Zionist and civil servant; Landman, a barrister; and, after 1913, Sieff and Marks, then-young businessmen who would soon take over the board at Marks and Spencer. Weizmann’s intimate relationship with each of these men allowed him to discover that “Manchester was not the Jewish intellectual wilderness [he] had imagined it to be” and create for himself a loyal network of support:

Here were people with whom problems could be discussed, with whom I could check and verify my ideas, and gauge how they would impress others. Not knowing the great difficulties in our way, they were readier for action than I, who was often hesitant and overcautious. In short, they helped to make Manchester, the city to which I had come as a stranger, and had considered a place of exile, a happy place for me.

Something about this group of young men in their late twenties and early thirties deeply captivated him. Weizmann liked to be in charge, and this band of devotees, “a fellowship of friends brought together by a common cause and sharing a common approach under an unofficial leadership,” provided him that opportunity. This circle, which in 1910 began to refer to itself as “The Manchester School of Zionism,” congregated around Weizmann because he offered them a distinct, nuanced Zionist world view.

The formation of the group allowed Weizmann to slowly curtail his reliance on Rabbi Moses Gaster, initially Weizmann’s most important contact. Gaster, religious leader of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation of London, officiated at the most prestigious institutions of English Jewry. After meeting at several Zionist conferences, the two shared a friendship borne of political convenience. However, Weizmann recognized
early on that Gaster, who possessed quite the prickly personality, got along with few in Anglo-Jewry and within a matter of years Weizmann separated himself from the Haham. Similarly, after five or six years, Weizmann's general feelings of alienation and frustration with England slowly began to dissipate. Weizmann had left Geneva in 1904 full of disgust for the Zionist movement on the continent. But the Jews of England, both Zionists and non-Zionists, as well as the generally stale intellectual milieu, discouraged him. This changed dramatically once Weizmann gathered around him the group of Zionists whose youthful enthusiasm and intellectual acuity brought out the best in him.

The personal loyalty sworn by the members of this group to Weizmann was just one measure of their value to the emerging Zionist leader. With the exception of Landman, each of the Weizmann consorts was an English native who possessed a keen awareness of the social and political English mores. Indeed, Weizmann never had designs of eschewing his Russianness and trying to fit in; instead, he nourished his relationships with those who had access to persons and places particular to England. The coterie was also well-educated; many of the members had studied throughout Europe and Simon and Sacher distinguished themselves from their peers with their work at Oxford. Some of these young Zionists embraced a rebellious spirit that clashed with the thinking of first-generation immigrant Jews; Simon's father, Manchester Rabbi Isadore Simon, was a fervent anti-Zionist who came to England from Eastern Europe. Likewise, Sieff was the son of an immigrant rag-picker from Lithuania, Marks of a poor Jewish immigrant from Russia, and Sacher of an impoverished Polish couple.

Perhaps most importantly, in an atmosphere of bickering and infighting amongst members of the weak and splintered English Zionist Federation (E.Z.F.), each of the Weizmann devotees deeply liked and respected the others. Sacher and Simon were childhood friends who were in the same graduating class at Oxford. Sieff and Marks grew up in the same street, attended Manchester Grammar school and staged their B’nei Mitzvot together. Eventually, they even married one another’s sisters one year apart; Marks in 1915 married Sieff’s sister Miriam and then Sieff wed Rebecca Marks, one of the co-founders of the Women’s International Zionist Organization (W.I.Z.O.). Sacher completed the triumvirate by wedding Miriam Marks, Simon Marks’ other sister. Landman and Hyamson did not share these same intricate personal ties, which might explain why each maintained marginal status in the group and exerted influence only sporadically.

Sacher’s sharp political instincts made him the most valuable of the group to Weizmann and would thus develop into the most influential of the associates. Like many Jews of his age, Sacher was a self-made man. He
grew up in a Zionist and Socialist family, the fifth son of a self-employed tailor who managed to make just enough money to finance his children's education. Sacher ultimately made his way from the Jews' Free School in Whitechapel to Oxford. His introduction to Zionism at the ripe age of 24 was quite dramatic; while studying German adjacent to the Swiss border, Sacher received a letter from home telling him a Zionist Congress was taking place at nearby Basel. This letter, of course, referred to the famous 1905 Congress where the majority of Zionists rejected the controversial Uganda project, voted for settlement in Palestine and precipitated a communal split headed by Israel Zangwill, who formed the Jewish Territorial Organization in response.

Sacher knew little of what was at stake but was intrigued and decided to attend. He took his bike, made his way through the Baden uplands and reached Basel on July 26, the day before the Congress opened. To his great surprise, all the tickets had been sold. Sacher then snuck into the casino and pretended for two days to be an English delegate. The Russian Zionist leaders Yechezkel Tschlenow and Menachem Ussishkin impressed Sacher with their sturdy opposition to the political Zionists, but Theodor Herzl inspired the budding writer with his enthralling, engaging presence. Sacher's experience at Basel transformed Zionism for him from an absent, elevated ideology into a compelling, dynamic cause to be championed.

Shortly after, he became the first of the group to meet Weizmann, probably at a meeting of the Manchester Zionist Association (M.Z.A.) sometime later in 1905. Sacher, who had joined the staff of the Manchester Guardian after failing to win a fellowship at Oxford, began lecturing occasionally on Zionist topics and soon became close with Weizmann. When the Weizmanns returned from their honeymoon in the fall of 1906, Sacher met the newlyweds at the London Road Station and loaned them half a crown to pay for a cab to their lodgings; the couple had spent their last few crowns on sandwiches on the train. Sacher also became the godfather of Weizmann's first child, Benjamin, when Gaster could not make it back to the country from Palestine in time for the circumcision. Sacher spent Passovers together with the Weizmanns, was asked to become their family solicitor, and traveled with the couple to the Austrian Alps and Cannes.

With Sacher firmly entrenched within the inner circle, Weizmann soon met others. Simon probably met Weizmann when he invited the Zionist leader to speak at the Oxford University Zionist Society. Together Sacher and Simon had founded the first society of its kind in England and held its first meeting on December 1, 1906; among speakers that year were Weizmann, Gaster and Leonard Stein, like Simon a classicist and like Sacher a liberal barrister. Sacher and Simon happened to establish the society at a time when Jews were increasingly gaining access to the most prestigious of English universities. Zionists societies had sprung up at most
of the major universities across Europe long before the advent of political Zionism. They were, however, formed in large Jewish centers in response to rampant anti-Semitism. Such societies in England, then, existed for more than an intellectual purpose; they were “also intended to ameliorate the spiritual conditions of Jewry, to conserve and develop Jewish culture on Jewish soil.” Similar societies were eventually initiated at all major English universities by 1914, and though small were considered to be a major gain for Zionism. It was through these societies that Zionists like Simon and Norman Bentwich first attained prominence. The core of the Weizmann circle then pulled in Hyamson and Landman through mutual involvement the Union of Jewish Literary Societies sometime between 1907 and 1911. With the latter two in the fold, the group began to take on a Hebrew revivalist character, especially eager to help Weizmann in his initial planning of the logistics for a Hebrew University.

Among those who participated actively in that campaign, Norman Bentwich was a quasi-member of the Weizmann circle until 1912, when he entered the Egyptian Ministry of Justice, relocated to the Middle East and didn’t return to England for years. He later joined the British army in Egypt in order to be closer to Palestine and kept the Zionists in touch with British “men on the spot.” But in the early years, Bentwich was an important member of this Zionist company. He was at the center of a public remonstration against Zionist activity on university campuses that began with the publication of his interview with the Jewish Chronicle, the leading source of Anglo-Jewish news. In this interview Bentwich argued, among other things, that Jews cannot be as entirely English in thought and culture as the man who is . . . descended from ancestors who have mingled their blood with other Englishmen for generations . . . it seems impossible to separate religion from nationality in Judaism without destroying both.

In response, no fewer than 25 leading members of the Anglo-Jewish elite signed a letter of protest; among them were fervent anti-Zionists Claude Montefiore and Phillip Magnus, who would both later present Weizmann and company with a bevy of problems. The next week’s issue allowed Bentwich to claim the protestors ignored the specifics of his statements and misconstrued his definitions of the duties of English citizens. The open conflict was punctuated by a letter to the editor by an anonymous member of Queens College, Oxford, which indicated “it must not be overlooked that the points made by [the opponents] are directed not against Zionism at the universities but against Zionism as such.” He was correct; indeed, these types of arguments would be utilized again by Montefiore and Magnus when accusing the Zionists of treachery in the
months leading up to the Balfour Declaration.

Though the archives of the M.Z.A. have been lost, the extant record makes clear members of the group gained access to Zionist institutions relatively quickly. Writing a programmatic pamphlet emphasizing the need for practical Zionism for the eighth annual conference of the E.Z.F. represented the first collaborative effort between Sacher and Weizmann.40 Sacher, along with Bentwich, Simon and Landman accompanied their mentor to the federation’s annual conference in Birmingham on February 7, 1907 and there, perhaps for the first time in public, began to advocate in favor of Weizmann’s ideas.41 Similarly, Sacher unofficially shadowed Weizmann at the eighth Zionist Congress of 1907 at The Hague and witnessed his famous “synthetic Zionism” speech, which, though not novel in its ideas, presented Weizmann as an icon to be reckoned with in the Zionist movement.42 Bentwich, Simon and Sacher joined the E.Z.F. executive in February 191143 and Simon became the body’s secretary the next year.44 So meteoric was the group’s climb that the Zionist Small Actions Committee (S.A.C.) in Germany contemplated in 1913 having Simon and Sacher take over the leadership of the entire E.Z.F., given its internal squabbles.45

Given that most of the members of his circle possessed polished writing skills, Weizmann naturally looked to his friends for help in creating his own organ. Weizmann long recognized Sacher’s utility in pressing the press to include pro-Zionist articles,46 but something more was needed for a “forceful campaign.”47 After all, the Jewish Chronicle, Anglo-Jewry’s most visible organ, was controlled by Leopold Greenberg, who hated Weizmann deeply; similarly, the preeminent Zionist publication on the continent, Die Welt, advocated in favor of Zionist Organization president David Wolffsohn, who was at odds with Weizmann.48 Thus, Weizmann encouraged his friends to create a monthly pamphlet of a uniquely English Zionist character. Edited first by Symon Massel, the father of Hebrew poet Joseph Massel, and Joseph Cowen, The Zionist Banner appeared for the first time in April 1910 in Manchester and represented the first attempt of the Weizmann group to interest British Jewry at large in Zionism. Harry Sacher wrote the first leading article and explained the publication’s mission:

Conferences, numberless as the sands of the seashore, have resolved that English Zionism shall have an organ . . . it has been left to a handful of youths to wipe away our reproach . . . English Zionism has the melancholy reputation of being more ridden with domestic quarrels than the Zionism of any other country . . . The peculiar note of our English quarrels which distinguishes them from the Zionist quarrels of other lands is the domination of the personal element, and the subordination, the almost total neglect of the element of thought . . . I venture .
. . . that this very grave defect in our English Zionists and English Zionism is not unconnected with the absence of a Zionist organ . . . The most urgent duty of English Zionism is to make English Zionists think clearly.49

Initially, the journal flailed under the leadership of Massel and Cohen. Weizmann complained to Ahad Ha’am that “it is a paper for ‘boys,’ which so far is of strictly local interest.”50 Ahad Ha’am, in turn, felt the value of the paper was diminished since the editors were so unknown outside Manchester.51 As a result, eight months later, the editorship of the journal passed to Simon, Sacher and Landman; they operated from an office in New Oxford Street and were supported financially by the E.Z.F.52 and later by the S.A.C.53 The trio renamed the monthly pamphlet The Zionist and embraced the notion that the ideas of a nation depend on the opinions of young men.54 Though appreciative of the propaganda efforts of this new journal, Weizmann remained skeptical as to its potential for actually creating change within the E.Z.F. He complained to Gaster that “the younger people just do not have the experience we have so bitterly undergone, and it is only to be expected that they will soon find out the hard way that the situation is impossible.”55

The operations of The Zionist also foreshadowed the means by which a later publication, Palestine, produced by Weizmann’s devotees, would confound his negotiations. In a November 1912 issue of The Zionist, an unsigned editorial foreshadowed the replacement of Turkey by England should the former lose her footing in Palestine; the article expressed a preference for a liberal Turkish regime but cited the notion of English succession as the best alternative.56 There was a problem with this idea: it had been previously expressed only in closed, private discussion amongst the members.57 Weizmann found the article “very premature” and warned Sacher of advocating too early for the idea of an English influence in Palestine.58

Weizmann and his close associates would often disagree over the means and methods by which to achieve their goals; foremost among those conflicts was the tendency of the Manchester group to push openly for British suzerainty in Palestine, a strategy which clashed with Weizmann’s more subtle approach.59 As it was, The Zionist ceased publication after only three years, probably due to a lack of interest. In 1913, then, the Weizmann disciples determined British Jewry could not be transformed into a mass Zionist movement and instead decided to focus their efforts elsewhere. The disheartening experience of The Zionist convinced the Weizmann circle they needed to appeal to a larger audience—and they would embrace this notion wholeheartedly when producing another journal in the midst of the Great War.
On the eve of 1914, Weizmann completed the formation of his circle by pulling in Israel Sieff and Simon Marks, who, until meeting him, had been lukewarm Zionists at best. Sieff’s father was a Zionist and Sieff joined the M.Z.A. in 1906 at the age of 17; Marks was not a member of any official Zionist organization. After an embarrassing first exchange at a social gathering, Sieff met with Weizmann at his lab in Manchester, pitched his skills to the chemist and excitedly accepted an invitation to accompany the Zionist leader to the S.A.C. conference later that year. Sieff then introduced Marks to Weizmann, and he too fell under Weizmann’s spell. Of all the devotees, Sieff and Marks were probably most influenced by their mentor.

Weizmann brought along the pair slowly. Sieff admitted his inexperience and ignorance of the modus operandi of the Zionist movement made him a less valuable commodity. He wished for some informal training in order to be an active, effective Zionist. Specifically, he wanted to understand “the administrative organization of the Zionist movement” and “how the central body controls all the various organizations.” By gradually introducing them to the personalities and institutions of Zionism, Weizmann readied Sieff and Marks to play a greater role in his day-to-day activities. By 1917, Weizmann would trust Sieff enough to utilize him as a primary advisor while Marks would emerge as Weizmann’s unofficial secretary.

Until the outbreak of war, Weizmann’s efforts were focused primarily on the Hebrew University project. Simon and Sacher played leading roles in drumming up support from Zionists and non-Zionists alike and together helped begin the process of organizing various aspects of the project. Due to the zeal with which Weizmann and his associates took on this task, the S.A.C. decided to concentrate the university project activities in England. The project acted as a training ground for Sacher, Simon and others, who came to learn the ways in which they should or should not work with Weizmann. The process also reinforced for Weizmann the necessity of having a close band of workers at hand so as to not rely on “commissions.” But the outbreak of war dashed any plans that might have been hatched. The project was not picked up again until after 1918.

The Zionist political position changed dramatically after the coming of war. The Allies began planning for the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, placing the future of Palestine on the international agenda for the first time. They also began to perceive the Jews as a group that might be useful for their purposes in the execution of the war. The Zionists, too, did their best to interest the British in their cause in general and Palestine in particular. On November 21, 1914, Hyamson composed the group’s first widely-read article, a piece on “The Future of Palestine” in the New Statesman, an obscure, intellectual British publication. Hyamson’s
commentary responded in part to then-Prime Minister Herbert Asquith’s proclamation earlier that month that the time neared when the Ottoman Empire would be dissolved. Hyamson provided arguably the first explicit connection between the shattering of the Ottoman Empire and Zionist aspirations; he also made claims that would have resonated with the general populace of England, which viewed the Zionists as generally pro-German:

As for the Jewish inhabitants, with exceptions that one could almost count on the fingers of one’s hands, they would certainly vote for Britain . . . Britain is in fact the only power that has ever shown sympathy with the Jewish people . . . Let Britain remember her past and think of her future, and secure to the Jews under her protection the possibility of building up a new Palestine on the ruins of her ancient home.72

Of those who read this article with great interest, the most important was David Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. C.P. Scott, the influential editor of the Manchester Guardian and Weizmann’s close confidant, possessed an assortment of contacts within the British government and corresponded often with Lloyd George. At this very moment and at Weizmann’s behest, Scott broached the subject of the Palestine question with the statesman and discovered, to his great surprise, that Lloyd George was familiar with the issue after reading Hyamson’s piece.73 Likewise, Herbert Samuel, at that time a Liberal Member of Parliament, was so fascinated by the editorial that he wrote the editor-in-chief of The New Statesman and asked about “this very interesting article.”74 Two months later, Samuel circulated amongst his colleagues an essay supporting the future control of Palestine by the British. The paper, entitled “The Future of Palestine,” argued there was

a stirring among the twelve million Jews scattered throughout the countries of the world . . . [that] now at last, some advance may be made, in some way, towards the fulfillment of the hope and desire, held with unshakable tenacity for eighteen hundred years, for the restoration of the Jews to the land to which they are attached by ties almost as ancient as history itself.75

There is no direct evidence linking Hyamson’s article with Samuel’s proposals to the Cabinet, but it is possible there might be some connection. True, Samuel had on November 9, 1914 gone to Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey and tried to convince him of the strategic and spiritual merits of future British control over Palestine.76 But Samuel did not have any connection with the Zionist movement before 1914 and, until this point, had not declared publicly in its favor.77 Nothing immediately came of Samuel’s Cabinet proposals, and the Palestine question was largely ignored
by British decision-makers until the change of government late in 1916.

Since Zionism had finally become relevant in the right circles, Weizmann gradually came to the conclusion some kind of modus vivendi had to be found with the Conjoint Foreign Committee (C.F.C.), the body representing Anglo-Jewry in matters of foreign relations. The C.F.C.'s leader was Lucien Wolf, a vehement anti-Zionist and journalist with a great personal interest in the plight of Jews in Russia, where a number of pogroms had erupted since the turn of the century.78 In order to begin a dialogue, Weizmann dispatched Sacher to contact Wolf and request a formal exchange of views. In December 1914, Sacher and Wolf had a series of meetings and subsequent correspondence, mostly an airing of views and establishment of a course for future negotiations.79 Sacher largely misled Wolf by claiming the Zionists had eliminated any political designs from their agenda.80 Wolf, in turn, was quite skeptical regarding Sacher's claim that “we know that we are the spokesman of 200,000 organized Zionists.”81 At one particularly tense meeting, Wolf asked Sacher “who are the persons and organizations representing your views and in what measure do they represent the great body of Zionists?” Weizmann was less than pleased with Wolf’s bravado. He wrote to Sacher in the most forceful way imaginable:

The gentlemen of the type of L[ucien] W[olf] have to be told the candid truth at present and made to realize that we and not they are the masters of the situation, that if we come to them it is only and solely because we desire to show to the world a united Jewry and we don’t want to expose them as ‘self appointed leaders’ . . . I, Chaim Weizmann, and you Harry and you Leon—say nothing of A[had] H[a’am]—are the accredited representatives of the Jewish people . . . we have a programme and shall have the support of a great majority of Jews. They stand alone. They can do no harm, but we shall cut the grass from under their feet.83

Sacher followed Weizmann’s lead, and after some rancorous correspondence, the two sides convened a formal meeting in January 1915—which neither Sacher nor Weizmann attended.84 Ahad Ha’am, for his part, had been dubious of the seriousness of the negotiations from the very beginning.85 Nahum Sokolow and Tschlenow, the accepted heads of the S.A.C. who had just arrived in London at the end of 1914, represented the Zionists in these discussions with Wolf and other members of the C.F.C. The talks, though, led nowhere and the breach between the two sides would never be repaired.86 By 1916, the once collegial talks had erupted into a public war. The publication of a book in July 1916 by the Weizmann devotees, Zionism and the Jewish Future, outraged the anti-Zionist opposition. Intended primarily for the general public and edited by Sacher, the volume was a
collection of essays designed to present the British public with background on and the desires of the Zionist movement. It sold a modest 3,000 copies. Hyamson, Simon, Bentwich and Sacher all contributed essays, as did Shmuel Tolkowsky, a Belgian agronomist who migrated to London early in 1915 after serving in his country’s army.

Theoretical essays by Weizmann and Gaster particularly incited the C.F.C. Lord Cromer, one of the magnates of the British Empire, wrote a favorable review of the book in The Spectator, claiming Zionism “is rapidly becoming a practical issue and before long politicians will be unable to brush it aside as the fantastic dream of a few idealists.” Wolf then published an article on “Zionism” in the Fortnightly Review in November 1916 discrediting Jewish nationalism as a potentially dangerous movement that must be stopped. This was the point of no return; the relationship between the two sides became even more acrimonious as 1917 approached.

At the end of 1916, meanwhile, some members of the Weizmann circle took their harrowing experiences in mobilizing support among British Jewry about Zionism to heart. Sacher, who was back at the Manchester Guardian after being fired from his post at the London Daily News in 1915, had secured the sympathies of two elder non-Jews at the office: news editor W.P. Crozier and Herbert Sidebotham, the newspaper’s so-called “student of war.” Sidebotham had been the first British gentile journalist to express publicly a preference for British control of Palestine. Sacher brought him into close contact with Sieff and Marks at the beginning of 1916, and from then on, the four fomented ideas together. At the behest of Weizmann, Sidebotham composed a memorandum, based on an article he had written for the Guardian in 1915, outlining in detail the potential strategic benefits of a British Palestine. He handed in the memorandum to the Foreign Office in spring 1916, but received no response. The group’s next step, then, was to attempt to form a grassroots activist organization.

Formed in late 1916, the British Palestine Committee (B.P.C.) was composed of Marks, Sacher Sieff and Sidebotham in Manchester, with Hyamson, Simon and Tolkowsky unofficially attached from London; the group adopted the mission of promoting a British-controlled Palestine to the general public. The B.P.C.’s driving force was Sacher, who was now confident enough in his own skills to begin to branch out independently from Weizmann. Sidebotham drafted a letter inviting luminaries in British society to join the committee, asking each person to “give the weight of their name to our views” but requested no financial contribution. The memo explained the B.P.C. aimed “to interest English people . . . in the idea of a Jewish Palestine under the British Crown . . . The formation of such a State would be a noble idea worthy of the British nation and of the sacrifices that it has made in this war.” Sidebotham and company sent 300
circulars to men in politics, writing and learning; they expected to receive a large number of acceptances and contemplated moving the committee’s headquarters from Manchester, where they would have continued to direct policy but let the larger names constitute the committee. Thus, the British Palestine Committee was envisioned to be an organization whose members were mostly non-Jewish.

But this idea was dropped once the group received just 10 replies, half of which were mere formal acknowledgements. Of those five respondents, two opposed on ideological grounds, two offered lukewarm support and one informally offered his services. Sir George Adam Smith, author of a famous geographical study of Palestine, The Historical Geography of the Holy Land, claimed the country had never been and would never become a nation; Wickham Steed, the foreign affairs editor of the London Times, rejected the idea because he felt it would “be an offence to Holy Russia.” Sir Flinders Petrie and Lord Carson expressed general sympathies, while Scott agreed to become a patron. Sidebotham then sent a special invitation to Sir Mark Sykes in which he explained in brief the aspirations of the company:

A small Palestine Committee has been formed in order to promote the ideal of an Anglo-Jewish Palestine, which it is hoped the war will bring within reach. The Committee wishes to familiarize the British people with this ideal. It believes that it can establish an absolute identity of interest between British state policy and Jewish national aspirations . . . with this object the committee propose by literature and other suitable means to bring out case before the public.

Sykes declined the offer per his position on the Committee of Imperial Defense but noted that “I have always considered that Jewish nationalism is inevitably destined to play a great part in the future . . . and a factor in the cause of peace.” A report circulated to B.P.C. members shortly after described the general response of the respondents to be “most discouraging.” Perhaps the British public was not as ready for such ideas as the committee collectively had envisioned.

The B.P.C. began holding formal meetings as early as December 1916, but the committee would soon become important as the stars began to align for the Zionist movement. Lloyd George became Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour moved from the Admiralty to the Foreign Office, the war with Turkey entered a new phase where Palestine became more relevant strategically, and suddenly, the Zionists had new life.

While the contributions of the Weizmann circle prior to 1917 pale in comparison to the group’s achievements during that decisive year, their collective experiences in this early period were crucial in preparing them for their behind-the-scenes work leading up to the promulgation of the Balfour
Declaration. The members not only developed close ties with Weizmann but also learned how to work with the sometimes sensitive figure. Through their various forays into public propaganda, they realized the importance of imparting their message to the British public as a whole rather than focusing exclusively on an inner Jewish dialogue. And after their meetings and open pamphlet war with Lucien Wolf and others, the Weizmann circle appreciated the stiff opposition they would face from within their own community. These would all be crucial lessons these Zionists would draw upon when helping forge the most important document in modern Jewish history.

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3. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 298-299; Stein, 124; Sanders, 100-101; Stuart Cohen, English Zionists and British Jews (Princeton, 1982), 121; Steven J. Zipperstein, Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha’am and the Origins of Zionism (Berkeley, 1993), 297.
5. Weizmann, Trial and Error, 132.
6. In 1914, Sacher and Simon were each 34 years of age, Sieff 25, Marks 27, Landman 31, and as the outlier and elder statesman, Hyamson was 39. Weizmann was 40.
8. Sacher coined the term in a 1910 Zionist publication he helped produce, The Zionist.
10. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 188.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid. The two stopped corresponding altogether from 1911-1913.
14. Landman was born in Zhvanets, Ukraine but relocated permanently to England in 1911.
17. In 1903, Sacher was awarded the prestigious Gladstone Memorial Prize for a thesis in modern history at Oxford. The next year, he earned a first in modern history under the guidance of tutor and famous 20th century historian H.A.L. Fisher. See Jewish Chronicle, May 8, 1903, August 5, 1904 and September 1, 1961 and David Ayerst, The Manchester Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper (Manchester, 1971), 383. Similarly, Simon won the Dean Ireland and Craven scholarships for his work in Classics and Philosophy. See Jewish Chronicle, August 5, 1904.
19. Ayerst, 383.
31. The son of Herbert Bentwich, a member of the Anglo-Jewish elite and a leading supporter of Herzl.
32. The Society had three main objectives: “the diffusion of knowledge of Jewish literature, history and sociology, the promotion of popular Jewish publications and the establishment of a circulating library containing
works on Jewish history and literature.” It sponsored lectures and classes on Hebrew revivalism and under the leadership of Bentwich and Simon, pushed for the union to support the Zionist vision for the establishment of a Hebrew University. See The Jewish Yearbook (1912), 60 and Cohen, 129.

33. Bentwich may have been sending the views of T.E. Lawrence about the relationship of the Arabs and Turks to Nahum Sokolow and other Zionists on the continent. See Vital, 83.

34. Jewish Chronicle, March 26, 1909.

35. A scholar, the founder of Liberal Judaism and president of the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA), the other important Jewish institution in England alongside the Board of Deputies. He was also a nephew of Moses Montefiore, the first publicly popular Jewish community leader in England during the 19th century.

36. The vice president of the AJA and one of the world’s leading champions of technical education.

37. Jewish Chronicle, April 9, 1909.


39. The preeminent historian of Manchester Jewry, Bill Williams has explained that “the archives of the M.Z.A. were destroyed by a caretaker anxious to create more room in new offices after the Association had vacated the building at 67 Cheetham Hill Road which it had occupied at the turn of the century. With them went the documented activities of the literally hundreds of Zionist bodies which had flourished in Manchester since the 1880s . . . What ended up on a municipal rubbish tip was part of the prehistory of the Jewish State.” See Bill Williams, “Heritage and Community: The Rescue of Manchester’s Jewish Past,” in The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness, ed. Tony Kushner (London, 1992), 132.

40. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 294; Jewish Chronicle, February 1 and February 8, 1907.

41. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 297-299.

42. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 305-311. Officially, Sacher was at The Hague covering the Congress for the Manchester Guardian. In every other year between 1905 and 1946, Israel Cohen wrote about the Zionist Congresses for the newspaper. See Ayerst, 382.

43. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 324.

44. WL V, 294, n. 11.

45. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 382.

46. Weizmann to Gaster, January 6, 1910, WL V, 164; Weizmann to SAC, December 28, 1911, WL V, 265-266; Weizmann to Vera, May 24, 1912, WL V, 305.

47. Weizmann to Ahad Ha’am, August 10, 1908, WL V, 83.
50. Weizmann to Ahad Ha’am, February 4, 1910, WL V, 176.
52. WL V, 176, n. 4-5.
53. WL VI, 99, n. 4.
54. Jewish Chronicle, October 11, 1907.
55. Weizmann to Gaster, March 2, 1910, WL V, 198.
56. WL V, 325, n. 7.
57. WL V, 325, n. 8.
58. Weizmann to SAC, November 23, 1912, WL V, 325.
59. Sacher often noted that “loyalty is a thing alien to my nature” when Weizmann chastised him for breaches of discipline. See, Sacher to Weizmann, January 23 1914, Weizmann Archive, Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel; hereafter referred to as WA.
60. Sieff, 68-70. The conference was cancelled after war broke out.
61. Sieff, 69.
63. Sieff to Weizmann, May 18, 1914, WA.
64. Sieff to Weizmann, July [], 1914, WA.
65. Weizmann to Sacher and Simon, November 9, 1913, WL VI, 162-163.
66. Weizmann to Sacher and Simon, November 2, 1913, WL VI, 158-159.
67. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 381.
68. Weizmann to SAC, July 20, 1913, WL VI, 116.
69. Reinharz, Zionist Leader, 401.
70. Vital, 89.
71. Vital, 90.
73. Scott to Weizmann, November 29, 1914, WA.
74. Simon to Weizmann, December 5, 1914, WA.
75. Qtd. in Vital, 93.
76. Vital, 92
77. Reinharz, Statesman, 21.
78. For more on Wolf, see Mark Levene, War, Jews and the New Europe (Oxford, 1992).
81. Qtd. in Vital, 177.
82. Qtd. in Reinharz, 36.
84. Vital, 177-178.
87. Stein, 300.
88. Gaster, for example, wrote “the claim to be Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion—that is, English by nationality and Jewish by faith—is an absolute self-delusion.” See Zionism and the Jewish Future, ed. Harry Sacher (London, 1916), 93.
89. The Spectator, August 12, 1916
92. Sanders, 290.
94. Stein, 302.
95. Sidebotham, 33-40; Stein, 302-303.
96. Stein, 303.
98. Sidebotham, 41.
100. Sidebotham, 41.
101. Stein, 303.
102. Sidebotham, 42.
103. Qtd. in Reinharz, Statesman, 107.
104. A British archeologist interested in the Middle East in general and Egypt and Palestine in particular.
105. A British politician committed to Irish home-rule and a healthy British-Irish relationship.
106. Ayerst, 396; Sidebotham, 42. For whatever reasons, Scott did not attend even one meeting of the British Palestine Committee.
107. B.P.C. to Sykes, October 11, 1917, WA.
108. Sykes to B.P.C., October 14, 1917, WA.
109. Qtd. in Stein, 304.
110. Sidebotham, 40.
111. Stein, 305.
Turf Wars: The Front Lawn and the American War on Nature

Robin Pam

“Lawns are nature purged of sex and death. No wonder Americans like them so much.” – Michael Pollan

The neighborhood where I grew up has no sidewalks, and oak trees hundreds of years old line the streets in Menlo Oaks. Two streets away from this pastoral enclave in the modern California suburb of Menlo Park lies Vintage Oaks, a 1997-1999 housing development. About one hundred homes on quarter-acre lots crowd into several square miles of land; an imposing concrete wall shelters the community. In front of every house, cookie-cutter mailboxes signal the mail’s arrival with perfect red flags, while a curving, contiguous swath of verdant grass divides the sidewalk from the street. A distance of no more than twenty feet separates each front door from the road, and almost every yard has a small patch of green lawn to match the neighbors’. While the older Menlo Oaks is the picture of an affluent, rural-feeling suburban neighborhood of the 1960s, the younger Vintage Oaks, with its open yards, and where homes sell for a higher median price, represents a throwback to the origins of front yard landscapes, and especially the uniquely American phenomenon of the suburban lawn.

In this suburb of San Francisco, why do people spend so much time and money, and invest in such environmentally harmful technology, to maintain the perfect green appearances of their lawns? All evidence indicates that the pressure of the dominant front lawn aesthetic has overpowered the environmental sensibilities of suburbanites. For years they have turned to gas-powered lawn mowers, automatic sprinkler systems, and a litany of herbicides and pesticides to manipulate their lawns into conformity. The Bay Area residents of Vintage Oaks are the new front in America’s love-hate war with nature.

For generations, Americans have elevated the lawn into the symbol of an all-out battle between human-created technology and human-constructed nature. The lawn is the garden, and lawn care technology – lawnmower, fertilizer, sprinklers, pesticides, herbicides and genetically engineered grass seed – the machine in historian Leo Marx’s metaphorical thesis of the “machine in the garden.” Marx argues that the dialectic between machine and garden is an inherent contradiction within American history. The garden is the pastoral ideal, which has “been used to define the meaning of America ever since the age of discovery, and it has not
yet lost its hold upon the native imagination.” When manifested as the “longing for a more ‘natural’ environment,” this imagination promoted the middle class exodus from city to suburb. The naturalistic images of the pastoral ideal evoke a misguided nostalgia for the continent’s wild past, long lost to the evils of urbanization. When the machine entered this idealized and unspoiled American garden – when the age of industrialization encroached upon Thomas Jefferson’s ideal agrarian society – the new age of mechanization encouraged Americans to rethink their relationship with nature. Marx points to the American literary canon as evidence of America’s struggle with the apparent paradox of the “rural myth and technological fact.” This dichotomy of man and his technology pitted against nature is the central point of reconciliation within America’s natural identity.

Yet the dialectic of grass and the lawn care industry inverts Marx’s classic relationship of technology invading nature, because the story of the lawn is the story of lawn technology. American front lawns “have become engineered spaces with rigid boundaries and hard edges.” Today’s patches of grass are far from the nature that nineteenth century visionaries meant them to resemble. Technology has helped to shape the lawn and our fetish with its aesthetic. Lawns and technology have become inseparable, for without lawn care technology, the silky green carpet that blankets suburbia would not exist.

**The Garden: Early Beginnings of the Front Lawn Aesthetic**

The American lawn has never been a symbol of wild nature. Rather, the lawn is a convenient way to evoke nature without feeling threatened by wilderness. The beginnings of the front lawn aesthetic in the late eighteenth century reveal this desire to control nature. At the time, Americans cultivated their gardens meticulously in the English tradition. Lawns appeared first in England where John Loudon, a gardener to the wealthy, decreed that tasteful gentlemen’s mansions ought to be surrounded by “the smoothness of green turf.” Another gardener, Lancelot “Capability” Brown, designed the gardens at Blenheim Palace, near Oxford, in the picturesque tradition with expansive swards of manicured grass. Brown, Loudon, and their contemporaries wanted to bring nature into the domestic realm of the English estate. They paired their lawns with trees, lakes and meandering streams to construct the illusion of nature and a new aesthetic. The English landscape architects of the picturesque tradition created “not nature itself, but an idea, a definition of nature as a place that is free of humans and human artifice.”

Upper class Americans obsessed over this new English style of gardening. Thomas Jefferson cultivated one of the first American lawns at Monticello, and George Washington called a field at Mount Vernon a “lawn” in one of the earliest uses of the new vocabulary. Interestingly, these
landscapes required an immense amount of human effort to sustain the pastoral, agrarian illusion. To maintain a lawn in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, property owners either employed laborers to painstakingly scythe every inch of grass, or they kept grazing animals such as sheep.

In the early to mid-nineteenth century, the movement away from cities and toward a new ruralism—what Leo Marx calls the “middle landscape”—emerged among upper class Americans. Andrew Jackson Downing, a gardener from upstate New York, mimicked the rural environment by adopting the English lawn aesthetic to Hudson Valley estates. His vision of the lawn as a place of “transition between the architecture of the house and wild nature” is the embodiment of Leo Marx’s middle landscape. It is a place between city and country, industrialization and the pastoral ideal. Possibly the most influential figure in nineteenth century lawn culture, Downing Americanized the grassy expanse surrounding houses. He also called on his countrymen to eliminate fences in an effort to dissolve what he saw as artificial boundaries marring the landscape. In his 1841 masterwork, A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, the landscape architect preaches against fences, calling them “the most unsightly and offensive objects in country seats” and “an abomination of which no person of taste could be guilty.”

As the original arbiter of lawn taste and figurehead of the Romantic garden and architecture movement, Downing imbued his followers with his love of lawns. Frederick Law Olmsted, the most recognized of Downing’s disciples, used lawns as a standard feature in his naturalistic park designs in the late nineteenth century. He envisioned parks with grazing sheep that would suggest the image of the country farm and pastoral ideal within the city. To create this ideal in Central Park, Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux built up hills, dug out a lake and meticulously crafted a landscape so naturalistic that many New Yorkers still do not know that the park has not always been covered in trees. In another of his projects, the model Chicago suburb of Riverside, Olmsted placed houses thirty feet away from the street and constructed deliberately curved roads to suggest leisure, meandering tranquility, and a semi-communal front yard park landscape. The pastoral ideal of a nature free of human touch led Olmstead and other developers to reject fences and straight lines. Nineteenth century landscape architects strove to create an open, public and naturalistic space that would be an uplifting influence on the lower and middle classes. Developers not only wanted to cure social ills, but also to improve the beauty of cities. As suburbs proliferated in the years following the Civil War, country cottages, cemeteries and parks were all seen as aesthetically pleasing influences on the urban landscape.

While Olmsted incorporated lawns into his suburban and public
park ideals, another of Downing’s students placed the lawn at the forefront of post-Civil War suburban development. Frank Jessup Scott democratized the lawn in America. As a landscape architect and developer in Toledo, Ohio, Scott advocated the positive aesthetic value of contiguous front lawns as a way to beautify the suburban environment and bring nature into the suburbs. Scott wrote in his 1870 volume The Art of Beautifying the Suburban Home Ground that “a smooth, closely-shaven surface of grass is by far the most essential element of beauty on the grounds of a suburban home.”\textsuperscript{10} Along with the recent invention of the lawnmower, Scott’s new aesthetic ideal sold the lawn to the growing numbers of middle class Americans who left the city in search of their own slice of the American dream. Owning a single-family home in the new streetcar suburbs lured countless upper and middle class Americans to places with bucolic names such as Tuxedo Park near New York, and Cleveland Park, College Park, and Takoma Park outside of Washington, DC.\textsuperscript{11} Scott’s contribution to these suburbs was to emphasize the egalitarian aspect of the front lawn, the contiguous velvet blanket spanning entire blocks of houses, and each individual family’s responsibility to its neighbors. Like Downing and Olmsted, Scott opposed fences and other boundaries of privacy. “It is unchristian,” he wrote, “to hedge from the sight of others the beauties of nature.”\textsuperscript{12}

Scott may have advocated the public space of the lawn, but others used the new ideal as a way to close off the home. In his classic The Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States, Kenneth Jackson writes that, while fences were eliminated, the lawn itself acted as a privacy barrier, “a kind of verdant moat separating the household from the threats and temptations of the city.”\textsuperscript{13} Scott had created a space that simultaneously promoted public neighborhood communities and private family homes. The lawn transcended the human-free nature of the pastoral ideal to become the great equalizer in a neighborhood, a symbol of open democracy and an egalitarian society.

As they democratized the lawn, Downing, Olmsted, and Scott also promoted the vision of nature as subservient to American will. The larger problem is that no matter how equal neighbors’ yards become, “with respect to nature [the lawn] is authoritarian.”\textsuperscript{14} An unnatural hubris emerges in this belief that all nature can and should be controlled for social improvement and societal good. We cannot coexist peacefully with nature. Instead, we must wage a war on our own front yards to exert our power and, paradoxically, eliminate all signs of human presence from the slice of nature that lies closest to our homes.
ENTER THE MACHINE: LAWN TECHNOLOGY

By the turn of the twentieth century, suburban front lawns covered most new developments in the Midwest. The landscape architects of the mid-nineteenth century were important figures in planting the seeds of the front lawn aesthetic, but the phenomenon quickly grew beyond their control. The invention of the lawnmower, increasing hybridization of grass seed, and greater availability of public water all made the ideal front lawn accessible to the growing suburban middle class.

Edwin Budding, an inventor from Stroud, England, made possible the Sisyphean task of mowing in 1830. His lawn mower and its descendents eliminated the need for the backbreaking labor of scything grass, or the pastoral but unrealistic presence of grazing animals. Once regarded as an effective and idyllic way of controlling lawn growth, grazing sheep “had been banished from yards because they gave the vulgar suggestion of thrift,” noted Thorstein Veblen in The Theory of the Leisure Class. By 1900, the lawn had become a status symbol. In 1897, the first gas-powered riding mower was patented, and in 1904, a steam-powered machine mowed a polo field in only eight hours. Yet these models remained impractical for most Americans until after World War II, when Roy Hainke patented the rotary blade mower that we know today. As lawn mowers became user-friendly, less expensive, and mass-produced in the early twentieth century, the front lawn aesthetic became feasible for the middle class.

With the rise of the mower, lawns became the masculine domain within the feminized garden. Advertisers marketed mowers to men, and before gas-powered machines were affordable, men were believed to be the only household members strong enough to operate them. More importantly, by marketing power mowers and lawn technology to men, the industry appealed to the masculine desire to exert control over nature. Power tools, chemicals, and technology were marketed to men, while women received images that emphasized their role of offering “cosmetic hints for a better complexion of the lawn.” Magazines and advertisements perpetuated the front lawn aesthetic. As the lawn care industry grew, so did the consumer culture of grass. Americans were bombarded with images of “good” lawns: green all year round, purged of artificial boundaries, and consistently cropped to match the neighbors. As lawns crept closer to the home, they resembled less and less the nature they were originally intended to represent.

The women of the Garden Clubs of America, the United States Golf Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the City Beautiful movement all promoted the front lawn aesthetic from the institutional side. These organizations provided the impetus to develop technology to domesticate the front yard, and they were largely responsible for advocating the early twentieth-century human-free vision of a closely
manicured lawn. While the Garden Clubs and the City Beautiful reformers focused on the power of the lawn to fix societal problems and improve communities, the USGA and USDA collaborated to develop the technology necessary to maintain the democratic ideal of the lawn. This two-pronged extension of the pastoral ideal – improvement for society and aesthetics for the leisure class – has propelled the lawn care industry to its present-day gargantuan size. In a sign of the industry’s lasting success, human life remains conspicuously absent from front lawns even in the twenty first century’s middle class suburbs.

After the invention of the mower, the tools of the American war on nature increased in number and variety. J. Lessler of Buffalo, New York, patented the first lawn-sprinkler in 1871. Public water systems, the rubber hose, and sprinklers all made a year-round green velvet carpet possible, even during the driest months of the summer. The USDA worked to develop pest and blight-resistant turf coverings in conjunction with the USGA. In the 1920s, many developers built new suburbs abutting golf courses, which had become popular in the early years of the century. The golf course represented the ideal in lawn appearance.

The suburbanites’ hostility escalated even further in the years after World War II. By the 1950s, the USDA marketed its engineered turf grasses to the general public with such propaganda as “‘Mother Nature has beaten [a good many homeowners] to a standstill for so many years that revenge is worth almost any price as long as it comes in the form of a real good, drought-tolerant, weed-resistant lawn.’” Another USDA leaflet stated that “in choosing a grass for his lawn, the owner usually has the choice of selecting a grass that will thrive under existing conditions or of selecting the grass he wants and then modifying the conditions to meet the requirements of that grass.” The choice was obvious. Manufacturers sold genetically engineered grass, from hearty Kentucky bluegrass to non-native ryegrass, specifically to the noncommercial market. The seed quickly became cheap and widely available to the average American. These technological innovations permitted homeowners to believe in their ability to craft a perfect yard for their perfect home.

In post-World War II automobile suburbs, the front lawn aesthetic rapidly became not only within reach, but also a battlefield for neighborhood tyranny that has persisted until today. One author writes of people in her mid-century San Diego neighborhood who refused to keep a lawn. “These people were about as popular as homeowners who parked pickup trucks in the front yard or kept their Christmas lights up year-round. They had violated the iron rule of lawns, which may be stated as follows: SHORT, GREEN GRASS IS THE ONLY NORMAL, RESPECTABLE THING TO HAVE IN YOUR FRONT YARD.” An unspoken edict throughout suburbia caused casualties of the war on nature. Vegetable gardens, swing
sets, and other unsightly garden paraphernalia were relegated to the back yard, leaving the front open to wide expanses of lawn.

By the 1960s, the arsenal of chemicals available to reach this ideal – to rid lawns of weeds, kill crabgrass, and eliminate bugs and insects – reached a tipping point. The lawn care industry generated annual revenues estimated at $3 billion in 1965, indicating that the American public had bought into the fantasy of a perfect lawn. The makers of DDT marketed the harmful pesticide as an effective way to fight insects for the five years that the poison remained embedded in the soil. The American consumer’s fascination with chemical and biological warfare on our lawns grew exponentially, oblivious to Rachel Carson’s incriminating study of the lawn and chemical industry in 1962. Her bestselling book, Silent Spring, eventually led to bans on DDT and arsenic for home-use. Yet despite Carson’s warnings, contemporary American lawns still receive more pesticides and herbicides per acre than any farm crop.

Silent Spring coincided with the rise of a national environmental consciousness that caused a backlash against the chemical oppression of lawns. Both scientists and the American public began to question our unique relationship with the lawn. Because Americans rely on nature as “a powerful source of authority for national identity,” the modern environmental movement seized on the detrimental effects of chemical and fertilizer treatments for lawns. Carson’s book appealed to every parent’s desire to protect children from harm. Another major reason behind questioning the lawn stemmed from the inability to manipulate lawns without “in some measure diminishing our local, regional, and global environment.”

Indeed, the effects of lawn chemicals have not ended with the human health impacts. Fertilizer runoff from golf courses and urban lawns has caused eutrophication in several of the Great Lakes. Crab fishers in the Chesapeake have noted a decline in catch due to chemical contamination of the bay. Constant irrigation has worsened water shortages in the arid Southwest.

Many 1960s suburbanites and environmentalists alike recognized the lawn as the epitome of our inauthentic and destructive relationship with nature. “The lawn,” says Jennifer Price, “was anti-nature.” Companies with names that mingled the natural with the technological, such as Chemlawn and Techniturf, dominated the lawn care industry, while eco-advocates complained that lawns were artificial and lifeless. The modern Frankenstein lawn – clipped and fed and micromanaged to perfection – had strayed too far from the pastoral ideal. Domestic swaths of grass no longer represented a long-lost naturalistic ideal, nor did they solve any social problems or strengthen communities. Instead, lawns were contaminated battlegrounds, festering cesspools of toxic chemicals that symbolized the decay of modern society at the hands of human-imposed technology. At the same time the
environmentalists condemned lawns, they advocated filling yards with more natural landscapes, such as meadows, wildflowers, and vegetable gardens. Ironically, these activists promoted the same essential pastoral, human-free vision of nature that had created the lawn in the first place.\textsuperscript{27}

Because of anxiety about the safety of chemical lawn treatments, many contemporary suburbanites have switched to organic methods of taming the lawn. Some homeowners have replaced their greenswards with trees and vegetable gardens. Others have defied city ordinances by allowing wildflower meadows to grow in their front yards. Not only do lawns reinforce our convoluted relationship with nature, they enforce conformity in our neighborhoods, as neighbors police each other’s front yards for long or disobedient grass. For centuries, we have exerted control over nature through lawns. Only now do we also control each other’s personal patch of nature through city ordinance and neighborhood tyranny. And only now can we see the deleterious effects of our war on nature. Only now do some suburbanites see that to injure nature is to injure ourselves. Yet the desire to sculpt front yards into a skewed vision of nature will not soon disappear. In 1993, the lawn care industry’s annual revenues were estimated at twenty-five billion dollars per year.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{A NATURAL PARADOX: BUYING INTO THE FUTURE}

If suburbanites are aware of the environmental and health ramifications of cultivating a lawn, why do lawns still cover most American yards? Are we aware that we are so paradoxically attached to this human creation that we have left the pastoral ideal behind while trying to perfect it? The answers lie in the conflict between taste and reality, aesthetics and nature.

To erase human presence from the lawn, every aspect of grass has become manufactured with increasingly complex and expensive technology. These days, baby boomers of both sexes are buying lawn mowers, breaking the traditional male hold on the lawn. Despite the backlash of environmentally conscious suburbanites, gas-guzzling riding mowers have replaced walking mowers as the machine of choice. A John Deere X595 Special Edition costs $14,149 and has a top speed of eight and a half miles per hour. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute estimates that Americans bought 1.9 million riding mowers in 2004. The shift to bigger and better mowers represents an insatiable appetite for more powerful technology to control the land and assert power over nature.

The “more power” phenomenon of television shows such as “Home Improvement” can be tied to the American proclivity to “arrive ignorant into a new landscape, to denude it and replace it with a hodgepodge from other climates and even other countries, and then to squander energy to artificially maintain the vegetation.”\textsuperscript{29} Professors of
turfgrass science still engineer new varieties of buffalo grass, ryegrass, and bluegrass that improve with every new modification. Some contain natural insect repellents while others stay green with relatively small amounts of pesticides and fertilizers. Today, the average North Carolina homeowner spends around four hundred dollars per year to maintain a lawn. The lawn has trickled down as a status symbol from the upper echelons of society all the way down to the lowest reaches, so that any bungalow on any street in America is likely to display a lawn as an indication of good taste and a keen aesthetic sense.

Lawn ornaments, a common feature of many lawns, run the gamut from kitsch, to good taste, to the invocation of nature. These cultural symbols of human artifice bring “wild” nature closer to the American home. Yet because they are man-made, plastic pink flamingos, fiberglass deer, and naturalistically placed rocks and waterfalls seem to push nature even farther away from the domestic sphere. In the 1990s, high-end garden-supply stores sold $299 copper herons and $179 fiberglass urns. Lawn art makes the “wall between nature and not-nature more visible and powerful.” We have effectively eliminated any trace of nature from our lawns while also erasing the evidence of not-nature, or, simply, humans. With naturalistic — and even not so naturalistic — lawn art we artificially bring nature back into our lawns. Within lawn art lies a persisting definition of nature, the pastoral ideal of the original arbiter of good taste, Andrew Jackson Downing. Nature is inherently free of human presence.

As Michael Pollan remarks, “Gardening, as compared to lawn care, tutors us in nature’s ways, fostering an ethic of give-and-take with respect to the land.” The dominance of technology makes the lawn the least appropriate covering for the residential front yard. In twenty-first century America, the garden, not the lawn, has assumed the position of the middle landscape in America’s age-old pastoral ideal, a place in which Americans gently mold their backyards into a comforting simulation of the idealized natural world. While Leo Marx theorized that the American pastoral ideal of nature has adapted to mechanization, the dramatic impact of lawn technology on the front lawn means that mechanization has played a role in the perversion of the pastoral ideal in the residential sphere. In our own front yards, we no longer believe in our ability to live within nature. Instead, lawn technology has reinforced Americans’ long-standing belief in a mandate to dominate the land and destroy the natural world.

Several current landscape trends suggest a shift from the environmentally destructive and psychologically skewed front lawn paradigm in America. In the Southwest, where water shortages have forced many communities to restrict lawn irrigation, xeriscape ordinances mandate planting low-water use native species. A 1990 xeriscape ordinance in Tuscon, Arizona, has all but eradicated the front lawn in that city.
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recent New York Times article documented a nascent trend among New
York City residents to pave over their front yards to create more space for
parking. Said one Brooklyn resident, “I want to keep a little grass, but a full
lawn is too much maintenance.” Ironically, another man simply wanted a
“cleaner and nicer place for the kids to play.” In some places lawns are
disappearing because of television and air conditioning, new technologies
that trap people indoors and diminish the need for a cool, open, outdoor
space in which to play. Now, as divorce rates increase and families move
more often, the lawn may be less and less a cornerstone of the single-
family home in the suburban American dream. Yet the forty-five million
suburban lawns covering thirty million acres of America in 1991 would
seem to suggest that the lawn still thrives.

And so Americans cannot decide between our love for nature and
our desire to control it. We want lawns as a place to picnic, to sunbathe,
to lounge, and to play catch. They are comfortable and comforting. Yet
technology has falsely allowed us to perpetuate the American ideal of
nature in a way increasingly dangerous to both human and environmental
health. Perhaps we will eventually embark on a path to a harmonious
relationship with front yard nature. But perhaps the lawn will always
exist in our collective imagination as a symbol of the American dream,
the undying pastoral ideal. The single-family home, two kids, a dog, pie-
baking neighbors and a two-car garage – all framed by the perfect, green,
all-American lawn.

Endnotes
11. Pollan 59.
15. Pollan 62.
16. Lowen 44.
20. Ibid 45.
23. Lowen.
25. Price 75.
29. Balmori et al 44.
30. Lowen.
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GOUVERNEUR MORRIS:
SOCIAL REALISM & THE EARLY AMERICAN REVOLUTION

WILLIAM LEVI

He drafted the United States Constitution. He was, as Theodore Roosevelt stated admiringly, “emphatically an American first” at a time when most Americans identified as state citizens. He witnessed two revolutions, and served as a United States Senator and Ambassador to France. He was a close friend and confidante to both George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, delivering both of their eulogies. He was charming, ebullient, witty and handsome. He was all this—and exceedingly more—with a disfigured arm and a wooden peg-leg; John Jay wrote that he wished “something else” had been lost, for the cripple was also an insatiable romantic. With a natural “taste for pleasure,” this dreamy and whimsical founding American statesman was a great lover of both married and unmarried women alike—from Philadelphia to Paris, from common whores to the wife of the great Talleyrand. He was Gouverneur Morris, and while popular history may decline to offer him the acclaimed status of a Hamilton or Franklin, his contributions warrant careful consideration. On the twentieth of May, 1774, Morris wrote to a Mr. Penn concerning New York’s reaction to the unpopular imposition of the Coercive Acts in Boston. This letter offers more than a mere description of the deteriorating relationship between the colonies and the mother country, and the evolution of the political theories leading toward independence. It provides a window into the formative years of a man who was to be at the center of America’s political independence. In less than one year’s time, Morris would become actively involved in the Revolutionary struggle; he served as a member of the First New York Provincial Congress, the Continental Congress, and the Constitutional Convention. But at the time he was writing to Mr. Penn, Morris’ political convictions were not yet solidified. In 1774, his understanding and portrayal of the radical independence movement reflected in part the comfortable and privileged nature of his role in a royalist society.

Morris was 22 years old in March of 1774 when Parliament enacted the Coercive, or Intolerable Acts, in response to the American refusal to comply with the Tea Act. Through these punitive measures Parliament sought to put in place the principles of the Declaratory Act of 1766. This forceful legislative assertion of Parliamentary supremacy thoroughly rejected the contention of Americans such as Morris that Parliamentary sovereignty only properly extended to the regulation of external commerce “from the necessity of the case, and [with] a regard to the mutual interest
of both countries. For the British, the Acts were disastrous. Their effect was to re-galvanize the smoldering ten year old debate concerning the constitutionality of parliamentary legislation over the colonies, and give rise to ad hoc extralegal governance structures — precipitated by the collapse of royal authority—which sought to formulate a unified response and define the place of the colonies.

As evidenced in his letter, Morris perceived that the nascent revolutionary movement was more than the chronology of historical action and response or the development of theories of sovereignty; from his vantage as a yet uncommitted observer, he saw the self-interest of the colonial political and social elite as the direct cause of the revolutionary movement and ideology. The letter explores the complexities of a political environment in which a diversity of conflicts and interests collided and united in unpredictable fashion. The letter shows how factionalism and attitudes about social structure affected the colonial elite’s perception of the conflict with England. It provides an understanding of the values of men like Morris who exhibited a peculiar brand of conservative republicanism, and an evolving radicalism which would soon belie its conservative label. And it allows the reader to better appreciate a revolution that, in its early local stages, was as much about who would rule as how to rule.

While the letter is clearly in dialogue with the broadest political and ideological currents of the day, at the same time it demonstrates that driving these events were distinctly human individuals, each shaped by his particular experiences. In Morris’ case, he was heir to a great political tradition. The first Morris in America, Richard, had obtained an estate of three thousand acres near Harlem (now in the Bronx). It was called Morrisania, and nearly a century later, the Morris family still lived there when Gouverneur was born in 1752. Richard’s son, Lewis, was appointed by the crown to multiple political posts, serving—among other positions— as the Chief Justice of New York and Governor of New Jersey. Lewis’ sons in turn were recipients of this same political skill, influence, and royal privilege: Robert was a Chief Justice of New Jersey and later the Deputy-Governor of Pennsylvania; Lewis was a member of the legislature and Judge of Vice Admiralty for New York. Gouverneur was Lewis’s son by a second marriage, and though Lewis died when Gouverneur was only twelve, he dictated in his will that Gouverneur should receive “the best education that is to be had in England or America.” Gouverneur received a classical education and then pursued a career in law.

Morris would not inherit these great estates or riches, but his eminent family, his status in the provincial system, and his natural talent, eloquence, and charisma would provide him influence and wealth. It was, then, as the product of royalist antecedents, the beneficiary of aristocratic relations, and as one “aware of the risks involved in discarding an old
[...] tradition for the uncertainties of revolution and the creation of a new nation,” that young Morris attended a meeting in New York held in response to the closing of the port and the imposition of military rule in Boston.¹⁷ His reactions to this meeting are what served as the basis for his letter to Penn.

Morris begins by announcing that “we have appointed a Committee, or rather we have nominated one. Let me give you the history of it.”¹⁸ Morris’ history of the events leading up to the meeting of May 19, 1774, takes the form of a vivid and cryptic metaphor. He begins with a characteristically patrician statement, asserting that “it is needless to premise, that the lower orders of mankind are more easily led by specious appearances, than those of a more exalted station.” And then continues:

The troubles in America during Grenville’s administration put our gentry upon this finesse. They stimulated some daring coxcombs to rouse the mob into an attack upon the bounds of order and decency. These fellows became the Jack Cades of the day, the leaders in all riots, the belwethers of the flock.¹⁹ The reason of the manoeuvre in those, who wished to keep fair with government, and at the same time to receive the incense of popular applause, you will readily perceive. On the whole, the shepherds were not much to blame in a politic point of view. The belwethers jingled merrily, and roared out liberty, and property, and religion, and a multitude of cant terms, which every one thought he understood, and was egregiously mistaken. For you must know the shepherds kept the dictionary of the day, and like the mysteries of the ancient mythology, it was not for profane eyes or ears. This answered many purposes; the simple flock put themselves entirely under the protection of these most excellent shepherds.

Here, Morris offers a belittling portrayal of the initial agency of the radical movement. He sees its origins in Prime Minister Grenville’s enactment of the Stamp Act in 1765, which imposed a direct tax for purposes of revenue—not regulation—and inspired resistance in the form of mob violence, riots, intimidation of collectors, and a boycott of stamped goods.²⁰ At this time the New York Assembly declared New York exempt from Parliamentary taxation, and asserted that they “glory in it as their Right.”²¹ Morris argues that the gentry or landed interest—the “shepherds”—created and controlled this non-importation resistance, and manipulated the dependent “belwethers,” or leaders of the mob (such as master-masons and carpenters), so as to maintain a popular following but also to remain on good terms with the British.²²,²³ According to Morris, “the belwethers” misinterpreted the elite’s rhetoric of “liberty, and property, and religion” as popular and inclusive, and thus misled, adopted these watch words, mistakenly believing that such “cant terms” held promise for them.
Morris’ metaphor continues, and soon reveals a “metamorphosis, without the help of Ovid or his divinities,” which fundamentally alters the relationship between the shepherds and the belwethers. This “strange metamorphosis or other,” which Morris refers to, apparently transformed the nature of colonial political affairs, and led Morris to conclude that it had “converted the belwethers into shepherds”—independent actors—and “these sheep, [the common people or ‘rabble’] simple as they are, cannot be gulled as heretofore.” What is this alteration that so re-structured the traditional power distribution among the wealthy elite and the previously duped agitators? Morris’ answer includes a reference to that “modern genie […] the goddess of faction.” This abstruse suggestion reveals not only the division that existed between the gentry and popular interests, but that within the colonial elite itself. Further investigation supports Morris’ implication that the elite exhibited dissension and fracture lines between defined factions.

During the 1760s New York politics were defined by a rivalry between two powerful families. These families, the Livingstons and De Lanceys, represented two elite factions that competed for control of the elective assemblies. As Morris’ metaphor illustrates, these efforts involved exploiting anti-imperial sentiment in order to gain popular support. Such coalition building, however, had unintended consequences. In the explosive political environment of the late 1760s and early 1770s, the courting of interest groups such as the Sons of Liberty brought members of the middle and lower ranks, among them “shopkeepers, printers, master mechanics, small merchants” and artisans, into the political arena, giving rise to an unanticipated form of popular politics. Riots initially inspired by elites to “give point to their constitutional theories about the right of self-government,” and for purposes of acquiring more “popular applause” vis-à-vis competing elites, began to express popular grievances. The leaders of the mob—the so-called “Jack Cades”—moved to displace the merchants and landed interests “in office and positions of power.” Thus, the aristocratic and conservative—albeit divided—rule of the propertied “small coterie of closely related families of wealth” saw its dominance diminished and interests challenged by an increasingly radicalized new political player. Having appropriated the elite Whig rhetoric of liberty, and detached themselves from their previous dependency, these new radical politicos began to successfully exercise a newfound and autonomous political influence. Elite factionalism had given rise to a “popularization” of the political landscape, and Morris’ stark assessment exposed the critical tension of the day as he saw it: “the heads of the mobility grow dangerous to the gentry, and how to keep them down is the question.” However, and as a possible result of the divided state of the elite, this task seemed insurmountable to Morris—“it is impossible to curb them.”
Morris departs from the metaphor when he describes what occurred at the meeting of May 19, 1774, preferring instead to represent the ensuing struggle as between patricians and tribunes. The meeting was held to confirm an election that had taken place three days before at an earlier meeting called by opposition radicals, and held at Fraunces Tavern, the Coffee House. The purpose of that meeting had been to appoint a group to consider and coordinate New York’s response to the Boston Port Bill. Elite conservatives had plotted in advance to submit a pre-drawn ballot of names to be selected as a group before the radical “tribunes” could nominate any of their own. This was so, according to Morris, because “art sometimes goes farther than force, and therefore to trick them handsomely a committee of patricians was to be nominated, and into their hands was to be committed the majesty of the people, and the highest trust was to be reposed in them by a mandate, that they should take care, quod respublica non capiat injuriam.” This artifice was, however, discovered. As Gouverneur notes: “The tribunes, through want of a good legerdemain in the senatorial order, perceived the finesse, and yesterday I was present at a grand division of the city.” The list’s submission was blocked. Instead, appointments were made by nomination on the spot. Still, the conservatives did out-maneuver the radicals, and won a majority in the Committee of Fifty-one.

Morris’ history and description offers a unique and complex understanding of the nature of American resistance less than a year before the war began. As late as May 1774, Morris details the lack of a unified revolutionary front. He depicts the fragmented character of colonial politics, the lack of consensus between the privileged and the mob, and the competition which existed among the split colonial elite. Due to these divisions, some saw the possibility of independence as distinctly improbable. Morris’ letter reflects this view; he recounts that at the meeting “I beheld my fellow citizens very accurately counting all their chickens, not only before any of them were hatched, but before above one half of the eggs were laid. In short, they fairly contended about the future forms of our government, whether it should be founded upon Aristocratic or Democratic principles.”

Morris’ understanding of the revolutionary movement was also affected by his aristocratic disposition—namely his conception that the ordinary populace was vulgar and unthinking. Morris was no democrat, and his attitudes concerning the common people help to explain his contemptuous and anti-egalitarian portrayal of the radical movement and its constituent “mobocracy.” “Farewell aristocracy,” Morris bemoans, “I see, and I see it with fear and trembling, that if the disputes with Britain continue, we shall be under the worst of all possible dominations. We shall be under the domination of a riotous mob.” However, his avowed
anxiety over social upheaval seems halfhearted—even with the “imminent” collapse of the aristocracy. For Morris provides hints to the contrary: his prose displays a detached, somewhat humorous, objectivity and a subtle critique of the political machinations of the elite. He blames the elite for having created an independent revolutionary mob and the ensuing tension with England (they are “not much to blame in a politic point of view”). Morris’ elite are clumsy deceivers, his common people, including the “tribunes,” beguiled and incompetent. All are self-interested; in this complex struggle over who will rule, none are innocent. It is tempting here to infer that a stark ideological and practical divide existed between the elite and popular elements. Yet in the context of New York politics, and the longstanding, open competition between sections of the elite, the letter is better understood as presenting a delicate depiction of a complicated political battle over local influence and who would rule.

When Morris relates what he saw at the “grand division of the city,” he turns again to discuss divisions within the social structure, this time with an explicit focus on the role of wealth and class:

I stood in the balcony, and on my right hand were ranged all the people of property, with some few poor dependants, and on the other all the tradesmen, &c., who thought it worth their while to leave daily labor for the good of the country. The spirit of the English Constitution has yet a little influence left, and but a little. The remains of it, however, will give the wealthy people a superiority this time…

In the context of the letter, this paragraph suggests that Morris believed the English Constitution bolstered the political influence of the propertied class, and that the political and social power of the wealthy depended upon continued allegiance to the Crown. Morris implicitly maintains that for this reason the wealthy supported the royalist system and British rule. In retrospect, this portion of Morris’ analysis appears too simplistic and somewhat misleading. Colonial America still retained many traditional attributes of “monarchical behavior and dependent social relationships.”

Men with considerable land holding or investments were likely to side with the Crown. Nevertheless, society was “not divided so widely between rich and poor.” Social divisions were permeable. There was an aristocracy of sorts, but it was weak; its power was based only on a fragile system of loyalties, obligations, and patronage which sought to bind its inferiors in a paternalistic and dependent web of greatly declining efficacy. There was no titled nobility or peasant class. Americans were increasingly independent; they “could look at [their] richest neighbor and laugh.” The availability of land provided tremendous opportunities for the poorest American, and so property ownership was pervasive, and cut across class lines.

The lead up to the Revolution was evidently not a class struggle,
for members of all social stations—social leaders, affluent property owners, small landowners—were found on both the Whig and Tory sides. There is no better example of this than the Morris family itself. His mother, sisters, and brothers-in-law were firm Tories. His half-brother, Staats Long, was an active loyalist as a colonel in the British army—though he did not serve in America—and later as a member of Parliament. But his brother, Lewis Morris, was an early advocate and patriot of the Revolution, and later a signer of the Declaration of Independence. His uncles were “invaluable allies of the American cause” and provided the early revolutionary movement with cannon. Morris’ conflation, then, of wealth and loyalist tendencies is a puzzle considering his own immediate experience. What is clear, however, are Morris’ views concerning the relationship between the rich and the poor. These views changed little from 1774 to the Constitutional Convention when Morris warned: “Give the votes to people who have no property, and they will sell them to the rich who will be able to buy them.” He argued that Congress should have two branches or bodies: one for the rich, and one for the poor. The reason for this recommendation also provides a succinct summation of Morris’ cynical understanding of the role of the wealthy and “the people” in society. Morris presented his rationale this way, in terms familiar to the Founders and the authors of the Federalist Papers: “One interest must be opposed to another interest. Vices [...] must be turned against each other.”

Morris’ disdain of the vices of special interest is an indication of what he valued, and a critical component of a peculiar republican virtue. Throughout, Morris’ writing is tempered by an amused sarcasm, and a subtle derision of the political “manoeuvres” of the elite. This derision is aimed most immediately at the elite’s political manipulation and intrigue—as discussed previously. But there is an additional quality to this critique, a condemnation of those who possess an unrestrained “ambition” and thus lack the republican ideal of public conduct untainted by private interest or passions. This classical republican virtue emphasized a disinterested disposition in public service and saw individual economic and political self-interest as motivations not befitting a gentlemen leader. If Morris’ tone in the letter is an accurate indication of his true beliefs, he believed in public or civic virtue: “the sacrifice of private desires and interests for the public interest.” Whig and Tory alike valued “virtuous” government participation, and so this can be no clear sign of Morris’ particular political development. But if we construe Morris’ republicanism to be of a Whiggish constitution, it was of a peculiar nature; Morris not only retained a “traditional patrician bias in regard to officeholding” but even accepted the forms of patronage and paternalism that bound society together in dependent relationships—forms that many of his revolutionary counterparts rejected. Jefferson spoke of a “natural aristocracy,” and believed in the “common sense of the
Many revolutionaries were highly antagonistic to “the prevalence of patronage and family influence." But Morris benefited from these traditional monarchical ties of personal and familial influence and did not reject them, feeling intuitively that the unthinking populace was rightly of a less exalted social station than the aristocratic gentry.

The letter concludes with Morris advocating for reconciliation and reunion with England. As part of this effort, he offers a solution to the legal relationship between the colonies and Britain. Morris argues that political necessity requires that the right of regulating trade “be vested in Britain, where alone is found the power of protecting it.” Morris then asks what “political necessity require[s] in the present instance.” He responds: “not that Britain should lay imposts upon us for the support of government, nor for its defence. Not that she should regulate our internal police. These things affect us only. She can have no right to interfere. To these things we ourselves are competent.” His answer excludes all rights of interference but the right to regulate trade. This political compromise was a commonly held sentiment among conservative colonists and one that the Continental Congress twice offered to Lord North, once in 1774 and again in 1775. Compromise it was, for Morris did not proffer outright independence, but his proposal was hardly conservative. Indeed, in light of the recent Coercive Acts, it was a radical proposition, one that the British could hardly be expected to accept. Morris’ advocacy of a solution, in which the British would have no say in domestic colonial affairs, demonstrates just how far the debate in the colonies had shifted toward independence. Interestingly, in the letter, this radical political solution does read as a conservative compromise, with its defensive tone and a rebuttal included against those radicals who might not find his proposal radical enough! Morris’ letter assumes a detached objectivity, and so it is surprising that Morris ends it by taking such a pronounced political stance. Notwithstanding, its nature is predictive of the political decisions that he and many other colonists would soon make. Two years later, in 1776, Morris declared emphatically that “a connection with Great Britain cannot exist, and independence is absolutely necessary…” Morris’ political views did evolve, but many of the sentiments expressed in his 1774 letter to Mr. Penn would stay with him. He would remain preoccupied and wary of factions and the power of personal and group interests. He saw wealth as a primary determinant of human behavior. His experience with the mutability of political factions and governance would color his deliberations on the durability of government. Outside of the bedroom Gouverneur was no romantic idealist, and it is fitting that he expressed the essential cynicism and subtlety of his political philosophy in terms of a marital union when he reflected in 1803 that “in adopting a republican form of government, I not only took it as a man does his wife, for better for worse, but what few men do with their wives, I
took it knowing all its bad qualities.”

ENDNOTES

1. While bound by the resolutions of the Constitutional Convention, Morris was largely responsible for the wording of the Constitution. He also spoke at the Constitutional Convention more often than any other member, at 173 times. No friend of Morris’, James Madison stated that “the finish given to the style and arrangement of the Constitution fairly belongs to the pen of Mr. Morris...a better choice could not have been made, as the performance of the task proved” (Morris, 17; Brookhiser, 83, 90, 91). Given this accomplishment, it is interesting that Morris later advocated Northern secession during the War of 1812. Morris saw the war as between Virginia and the North and stated: “The union, being the means of preserving freedom, should be prized as such [but] the end should not be sacrificed to the means” (Brookhiser, 205, 207).


3. Morris’ right arm was disfigured at age fourteen after a pot of scalding water was upset. Fourteen years later his left leg was amputated after he was thrown from a horse.


5. Accounts identify Mr. Penn only as a friend in Philadelphia. No first name is given nor have biographers identified the recipient.


10. Sparks, Jared. The Life of Gouverneur Morris, with Selections from His Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers. Boston: Gray & Bowen, 1832; pg. 1, 4.
18. All Morris quotes, unless otherwise attributed, are taken from Sparks, Life and Writings of Gouverneur Morris, pg. 23-26.
19. Jack Cade was the leader of an English peasant revolt (Cade’s Rebellion) in 1450 against land seizure and taxation.
22. Morris’ use of “mob” is a reference to both riotous crowds, and the “common people” generally (Brookhiser, 20).
24. This clever play on words, referencing Ovid, the Roman poet and author of Metamorphosis, is an example of Morris’ classical training.
Modern Library, 2002; pg. 30.
31. In Rome circa 450 BC the plebeians were granted rights to an assembly and representative officials called tribunes.
34. That the Republic should not suffer injury.
35. Sparks, Jared. The Life of Gouverneur Morris, with Selections from His Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers. Boston: Gray & Bowen, 1832; pg. 22.
36. Later at the Constitutional Convention Morris argued for a Senate elected to life terms, and for “suffrage to be given only to freeholders, and property to be represented.
38. Morris notes just before that “the mob begin to think and to reason. Poor reptiles! It is with them a vernal morning, they are struggling to cast off their winter's slough, they bask in the sunshine, and ere noon they will bite, depend upon it.”
47. Sparks, Jared. The Life of Gouverneur Morris, with Selections from His Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers. Boston: Gray & Bowen, 1832; pg. 3.
Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem: Meaning and Audience

Daniel Phillips

Sometime in the dark between the 14th and 15th of November 1940, planes of the German Luftwaffe bombed the city English city of Coventry, destroying much of its historic center including its great cathedral. Though London itself had been bombed earlier, no equivalent landmark had been destroyed, and the bombing itself had been the result of navigational errors. The intentional bombing of Coventry, a city of negligible military value, marked the beginning of an extended campaign by all sides during the Second World War of area bombing, or the intentional destruction of populated urban areas. At first these raids were conducted as retaliation, or for some ostensibly military objective: oil refineries, factories, docks. This pretense was shed early in the war and civilians themselves, their morale and productive energies, became legitimate military targets. In the aftermath of Coventry, even some in the Anglican Church’s hierarchy joined their counterparts in the laity in the call for retaliation.1 This war’s immense destruction would surpass even its apocalyptic predecessor’s. The First World War verses of Wilfred Owen and others, their attempts to communicate the horrors of France and Belgium to those at home, were now exchanged for the blunt speech of sirens, blackouts, and bombs.

But the composer Benjamin Britten, commissioned to write a piece for the consecration of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral, drew on Owen’s texts for his work, which by context seemingly had far more to do with the Second, not the First, World War. This piece, the War Requiem, was both a setting of the traditional Missa pro defunctis, the Mass for the Dead, as well of Owen’s poetry. It was completed in 1961, but only at its premiere in 1962, in the rebuilt Cathedral, could it be fully appreciated in all its meaning. Its context was an England growing increasingly secular and distant from the Church, yet a recording of the work made that same year would go on to sell over 200,000 copies, astonishing for any classical work, especially a contemporary one. What about the War Requiem proved so appealing? Even as the complex structure of the War Requiem may be articulating – by Britten’s own intention or not – the bitter irony of human reality against a backdrop of metaphysical comfort, this structure still managed to provide for its listeners a kind of consolation. Despite a scholarly approach that details Britten’s adamant pacifism as well as the work’s (perceived) profound areligiosity, the historical moment that saw the War Requiem’s premiere in England provided an audience less interested in this cynicism than in the raw emotional power of ritual expressed musically.
and made relevant to the 20th century’s great tragedies. The importance of context becomes even more apparent when we look at the reception of the work elsewhere, such as in America, a country that suffered far less directly the disaster of war.

THE WAR REQUIEM: TEXT, MUSIC, AND CRITICAL INTERPRETATION

The War Requiem is a vast work. Its orchestration calls for a large orchestra, a smaller chamber orchestra, an organ, choir, boys’ choir, and a group of three solo singers (soprano, tenor, and baritone). It takes as its texts both the Latin Mass for the dead and several poems by Wilfred Owen. While the soprano sings in Latin with the large orchestra, the tenor and baritone are accompanied by the chamber group and articulate Owen’s poetry. The boys’ choir sings at times alone with a small organ, but later joins the massed orchestral group and shares with them the Latin text. By their arrangement musically, textually, and by language, we have in the Requiem at least two distinct groups, prompting most musicologists to see the soloists singing Owen’s texts as performing some sort of commentary on the Latin mass. Part of the reasoning for this approach stems from a letter from Britten soliciting Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau’s engagement. Britten wrote to the German baritone that he was “interspersing the Latin text with many poems of a great English poet, Wilfred Owen, who was killed in the First World War. These magnificent poems, full of the hate of destruction, are a kind of commentary on the Mass . . .” 2 Many scholars go even further in their categorizations of the “commentary” Owen’s poetry provides. Philip Rupprecht, in his analysis of the War Requiem, writes that

Owen’s words [are like] a subversive trope, surrounding the Latin text by a commentary depicting in direct, even graphic, terms the horrors of modern warfare . . . its vein of ambivalence cannot be reduced to a simple “critique” of the mass. Rather . . . [it is] a complex act of resistance to the inherited communal symbols of ritual. 3

Rupprecht sees Owen’s poetry then as in conflict with the text of the liturgy; the two main groups of the piece both literally and figuratively set apart in opposition. Mervyn Cooke takes a similar view:

[The] daring juxtaposition of vernacular poems and Latin liturgical texts, and the bleak portrayal of man’s inhumanity offered by the Owen poems seriously undermines the stylized religious phrases of condolence and consolation voice by the words of the Missa pro defunctis. 4

Rather then finding the chamber orchestra as performing “commentary,” these two scholars see two separate ensembles, equal in importance if not in scale, whose tumult and uncertainty cannot be resolved in the course of
Britten’s work. Cooke argues that Britten prohibits the type of consolation and peace the Requiem form usually provided. William Mann, writing anonymously for The Times, seems to have shared an opinion with modern scholars in his preliminary assessment of the War Requiem, writing five days before its actual premiere.

It is not a Requiem to console the living; sometimes it does not even help the dead to sleep soundly. It can only disturb every living soul, for it denounces the barbarism more or less awake in mankind with all the authority that a great composer can muster. Arguably, reading the War Requiem from the score and libretto as a critic rather than hearing it as a layman limits Mann’s understanding of the piece, and his assessment of its meaning unduly stresses a cynical attitude towards the hopelessly consoling liturgy.

Yet note Britten’s own qualification that Owen’s words are a “kind of” commentary, the precise nature of which Britten leaves uncertain. In this context, Britten’s qualification as to the exact nature of the dialogue between Owen’s poetry and the Mass seems to reveal an uncertainty within the composer himself. Unlike the great Latin Requiems of the past, such as those of Mozart, Berlioz, Verdi, and Fauré, Britten seeks to add to the existing text. Perhaps the best comparison would be to Brahms, whose German Requiem drew on Luther’s Bible rather than the Latin liturgy. But since Brahms’s limited himself to sacred texts, his work is in some ways free of the questions that Britten’s juxtapositions constantly raise. In discussing Britten’s War Requiem, which preserves the form’s traditional text alongside the “new” modern poetry, one must somehow determine the nature of the relationship between two texts separated by time, place, and genre. Though Britten himself never commented specifically on this relationship, scholars have generally interpreted it as the demeaning of ritual and ceremony at the hands of bitter and ironic human reality.

Rupprecht sees Owen’s poetry as meeting and disrupting the efficacy of ritual. This perceived attack occurs not only in the interaction between texts but also in the formal structure and main musical motifs of the piece, which can and have been read as subversions of the liturgy’s attempts at consolation. Many musicologists focus on the tritone C-F sharp motif, heard originally in the bells and choir as not only structurally important but harmonically symbolic. Cooke writes “the final diatonic tutti is suddenly halted by the abrupt return of the tritone C-F sharp on tubular bells and
a distant, passionless prayer for ‘reliquem aeternam’ chanted by the distant boys to the same interval.” Here, Cooke discusses the Requiem in the context of tonal music as a whole: the tritone interval has been considered throughout the history of the tonal system to be the most dissonant of all intervals. “Dissonance” is usually defined to be an unstable or “tense” quality in an interval or chord, and thus Cooke uses his knowledge of tonal characteristics to categorize the tritone’s psychological effect on the listener. It is interesting to note however that a strict definition of “dissonance” is impossible, always relying on subjective and contextual perceptions. The Grove musical encyclopedia, when discussing consonance and dissonance, observes that

The ‘roughness’ criterion, however, implies a psychoacoustic judgment, whereas the notion of ‘relief of tonal tension’ depends upon a familiarity with the ‘language’ of Western tonal harmony.

The musicological approach to Britten’s War Requiem then relies on:

1. A close analysis of the score;
2. The ability to distinguish motifs as they appear and return throughout the piece; and
3. A comprehensive knowledge of the history of the tonal system, the music composed within it, and the common associations made with its various aspects, such as the tritone. The tritone interval was known in pre-tonal Europe as the “devil in music,” an interval so dissonant that the common modes or scales used in those times were commonly structured to avoid it at all costs. Its symbolic and historical importance leads to writing such as William Mann’s pre-premiere discussion of the piece: “[T]he tension of F sharp and C is felt in almost every movement of the Requiem, tolling mournfully for the past, calling an abrupt warning to present and future, pointing the opposition of imagination and reality, life and death . . . .” By using this interval as a central motivic figure, Britten invokes meanings from the Renaissance through the history of tonality. But would the average listener of the War Requiem really have placed so much symbolic or harmonic importance in the tritone interval that so many viewed as central to the pieces’ structure? While the composers of pre-Baroque Europe may have seen something devilish in the tritone, it is doubtful that the modern British public would have the same acute ear.

1962 also saw the release of the musical – a popular genre – West Side Story and the song “Maria,” a decidedly un-satanic, ecstatic vocalization of love that features this “devil” as its opening melodic leap. In this context, where popular music freely moves into areas once considered taboo, a strict understanding of the tonal system is only found among the specifically
educated.

The apparent influences of previous composers also constitute a significant aspect of the intellectual approach to the War Requiem. Many figures, from score-reading critics to modern scholars write of similarities in key, tone, and texture to the corresponding sections in the setting of the Missa pro defunctis by Verdi. From a highly educated perspective, Britten’s piece reveals itself to draw heavily upon the traditions of Western classical music. This knowledge allows critics to analyze the piece in a way most members of the public could not in 1962.

Scholars have tried to establish that the War Requiem, far from being consoling, is ultimately a cynical work, one which challenges the efficacy of ritual in human life. They assert it is such in its musical form and reliance on motifs that harmonically convey an unsettled quality, and also by the use of Wilfred Owen’s poetry, which deprives the liturgy of its consoling power with the irony created by human experience. Yet the intentionally of irony can be hard to determine; even more difficult how an audience will receive that irony. Receptions both critical and popular to the premiere at Coventry and subsequent English performances would emphasize not its cynicism but its spirituality, not its irony but its sincerity.

Premiere and Response

The War Requiem premiered on May 30th 1962. Even before its premiere some heralded it as a momentous achievement. Alec Robertson wrote in The Musical Times that “I make bold to say on the evidence of the vocal score, [that it is] a triumphant success, it is Britten’s finest work so far.” The tone of Times critic William Mann’s actual review of the piece (also published anonymously) differs markedly from his initial briefing. Under the headline “Britten’s War Requiem Unforgettable,” Mann does not focus on the piece’s musical structure at all; indeed, one senses the reviewer profoundly moved past his critical capacities.

One might wish that everyone in the world hear, inwardly digest, and outwardly acknowledge the great and cogent call to a sane, Christian life proclaimed in this Requiem. Mann’s writing, far from limiting itself to musical criticism, actively links itself to the War Requiem’s emotionally, rather than intellectually, engaged audience. As Cooke remarks, “Mann was in no means alone in his choice of ‘masterpiece’ as the most appropriate label.” Cooke continues with a quote from Peter Evans, who remarked that

We have now redeveloped to so fine an art the faint praise reserved for the musical works of our contemporaries that the ‘masterpiece’ seems a concept of little meaning outside a hallowed but restricted area of music’s past. The heralding of Britten’s new work as a “masterpiece” acknowledges
its immediate reception as a composition outside the normally abstruse and anti-populist sphere of contemporary music as a whole. By applying a label usually reserved for those such as Beethoven, or in England perhaps Purcell and Elgar, critics recognized the seemingly universal and importantly, emotional appeal of the work to the public as well as to critics. “Masterpieces” do not come with qualifications, and blur distinctions between groups. The title is symptomatic with universal and powerful emotional recognition. Peter Schaffer wrote that the War Requiem was “the most profound and moving thing which this most committed of geniuses has so far achieved. It makes criticism impertinent.” Through its emotional appeal, the piece had somehow broken down the wall that separates critical and public opinion. Mann would follow the success of the Requiem’s later performances and explain that “the immediate impact of Britten’s War Requiem is emotional, and herein lies a part of its immediate attraction for people who dismiss most modern music as an ‘intellectual exercise’. . . it speaks to us all and for us all.”

It is important to note that all of these responses came only after the premiere, from the historical moment that provided not only the realization of a musical score but a host of performers and audience members most of whom, in 1962, were undoubtedly either directly or indirectly affected by war. The baritone soloist, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, was no exception, having been conscripted in the German regular army late in the war. In his memoirs, he remembers his attitudes towards the music prior to its performance. “Various stylistic influences were evident. . . the most fortissimo passages reminded me of William Walton’s excesses of this kind.” Yet the experience of the performance affected Dieskau beyond his intellectual opinions about the music and its influences. Britten recalled in a letter how after the performance, “Poor F-Dieskau was so upset at the end that Peter [Pears, the tenor] couldn’t get him out of the choir-stalls!” And the baritone himself in his memoirs writes how, despite his reservations about the work’s status as a musical “masterpiece,” after the performance he was “completely undone; I did not know where to hide my face. Dead friends and past suffering arose in my mind.” When looking at the War Requiem, it seems that its emotionally affecting qualities were amplified in performance by an unusually large factor.

The symbolic importance of the rebuilt Coventry cathedral surely provided some of this amplifying power.

Obviously, the mere fact that the performance took place in a cathedral destroyed in war and rebuilt in the hope of peace contributed its own dramatic value, adding to the power of words and music its symbols of eternal conflict and resolution, with the looming presence of the bombed out ruins [of the old cathedral] nearby.
The mass of people comprising the audience in the new Coventry cathedral were reminded of its history and symbolism, of persistence in the face of destruction, for reasons beyond the visible remnants of the ruined older structure. The very occasion of the War Requiem’s premiere was intended to show a sort of victory: that the institutions affected by war, and that the material home of the divine, were in some way indestructible. Britten’s work, taking as its subject not simply death but also war, a subject also directly evoked by the venue of Coventry cathedral itself, overwhelmed its audience, speaking to their own experiences of the 20th century as well as to the seeming timelessness of religious ritual.

Yet for all this discussion of the work’s emotional impact nowhere do we find the tone of the modern scholar or that of Mann before the premiere. The epithets such as “cynical” or “ironic” are not used in descriptions or reviews of the War Requiem by its contemporary reviewers. The piece had captured the public imagination to “an almost unheard-of degree.”

In January of 1963 Britten conducted a recording of the work for Decca that included the London Symphony Orchestra as well as the originally planned group of soloists; the Englishman Pears (tenor), German Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), and Russian Vishnevskaya (soprano), Soviet authorities having prohibited the latter from singing the premiere performance. Four months later the recording was released, and in only five months managed to sell over a quarter of a million copies.

The enthusiasm of the critical press for the recording equaled that of the premiere of the work itself. The Times titled its review “Britten’s War Requiem as It Should be Performed,” and saw the recording as a way for the masses to join the audiences of live performances in proclaiming the work a masterpiece. What one might consider a fault in performance was transformed into a virtue. For example, The Times commented on Vishnevskaya’s performance:

But although Vishnevskaya may not be so completely at home with Britten’s style . . . some of the criticism leveled at her seems hardly justified. It is perfectly true that in some of the more agile music . . . her voice sounds a little cumbersome, and her intonation is not absolutely impeccable.

This “criticism,” however of Vishnevskaya’s performance on record (and in later performances) we almost always find mitigated with praise for her emotional intensity. The Times continued that “when she enters at “Liber scriptus” and again in her terror-stricken “Tremens factus sum ego” she is like some great baroque Sibyl of bronze come miraculously to life . . . more than human.” The Musical Times in a briefer, slightly more sober but still quite positive review apparently shared this assessment, noting that while Heather Harper, the soprano at the premiere, possessed a greater purity to her voice, “Vishnevskaya’s vivid attack brings a sense of operatic
high drama.” A less charitable reviewer could have simply remarked that Vishnevskaya’s vocal control and pitch seem wanting, as Stravinsky dryly pointed out.

The same reviewer [for The Times] remarks that ‘the grandeur and intensity of [her] phrasing exorcises all conventional notions of angelic insipidness’, meaning, I take it, that unconventional notions have the field. (In fact, Mme. V’s singing is singularly harsh and out of tune.)

The Russian composer’s commentary on the “hype” surrounding both the recording and work itself cannot be simply attributed to jealousy at his peer’s success. It seems obvious that Britten’s War Requiem on touched on something so significant in the English consciousness that for a period of time it could simply do no wrong. This was extended to evaluations of its recording and performers. Even if Vishnevskaya’s singing was imperfect, or even poor, this could be explained as an intensity suiting the work. As a Russian, her mere presence on record and stage deepened the symbolism of the music. It cannot be stressed enough how universal the praise was, especially – and understandably – in the English press; the acerbic Stravinsky noted that to criticize the piece would be “as if one had failed to stand up for God Save the Queen.”

This stream of emotionally tinged acclamations persisted throughout the sixties; not until more than a decade later would there be any substantive criticism in the English press of the piece’s musical merit.

The Importance of Context

Away from the context of its premiere, later critics and scholars have come to find flaw, at least in their opinion, in Britten’s work. That these opinions generally have come so far removed from the piece’s first hearing serves as a testament to the emotionally charged spaces of its first performances, the sheer electricity of which precluded attempts at objectivity. Desmond Shawe-Taylor wrote in 1963 that “not for a long while can I hope to write of Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem with the detachment that is supposed to be proper to criticism: the experience is still too immediate and overwhelming.” Many note the significant similarities between the War Requiem and Verdi’s setting of the Missa, similarities that lead them to criticize Britten for leaning to heavily on Verdi, for not showing enough originality in his treatment of the Latin text. Others focus on what they see as the over-sentimental and peaceful nature conclusion of the work. In retrospect, many note that Britten’s original casting of an Englishman, a German, and a Russia seems itself sentimental and “ham-handed,” playing to the emotions of the crowd. Yet I for one do not find this latter criticism appropriate. Britten, in the program for the premiere, prefaced his work with a quote from Owen. “My subject is War and the
pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity. All a poet can do today is warn.”

Equally notable is the line, originally before the third sentence above, which Britten omitted. “Yet these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolatory.” This deliberate omission would seem to weaken all those readings that see Britten’s work as areligious, as depriving the liturgy of its consoling, comforting function. The temporal distance that separates a modern critic from the emotion of the premiere may engender an element of scholarly objectivity, the fog of sentiment lifted so that the intellect may explore freely the music itself. But Britten, to the very core of the piece, imbued the War Requiem with a strong emotional element. Stout observes that while a critic today might deride as “corny” the multinational casting of the solo roles,

Most listeners who are aware of the identity of the singers [Pears, Fischer-Dieskau, and Vishnevskaya] find it genuinely moving, as representing a momentary reconciliation of enemies that may prefigure a world of nations reconciled, a world in which war is no more. Clearly the symbolic nature of the cast was an expression of Britten’s pacifism. But beyond that, it was an expression of a universal pacifism for an audience whose experience of the 20th century was irrevocably shaped by the experience of war. Britten made casting choices will full knowledge of the symbolic architecture within which the Requiem would be performed.

The subject of Christianity in Britten’s life has also proved a source of controversy. Texts that have been too involved with the composer’s homosexuality and peculiar political attitudes tend to emphasize statements such as those he made to the tribunal to whom he professed his pacifism, where he claimed to not believe in the divinity of Christ. His pacifism, especially during the war, made him the subject of criticism and which almost landed him in jail alongside fellow composer and conscientious objector Michael Tippet.

At the end of May 1942 Britten went before a local tribunal of the Military Recruitment Department of the Ministry of Labour for the registration of conscientious objectors. Earlier that month he had submitted a statement pointing out that as a creative person he could not participate in destruction, and that Fascism needed to be fought with passive resistance. In his letter to Fischer-Dieskau, we see Britten the pacifist and composer identifying with Owen the poet, “so full of the hate of destruction.” But even as he denied Christ’s divinity Britten believed to his core in his teachings of peace. As Graham Elliot details in his book Benjamin Britten: The Spiritual Dimension, the subjects of religion and the influence of a religious upbringing never left Britten’s music, and Peter Pears, Britten’s companion for most of his life, always asserted that religion held some fundamental place
in Britten's worldview. England in 1960 was an increasingly secular society, disillusioned with traditional religion, and this disillusionment was felt even in the structure of the church itself. Even as melancholy theologians lament the secularization of religious institution itself, they recognize that the English public retains an unequaled enthusiasm for the symbolism and heritage of belief. This culture of symbol and ritual did not exist in, for example, the United States, and one might suppose its lack to account for that country's lackluster critical reception of the work. The New York Times review of an American production at Tanglewood, only a year after the English premiere, found the piece much too obvious to have any staying power; certainly to the American reviewer it was no “masterpiece.”

Studies of the War Requiem are prone to omit any discussion of audience beyond the critical establishment, yet surely one of the factors that makes this piece so unique in the context of modern classical music has been its mass appeal. Though this appeal may be derided as a base emotional response of audiences ignorant of compositional subtleties, ultimately the reception of the War Requiem reveals not simply Britten's technical virtuosity as a composer, but his stunning ability to emotionally affect the post-war English public with a musical articulation for peace.

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6. Rupprecht 244.

7. Cooke 77.


9. William Mann. “Britten’s Masterpiece Denounces War.” Times [London]. May 25, 1962. 4. Note that the original articles from The Times are without bylines, given as “From our Music Critic.” I rely on reading in Cooke et al. that they were written by Mann.


13. Cooke 78.
16. quoted in Carpenter 410.
20. Fischer-Dieskau 258.
23. Cooke 80
27. Ibid.
28. Quoted in Cooke 85.
29. See Robertson 309.
30. Stout 217.
In pondering the disparity between Leonardo’s extraordinarily detailed anatomical drawings of the 1500’s and his amorphous painting Saint John the Baptist (ca. 1510-15), A. Richard Turner asks:

…is it not possible that the Saint John …alludes to intimated mysteries central to human experience, but beyond the grasp of science? The scientist rationally explains, the artist in an act of faith proclaims. That … is the point at which Leonardo finally arrived.¹

In the early years of his artistic career (ca. 1469 – 1500), Leonardo incorporated his knowledge of human anatomy in his paintings. For example in The Last Supper, each individual is rendered with subtle and accurate anatomical detail. Turner suggests that at the end of Leonardo’s career, art and anatomy had become separate spheres. According to Turner, the Saint John, Leonardo’s last painting, embodies this separation because Leonardo chose to depict a man without defined musculature or modeling, a radical departure from his earlier practice of fusing anatomy in his art.

While the proposed divorce between art and anatomy at the end of Leonardo’s career seems to hold true when comparing the technical skill and observational precision in Leonardo’s late drawings of musculature or the spinal cord with the surreal image of Saint John, it fails to consider Leonardo’s investigations in embryology which he pursued toward the end of his career. In Leonardo’s embryological drawings, his anatomy and his art are very much intertwined. In this paper, I argue that Leonardo’s drawing of the fetus in utero (ca. 1510-12) exemplifies how his artistic and anatomical concerns were unified even at the end of his life (Fig. 1). This drawing synthesizes Leonardo’s thoughts on the complexities of “life” that include the cyclical life of the physical body, the shared life of humans and animals, and the life of the soul. Because these themes are also pervasive in Leonardo’s art throughout the entirety of his career, this single image of a human embryo conflates Leonardo’s artistic philosophies and anatomical interests and shows how Turner’s argument is shortsighted.

Setting the Stage: Anatomy before Leonardo

Leonardo entered the story of anatomical illustration in the fifteenth century at a time when artists used their affiliation with physicians for the sake of depicting the human body more realistically. The fourteenth century apothecary shop was the environment that fostered this increased contact between physicians and artists as a place where artists...
and physicians interacted since paint pigments as well as medicines were available there. Beginning in 1303, it became typical for artists, physicians, and apothecaries to belong to the same guild. From this union of artist and physician, artists were able to gain more access to observe and participate in instructive dissections conducted at medical schools, a novel opportunity in the history of art and medicine. Prior to the fifteenth century, dissections were discouraged due to Christian fears of disturbing the human body, believed to be a masterpiece in God’s creation and a microcosm of the natural world. Dissection became recognized as a tool for anatomical instruction by medical schools only in the 1400’s.

The fifteenth century was an unprecedented time for artists as the increased access to observing the human body via dissection ushered in a new era for artistic naturalism. Renaissance artists like Donatello (1386-1466), Antonio Pollaiuolo (1432-1498), and Leonardo’s mentor Verrocchio (1435-1488) all engaged in anatomical studies through observing musculature and perhaps also flaying corpses. As artists sought to improve their representational skills with anatomy, their studies were aimed primarily at surface anatomy: tendons, superficial blood vessels, and surface musculature. It is possible that Verrocchio introduced Leonardo to the notion of using dissection to further his artistic abilities.

Leonardo’s Anatomical Career

Leonardo’s anatomical work diverged from that of his contemporary artists in that he pursued anatomy outside of its practical relevance to representing the human figure. Whereas his colleagues had superficially interest in anatomy solely to depict individuals more realistically, Leonardo’s interests in using anatomy in his art were aimed at understanding the human body. For Leonardo, painting was not “a mindless, mirror-like reflection of the appearance of the natural world” but required the artist’s complete awareness of physical phenomena. For Leonardo,

[Painting] endures and has all the appearance of being alive, though in fact it is confined to one surface. Oh wonderful science which can preserve the transient beauty of mortals and endow it with a permanence greater than the works of nature; for these are subject to the continual changes of time…

Anatomy provided the means for Leonardo to achieve his philosophy of painting as a “wonderful science,” allowing him to first understand the human life that he sought to portray in his art. Initially, his interest in anatomy arose from his ideas on linear perspective as an artist’s tool and human perception. His first anatomical studies (ca. 1489) were aimed at determining the mechanisms of vision and led to his investigations on the human eye and brain. As his initial studies led him to read and assimilate medieval and contemporary works on anatomy, such as Mondinus’s
Anothomia (1316), his anatomical ambitions expanded. By ca. 1489, during his first stay in Milan, Leonardo began to outline a plan for what he hoped would become a “Treatise on Anatomy.” Though ultimately, he was unable to complete this work, he spent the rest of his career gathering material for it. Leonardo’s lifelong pursuit of anatomical knowledge demonstrates how important anatomy was as a component of his artistic philosophy but also as an intellectual interest.

Embryology framed Leonardo’s anatomical career as an early interest and a subject in his last studies. In planning for his anatomical treatise (ca. 1489), Leonardo situates embryology at the very beginning. In his notebook, Leonardo outlines what his treatise should accomplish:

…[It] should begin with the conception of man and describe the nature of the womb, and how the child lives in it, and up to what stage it dwells there, and the manner of its quickening and feeding, and its growth, and what interval exists between one stage of growth and another, and what drives it forth from the body of the mother, and for what reason it sometimes comes forth from the belly of its mother before the proper time.

According to Leonardo’s vision of his treatise, he can move onto discussing the forms of the mature adult only after he establishes the early stages of human life. The scarcity of available human corpses, however, postponed Leonardo’s studies of embryology to the end of his career. In the 50’s, Leonardo was finally able to acquire the body of a six or seven month old fetus and engage in detailed studies of the embryo in the womb. Along with his studies of the heart, embryology was part of Leonardo’s last anatomical projects.

Influences on Leonardo’s Approach to Embryology

Like his contemporaries, Leonardo’s thinking regarding the natural sciences was influenced by Medieval and ancient authorities. Embryology in the Middle Ages was concerned with the processes of conception and fetal growth, how the fetus derived nourishment, and the formation of another soul within the mother’s body. Much of medieval thought on embryology was also related to astrology; it was widely believed that the human body, as a microcosm of the universe, was influenced by the heat, light, and mysterious powers generated by the stars.

Though Leonardo must have been aware of traditional thought on the subject, by the time he applied himself to examine the human fetus, his approach to studying the human body had become substantially more independent of ancient and medieval thought. Martin Kemp argues that as Leonardo built for himself a foundation of anatomical knowledge from reading contemporary anatomical texts and independently conducting dissections, by the time he conducted his embryological studies, he became
more focused on accounting for what he observed. Rather than conforming his observations to the notions of earlier anatomical authorities the way he did at the beginning of his studies, he was occasionally even critical of them. Aside from Leonardo’s interest in the soul of the fetus, his embryological discussions were mainly centered on determining what structures surround the fetal body and how the fetus and womb are attached to the female body—these concerns are a departure from traditional embryological literature. Though his studies on the embryo and the womb are not entirely free of medieval influence, Leonardo disregarded the astrological component and established an independent approach to studying the body within the context of the prevailing anatomical methodology of his time.

The Human Life Cycle

Leonardo’s embryological studies, specifically his sketch of the fetus in the womb, constitute a part of his larger interest in the cycle of human life. How life was generated and terminated was of utmost importance to Leonardo and heavily influenced how he approached both anatomy and art. His reflections in his notebooks show that death and regeneration were linked to his ideas on the passage of time, the physical body, and Nature. In his notebooks, he contemplates the cycle of life and muses on the relationship between regeneration and destruction:

Nature being inconstant and taking pleasure in creating and making continually new lives and forms, because she knows that they augment her terrestrial substance, is more ready and swift in creating than time is in destroying … This earth therefore seeks to lose its life while desiring continual reproduction…

Here, his thoughts dwell on the balance between life created through the act of reproduction and destroyed by time and the biological need for food. Embryology fits within this scheme as the mysterious fruit of reproduction. Thus, embryology was not only an anatomical investigation but one way by which Leonardo comprehended the natural progression of life.

Leonardo’s painting The Virgin and Child with St Anne and a Lamb (ca. 1510) visually depicts the same fascination with the cycle of life motivating his studies on the fetus in utero by portraying three generations of one family (Fig. 2). It seems appropriate that the older Leonardo, an aged man by 1510, would reflect on the transition from life to death. In the painting, the Virgin sits in the lap of her mother, St. Anne, while looking fondly at her child, the Christ. The hierarchy of figures with the grandmother St. Anne in the background, Virgin mother in the middle ground, and the Christ child in the foreground portrays the progression of young to old. Furthermore, the painting illustrates Leonardo’s interest in the relationship between mother and child, a theme also present in his embryological studies. The painting depicts the Virgin reaching and caring for her child, paralleling Leonardo’s attempts to structurally relate the fetus
within the body of the mother in his notes on the same page as the drawing of the fetus in the womb.

**Comparative Anatomy**

In addition to depicting the regeneration of human life, the figure of the embryo in utero also illustrates the extent to which Leonardo combined his studies of human anatomy with animal morphology. The drawing of the embryo in the uterus is actually a composite of human and animal parts. At the time of the drawing’s execution, Leonardo was unable to procure a human placenta to observe. He instead substitutes the human placenta with one from a hoofed animal. Notes on the side of the same notebook page indicate that Leonardo wondered “whether the male or female [parts of the cotyledons] remain attached to the uterus of the woman or not.”

To determine this, Leonardo reminds himself to “obtain the secundine of calves when they are born and note the shape of the cotyledons and if they keep the male or female cotyledons.”

The choice of calves is made not only because human corpses were scarce but because Leonardo believed in the interchangeability of human and animal parts. This idea originated from the ancient Roman medical authority Galen (second century AD) who taught that the majority of animal and human anatomy differed only in proportion. Galen’s thought influenced many of Leonardo’s anatomical drawings such as his “Great Lady” (Fig. 3) in which human organs are substituted with animal organs and proportionally altered to fit the human body. In his studies aimed at understanding the human brain and heart, the specimens are bovine.

In addition to Galen’s influence, Leonardo’s appropriation of animal parts to stand for those of humans in the fetus in utero can also be attributed to the belief in the “microcosm-macrocosm” connection that governed so much of the Renaissance worldview. According to this view, man was a miniature of the natural world and was bound by the universal natural laws that presided over all living things. Though Leonardo believed that man was the highest form of life because he had a soul, it is possible that he also believed that man and animals shared a common physical life. A passage in his notebooks on how man and animals walk hints at how closely Leonardo thought they were interrelated: “The walking of men is always after the universal manner of walking of animals with four legs inasmuch as just as they move their feet crosswise after the manner of the trot of the horse.”

Even in as subtle a movement as walking, Leonardo could evoke a resemblance between man and animals.

The myth of Leda and the swan was then the perfect vehicle by which Leonardo brought his comparative anatomy into the realm of painting. As Leonardo persevered in using painting to depict the complexities of human life, it follows that he would create a picture relating human life
with its analogous animal life. Though Leonardo’s original painting is lost, copies by his followers show that he portrayed the intertwining of the female body with that of the swan (Fig. 4). In light of his anatomical work and his reflections on human and animal ambulation, it is likely that Leonardo saw compatibility between the human and swan forms. The sinuous form of the female pose corresponds to the twisting neck of the swan, making the painting more a discussion on the similarities between the physical manifestations of human and animal life rather than the narrative of Leda and the Zeus-swan.

Leonardo’s Search for the Human Soul

Finally, a discussion of how the fetus in utero illustrates the fusion of Leonardo’s art and anatomy would not be complete without connecting it to his metaphysical search for the soul in the body. As relating to art, Leonardo thought that painting should describe the life of the soul: “The good painter has two chief objects to paint, man and the intention of his soul; the former is easy, the latter hard, because he has to represent it by the attitudes and movements of the limbs.” Since the soul could only be expressed through the movement of the body, accurately conveying human movements and the emotions driving them was paramount to Leonardo’s notion of painting. His efforts in achieving the expression of the soul through the human body are evident in his painting The Last Supper (1498) and Peter Paul Rubens copy of his cartoon of the Battle of Anghiari.

The relationship between soul and body is also crucial to how he investigated the human body. Leonardo believed that “though [man’s] structure seem to thee a marvel of artifice…it is as nothing compared to the soul which resides in this dwelling; and in truth, wherever [the body] is, it is a divine thing which lets the soul dwell within its works and at its good pleasure.” As mentioned previously, Leonardo began his anatomical studies in order to understand how human perception works. Perception also fit into Leonardo’s metaphysical understanding of the soul. Leonardo believed the soul to be a sublime entity trapped within the body and only able to “bear its imprisonment” by discerning the world through the body’s senses and expressing itself through the movement of the body. Leonardo’s investigations of perception thus led to his search for the soul within the body. His earliest known anatomical drawings of the human skull indeed show Leonardo using geometrical methods derived from architecture to locate the sensus communis (or common sense) within the skull, the very sensus that Leonardo believes “serves the soul” (Fig. 5). Leonardo’s early notions of the soul was that it was an entity that could be physically localized via mathematics.

Leonardo did not definitively locate the soul within the body and seems to have eventually given up the search as he writes after
Herodotus, “what trust can we place in the ancients, who tried to define what the Soul and Life are? Whereas those things which at any time can be clearly known and proved by experience remained for many centuries unknown or falsely understood.” However in contrast to what Turner might argue in *Inventing Leonardo*, Leonardo here does not refer to the impossibility of determining the relationship between soul and body but rather to philosophical debates on the soul and life that cannot be tangibly investigated and resolved. Leonardo’s interest in the life of the soul within the body does not wane in his later years but in fact motivates many of his ideas concerning embryology. In studying the life of the fetus within the body of the mother, Leonardo engages in the medieval question of how the soul of the fetus is formed. This is shown in Leonardo’s notes next to his drawing of the fetus in utero in which he concludes that “One and the same soul governs these two bodies [of the mother and child], and the desires, fears, and pains are common to this creature as are all other [nervous] members … One concludes that one and the same soul governs the bodies and one and the same nourishes both.” Other passages in his writings on embryology demonstrate that Leonardo also believed that “the soul of the mother…first constructs within the womb the shape of man, and in due time awakens the soul that is to be its inhabitant.” For Leonardo, understanding the biological formation and growth of a child within a mother was not separate from understanding how its soul was formed and how its soul was related to its mother’s.

Thus, Leonardo’s ethereal painting Saint John the Baptist (Fig. 6) is not as estranged from Leonardo’s anatomical studies as it might appear to be when juxtaposed with the drawing of the fetus in the womb. Depicting Saint John in an androgynous manner, the painting confirms that Leonardo’s goal was not to convey anatomical realism but rather to evoke the presence of a living soul on the canvas. Leonardo’s anatomically ambiguous mode of representation allows us to focus on Saint John’s essence as a person, rather than distract us with the details of his physical body. Similarly, the emergence of the sleeping fetus from the womb that opens like a flower blossom conveys Leonardo’s sense of awe at the power of life and is not a mere record of anatomical detail. As both his anatomical studies and artistic pursuits were aimed at understanding the human soul, one might argue that painting and anatomy were two ways by which Leonardo expressed his thinking about the same phenomenon.

Leonardo’s approach to anatomy in the 1500’s transformed into a more logical process as he began to define for himself what his studies could and could not accomplish. Yet underneath the change in his methodology remained the same concerns motivating his anatomical and artistic pursuits from the beginning of his career. While his late anatomical drawings show a more precise mode of observation, Leonardo’s work on embryology
demonstrates that he never ceased to wonder how life regenerates itself, how animals and humans are related, and how the soul relates to the physical body. His fascination by what life was related intrinsically to his approach at depicting and understanding the complexities of the human body in his art and anatomy.

**Figures:**

- **Figure 1.** Leonardo, The fetus in utero (ca. 1510-1512)  
  Source: Grove Art Online  

- **Figure 2.** The Virgin and Child with St Anne and a Lamb  
  ca. 1510  
  Source: Web Gallery of Art  

- **Figure 3.** Great Lady Anatomy (ca. 1510)  
  Source: Web Gallery of Art  

- **Figure 4.** Leda, copy by one of Leonardo’s followers  
  Source: Web Gallery of Art  
  http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?html/l/leonardo/05copies/3leda1.html
ENDNOTES
2. O’Malley and Saunders, 15
8. Leonardo, 278.
10. O’Malley and Saunders, 474.
13. Kemp, “Dissection and Divinity in Leonardo’s Late Anatomies” 211.
17. O’Malley and Saunders, 474.
18. Leonardo, 163.
Chinese Hospital: A Study of San Francisco Chinatown Attitudes Towards Western Medical Practices at the Turn of the Century

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In an 1885 report on Chinatown, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors claimed, “here it may truly be said that human beings exist under conditions (as regards their mode of life and the air they breathe) scarcely one degree above those under which the rats on our waterfront and other vermin live, breathe, and have their being.” The supervisors viewed Chinatown as a place of squalor and filth, in desperate need of institutionalized healthcare. However, at the turn of the century, the city of San Francisco showed no interest in providing healthcare to the local Chinese population. Isolated from the rest of the community both physically and culturally, the Chinese had little access to government services. In 1900, the city even quarantined 35,000 Chinese against the order of a U.S. Circuit Court. City authorities barricaded the community and passed an ordinance requiring the immediate closure of all Chinatown businesses. Throughout the decade, city officials remained reluctant to finance any health services for the Chinese or provide sanitary service to Chinatown. Policy makers concluded that it was fruitless to allocate resources to an area infested by gamblers and drug addicts.

In spite of the city’s hostility, Chinese residents organized their own healthcare system. After more than ten years of planning, the San Francisco Chinese Consul general and the Chinese Six Companies helped establish the Tung Wah (東華) Dispensary in 1900 as the first Chinese medical facility in the United States staffed by Western-trained physicians and nurses. By 1923 Dispensary services had outgrown the existing space; as a result fifteen community organizations banded together to create the Chinese Hospital Association. The Board of Trustees raised funds for the construction of a new facility, Chinese Hospital (東華醫院) at 835 Jackson Street, which opened in October 1925. Donations came from political, religious, and community organizations, and even from overseas sources such as the Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong. The completed building was an impressive modern structure with five floors and a basement linked by elevators. The hospital had fourteen private patient rooms, forty cubicles or beds, a surgical department with two operating rooms, a maternity department with a delivery room, a pharmacy, a lab, and an outpatient department.

Despite these amenities, the Chinatown community at large did
not share the enthusiasm of its local Chinese leaders. Even when care was provided at minimum charge, the hospital remained relatively empty, causing needless suffering and death from tuberculosis and other treatable diseases.\textsuperscript{10} Thousands perished because they did not seek professional help. San Francisco’s Chinatown residents ultimately refused to take advantage of the medical services at Chinese Hospital because of their aversion to Western medical institutions, their preferences for private rather than public healthcare providers, and their rejection of Western medical practices in favor of traditional Chinese remedies.

This paper examines these sometimes contradictory factors through an analysis of three local Chinese-language San Francisco newspapers published between 1924 and 1937.\textsuperscript{11} Unlike most mainstream newspapers of the time that would rarely provide an authentic voice to Chinese immigrants and Chinatown, Chinese-language newspapers more accurately reflected the thoughts, concerns and even stereotypes and superstitions of Chinatown residents. These materials provide a more faithful perspective on Chinese culture that allow for the study of the social dynamics regarding attitudes toward Chinese Hospital.

Chinatown residents refused to patronize Chinese Hospital because they had little confidence in Western medical institutions and considered hospitalization to be “deathbed” care. Chinatown residents regarded Chinese Hospital, like other Western clinics, as a last refuge for the dying. According to Dr. Henry Cheu, “Even though the cost was only four dollars a day, there were vacancies all the time. The popular notion was ‘if you go there, you die.’”\textsuperscript{12} They connected physicians to fatal epidemics and hospitals to high mortality rates.\textsuperscript{13} Obituaries and other Chinese newspaper reports described cases of people who died in hospitals or died in their own home but were taken to hospitals for an autopsy.\textsuperscript{14} The frequent mentioning of death with institutionalized medicine reinforced popular views of hospitals as places of doom.

Though advocates of modern care blamed the Chinese community for being backward and superstitious, the reputation of hospital care was neither ill-deserved nor uncommon at the time. Epidemics like the bubonic plague helped to root associations of death into the healthcare system. Many severely ill people were taken to hospitals for professional care, but most of them died there.\textsuperscript{15}

In addition, Chinatown residents resented the role that Western-style care played in racial discrimination. Racism was rampant in San Francisco, as evident in reports of robberies, beatings, and labor discrimination.\textsuperscript{16} Public health movements in the early twentieth century excluded the Chinese and cared primarily for Caucasian members of the lower class. For many Chinese, going to the hospital meant leaving the protection of Chinatown, risking beatings or robbery. Even then, doctors might refuse treatment.
Western-style care came to be associated with rejection of Chinese, strange medication, death, and language barriers. People also remembered the Western-style medical examinations that took place when they entered the United States. Immigration officials implemented racially selective and humiliating examinations to target individuals considered to be unfit for entry. These medical screenings often continued after entry, causing many Chinatown residents to associate immigration examinations with Western practitioners. Furthermore, even though the hospital was staffed partially by members of the Chinese community, many Chinatown residents still saw it as a Western health service.

The Chinese media paid little attention to Chinese Hospital, keeping its confidence in its medical programs low. There were very few references to Chinese Hospital in Young China even when the hospital opened in 1925; the only coverage the hospital received was a short article describing the opening ceremony. There was no mention of the institution in the subsequent twelve months except for a few entries that described the appointment of a new assistant director. Brief coverage like this indicates that Chinese Hospital was not one of the community’s top interests. Whereas the articles about international events occupied nearly half a page, the report on Chinese Hospital’s grand opening spanned a mere four sentences. It is understandable that there was more coverage on political issues in Young China, since the Nationalist Party (KMT) controlled it. However, even in the non-politically affiliated newspaper Chin-shan Jih-Pao, there were only three references in the span of a year. The focus in these newspapers seemed to be on Chinese politics and entertainment with little attention given to social, educational, or health issues. Local news sections spanned only half of a single page from among the ten in Chinshon Jih-Pao; the remaining sections of China news, Canton news, and entertainment made up most of the paper. Interestingly, periodic reports on the hospital’s beauty pageants and fundraisers increased the general awareness of the hospital’s existence. Nevertheless, few people actually went on to use the clinic’s services.

Ironically, many of the Chinatown residents who did believe in Western care opted to go to white-run medical institutions instead of Chinese Hospital because of their preference for Caucasian doctors. As Doctor Margaret Chung stated, “Chinatown was divided into two classes – the older generation who still believed in Chinese herbs, and the younger, more modern generation who, if they required medical attention and wanted medicine and surgery, would go to a white physician.” Chinatown residents who valued Western medicine also internalized mainstream racial attitudes that attributed superiority to Caucasians. Some Chinese women preferred white female doctors to be their midwives and would never allow a Chinese doctor to deliver their babies. Since Chinese largely established,
ran, and staffed Chinese Hospital, some residents assumed that the facility not capable of providing good health services.

Many who believed in Western medicine and did not mind the care of a Chinese physician still preferred private clinics, the number of which rose with the competitiveness of health services. This in turn augmented the need to advertise, as seen by the numerous medical ads in Chinatown newspapers. In addition, patients often established strong ties of loyalty towards a particular doctor or clinic. Doctor Mom Chung, for example, had a dedicated following among both white and Chinese patients in the San Francisco community. The clientele of doctors was maintained or enhanced by patients’ word of mouth advertising. As an ad in Chin-shan jih pao states about traditional medicine practitioner Dr. Mah Jin Chow:

**Recommending an excellent doctor: Mah Jin Chow. The doctor always looks professional and can cure many diseases… give back to the community and care for the poor… this is a one in a life time opportunity. Dr. Mah is always applying himself and learning; his extensive experience in clinical work makes him a valuable resource… he has the best medical skills out of all the doctors I’ve seen. Before my wife gave birth, she vomited, coughed and excreted blood. Fortunately someone recommended me to Dr. Mah and he cured my wife. Recommenders: Chen Ton Po, Hwang Bi Tran et al.**

The well-designed advertisement appealed to a wide Chinese audience through its publication in a newspaper and its format as a personal recommendation. Doctors often forged close personal relationships with their patients, encouraging clients to regard highly their medical practices and recommend their services to others. Since the community in Chinatown was relatively small, a good doctor could amass a sizable following within a few months. Residents likely preferred the familiar and intimate setting that private practices provided over the cold and impersonal atmosphere of medical institutions. The comfortable atmosphere that many clinics create allowed patients to relax and overcome their fear of Western medicine.

The community’s preference for traditional medicine over both public and private clinics contributed to the inability of Chinese Hospital to gain clientele. Intense competition from herbal shops and Chinese practitioners took patients away from Chinese Hospital. Disillusionment with healthcare institutions strengthened trust in traditional care and even increased the number of herbal stores. When Dr. Collin Dong, a graduate from Stanford Medical School, began his practice in San Francisco in 1931, he competed with over fifty Chinese acupuncturists and herbalists. Dong remarked that it was “not easy to introduce Western medical concepts to our Chinese patients. They were eclectic, taking our pills sometimes, and
other times, they reverted to herbs and acupuncture.” Patients were often suspicious of medication, preferring to trust herbal healing techniques that they had been exposed to in China. More than half of the advertisements in Chinese-language papers promoted herbal cures and traditional practitioners. In the month of July 1932 alone, one newspaper published an average of 42 ads, 19 of which were for herbal medicine, 12 for traditional practitioners, and 1 for a Western practitioner. Popular self-care columns in Chinese newspapers instructed people how to deal with various diseases without going to the hospital. For example, Young China devoted an entire page to teaching families how to give birth. Another advertisement stated that although “brain fever” cannot be cured by Western physicians, Dr. Chen, a traditional doctor, can readily treat it. These advertisements likely decreased the demand for in-hospital deliveries as more people learned how to do it themselves. Furthermore, some restaurants claimed that chefs used herbs in their food and were therefore more health-conscious than their counterparts. This emphasis on herbal care remedies reinforced the Chinese convention of taking herbs to stay healthy rather than visiting doctors during sickness. Because Chinese Hospital could not provide the everyday herbs and drugs that their prospective patients sought, few made use of its services. Additionally, statistics reveal that the number of ads promoting herbal stores and Chinese doctors was significantly higher than those for Western doctors, underscoring the community’s preference for, or at least exposure to, traditional medicine. When traditional practitioners opened a small charity clinic next to Chinese Hospital, many patients in the area chose the latter to address their health issues.

Chinatown residents also preferred traditionally trained doctors over those with American degrees. Even Chinese doctors with Western training received a cool reception from the community, most of them serving a predominantly white clientele. Since mostly American-trained Chinese and Caucasian doctors staffed Chinese Hospital, people responded to its founding with disinterest. Recognizing the unwillingness to seek medical care beyond conventional procedures, traditional practitioners flaunted their previous experiences in China. Doctor Lau wrote in a Chinshan jih pao ad that he was an herbal medicine professor who placed first in the Canton provincial examinations. He also boasted that he held a license in Canton and graduated from Canton city medical school. Most medical ads described previous exam scores and degrees from China at length; few advertisements contained references to American training. This reaction against American-educated doctors reflects the wariness of the Chinese toward using American institutions that had subjected them to racism and unfair immigration policies.

In addition to competitive herbal stores and a preference for traditional training, the close association between Chinese medicine
and culture limited use of Chinese Hospital. According to Joseph Lum, superintendent of Chinese Hospital, “[the Chinese-American community] did not trust American doctors.” Patients explained that the high number of deaths was a result of “being cut open … and other totally unheard of remedies.”

As Dr. Helen Tong remarked, “Everyone was suspicious of strange medications, especially hypodermic injections of any type.” Since Chinatown residents had had only a few decades of exposure to Western care, it was difficult for them to accept its foreign practices. Surgery, a trademark of Western care, was unheard of in Chinese medicine. Traditional practitioners allowed patients to remain fully clothed during examinations, which consisted only of observation, conversation, and pulse detection.

People were not used to excessive body contact with the medical practitioner. Since people believed that illness was caused by blockages or lack of balance in the body’s chi, intrinsic energy, surgery was viewed as a futile attempt to cure the body’s non-physical problems. Traditional medicine, on the other hand, was much more modest: in the back rooms of herbal shops, a Chinese doctor would ask his patient about his daily life to see if the patient’s system should be sped up or slowed down. After determining the inner forces creating imbalance in the patient, the doctor would write a prescription that the patient would then take to the Chinese pharmacist in the outer store. This kind of care allowed the patient to have adequate personal space while reflecting traditional Confucian ideas of mediation, peace, and balance. Chinese Hospital, therefore, faced the colossal task of convincing the community that the services it offered were better than the more traditional treatments of Chinese practitioners.

Similarly, the herbal stores’ mode of operation was more comfortable for Chinatown residents. The shops often had doctors present, allowing them to serve as both pharmacies and clinics. Doctors there tended not to charge for their diagnoses and outpatient services, instead making profits by selling herbs. Patients also appreciated traditional practitioners’ secrecy; Western doctors were required to report communicable diseases cases to the public health department. Such reports could induce the city government to order a mandatory sick leave, causing patients to lose time and work. The combination of privacy and low prices made traditional stores preferable to Chinese Hospital.

Moreover, with traditional herbs that promised to treat all illnesses, people did not see the value in seeking further professional care. According to Dr. Henry Cheu, “People didn’t think they needed a hospital because they believed in Chinese herbal stores.” The stores advertised using drug names that were often flamboyant and convoluted. Names such as “heal body strengthen yang force pill,” “long-lived oak poison extract pill,” or “white medical pill” were common in Chinatown newspapers. Because many of the characters used conveyed notions of health, longevity, magic,
or happiness, the herbal advertisements appealed to Chinatown residents by using words that promised vitality and guaranteed cultural authenticity. In contrast, the English drug names seemed foreign and ineffective to the Chinatown community. It is also important to note the wide array of drugs promising to treat every disease imaginable. Medications advertised in Chinatown newspapers include “stopping wet dreams pill,” “detoxifying drug,” “stopping itchiness solution,” “all purpose pill,” “cough drop,” “nicotine replacement solution,” “blood pressure control for women pill,” “kidney repair pill,” “arthritis pill,” “sexual arousal pill,” “menstruation control drug,” “infertility tablet,” “lung repair pill,” “sex doctor special pills,” etc. With these drugs readily available and trust in their effectiveness, Chinatown residents seldom utilized Chinese Hospital and only sought professional help when all other alternatives had been exhausted. In their minds, there was no need to venture into the unfamiliar world of Western clinics when herbal drugs covered such a broad spectrum of diseases.

Conclusion

The enthusiasm that galvanized Chinese merchants and political leaders to improve health care in Chinatown was met with apathy and distrust. People in the community were simply not ready to fully embrace western healthcare. It would take twenty years for residents’ attitude towards medicine to shift before they would utilize the resources that Chinese Hospital offered.

Nevertheless, the establishment of Chinese Hospital provided an institutional foothold for public and private health agencies in Chinatown. The San Francisco Public Health Department and the Baby Hygiene Committee of the American Association of University Women expanded their programs into Chinatown to take advantage of the institutional structure that Chinese Hospital provided. However, not until the 1940s did Chinese Hospital finally gain acceptance as a viable medical facility among the Chinese. Now the top provider of medical care in Chinatown, Chinese Hospital has the latest medical equipment and a well-trained staff. And through the creation of the first Chinese-sponsored, state-licensed HMO health plan in America, the facility provides twenty-four hour care for the Chinese community. The hospital also has an active community outreach program that sponsors annual fundraising and awareness campaigns.

An exploration of why the attitudes of the Chinese community towards Chinese Hospital changed would provide fertile ground for further research. One profitable lead might be to study the impact of World War II on health preferences. Traditional herb imports were curtailed during the war due to frequent conflicts in the Pacific arena. People might, therefore, be more inclined to utilize facilities that provided Western care. Another possibility is to examine the increase in the number of American-trained Chinese physicians. These doctors were more culturally aware and might
have connected better with the Chinese community at large. Understanding 
the shifts in attitude since the founding of the hospital will provide insight 
into future policy issues dealing with Chinese cultural attitudes.

**ENDNOTES**

1. Loo, Chalsa M. Chinatown: Most Time, Hard Time. New York: Praeger, 
   1991, p. 146.
2. The image shows a “rags, bottles, sacks man”, who drove through the 
   streets of Chinatown to collect used clothing and trash to sell. Genthe, 
   Arnold. Text by John Ko Wei Tchen. Genthe’s Photographs of 
3. Loo, Chalsa M. Chinatown: Most Time, Hard Time. New York: Praeger, 
   1991, p. 147.
4. Kung, S. W. Chinese in American Life: Some Aspects of their History, 
   Status, Problems, and Contributions. Seattle: University of Washington 
   Press, 1962, p. 54.
5. Shah, Nayan. Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s 
6. **Organization sponsors include:** 中華總會館, 中華總商會, 台山寧 
   陽總會館, 同源總會, 肇慶總會館, 中國國民黨總支部, 合和總會 
   館, 致公總堂, 岡州總會館, 民主憲政黨, 陽和總會館, 華人基督 
   教男青年會, 三邑總會館, 華人基督教聯會, 人和總會館 “Chinese 
   Hospital” 30/5/05 http://www.sanfranciscochinatown.com/attractions/ 
   chinesehospital.html, p.1.

Translation: Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Assoc., Chinese Chamber 
   of Commerce, Ning Yung Benevolent Assoc., Chinese American Citizens 
   Alliance, Sue Hing Benevolent Assoc., Kuomingtang of China, Hop Wo 
   Benevolent Assoc., Chee Kung Tong, Kong Chow Benevolent Assoc., 
   Chinese Democratic Constitutionalist Party, Yeong Wo Assoc., Chinatown 
   Y.M.C.A., Sam Yup Assoc., Chinese Christian Union of San Francisco, Yan 
   Wo Benevolent Assoc.
7. The old building of Chinese hospital, modern view
   (http://www.sanfranciscochinatown.com/ 
   graphics/chinese-hospital-old.gif)
The opening ceremony of Chinese Hospital in 1925 (http://www.chinesehospital-sf.org/about.html#history)

The new building of Chinese Hospital (From Chinese Hospital website, http://www.chinesehospital-sf.org/about.html)

8. “香港東華醫院捐來善款一萬五千……為貴院置業生意” Young China (少年中國), 10/24/1925. Translation: The Hong Kong Tung Wah Hospital has donated fifteen thousand dollars to help the hospital’s operations.


11. A page from the 7/8/0 issue of Kuo Min Jih Pao.
14. 老華人因病逝世: 老華人雷萬勝 年六十五歲 寓在天后廟街一五八號 患肺癆症數年 至昨在該寓所與世長辭 同居者察悉 至六點餘鐘報差電驗屍館派員到場將屍車往驗屍場查驗 候其親人領回安葬云Kuo Min Jih Pao (國民日報), 1/10/1932. Translation: Old Chinese man passed away because of disease: old Chinese man Lai Wan Shan, 65, living at Tien Ho Miao Street # 158 passed away because of his lung problems…
15. Although the poor and working class generally had access to the health services from institutions, they did not have access to routine checkups and services. This made it more difficult for the poor and working class to “maintain health,” a condition that had become increasingly possible for the white upper class.
16. 昨日婦女李聖潔被劫，為西人也 Young China (少年中國), 9/22/1925. Translation: Yesterday a woman Li Shan Chia was robbed by an unknown white person. 幼童被西人打…Chin-shan Jih-Pao (金山時報), 7/17/1932. Translation: A child was beat up yesterday by a white person. 船公司停雇華工 Kuo Min Jih Pao (國民日報), 1/15/1932. Translation: ship company stops hiring Chinese workers.
19. 東華醫院開幕誌盛: 本地東華醫院 昨日下午兩點半鐘 舉行開幕典禮 行禮地點 即在新樓門首 來賓蒞止 僑胞環立街旁…Young China (少年中國), 10/9/1925. The Opening Ceremony of Chinese Hospital: the opening ceremony of the local Chinese Hospital was yesterday at 2 pm. White visitors were present, as fellow Chinese watched Chairman Chen make an announcement…
20. 東華醫院選定副司理.東華醫院各值理為選聘副司理一事昨晚七時會議當時各團體薦出候選人四名…Young China (少年中國), 10/20/1925. Translation: Chinese Hospital selected an assistant director. The hospital held a meeting yesterday night at seven and the various supporting groups selected a total of four candidates…
21. Young China’s was divided into seven sections: opinions, special news, urgent news, local news, Nationalist Party news, Chinese news, and the Freedom Bell. 論說, 特電, 緊要新聞, 本地新聞, 國民黨消息, 中國要聞, 自由鐘. Young China (少年中國), 10/24/1925, 10/20/1925, 10/1/1925, 10/21/1925, 5/26/1925, 9/22/1925, 3/5/1928, 5/10/1925, 10/9/1925,
10/20/1925, 4/10/1925.
24. 東華醫院: 舉行選女王賽會慶典 由本月廿九起至五月九號止 一連十天 廿九晚女王加冕 星期日劇演梨園 冠群芳以首出 合萬眾 以心傾 市長則親臨加冕 著董則聯同助慶 Young China (少年中國), 4/10/1925. Translation: Chinese Hospital is holding a beauty pageant to raise money: from April 29th to May 9th, a 10 day coronation event will be held… the mayor will be at the coronation to celebrate, as well.
31. 介紹良醫: 馬景周醫生. 有良相而後國能治. 得良醫而後病能愈 誠古今天下不易之理 今有良醫馬君景周 甫抵金門 開設醫館 懸壺 濟世 贈醫救貧 真千載一世之機會也知馬君前在廣州關澄弼中醫學校 尋業多年 悉心研究 醫學精深 舉世聞知 然其志猶未足 力求深造 臨症數載 醫學超群 始以所學問世 診治三陰 三陽 大寒 大憤 婦人胎
前產後及虛痞久咳 咳血 吐血 便血. 用特介紹數言 備患病者 知所聘請良醫焉. 介紹人陳敦樸 黃璧傳 李聖庭 廖君哲 朱昌晃 雷崇平 李耀國 李立生 唐瑞年 (Chin-shan jih pao, 7/16/1932.) Another example was found in Young China: 介紹良醫 詩亞士濶牙科醫生... Chin-shan Jih-Pao (金山時報), 7/16/1932. Translation: Recommending an excellent doctor: She Yah Shi Kwa Dentist....


37. 自由鐘 常識 生產 凡孕婦將產時 丈夫宜預先開導 使孕婦知瓜熟 少則五六人 是日天命起始之呼吸 最忌邪風 須空氣清濁 房內人多 空氣必穢濁 秉之此來彼往 空氣動盪而生邪風 胎受邪風 必病變多端 且最不易治 產婦受風邪 非服鹿茸丸萬不能愈 下列四條 胎前產後倘能遵守 必無難產受病之患 産婦不必服藥 能飲酒者 可畧飲數杯 不能飲酒者 Young China (少年中國), 3/5/1928. Translation: Freedom Bell [a section of the newspaper] Common Knowledge: Giving Birth. When a woman gives birth, a husband should be there to lead, so the woman can be in a familiar setting. The room should not exceed five to six people. Make sure the baby is breathing and that the room is clean. When there are too many people in the room, the air is stale and evil and the baby can be hurt...if the women can drink wine, do so to heal, or if she cannot drink.

38. 陳天一醫生. 患腦風症者宜特別注意: 腦風症自醫視為難愈之疾無所施拙 外症清涕鼻塞 嘯唑不休 或目鼻悶 或氣逆作咳 …日見其 多 本醫生測然於懷 用是不辭勞瘁 研究數月載至今始得十全之治法 特登報章 以便患此症者 知所問津焉 Kuo Min Jih Pao (國民日報), 7/8/1932. Translation: Doctor Chen Tien Yi. Attention to people with brain fever: brain fever is seen by Western doctors to be a hard illness to cure, as they scramble to cure it but cannot. Symptoms include nasal
congestion, sneezing, breathing difficulties, and coughing ... this doctor can cure it; he is kind, well versed, skilled, and hardworking. You will be cured within ten days by him. I put this information into the newspaper so that people with brain fever can know about Doctor Chen.

39. 招客 餐館價值相宜...合藥材...補於其餐館 Young China (少年中國), 7/10/1925. Customers welcome, cheap prices at restaurant... herbs have been added to the food... better for your body than other restaurant.


41. A Z-Statistical test was performed, with \( p_1 = 0.238 \), \( p_2 = 0.738 \), and \( p = 0.488 \) s.e. = 0.109, and \( z\text{-stat} = 4.81 \), yielding a \( P \) value of less than 0.0001, null hypothesis rejected, difference highly significant. A second period (August 4\textsuperscript{th} to 30\textsuperscript{th}, 1932) was counted, Total 45, 12 herbal, 22 Chinese doctors, and 0 Western doctors, also yielding highly significant results.


43. 劉仁譜醫生:廣州市衛生局第六區中醫生考試取錄,台山縣政府第二局中醫生考試取第一名,廣州市仁生醫社第三屆畢業,廣州光漢醫院婦科教授 Chin-shan Jih-Pao (金山時報), 1/9/1937. Translation: Doctor Lau Ren Pou passed the Canton city area six entrance examinations for Chinese medicine, was first place in the Tai-Shan County area two Chinese Medical examination, graduated from Canton city Ren-Shen Medical School, and was an OB/pediatric professor at Canton Guan-Han Hospital.


48. 乾坤藥房 中醫在也Young China (少年中國), 10/1/1925. Translation: Traditional Chinese Herbal Store: Doctors present, also.


51. Loo, Chalsa M. Chinatown: Most Time, Hard Time. New York: Praeger,
1991, p. 149.
52. 劉日初醫生, 補身壯陽丸, 遠生花柳竝毒丸, 白丸濁丸: Young China (少年中國), 10/2/1925, 5/10/1925, 10/9/1925.  Translation: Doctor Liu: we sell heal body strengthen yang force pills, far lived oak poison extract pills, and white medical pills.

WORKS CITED
Chinn, Helen T. Autobiographical statement, in ibid.
Dong, Collin H. Autobiographical statement, in Quock, Following the Dawn.
Gintjee and Johnson, San Francisco’s First Chinese Hospital, 285.

