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## Contents

Letter From the Editor.................................................................2

The Men And Women Of Gettysburg College: Class Of 1903  
Daryl Grenz, ’04........5

Broken Bodies, Shattered Dreams: The Aftermath of a Life as a  
Korean “Comfort Woman”  
Jessica Winerger, ’03........25

The Failure of Maternal Domesticity: An Evaluation of Frankenstein as  
a Didactic Source  
Keith R. Swaney, ’04........52

And Then There Was One: How the Ruling Styles of Elizabeth I and  
Mary, Queen of Scots Affected the Outcomes of Their Reigns  
Anushia Sivendran, ’03.........61

“The Tenter-Hooks of Temptation”: The Debate Over Theatre in Post-  
Revolutionary America  
Meredith Bartron, ’03 ..........75
Readers,

The inaugural Gettysburg Historical Journal was, in the words of last year’s General Editor, Sarah Andrews, a “good beginning.” So good, in fact, that I worried it would suffer a “sophomore slump” under my leadership. To use another sports metaphor, last year I was the scrawny kid at the end of the bench waving my towel in support. I did my job, but felt little stress regarding the whole project

This year, while my responsibilities increased, my blood pressure did not. The main reason is explained by the hard work of the entire Editorial Board. Not only was everyone’s contribution excellent, but they demeanor was as well. Meetings were efficient, productive, and FUN. We joked about everything from egg salad to each other, while constructing a journal that reflects the superlative work of Gettysburg’s History students.

The student body can also clarify why I found the year’s work relatively stress free. The quantity and quality of submissions was remarkable. We received nearly twice as many submissions this year compared to last. And though choosing which pieces would be published was difficult, knowing that the journal would be high-quality from cover to cover allowed the board and I to rest easy.

Throughout the whole process of constructing the journal the History Department helped make producing the journal a seemingly simple task. From recruiting the Editorial Board to encouraging their students to submit their work, the entire Department deserves endless thanks. Of course our advisors, Michael Birkner, Julie Landweber, and Timothy Shannon merit special thanks. They provided every bit of help that was needed, in any way that was needed. Above all, they supported us and helped maintain our status as a student run journal.

In short, the second Gettysburg Historical Journal represents the hard work and dedication of many people. Thank you to all who helped. You allowed me to stay on the bench waving my towel more than I anticipated. And your work produced a good continuation of a “good beginning.”

Kevin Luy, ’03
General Editor
On Thursday September 7, 1899 a new school year (its sixty-eighth) began at Pennsylvania College in Gettysburg. Many students had arrived as early as that Sunday to begin settling into their rooms. Many of the forty-three new students had been accepted the previous June by passing a series of entrance exams in all of the applicable subject areas, especially the Classics. A number of others had waited and taken the exams as the school year started. Eighteen individuals were exempt from entrance exams because of their satisfactory work during the previous year at the attached preparatory school in Stevens Hall. These students were already familiar with the campus and with upperclassmen that they had come in contact with casually or through their attendance of and participation in various campus societies. In many ways these eighteen formed the core of the class of 1903 from entrance to graduation. Freshmen by and large came from the surrounding towns and counties in Pennsylvania and Maryland; four of the new men were from Gettysburg itself. Their general proximity to the campus meant that the men of the freshman class had largely been able to visit the campus prior to their matriculation. Edward B.

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1 Officially named Pennsylvania College students and others generally referred to it as Gettysburg College so as to avoid confusion with other Pennsylvania Colleges. The name was officially changed in 1921. “Calendar, 1899-1900” Annual Catalogue Of The Officers And Students: 1899-1900, (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1900).

2 Ibid., 55.

* References during this period to “the men” generally reference the entire male student body and do not indicate the female members of this body though in some instances they do reference co-ed groups.
Hay of Red Hook, NY and Charles D. Speers of Pittsburgh were the exceptions to the limited geographical representation of the class.³

Among the incoming students were six women, five of Gettysburg and one of York, who made up the as yet ill defined, but still widely admired collection of class co-eds. These women were necessarily from Gettysburg and its environs because school policy did not provide for on campus accommodations for women and defined female students as “day students”⁴ only. Despite continuing to live at home however female students appear to have participated actively in college life whenever possible joining and holding office in the campus literary societies and attending (on occasion) class banquets and sports events. Three of the class’s women had also been students at the preparatory school the previous year.

The campus weekly, The Gettysburgian, published every Wednesday gives some idea of the general feeling on campus at the beginning of the school year. While praising the energy and interest with which it claims students began the year it also openly laments two related issues that troubled Gettysburg students at the time.⁵ First was a lack of money to pursue the construction and other expansion, which in many respects marked the era of Harvey W. McKnight’s presidency (1884-1903). Thus The Gettysburgian began the year soliciting donations from alumni. The issue of creating an endowment for the college that would permit it to expand had taken special precedence in previous

³ Ibid., 54-55.
⁵ “Greeting” The Gettysburgian, 4, no.1 (September 13, 1899): 1.
years as McKnight struggled to complete new building projects. Second was the feeling that the college at Gettysburg lacked “standing” in the eyes of many prospective students, mostly through a perceived failure to achieve athletic success.⁶

Prominent for incoming students in 1899 among McKnight’s improvements was the completion in 1898 of a second dorm building, designated South College at the time this building is now called McKnight Hall.⁷ Many of the new students chose rooms in this new building while a nearly equal number moved into rooms in “Old Dorm” (the original campus building and the primary dormitory). The choice of rooms was generally based upon income level as the cheapest rooms (costing a student as little as 12.50$ a year) were among Old Dorm’s 86 rooms and the South College suites, able to room fifty students total, could cost as much as 62.50$ a year, even assuming that the room was shared.⁸ Other additions to the campus that greeted the class of 1903 that would not have been there for their peers just over a decade earlier were the towering Glatfelter Hall (called the Recitation Hall) and the Brua Memorial Chapel (now the Kline Theater).

New buildings had greatly increased the college’s capacity for students yet the class of 1903 was smaller than the freshman classes of the preceding years. Succeeding freshman classes rebounded from this decrease and no explanation for the dip in enrollment is readily apparent. Among other things their small size

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⁶ Ibid., 5.
⁸ *Annual Catalogue: 1899-1900*, 35.
made the “new men” in the fall of 1899 especially open to hazing and domination by the sophomore class who according to college traditions held the incoming freshman in mocking contempt. Accounts of freshman / sophomore clashes from the year 1899-1900 are epitomized by the romanticizing words of The Gettysburgian’s story of the “’02 and ’03 Rush.”9 This traditional event consisted of an impromptu battle in the middle of the night between freshmen and sophomores. Each class making “a number of determined efforts to drive their opponents from the field” of the preparatory campus, until the freshmen were forced to admit defeat by giving the sophomore’s class yell.

The class yell was one of a number of distinguishing features that acted to strengthen a sense of class unity. Each class had a yell9 and official class colors (blue and white, representing loyalty and purity, for the class of 1903) that were taken to be proud symbols of their position within the campus hierarchy. Many classes purchased caps or other clothing displaying their class colors. The rush was a traditional feature of class rivalries and was initiated at the beginning of the year by one class that had become fed up with the boasts of superiority of another class (typically between sophomore and freshman classes). Other outbursts of class competition were in athletic events between class baseball, football and basketball teams. Between class teams the class of 1903 distinguished itself as fielding some of the college’s best athletes (the other area where it dominated was in providing the school’s best musicians). In the arena of the all-member rushes between classes the class of 1903 was defeated in both

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9 “’02 and ’03 Rush” The Gettysburgian, 4, no. 3 (September 27, 1899): 26-27.
* c/o 1903 yell: “Alle-garo-gara-garee! / Alle-garo-gara-garee! / Hi! Yi! Ki! Yi! / Nineteen Three
years in which it took part. The class of 1903 always appears to have put up a strong fight however as noted in the multiple accounts of the September 8, 1900 rush during which they were overwhelmed by the efforts of nearly 60 freshmen only after a three hour long battle that was witnessed by “probably two hundred people from town.”

This rush also marked the last class rush to occur at Gettysburg College with administrative acceptance. In the spring of that year the Board of Trustees ordered that “no student shall participate in any class rush” and that the parents of all incoming students be notified of the change. The decision to end acceptance of this traditional expression of class rivalry was in response both to concerns of student injury to themselves and the college’s property, and a feeling that such activities were incompatible with the restrained behavior appropriate to a college man.

The particular incident leading to the college’s decision was an attack by the freshmen (the class of 1904) upon the preparatory students of Stevens Hall on the night of October 17, 1900. The incident followed “inconsiderate action” on the part of some prep students that the men of 1904 took as an invitation to battle.

The prep students sought refuge in their dorm and the frustrated freshmen resorted to breaking the windows of the building. The entire freshmen class was implicated in the destruction at Stevens Hall and each was fined .25$, placed on probation and required to pledge “more discreet behavior for the future.”

The faculty’s attempt at a balanced response to what The

10 “Collegiana” The Gettysburgian, 5, no. 14 (September 12, 1900): 168.
11 Correspondence from President McKnight to J.V. Wentz dated Oct. 24, 1900. Abdel Ross Wentz Library Archives, Lutheran Seminary of Gettysburg.
12 Ibid.
Gettysburgian termed “malicious mischief” that “should be stamped out of our midst”¹³ is clear in the cool and understanding tone of President McKinley’s letter of notification to the parents of the offending students, his primary lament being that such actions damage the college’s reputation in the community. Such a response was necessary in light of the fact that many rowdy activities were partaken in by all members of a class and were felt by the men to be legitimate expressions of class rivalry and school spirit.

The primary fear of the faculty was that rowdiness was in “defiance of and insubordination to college authority.”¹⁴ An example of particularly disconcerting behavior in this respect was the burning of an effigy of their German professor (Professor Brede) by the members of the junior class on the night of May 9, 1900 that resulted first in the suspension of the entire class and then in the penalties being cut to the awarding of 25 demerits [which required that a student’s parents be notified] and probation once the faculty gained a better understanding of the circumstances. 50 demerits were necessary for the suspension of a student. This episode resulted in Professor Brede not returning the following year because of the intense dislike that he evoked among the student body and appears to be an anomaly in generally genial relations between students and faculty. In The Spectrum student comment typifies the professors as rigid and overly difficult, but that is to be expected.

Other types of rowdy public behavior were even less justifiable in the eyes of college authority. The primary examples of such behavior are the use of

¹³ The Gettysburgian, 5, no. 20 (October 24, 1900): 232.
¹⁴ The Gettysburgian, 5, no. 10 (May 23, 1900): 112.
alcohol and the often associated vandalism. Alcohol violations tended to result in
demerits and probation and offenders were often required to pledge that they
would not use “intoxicating beverages” and would report any observed use to the
faculty. In addition the faculty required that all approved class and fraternity
banquets occur only with an accompanying pledge that alcohol would not be
served. Students were discouraged from frequenting or boarding in area hotels
that served alcohol and generally a hard propaganda line was taken toward
alcohol, yet a group of six students found guilty of drinking in 1900 were given
demerits, but assured that the faculty’s desire “was not to punish anyone, but
rather ‘to crush out the evil of using intoxicants.”

The administration’s prohibitions in this respect were generally meant to
maintain the dignity of the institution and to uphold its students’ morality. An
example of interventions in this vein was the decision at the June 13-14, 1899
meeting of the Board of Trustees “that public entertainments that include dancing
shall not be given by students.” These restrictions on student activities were
meant to preserve the dignity of the students and protect them from lewdness.
Of special concern were improper activities between men and women students,
reflected in the dancing prohibition. This attitude also played a role in the
faculty’s response to the women’s request to have access to the gymnasium for
exercise. The faculty rejected that specific request, but came up with an

15 Faculty Minutes, Gettysburg College: December 7, 1900.
16 Faculty Minutes, GCSC: February 21, 1900.
17 Glatfelter, 326.
18 Faculty Minutes, Gettysburg College Special Collections: inserted report of the Board of Trustees
meeting of June 13-14, 1899.
19 Faculty Minutes, GCSC: December 12, 1901.
alternate system by which women could have an exercise class two nights a week in Recitation Hall, under the care of a chaperone, and that a changing room be set aside, but that no young men be permitted in the building during this time.  

The Gettysburgian often positioned itself as a defender of administration attitudes and concerns making it difficult to determine the majority positions of the student body itself. In some cases the newspapers admonitions, such as the following warning against Halloween mischief, were likely reflective of the fact that students regularly engaged in activities disturbing to the proper sensibilities of the college.

Custom has also given this special night over to the small boy in which he may play his mischievous pranks more freely than at other times. Sometimes we ‘more grown up small boys’ have taken to ourselves these privileges and raised ‘cain’ as they say. It is not fitting however that we should continue doing so and so to-night let us leave to the witches and smaller boys the proper celebration of Hallowe’en.  

Conversely the newspaper’s subsequent report that Halloween night was free of disturbances may well indicate that the students were responsive to President McKnight’s policy of encouraging student self-control, allowing them the freedom worthy of their status, yet still maintaining rigid order (what may be loosely considered “modern college discipline”).  

This tone can also be found in a Gettysburgian article reporting Halloween vandalism committed the following year upon the laboratory building, which concluded that

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20 Faculty Minutes, GCSC: December 19, 1901.
21 “Collegiana” The Gettysburgian, 5, no. 21 (October 31, 1900): 251.
22 Samuel Gring Hefelbower, The History Of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932 (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1932), 277.
Such acts are due to a cowardly, malicious spirit of mischief which ought to meet with the hearty disapproval of every self-respecting student, and, happily, the great majority of our students are of this class. We ought to feel a common interest in the property of the college and unite to a man in its preservation.23

The breaking of windows in campus buildings and the uprooting of shrubbery is clearly not what might be called an above-board student pastime and it seems likely that in this instance The Gettysburgian is correct in assuming that most students rejected such behavior as unthinkable. Once a year each class was expected to assist the groundskeeper and janitor Adam Foutz (referred to as “Jan” or “Guv”) who served the college from 1876-1906, which would seem to indicate their general interest in keeping up the school (though not everyone participated).24

Opportunities for school-wide recreation outside of sports events were limited though the two most visible were the annual Washington’s Day Parade on February 22 and the campus parties of May 1902 and 1903. The Washington’s Day Parade also provided an opportunity for class rivalry in a civilized arena through costume competitions while providing expression of the “hearty good feeling existing between the college students… and residents of town”25 on such communal occasions. The spring party was initiated by The Gettysburgian as a means to pay off its debts through the sale of candies, cakes and ice cream to students, faculty and townspeople.26 The snack sales were accompanied by

23 The Gettysburgian, 6, no. 22 (November 6, 1901): 160.
24 Glatfelter, 266.
26 “Campus Party” The Gettysburgian, 7, no. 9 (May 14, 1902): 97.
music by various campus musical groups that combined to provide enjoyable and profitable evenings for both the attendees and *The Gettysburgian*. 27

Student rowdiness must otherwise not obscure what was a very academic atmosphere of study and intellectual stimulation at the college. This was the result of the heavy course load required of students who could participate in either the Classical or Scientific Courses (leading respectively to a BA and a BS) with options in the junior and senior years among modern languages (normally German and French) and various specific sciences as electives. The Scientific Course was generally considered the easier of the two engendering the following comment “If you want the laziest set of daredevils in the college, go to the class of 1903; but if you want the laziest set of devils in the class, go to the Scientifs.” 28

The number of “Scientifs” had risen continually in the preceding years with a third of the class of 1903’s graduates holding a BS. The detailed scheduling of a student’s time contributed to the atmosphere and left most students with little leisure time. Throughout the years that the class of 1903 worked at Gettysburg College they would have had classes “on the hour, except at noon, from 8 A.M. through 3 P.M.” during the week with additional class times at 8 and 9 A.M. on Saturdays. 29

The studious atmosphere was encouraged by the college’s close association with the nearby Lutheran Seminary (which five of the graduates of 1903 attended the following year) and by the continued presence at the college

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29 Glatfelter, 304.
of a graduate program (officially ended in 1905).\textsuperscript{30} In addition the college permitted students freetime in the week from 6:45 to 7:45 AM, 12 to 1 PM and 5 to 8 PM.\textsuperscript{31} During this time they could freely leave campus, though they were supposed to remain in town. In order to miss classes or leave town students were required to have an excuse from their parents or approval from the faculty, and unexcused absences could be punished by the awarding of demerits. Some school-sponsored events could also excuse a student from classes, especially important sports events against major rivals such as Franklin and Marshall or Dickinson. In addition many years the sophomore class took trips around the countryside for their botany class. In 1899 the faculty had agreed to permit limited absenteeism from class, but trips out of town still required permission and most students still found it best to get pre-approval before absenting themselves from class, as evidenced by the continual entries of approved excuses in the faculty minutes.

Colleges across the country were still struggling at this juncture with the level of support to be given to student athletic programs through questions of whether to hire full-time coaches or assign professors to coach and the appropriateness of providing outstanding athletes with scholarships to encourage their attendance. The two primary sports at Gettysburg were football and baseball, though tennis and track (begun in earnest in the spring of 1899) teams also played intercollegiately, as did basketball (for the first time during the 1900-1901 season). Without question football evoked the greatest student interest and

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 294.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 322.
support. The primary difficulty for the creation of a successful football squad lay in the inability to hold onto a coach with a different coach leading the team each year from 1899-1902. The 1899 team went through its first two games without a coach, but Coach “Doc” Ritchie succeeded in leading the team to a 4-5 record for the year.\footnote{Robert L. Bloom, \textit{Intercollegiate Athletics At Gettysburg College, 1879-1919} (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1976), 14.} A new coach the following year, Coach Byron “By” Dickson, who despite renewed hopes also failed to lead the team to a winning season, victorious in only its first and last games of the year the team ended with a rather awful 2-6-1 record.\footnote{Ibid., 18.} A much more gratifying record of 6-3 closed out the 1901 season despite the formidable setbacks of again adjusting to a new coach (Livingston Smith) and losing their Captain Charles Speer ’03 mid-way through the season, to be replaced by Howard B. Young ’03. The 1902 season saw a return of Gettysburg’s poor luck with Coach Smith leaving after only one game and the team finishing out the year with a hopeful 4-7 season. Student and town interest was evidenced by the fact that on a number of occasions when important away games were being played individuals or groups would buy up the telegraph time and receive play-by-play reports that were then read out loud to the gathered crowd.\footnote{Ibid., 18.} The creation of a basketball squad was intended in part to keep athletes in shape between football and baseball seasons but quickly gained a following among the student body. Student interest was not dampened by the squads early setbacks, with a 1-5 record in its first season and the 1-4 record of its second, the team’s 6-5 record of the 1902-1903 season marked a huge
success that seemed to justify the faithfulness of the many students who had enjoyed the home games through the losing winters many of them anteing up the .25$ game fee. Not all students paid however, Abdel R. Wentz ’04 wrote his brother that when he attended games he got in for free because, at the team manager’s request, he assisted in setting up chairs for spectators. The result of greater student participation and interest in the school’s sports programs was the regulation for the first time in October 1900 of the “privilege of wearing distinguishing initials and numbers”

The class of 1903’s junior year was marked from its beginning by the discovery upon students return that one of their classmates Theodore F. McAllister had died during the summer break (on the 25th of July) from typhoid fever. Theodore had been an active member and officer in class government, the Philo Literary Society and the YMCA among other things and appears to have been widely admired for his dedication and spirit. If the literary and intellectual circles of students were directly touched by the death of Theodore, then the athletic and fraternity crowd felt the blow the class received on October 24, 1901 in the death of Charles D. Speer of appendicitis. Charles’ “wonderful physique made him a leader in all lines of athletics” and was leading the college football team as captain in a successful season at the time of his death.

34 Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated October 18, 1902. Abdel Ross Wentz Library Archives, Lutheran Seminary of Gettysburg.
35 Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated January 27, 1902.
36 “Athletic Association Meeting” The Gettysburgian, 5, no. 20 (October 17, 1900), 218.
As college athletics grew in importance during this period the issue of balancing athletics with education quickly showed its face with Charles as an early case who was removed by order of the faculty from the football team in 1900. Charles was permitted back onto the team in the spring upon the request of the team manager, after making improvements in the quality of his scholarship and promising to maintain the level of his work.\(^{39}\) In addition to his athletic prowess Charles was a brother in the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, one of the six active fraternities (four of which had their own fraternity halls) of this period. The other five were Phi Kappa Psi, Sigma Chi, Phi Gamma Delta, Phi Delta Theta and Sigma Alpha Epsilon (the newest having been opened just the previous year). Fraternity membership made up over a third of the student body with 68 brothers among the student body of 182 in 1899-1900 and 73 of the 178-member student body of 1902-1903 being active members. The fraternities’ growth also decreased student participation in other traditional societies, especially the two literary ones. Though Philo and Phrena declined some groups such as The Pen and Sword (composed of upperclassmen who had been active in organizations of academic or athletic prowess) continued to thrive.

Charles Speer and Theodore McAllister occupied opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of intellectual versus athletic achievements, a separation that perhaps was necessary in light of limits on a student’s time, but remains of note. In *The Spectrum: 1903* the pursuits of each member of the class are listed and provide insight into the typical combination of extracurricular activities that adherents to one path or the other might enjoy. Members of the college football

\(^{39}\) Faculty Minutes, Gettysburg College: April 18, 1901.
or baseball teams are also generally members of the macho “Sons of Hercules” and are more likely to have served as a class officer and to have membership in a fraternity. A prime example of such a man and of the good-natured ribbing that accompanied the competition between the two camps is Uriah Francis White, a member of Phi Kappa Psi and a football, baseball, and basketball player at both the class and inter-collegiate levels who’s senior quote is “I rarely read any Latin, Greek or French book in the original, which I can procure in a good version.” This refers to the ever more popular, and controversial, trick of avoiding the reading of required Classical texts by procuring “horses” or translations (assailed by professors as a sign of mental sloth among students).

These popular and athletic individuals were also likely to play not only on the college team for their respective sport, but also to have been part of their class’s teams in nearly every sport. While nearly all students are listed as being members of either the Philomathean or Phrenakosmian literary societies those who at some point held officer’s posts or memberships in the society’s debating club were not on any of the inter-collegiate sports teams though several played on their class baseball or football teams. In addition these men were more likely to record leadership positions in organizations such as the YMCA or have worked on the staff of The Gettysburgian or The Mercury (the college’s literary publication). Men of this leaning also laid themselves open to jokes of prudish or snobbish behavior as in a reference to the appearance of harmless forms of strong words “for the sake of Y.M.C.A. men, so that they can swear without

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41 “Seniors Under The X-Rays” The Spectrum: 1904 (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1903), 268.
‘cussing’.”\textsuperscript{42} Such men as Curtis Edward “Elizabeth” Cook, who in his junior year was vice president of Philo and the Deutsche Gesellschaft, president of the Philo Debating Club and assistant manager of \textit{The Mercury}\textsuperscript{43}, of whom one was told “talk to him of Jacob’s ladder and he would ask the number of steps.”\textsuperscript{44}

Organizations that enjoyed active participation from members of both the athletic and the intellectual student groups tended to be those, such as the Mandolin and Guitar club, the Class Glee club and the college Orchestra, which provided more leisurely activity then the strenuous physical or mental workouts of other groups.

In addition to outlining their activities and achievements this catalog of the junior class also provides information as to the party allegiances and denominational backgrounds of the class members. Of those for whom party information is provided (all of the men) 20 are Republicans, 8 Democrats and 3 Prohibitionists. Denominational representation consisted of 29 Lutherans, 1 Presbyterian (though strangely enough both of the deceased, Speers and McAllister, were Presbyterian), and three men for which no denomination is listed. Clearly then the student body is very much what would be expected for a college in Pennsylvania (at the heart of the Republican north) with a close affiliation with the Lutheran Seminary of Gettysburg. Student interest in politics is also evidenced by the many political debates taken up in Philo and Phrena and the fact that early November always brought an exodus of students who went home to vote.

\textsuperscript{42} “Dictionary of College Words and Slang Expressions” \textit{The Spectrum: 1901} (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1900), 219.
\textsuperscript{43} “Junior Statistics” \textit{The Spectrum: 1903} (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1902), 23.
\textsuperscript{44} “Seniors Under The X-Rays” \textit{The Spectrum: 1904} (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1903), 265.
Racial diversity among the student body was generally non-existent though interestingly enough a Japanese student, S. Koidzumi, did enter the preparatory school in 1902 without particular note being taken though he appears to be the only international student at the school during this period.45 Another source of distinct diversity were the several Pennsylvania Dutch men who were subject to ribbing for their speech though they also received praise as that lavished by Abdel Wentz (following the victory of Phrena over Philo in the spring 1903 society competition) when he noted “oh the dutch can do almost anything if they really want to. It was a dutchman, too, Eyster* by name, who won the debate for us. Oh yes, the dutch are all right.”46

The literary societies were declining during this period but they were far from defeated. Besides openly debating the issue of their own value to the school and complaining regularly over their own delinquent members47 they also sought to encourage interest with new programs. Phrena revived the tradition of mock trials with that of “Moses Johnson (colored), on the charge of chicken stealing” in 190048 which was accompanied by orchestral music to produce an engaging night. The fact that this and other societal activities were held on Friday nights (in conflict with student preferences) also contributed heavily to their unattractiveness though the increased appearance of music at their

45 “Collegiana” The Gettysburgian, 7, no. 15 (September 17, 1902): 180.
46 Paul W. Eyster of the c/o 1903 noted in The Spectrum as speaking neither English or Dutch but rather his own language, “Eysterism”.
47 Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated March 22, 1903.
48 Philomathean meeting minutes from the Gettysburg College Special Collection’s MS-006 document collection: “Papers of the Philomathean and Phrenakosmian Societies.” Series I, Box 4: minutes dated November 10, 1899.
48 “Phrena’s Mock Trial” The Gettysburgian, 5, no. 27 (December 12, 1900): 321.
presentations, with extensive recitals by co-ed members, in addition to more interesting debate topics stemmed the tide of student apathy for a time.

Religious instruction remained an integral part of student obligation while the class of 1903 was at Gettysburg College with students who resided on campus required to attend daily chapel (at 7:45 AM)\(^\text{49}\) and all students required to attend weekly Sunday services at Christ Lutheran Church.\(^\text{50}\) Those students of other denominations could receive an exemption with a letter from their parents, though they were still required to attend the services of their own church.\(^\text{51}\) An absence from church normally led to the accruement of 10 demerits making suspension a real threat to students who neglected their religious duties.\(^\text{52}\) This system was under criticism by some students at the time as evidenced by the decision of Philo to debate the question of whether “compulsory attendance at chapel in our colleges should be abandoned.”\(^\text{53}\) Many Gettysburg students however were quite pious, intending to join the ministry, and were strongly religious regardless as evidenced by the fact that they were already attending school through synod scholarships (such as that of 35.00$ received by A.R. Wentz for each of the school year’s three terms). Religious activities that were voluntarily and still widely participated in included class bible studies, the YMCA, the annual week of prayer every mid-November, the annual “Day of Prayer for Colleges” in late January, and numerous speeches by visiting

\(^{49}\) Annual Catalogue: 1899-1900, 9.
\(^{50}\) Glatfelter, 268.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., 322.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 323.
\(^{53}\) Philomathean meeting minutes dated April 17, 1903.
reverends throughout the year. Representatives of the Anti-Saloon League\textsuperscript{54} or various other “anti-profanity”\textsuperscript{55} or prohibition leagues and clubs made many of these orations, in advocacy of deeply held religious condemnations of those students who offended the faculty’s (and some other students) sensibilities.

The spring of 1903 was marked by a scare of smallpox infection on campus that led to a mass exodus of students from campus who wished to avoid quarantine. In the end the original diagnosis was proven to be false, but all students were required to provide evidence of vaccination. This incident was recorded by Abdel Wentz in a letter where he explained his decision to stay saying “I’d rather be quarantined and stay right here in this room for several months, than carry smallpox home.”\textsuperscript{56} The return of normalcy to campus brought with it the announcement by Pres. McKnight that he would not be returning the following fall at a dinner reception that he held for the senior class on February 24\textsuperscript{th}.

After eighteen years of service as president, McKnight’s announcement was met with mixed feelings though Abdel R. Wentz may well be representative of students when he noted that “so far as I have been able to learn there have been no tears shed. I know I did not shed any, - far from it. Don’t know who will be chosen to fill his place, but I do hope we will get a live, up-to-date, active, energetic president.”\textsuperscript{57} The thirty-one undergraduate students who crossed the platform on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 2 to the “strains of ‘College Days’

\textsuperscript{54} “Collegiana” \textit{The Gettysburgian}, 6, no. 30 (January 29, 1902): 364.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{The Gettysburgian}, 7, no.2 (March 26, 1902): 5.
\textsuperscript{56} Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated January 22, 1903.
\textsuperscript{57} Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated February 28, 1903.
from the orchestra would however not be directly effected by this change.

Eleven of the graduating were among the prep students in the original class of 1903, of whose total twenty-four members graduated with their class. The week was marked by a number of readings and speeches and the ceremonial passing on of the caps and gowns to the junior class that accompanied the college’s seventy-first Commencement. Thus passed the class of 1903 into the historical annals of Gettysburg College.

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58 “Exercises Of Seventy-First Commencement” The Gettysburgian, 8, no. 13 (June 3, 1903): 153.
The Pacific War in Asia is infamous for the sickening atrocities committed by the military forces of both the Allies and Japan. Proof of the carnage is undeniable and is often discussed in textbooks, history classes, and documentaries around the world. The forced recruitment of women to serve as sex slaves to the Japanese military is included on the long list of wartime tragedies, however it often remains on the periphery of discussions on wartime violence. The negligence is due in part to the half century of silence that followed the victimization of the women most often known as “ianfu,” “wianbu,” “Military sexual slaves,” “Japanese war rape victims,” or the less provocative “comfort women.”¹ Yet the inattention can also be attributed to the Japanese government’s repeated denial of culpability, be it from shame or simple economic greed. Despite Japan’s desire to hush up the stories of the military sexual slavery, recent women’s movements in Korea and the international community have spurred the outspokenness of the survivors. This paper will discuss the rationales used by the Japanese government for the establishment of the comfort system, its effects on women’s lives, and their reasons for decades long silence. Also examined are the women’s recent demands for justice and various governmental reactions in an effort to reveal the actions that necessitate emotional and mental healing, as well as prevention of future abuses against women.

The use of women for sex during wartime is not a novel concept. However, what made the phenomenon of the comfort women so appallingly unique was the level of
systemization by the Japanese government. The Japanese military set up comfort stations for the troops beginning around the time of the Manchurian invasion in the early 1930s and the stations remained a permanent fixture until the end of the Second World War.\(^2\)

The military established strict regulations for the comfort stations. The only patrons allowed were soldiers and civilian employees. Both the women and their patrons were obligated to observe rules regarding personal sanitation and other behavioral regulations, such as forbidding violence towards the women. The military also provided condoms (ironically called Assault No.1) for the men and regular pelvic exams for the women. Additionally, the military documents claimed troops paid the women a fee for their services.\(^3\)

However, oral accounts from surviving comfort women explained that rarely did the stations abide by these rules, further allowing for occurrences of gross neglect, abuse and exploitation towards the women by the Japanese military.

Most often, the military was responsible for the operation of such stations but occasionally a civilian was hired instead. Regardless of who administered the station the local military was solely responsible for the protection, transfer and provision of the female population.\(^4\)

Ustinia Dolgopol, in her opening statements as Co-Chief Prosecutor for the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal for the Trial of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery held in Tokyo in 2000, explained the accountability of the Japanese government and the military for the establishment of the comfort system by stating:

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establishment of facilities for sexual slavery were considered to be part of the war effort and that the Japanese government and military officials at the highest levels were involved either directly or indirectly in sanctioning, condoning or tolerating the system. Further, officials of the state of Japan were responsible for
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requests for recruitment of women, the authorization of travel for women to be taken to facilities of sexual slavery, and the organization of transport, including naval vessels.\footnote{“Breaking the History of Silence: The Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal for the Trial of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery,” prod. and dir. Video Juku, 68 min., Violence Against Women in the War-Network Japan, 2001, videocassette.}

Dolgopol based her statement on evidence provided from an inquiry made by the International Court of Justice that recovered documents from field officers in both the Japanese army and the navy requesting shipments of comfort women to their areas.\footnote{Sangmie Choi Schellstede, ed., \textit{Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military} (New York: Holms & Meier, 2000), 108.}

The Japanese military felt a need to establish the comfort system for a variety of reasons. The initial reason given by the government for the comfort system was to sustain the troops essential fighting spirit.\footnote{Howard, 14.} The Japanese troops held very superstitious beliefs regarding sex and war, claiming amongst other things that copulation before battle would protect them from injury. This belief led many troops to ritually visit comfort women before entering combat.\footnote{George L. Hicks, \textit{The Comfort Women: Japan’s Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War}, ( New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 32.} Secondly, it was deemed necessary in order to protect the troops against contracting venereal diseases from the local brothels. Instead, they were only allowed to frequent facilities established exclusively for their own use, which through the regular medical exams, and supply of chaste women from Korea, supposedly ensured the men’s virility and sexual health.\footnote{Ibid., 14.} Thirdly, the comfort stations were created in hopes of preventing the rape of local women by the troops that often resulted in anti-Japanese sentiment. Note the concern was not for the local population but rather for their ability to succeed in governing the conquered peoples.

Yet, all the reasons stated by the Japanese government for the establishment of the comfort system can be contested. While psychologically sexual activity can be construed
as an outlet for the tension created during war, it is not a necessity for the survival and success of humans in warfare. Additionally, the comfort system did not stem the tide of venereal diseases. In fact, it remained one of the major complications suffered by the surviving comfort women, as later accounts will prove. Lastly, strong evidence exists that directly conflicts with the credibility of the claim that comfort stations prevented the rape of local women by the military. For example, during the aforementioned Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal, two Japanese veterans were sworn in and questioned by prosecutors if they believed that the establishment of comfort stations prevented rape. Kaneko Yasuki was one of the two veterans questioned. He responded by saying, “No. Because we got charged there. But rape was free.” The prosecutor countered, “If you thought that way then did you ever rape anyone in the field?” Kaneko replied, “Yes. In 1943, when we attacked a village, one of us found a woman around 21 or 22. Six of us drew lots to decide who’d go first, and one by one we raped her. ‘Kill the women. They give birth. Babies grow up to resist us.’ The orders were completely different from what they said at home. We could die anytime. We were to kill them, so we might as well rape them first. And we did…” The prosecutor then turned to Suzuki Yoshio, the other remaining veteran and asked, “Did you see others rape in the field?” Suzuki responded, 

In the army, rape went along with fighting. It was almost an everyday affair. I once went on my own to find a woman. I found one about age 30, guarded by several old women. I chased the old women away but she hid herself. I finally found her hiding in a pigsty. In China, pigsties were used as toilets. She had covered herself in manure to keep me off. That somehow stirred up my lust. I dragged her out to a barn and raped her there.

Kaneko later added to his testimony, “The Army’s Criminal Code gave at least seven years in prison for rape. But we raped anyway because we despised the Chinese. We used to call them “Chinks” and other dirty names. ‘What’s wrong with raping Chinese? We
are killing them anyway’…we raped thinking like this.”

Historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki found the logic behind the theory that establishment of comfort stations would end rape questionable, for “the comfort system was a system of officially recognized sexual violence that victimized particular women and trampled upon their human rights. It is impossible to prevent rape on the one hand while officially sanctioning sexual violence on the other. There is no reason to imagine that there would be any relation between the comfort station system and a substantive solution to the problem of preventing rape.” Clearly, the reasons stated for establishment of the comfort stations were not legitimate for the stations did not ensure the troops would remain exclusive patrons, nor did it prevent the spread of diseases or widespread rape.

There remains little documented evidence as to the precise methods of recruitment used by the military since much of the evidence was destroyed at the end of the war. What knowledge there is of such techniques comes from oral accounts of surviving comfort women and the rare military man. The various processes of recruitment ranged from “recruitment by violence, including threats of violence and the misuse of power; false promises of employment; abduction; [and] human traffic.” From accounts of surviving former Korean comfort women, it seems that deceit was the most frequent method used in their area. Often the young girls from poor farming families were approached by local agents hired by the Japanese military, who enticed them with tales of good paying jobs in Japan. The girls would then go with the agent and were

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10 “Breaking the History of Silence”
13 Howard, 11.
14Ibid., 29.
relatively well treated while in transit to their comfort station. They remained ignorant of the true nature of their work until arrival whence they were “broken in” by rape at the hands of the Japanese troops.\textsuperscript{15}

While the rationalization for the establishment of comfort stations and the recruitment of comfort women is clearly stated, the reason for the predominance of Korean women as military sexual slaves is not as precise. Many historians claim racial prejudice and hatred as the determining factor in such a large recruiting drive on the Korean mainland. While racial hatred for Koreans and many other Asian peoples, by the Japanese is undeniable, other factors exist. Namely, the annexation of Korea in the 1910 created an atmosphere in which the Japanese felt they could harvest the resources of Korea at their leisure, whether it was iron ore and other raw materials or the nation’s larger resource of its peoples.\textsuperscript{16}

Another possible reason for the enthusiastic recruitment of Korean women for Japan’s military sex slaves involves an academic discussion of their inherent sexual nature. The first wave of women sent to the Chinese front in 1932 were experienced prostitutes from Japan often already afflicted with venereal diseases. Fearing incapacitation of the troops and an epidemic at home once the war was over, a different approach was quickly taken and the Japanese military turned to their colonies Korea and Taiwan. Korean women were thought of as more chaste then average resulting from their Confucian heritage that emphasized purity and frowned upon premarital sex. Therefore, Korean women were considered free of damaging sexually transmitted diseases. In 1939, a gynecologist name Dr. Aso Tetsuo serving at the Shanghai base hospital submitted a

\textsuperscript{15} Tanaka, 38.
report that is believed to be the impetus behind recruiting such a large force of Korean women for use in the comfort stations. In his report he included,

Among those from the [Korean] Peninsula, there was very little indication indeed of venereal disease, but those from the Homeland, although free of acute symptoms at present were all extremely dubious. In age, these were all past 20, some approaching 40, and had already spent a number of years in prostitution. Those from the Peninsula presented a pleasing contrast, being in the main younger and unsophisticated…care needs to be taken with the more jaded type of woman, whom I have repeatedly examined for syphilis and found clearly branded with a past history of venereal disease by the scars of bubo excisions on the groins. These are really dubious as gifts to the Imperial Forces.17

Aso’s report is not only a rationalization for the recruitment of Korean women over Japanese, but also of young virgins over older women.

While little documentation remains regarding the official recruitment methods, the military was precise in its documentation on the administration of the comfort stations.18 The description of conditions in which the surviving comfort women lived during the war differ slightly for each case, yet every account is strikingly unlike the official standard which ensured adequate clothing, food, health services, protection from infection and abuse. George Hicks described the official regulations of the comfort system as, “set[ting] out hours of opening, fee, and time allowed—two yen for thirty minutes—and procedural details such as the banning of intercourse without a condom which was issued at the time of payment…Army rations were supplied to the comfort women.”19 In spite of the official decrees, the women’s living conditions varied from constraint of personal freedoms to utter disregard for the basic human needs of food, water, and shelter depending on their location in the empire and at what stage in the war

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17 Hicks, The Comfort Women, 34.
18 Ibid, 83.
19 Hicks, “The ‘Comfort Women,’” 317.
they served.

Most women recall the provision of a small room along a corridor filled with other similar rooms. Each individual cubicle was approximately large enough for a few tatami mats. Their diet usually consisted of rice and few vegetables, but as the supply lines stretched food and other necessities became scarcer for the scorned comfort women. Medical examinations occurred anywhere from once a week to once every few months. If found to be infected with a sexually transmitted disease, the women were injected with a harsh chemical called “No. 606,” now believed by many survivors to be one of the causes for their sterility. Hwang Kumju recalled her experience at the comfort station,

The station was a makeshift building, and each main room was divided into five or six small cubicles by wooden planks. The entrance to each cubicle was draped with a blanket as a substitute for a door…The cubicle had a wooden floor covered with a blanket and was just big enough for one person to lie down, leaving sufficient room for another person to stand at the side…It was bitterly cold there with just a single blanket to cover us…The meals were mainly rice, soya bean soup and pickled radish. When we first arrived, we were given baggy trousers, a short jacket, military socks, a cap, black canvas shoes, a padded coat and padded trousers. Later we were given some kind of military training suit. Later still, the supply completely stopped, and we had to wear the clothes that had been discarded by soldiers. When we entered 1945, the supply shortage became so serious that we were not given any clothes anymore. The supply of vegetables also stopped, as did that of soy sauce and soya bean paste. We had to eat balls of rice cooked in salt water. That was it.\textsuperscript{20}

Short supplies of food and other necessities were not the only difficulties endured by the comfort women during their stay at the stations. Despite military injunctions against beating the women, many soldiers inflicted great physical harm when rebuffed. Additionally, the number of men the women serviced in a day far exceeded what a body could withstand. Historian Tanaka Yuki wrote, “Each comfort woman served several men—up to 10—on a normal day, but the number would sharply increase shortly before

\textsuperscript{20} Howard, 74.
and after each combat operation. On such days, each woman was forced to serve 30 to 40 men a day. The available time for each man was regulated to 30 minutes. However, in the busy periods each soldier was allowed only a few minutes."21 Many survivors recall lines of men forming at their door, causing them to remain on their back throughout the day and night. With these facts in mind, it is understandable why so many survivors claim they suffer severe physical pain and injury resulting from the repeated sexual violations which lasted from as little as three weeks to as long as eight grueling years.22

The nature of Japan’s system of military sexual slavery was such that at the war’s end the women who survived could not easily reassemble their lives. They suffered from significant emotional distress, physical ailments, and general incapacitation. They lived in a society in which “the shame of a woman was the shame of her whole family” and despite whatever atrocity caused the defilement, Korean women remained depraved, crippled by a past over which there was no control.23 However, the initial problem for comfort women after the defeat was their inability to return home. In many cases Japanese troops simply left their posts and abandoned the comfort women hundreds of miles away from Korea, often without money or any other means of transportation. One example is Pak Ok-Nyon who served as a comfort woman in Rabaul, New Guinea for nearly three years.

After a week of sailing, our ship was torpedoed in the morning. It was hit in the midsection and broke apart into two parts after the explosion. We were all thrown into the water. After the ship sank, I was left with another girl. We tried to go to the men calling us but just could not move. Fortunately we found a piece of wood drifting nearby and hung onto it throughout the night. That piece of wood saved our lives. The next morning a boat rescued us…. We saw many wounded people. I was injured too, but somehow the wounded open area did not bleed. The boat

21 Tanaka, 52.
23 Ibid., vi.
sailed back to Rabaul…. After landing I found out our group of 50 girls was reduced to 15. In spite of the dangers of the air raids and torpedoes, I still wanted to return to Korea. Air raids got worse in Rabaul… I was able to board another ship, but this time the ship sailed only one day before it was bombed and sank… Our group of 15 girls was further reduced to only four. After a while, we sailed again. This time we made it to Shimonoseki, Japan.  

Amazingly, Pak Ok-Nyon eventually made it to her home in Muju, Korea. While her story of homecoming is one of the most sensational, it is still an excellent example of the dangers these women had to endure, and the lengths they would go to put their lives back together. 

Many of those who did manage to return home faced the stark reality that the vestiges of their old life no longer existed. Their families had either perished or moved on during their absence. Women who did find relatives confronted the equally arduous task of fielding questions regarding their activities. Kim Bun-sun recalls her life at the end of the war, “When I got home, my father was deceased, and my mother was having a hard time alone with small children. For four years she had no idea of my whereabouts; she assumed I was dead. She was very surprised and happy to have me back home. Occasionally, she asked me about those four years I was away. I vaguely told her that the Japanese authorities sent me to Japan where I worked for four years. I could not tell her the truth and details.” Other survivors were so ashamed of their past they completely avoided placing themselves in a position to answer their relatives’ painful questions by simply not returning home. One such woman was Mrs. K * who explained, “I was glad to have survived, but very ashamed and angry about my past life. I decided not to go back to

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24 Schellstede, 84-85.
25 Ibid., 23.
* Pseudonym
my home because of the shame and potential harm to my family.”

Also upon return to their native land, the families of the survivors frequently urged them to marry. Many former comfort women found the prospect of marriage and the implicit sexual acts of such a relationship fantastically daunting after the sexual trauma they experienced on a routine basis during the war. Kang Duk-kyung expressed the sentiments of many survivors when she said, “Over the years, I had several marriage proposals. But I did not have enough strength to overcome my low self-esteem, guilt and past nightmares to get married and raise a family.”

Kim Sang-hi was a comfort woman stationed in Singapore from 1943 until the end of the war. She too was confronted by her family with the frightening prospect of marriage upon her return from the front. She recalled the experiences, “My family didn’t ask me about my past; they must have just guessed. I was 24 years old, still a marriageable age. So my parents tried to arrange my marriage, and this was the most painful thing. How could I get married? I had been raped and raped, and my body had been used over and over. My heart was ripped and torn so many times.”

The residue of their experiences as military sexual slaves remained long after the immediate years following the war. The comfort women who survived the atrocities of war retained permanent scars on their psyches and physical bodies. One of the long-term effects of the wartime sexual abuse is the women’s considerable health problems. These problems range from low self-esteem and self-worth, as noted in previous accounts, to disabilities incurred as a result of systematic physical abuse, as well as the debilitating effects of syphilis and other venereal diseases contracted through serial copulation.

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26 Ibid., 104.
27 Ibid., 19.
28 Ibid., 35.
The hatred the Japanese troops exhibited for Chinese and Korean peoples is undeniable. Korean comfort women were not spared the wrath of racial hatred while in the comfort stations. Moon Pil-gri was one of the many Korean comfort women to experience the physical ramifications of Japanese racial hatred. She recalled,

…The day, after receiving so many soldiers, my vagina was swollen and painful. So I tried not to receive any more soldiers that day. A soldier who was turned away became so angry he ran to a ‘pechika,’ a Russian coal burning stove, scooped up burning coal and threw it at me. It hit me and burned my back. It took three months to heal. You could still see the scar there. I learned later that he was not properly punished for the offense, which was not a surprise because they did not regard us as equal human beings. One soldier told me he was surprised by my resilience. He didn’t think I would recover from my burns. He also said that our Korean race should be eradicated from the earth. 29

Many received beatings before, during, or after sex, while others were beaten for their attempts to flee the nightmare of their situation. Many were left permanently disfigured or disabled. Mrs. K recollected her attempts at escape, “Whenever we were moved, we were guarded by military policemen and kept under constant watch. I tried to escape several times, but I was caught each time by the soldiers and severely beaten by the supervisors. On one occasion, I jumped off a truck and tried to run away in the dark. But they caught me and my supervisor beat me savagely all over my body and then cut off my three left fingers with a knife.” 30 Survivors Yi Bok-nyo and Kim Dae-il have suffered all their lives from injuries sustained from Japanese troops while at the “comfort station.” Yi Bok-nyo described how her injury was inflicted, “I could not bear this sight [of soldiers stabbing the women with their swords] and started to flee the scene. They caught me and seared my buttocks with a heated gong-shaped metal piece. This crippled me for life, and the burned flesh still remains very unsightly. To this day, I cannot walk

29Ibid., 66.
30Ibid., 104.
alone without leaning on someone.” Kim Dae-il was also crippled resulting from physical abuse at the hands of the Japanese she was forced to service as a “comfort woman.” She recalled the experience, “One time another drunken soldier came in and continued drinking in my cubicle. He then stabbed the lower part of my body and shouted, ‘Hey, this *senjing* (a dirty Korean) is dying.’ He then screamed, ‘*Kono yaro!*’ (Damn you!) and stabbed a few more times on my lower abdomen. I became crippled for life from these wounds.”

Permanent injuries were not the only debilitating and embarrassing scars the survivors of the “comfort station” system incurred. Many contracted sexually transmitted diseases resulting from their frequent and forced copulation. Pak Kyung-soon* was a “comfort woman” who contracted syphilis soon after arriving in Hiroshima, Japan. Since her condition went untreated for a long period, she will carry the disease for the rest of her life. Upon her return home,

My parents figured out the best thing for me to do was to get married…so they quickly searched and found an eligible man for me. He was twelve years older than I was. We were married without delay and started our new life in a rented room… A few days later he found out he was infected with syphilis from me. After five months’ treatment at Dr. Huh’s Clinic we made some improvement. Those days I could smell the odor of my weekly injection of ‘# 606,’ arsenic treatment for syphilis…After a year of marriage my husband literally kicked me out, and I moved back into my parents’ house…For the last thirty years, I have been treated at a psychiatric hospital for mental disorder caused by this syphilis… All these years I was too ashamed of my past, and I could not reveal it even to my doctors.  

Venereal disease spread like wildfire in the comfort stations. If women did not contract syphilis, it was gonorrhea or some other sexually transmitted disease. Clearly, based on

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31 Ibid., 92.
32 Ibid., 26-27.
* Pseudonym
33 Schellstede, 77-79.
these accounts, the argument made by the Japanese government and even contemporary historians that the establishment of comfort stations controlled the problem of venereal diseases, and protected the health of troops in wartime is incontestably false.\textsuperscript{34}

The mental and physical effects of the sexual victimization they met as comfort women prevented great numbers of these women from forming lasting relationships with men, bearing children, or even the ability to secure for themselves comfortable living circumstances in their waning years. For many survivors, like Yi Yong-nyo and Kang Duk-kyung, entertaining the idea of marriage was impossible due to systematic and repeated sexual violence inflicted upon their persons during the war. Yi Yong-nyo was a comfort woman for three years in Rangoon, Burma. Regarding her marital status she said, “I never married. I have no children. All these years I have earned my living, working as a maid in others’ homes or in restaurants. I sorely miss the ordinary life that most women enjoy: getting married and having a family. The Japanese took that away from me.”\textsuperscript{35} Kang Duk-kyung paralleled her sentiment when she stated, “I am now 65 years old. As I think back on my past nightmares working as a ‘comfort woman,’ I want to believe that it was just a terrible dream. And if it were not a dream, I would like to think of it as my fate, over which I had no control. But then, I often say to myself, ‘but I had every right to have gotten married and lived a happy life!’”\textsuperscript{36}

Unlike Kang Duk-kyung and Yi Yong-nyo, some former comfort women attempted to establish relations with men despite their unforgettable past. Often, these women suffered from such low self-esteem that they entered into unequal relationships with men as their concubines or mistresses. Kim Soon-duk met a man, had an illegitimate

\textsuperscript{34} George Hicks, “The ‘Comfort Women,’” 310.  
\textsuperscript{35} Schellstede, 97  
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 19.
child by him but never married. She commented on the frequency of former comfort women entering into similar relationships, “I know of no women with the same background as mine who ever legally married.”37 Yet, some survivors did attempt to normalize their lives by marrying. However, they soon found they could not easily wipe away their memories of the comfort station. Kim Yoon-shim was one of the few survivors who attempted to legitimately marry. Still, her past continued to haunt her and her marriage was very unhappy.38 While Jan Ruff O’Herne, a former comfort woman from the former Dutch Colony of Indonesia, married, she could not forget the sexual abuse inflicted upon her body during the war. She vividly described the difficulty many comfort women encountered with marriage during the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo, in 2000. “One thing that we could never enjoy as a woman, was the pleasure of sexual intercourse with our husbands because you are reminded all the time of all the hundreds of times you were forcibly raped by Japanese. That always comes into your mind.”39

While unfathomably great, these emotional, physical, and mental distresses caused by the forced sexual acts were not the only severe ramifications of the comfort system for the surviving women. Most survivors were barren because of the constant sexual abuse inflicted upon them during their time as a comfort woman. Hwang Keum-ju, who spent four years as a comfort woman stated, “I cannot begin to describe the pain and hardship I went through afterwards. The Japanese gave me diseases, and I bled so much that I lost my uterus. It’s been over 35 years now, and I am alive only because of

37 Ibid., 41.
38 Ibid., 47.
39 “Breaking the History of Silence”
penicillin.”  

Similarly, Mrs. K had to undergo a hysterectomy resulting from the ravages Japanese troops wreaked upon her body.

In a society in which tradition mitigated that children became the primary care givers for their parents in their waning years, the inability to bear children was enormously debilitating for the surviving comfort women. Jin Kyung-paeng was a comfort woman for five years during the war. Of her life afterwards she said, “Today I have constant pain all over my body and frequent dizziness, but I cannot even afford over-the-counter drugs. My monthly income is 45,000 won or about $55, from the Korean Government. I have no possessions, relatives, or offspring. I am alone.” Many former comfort women found themselves in similar circumstances. Kim Sang-hi shared her related story;

I was born into a good family and was raised properly. I never went outside the house much until I was so suddenly abducted that evening. Now, no family, no children, I am only growing old. Whenever I see an old lady of about my age walking hand in hand with her grandchild, my heart wrenches. I became a Catholic, but I still cannot find solace in religion. I should forget and forgive but I cannot. I try and try, but I cannot let go of it. When I wake up every morning, my head subconsciously turns east toward Japan, and I curse her. I cannot help it.

Kuhma Lim tells another sad tale of a life stunted by her exposure to the Japanese system of sexual slavery during the Pacific War, “…I live [d] by myself in a small squalid room with space only for one person to lie down in. You could call the room a cave for an animal rather than a shelter for a human being. I wish I could have a cozy house so that I could sleep comfortably.” Kuhma Lim died alone from cardiac failure in her home on
March 12, 1994, one year after she told her story.\textsuperscript{45}

The survivors of Japan’s system of military sexual slavery are increasingly dying out. Unlike Kuhma Lim and the other women quoted above, many have not dared to speak the truth of their past. Even more are ending their lives lonely, sick, and unfulfilled with words of apology and regret from the Japanese government. Try as they may, these women could not piece together their lives at the conclusion of the Pacific War for a myriad of reasons. Kuhma Lim expressed this trend best when she said, “My life can never return to the time before I was taken by the Japanese to the comfort station, at the age of 17, and my wounds cannot be healed.” \textsuperscript{46} The systematized sexual slavery numerous Korean women were subjected to during the Pacific War left them incapable of carrying on their lives on numerous levels, physically, emotionally, mentally and economically. There is no way to make up for these cavernous losses, but the Japanese government can attempt to assuage these wounds and prevent further occurrences through acceptance of legal and moral responsibility, admission of wrongdoing, and education of future generations.

One of the reasons the issue of comfort women barely figures on the political radar of Japan and many other nations is due to the fifty years of silence that immediately followed the victimization. It is important to understand what perpetuated the silence, and then, what prompted these women to speak out about their past. The prolonged silence can mostly be attributed to the structure of Korean society. Confucianism was the basis for much of Korean societal beliefs, one of the most important being the emphasis on

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 226.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 230.
female chastity. A woman’s sexuality was strictly controlled in Korea; a young woman had to remain chaste until marriage, and if her husband should perish, she then was required to remain faithful to his memory for the rest of her existence. The emphasis on preservation of female chastity was also one of the reasons why so many young Korean girls were drafted into forced sexual service for the Japanese army who feared contraction of venereal diseases from more mature sexual women. However, the most significant result of the constricted view of women’s sexuality in Korea was that regardless of how the loss of innocence occurred, a woman who lost her virginity before marriage was forever considered damaged goods, to be shunned and disrespected by their loved ones as well as general society. The victims who returned to their homes and revealed their stories were ostracized for their degradation. Therefore, many women chose instead to swallow their pain, and live a lie in an attempt to remain a member of average society. Madam X was one such woman. She tells what it was like living in silence,

When I was sleeping with my husband, I often had nightmares and he would ask, ‘what’s wrong? What’s wrong?’ I could never tell him the cause of my nightmares…for nearly fifty years I have lived with my terrible secret. Even though what happened to me was no fault of my own, I dread to think what people would say. It’s awful not to be able to talk to anyone. Not even my own husband or children. Sometimes I am deeply depressed and have a long face. No one knows why.

The same patriarchal society placed an equal emphasis on the birthing of heirs, an act many survivors could not perform for various reasons, either because of internal

49 Ibid., 1229.
* Pseudonym
50 Hicks, The Comfort Women, 166.
scarring or because of the mental anguish of sexual interaction. These women could not reveal the source of their infertility, and therefore suffered the doubled scorn of their relatives. Li Tianying, a Korean comfort woman from 1939-1944, experienced a similar situation. In 1944, Li escaped from the brothel to work as a communist nurse in China. There she met her first husband, a soldier in the communist army. They soon returned to his family’s home. “Though no one in the village knew about Li’s past, or that she was even Korean, her inability to bear children because of her scars brought on her the disdain of her husband’s family…. Li was divorced in 1955.” Li was later thrown into a rehabilitation center because of her despoiled past and there she met and married another inmate. He too eventually shunned her for her sterility and later left Li. Consequently, she lived the rest of her life alone, without close family or friends.  

Only recently with the shifting of societal beliefs in Korea have the comfort women come to be viewed as victims of abhorrent violence. Much of this changing atmosphere can be attributed to a rise of feminist women’s movements within South Korea. Historian David Andrew Schmidt attested that “in 1988, a coterie of South Korean women’s organization’s first demanded a formal investigation into the ianfu station with a collection of more than two hundred signatures.” The atmosphere of female empowerment enabled a group of three former comfort women along with thirty-five other Koreans in 1991 to formally file a class-action suit against the Japanese government for their sufferings as comfort women serving the Japanese military. One of these women testified under her own name, Kim Hak-sun. She declared her reasoning, “I

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52 Schmidt, 21.
wanted to sue for the fact that I was trampled upon by the Japanese Military and have spent my life in misery. I want the young people of South Korea and Japan to know what Japan did in the past."  

Her brave action encouraged many other comfort women to come forward with their stories and seek redress from the Japanese government.

One of the largest groups behind the efforts to satisfy the comfort women needs for apology and acceptance of responsibility by the Japanese government within Korea is the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery (also known as Han’guk Chongsindaemunje Taech’aek Hyopuihoe, or “Korean Council”). The Korean Council has formulated a clear outline for the goals of the comfort women’s efforts for redress. They are as follows,

To reveal the full details of the war crime of military sexual slavery,
To acknowledge the war crime of military sexual slavery by Japan,
To apologize formally for the crime,
To pay reparations to the victims and their bereaved families,
To erect a memorial tablet,
To record the crime in school textbooks and teach Japanese students about it,
To punish the perpetrators.

Many Japanese citizens feel these women are acting out of greed in seeking to rectify their past. However most survivors and activists state their search is for emotional rather than fiscal gain. They believe that only after the perpetrators are punished, and Japan accepts its responsibility in perpetrating such atrocities and apologizes for their actions will their wounds ever truly heal. A Serbian psychologist at the December 2000 Tribunal for the Trial of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery, in Tokyo, Japan testified that prosecution of one’s aggressor helps the victim progress in the healing process. Since

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54 Yoshiaki, 33.
56 Ahn, 232.
these women have not spoken out about their past for fifty years likewise, the perpetrator of their crime has not been brought to justice, therefore little therapeutic progress has been made. Wretchedly, many continue to live with the same level of grief they had after the initial violation, five decades later. Yet, revealing their past was one step to assuaging their pain, for as Choi Chungmoo writes, “Silence impregnates violence. It prevents war survivors from healing, and instead leaves their individual wounds and the collective nation wound open and bleeding.”

Former comfort woman Kuhma Lim also felt great relief after speaking about her past, saying to Yohson Ahn, “If I were to write my painful story it would become several books. This is the first time I have said something about my past to others. Now it feels therapeutic. To say something about my past is one thing but not to say anything at all, to keep it secret, is even more painful.” The activists feel the redress of the comfort women by the Japanese government would fulfill many roles, not only helping the women be at peace with their past, but also educating Japan and the world that while sexual victimization often goes hand in hand with war, it is not acceptable and they must do all they can to prevent similar atrocities from ever happening again.

Yet, impending legal suits and external pressure from interest groups advocating on behalf of the surviving comfort women, was not enough to force Japan to address the issue. The event that necessitated a response from the Japanese government was the publication of materials in the Asahi Simbun, one of the country’s top newspapers, in 1992 by historian Yoshiaki Yoshimi, which proved beyond a doubt that “the imperial

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58 Ahn 230-231.
army was involved in both establishing and operating the comfort stations.” In the face of such blatant documentation, the government had no other recourse but to acknowledge involvement in the establishment of the wartime comfort women system. However, for the Japanese government, acknowledgement was not as simple as saying “Yes, we did it, and we’re sorry.”

The government draws a distinct difference between accepting moral responsibility and legal responsibility for the actions towards comfort women. Morally it understood that what happened to the women at the behest of the Japanese government was wrong and should never again recur. The government did issue an official apology stating it, “sincerely apologizes and [expresses its] remorse to all those, irrespective of place of origin, who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physiological wounds,” and expressed a “firm determination never to repeat the same mistake and that they would engrave such issues through the study and teaching of history.”

To help assuage the wounds of the victims, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi and Prime Minister Murayama developed a private fund, known as the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF) to provide monetary compensation for the survivors. Sarah C. Soh writes that the government created the AWF fund, “to express ‘a sense of national atonement from the Japanese people to the former ‘comfort women,’ and to work to address contemporary issues regarding the honor and dignity of women.” However, the Korean Council and others from within Japan feel the establishment of AWF was a diversionary tactic on the part of the Japanese government to avoid accepting legal responsibility. Many Korean victims refuse to accept the provisions of the fund based on

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60 Ibid., 2.
61 Schellstede, 127.
this belief.

The AWF has four areas of concern. They are:

1) To deliver two million yen (around $18,000 US depending on the exchange rate used) to each survivor-applicant as “atonement money” raised from the Japanese people, accompanied by letters of apology from the Prime Minister and the AWF President;
2) To implement government programs for the survivors’ welfare;
3) to compile materials on the comfort women for the historical record;
4) to initiate and support activities that address contemporary issues of violence against women.

It has been argued that the AWF is not wholly private, for the Japanese government oversees the administration of the fund. However, the government continually reiterates that the fund was created out of moral obligation and receives its funds from thoughtful citizens. The special rapporteur on violence against women for the United Nations, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, commended the nation of Japan for the establishment of the fund but chided the government for its continued negligence of legal responsibility for the “comfort women’ under public international law.”

While the state of Japan could no longer deny it had a hand in the administration of the comfort system after Yoshiaki Yoshimi’s expose in 1992, it remained adamant that it bears no legal responsibility for those actions. The government has several different tactics to avoid legal liability. Firstly, they deny that any of the latest updates to international law are retroactive and therefore do not apply to their involvement with comfort women during the Pacific War. Secondly, Japan denies the women were “slaves” and therefore this cannot be prosecuted under international law prohibiting the trading of slaves. Thirdly, they contend that acts of rape during war were not found illegal by either

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63 Ibid., 3.
64 Ibid., 3.
65 Schellstedt, 129.
the Hague Convention No. 1V from 1907 or any of the international laws Japan was under during the time of the Pacific War. Lastly, since Korea was an occupied state of Japan during the War, the Japanese government cannot be sued for crimes against the indigenous peoples of a belligerent state for technically Koreans were Japanese citizens.67 The government of Japan also refuses to consider the individual reparation of comfort women, stating, “That any individual claims that these women may have had for compensation were fully satisfied by peace treaties and international agreements between Japan and other Asian States following the end of the Second World War.”68

The reaction against the Japanese for their refusal to accept legal responsibility is great. The United Nations is particularly heated in their castigation of the state of Japan, because they find little credence in the arguments the Japanese use for defense. One of the numerous arguments the Japanese government makes in its denial of legal responsibility for the suffering of comfort women is the women were “volunteers” and in no way coerced, enslaved, or drafted into service. Therefore, the government claims the comfort system was not an illegal process through international law. However, Keith Howard, editor of True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women, states, “as defined by an international regulation contemporary to the time, taking anybody through deceit, violence, threat, misuse of power or any other coercive means constituted an act of forced drafting. The methods used against the women…consequently constitute coercive recruitment.”69

The Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, held at the conclusion of World War II, also shared a similar view of the Japan’s forced labor corps, this included wartime factory

67 Schellstede, 137.
68 Ibid., 137.
laborers as well as comfort women. Despite the common perception of the Tribunal as a kangaroo court held by the victors of war, the point of the decision remains valid. The Tribunal affirmed;

This recruitment of labourers was accomplished by false promises, and by force. After being recruited, the labourers were transported to and confined in camps. Little or no distinction appears to have been made between these conscripted labourers on the one hand, and the prisoners of war and civilian internees on the other hand. They were all regarded as slave labourers to be used to the limit of their endurance.  

In light of Howard’s declaration and the Tribunal’s verdict, it seems virtually impossible for the Japanese government to continue to proclaim its innocence and deny responsibility for the atrocities of the comfort system which the government condoned and encouraged. And yet the Japanese government still does.

For every aspect of the Japanese government’s defense, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights can find intricate legal inaccuracies and subsequently finds the Japanese government to be legally responsible for the egregious crimes committed against the comfort women during the Pacific War. Nevertheless, because the acceptance of legal responsibility seems to be linked with individual fiscal compensation, the government is unwavering in its refusal to pay. The reparation of comfort women would set a troublesome precedent for Japan, who is quite rightly afraid that such action will cause a domino effect of other war crime victims suing the government for economic redress, plunging Japan’s economy even further into the grips of its current recession.

Additionally, the reluctance of much of the Japanese citizenry to believe in, let alone empathize with, the surviving comfort women remains a large roadblock to any attempts to remedy their grievances. Kazuko Watanabe reported, “According to research,

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69 Howard 18.
more than half of Japanese women do not believe the stories of the comfort women.” 72

As previously stated, many Japanese feel the comfort women are only suing out of greed rather than any psychological need, while others feel that no one should obtain prizes for the pain they suffered during the war for everyone, they feel, suffered equally. 73

In contrast to the brave acts of the comfort women, who despite social mores and years of silence have spoken out against their aggressors and revealed their history of pain, the government of Japan is acting with grand weakness. Ustinia Dogopol, acting as Co-Chief Prosecutor for the Tribunal for the Trial of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery declared in her closing statement on December 12, 2000, “[we] must feel humbled by the demonstration of bravery and commitment that the survivors of military sexual slavery have displayed. The cowardice of the Japanese government stands in stark contrast to the courage of the women. The government of Japan has not had the strength of will to admit honestly and openly the extent of the atrocities committed by the previous government.” 74 Clearly, the government of Japan has no legitimacy to continue its avoidance of accepting legal responsibility for the crimes committed against the comfort women and must move to amend the situation for the surviving women.

No justifications exist for the systematic enslavement of women for sexual gratification during the Pacific War by the Japanese government. No matter how the situation is spun, the moral depravity that allowed such behavior is inexcusable. The atrocities of the “comfort stations” affected not only the survivors’ ability to marry and have children, but also their capacity to secure for themselves comfortable living

70 Dolgopol, 27.
72 Watanabe, 24
74 “Breaking the History of Silence.”
circumstances in their waning years. Military sexual slavery tore apart these women’s lives in addition to their bodies, minds, and souls. They were practically rendered helpless. Something must be done to assuage the open and festering wounds of the victimization of thousands of innocent women at the hands of the Japanese military. It appears doubtful the Government Japan will ever fully compensate the victims and their families, for it believes it has too much to lose in light of the possibility of other war crime victims coming forward to press their case in the same vein.

Regardless of financial obligation, the government of Japan owes an apology not only to the survivors and to the memory of the departed comfort women, but to all women in the world who have been violated as an act of war. For the government of Japan to continue to deny their responsibility for the damaged lives of these women sends a subtle message to other governments that such behavior is allowable (for over fifty years later no perpetrator has formally been brought to justice in either Korea or Japan), if not tacitly condonable. The international community must continue to put pressure on the Japanese government to fully admit its responsibility in the creation and administration of the comfort system, to memorialize the departed and surviving comfort women, and most importantly to educate any and all that such revolting behavior is intolerable.
Is man inherently good or evil? Nineteenth century Romantics, inspired by the doctrine of Jean Jacques Rousseau, hypothesized that man is a product of his or her environment. Middle class society imputed the mother as the gateway by which a child learns to become a model human being. This theory held that mothers nurture their offspring naturally. Children learn proper morals and social conduct based upon a female-inspired education. Without this domestic influence on their lives, children fall into the trap of an “eye for an eye” ideology. The monster that Mary Shelley conceives in *Frankenstein* defies the domestic conception of a maternally guided household. The piece serves as a didactic tool; Shelley, in representing the Romantic Movement, warns nineteenth century society about the dangers of a maternally void world, a world that contradicted the Romantic conception of proper maternal guidance in both the home and in society.

A Romantic of the nineteenth century believed that a father, a mother, and their children comprised the model family. The home was not merely a place, but rather “a sense of stability” that signified an intact marriage within a nuclear family.¹ Nature prescribed distinct gender roles for both men and women. Males were the breadwinners of the family, while women managed the domestic sphere, overseeing the physical and moral development of the children. Romantics subscribed to this segregation of gender roles because nature intended families to function in this manner. Mothers, in particular,
possessed the innate ability to provide both physical and spiritual nourishment to their offspring. “For motherliness was boundless,” feminist Ellen Key wrote, as “its very nature was to give, to sacrifice, to cherish, to be tender, even as it is the nature of the sun to warm, and of the sea to surge.” In this domestic sphere, the Romantics feared an imbalance of parental influences, especially the absence of the mother altogether; for, a mother not only brings the child into the world, but develops his or her character as well.

Dr. Frankenstein’s monster, to the abhorrence of the Romantics, lives according to a masculine conception of the world. He represents all that is primitive about man in the raw state of nature. Uncontrolled emotions and the absence of a moral code move him to act impulsively without sympathy. Percy Shelley, commenting on the texture of his wife’s masterpiece, wrote:

The direct moral of the book consists; and it is perhaps the most important, and of the most universal application, of any moral that can be enforced by example. Treat a person ill, and he will become wicked.

Ironically, however, the monster is not totally culpable for his behavior. His underdevelopment as an individual stems, in part, from a breach with nature, as the monster is not naturally born, but rather artificially created. By manipulating nature, as Ellen Moers argues, “He [Frankenstein] defies mortality not by living forever, but by giving birth.” In effect, Frankenstein besmirches not only a natural process, but also the

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3 Stemming from the work of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, the state of nature refers to the tendency of man to either good or evil in his natural state.
creed of the Romantics, which glorified the beauty of the individual in harmony with nature.

After observing what he crafted with his own hands, Frankenstein, instead of praising his creation, labels it a *devil*. The distraught creator relates, “I remained . . . catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.” Nineteenth century society perceived the birth of a child as a miracle, since both the biological and emotional connections between the mother and child extended from pregnancy to birth. Conversely, Frankenstein rejects his own hideous creation. Romantics would have affirmed that, even if Victor Frankenstein actively raised and educated his creation, the monster would have lacked the morality inculcated by a feminine touch. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton vouched in *The Woman’s Bible*: “The angel who whispers into our [female] ears is knowledge, foresight, high motive, ideality, unselfish love. A conscious attitude towards the ideal still unattained, a lofty standard of virtue for the coming offspring . . .” Stanton’s conviction corresponds to the Romantic thesis of gender roles. In other words, the *mother* is the only figure who is so strongly attached to her child that she, without reservation, sacrifices herself in order to raise her offspring as nature intends.

Is it possible, therefore, for a child to develop morally without the feminine influence? Romantics would concur: no. Since nature created a division of labor, so to speak, encompassed within specific gender roles for men and women, the mother’s role was integral to the well being of the child. “The man’s work is to *kindle* the fire on the hearth, the woman’s is to *maintain* it,” Ellen Key penned; “it is man’s to *defend* the lives

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of those belonging to him; woman’s to care for them. This is the division of labour by which the race has reached its present stage.”8 According to the Romantic ideology, male labor creates the capacity to live in the physical home, as well as the material goods required to survive. Competition permeates the male world; without a mother’s influence, people would live by the Darwinian notion of “survival of the fittest.” The mother, on the contrary, is the moral arbiter of the family. She provides stability to the home not economically, but rather domestically, as she loves her family unconditionally.

The Romantics, moreover, recognized the purport of companionship, the glue that held the domestic world together. Companionship bound the husband to the wife, as well as the child to his mother. Frankenstein, however, provides a variant model, in which the kinship ties associated with maternal domesticity fail. Continuously, the monster experiences rejection, causing a series of reactions that affect not only him, but tragically, others as well.

Since he never had a mother, the monster searches for kinship ties, but others repeatedly turn him away. As a result, he seeks the beauty of companionship in a primitive fashion because he does not know how otherwise. He reveals, in a conversation with Frankenstein:

I began to observe, with greater accuracy, the forms that surrounded me, and to perceive the boundaries of the radiant roof of light which canopied me. Sometimes I wished to express my sensations in my own mode, but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again.9

Because the monster lacks the maternal guidance so integral for emotional development, he finds it tough to express himself. He wants to enjoy the beauty of his surroundings.

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8 Key, 173.
9 Shelley, 69.
yet has not been instructed on how to do so. In addition, he is incapable of controlling any emotion that emanates from his soul.

The mother’s absence compels the monster to revolt against nature; namely, by manufacturing personal kinship ties. Romantics despised this type of lifestyle because it undermined nature’s intentions. For instance, the monster seeks an education based upon uncultured, primitive conceptions of the world. Along with his perusal of literature, the monster observes, at length, the life of a domestic family, including the sincere love that each member holds for one another. At first, the monster indulges in sentimental literature that addresses many of the issues with which he struggles. “Who was I?” the monster wonders, “What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination? These questions continually recurred, but I was unable to solve them.” The monster ponders a number of identity issues, yet at this juncture, he lacks the context necessary to comprehend them. Rather, he “sympathized with” the characters about which he read.\(^\text{10}\)

By reading Milton’s \textit{Paradise Lost}, however, the monster realizes his abnormality. More importantly, he concludes that he is alone. The distressed monster relates:

\begin{quote}
But \textit{Paradise Lost} excited different and far deeper emotions. . . . Like Adam, I was created apparently united by no link to any other being in existence. . . . But I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition.\(^\text{11}\)
\end{quote}

According to the Romantics, the mother, by nourishing the domestic environment, instructs her children on appropriate, moral behavior by setting examples. Thus, when the child becomes cognizant of his or her own decision-making powers, he or she is able to and \textit{desires} to think and act independently, based on a code of ethical conduct. During

\(^{10}\) Quotations drawn from Ibid., 86.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 87.
this same phase of life, however, the monster discerns his true nature: “wretched, helpless, and alone.” Just as the domesticated child learns of his or her own worth from a loving mother in the sheltered, warm environment of the home, Frankenstein’s monster learns as well, but out in the barbarous wilderness.

Paradise Lost incites a deep emotional conflict within the monster, in that he doubts his worth altogether. More importantly, though, the scientific journal written by Frankenstein convinces the monster of his utter nothingness. Literary critic Mary Poovey concludes, “When the creature discovers its true origin—not in the social texts it learns to read—but in its maker’s notebooks it can no longer deny the absolute ‘horror’ of its being. . . .”\(^{12}\) Just as God rejected the fallen angel of Satan, Frankenstein scorns his own creation, yet even before the monster has the opportunity to develop. Frankenstein’s diary confirms his creation’s worthlessness; the monster has been abandoned and has nothing for which to live, except the possibility of a manufactured, unfulfilling companionship.

“In every strong maternal feeling,” as Key asserted, “there is also a strong sensuous feeling of pleasure—a pleasure which thrills the mother with blissful emotion when she puts the child to her breast.”\(^{13}\) Romantics identified the mother as the bastion of sentimentality in the family. The behavior of Frankenstein’s creature, on the contrary, lacks sentimentality because it lives without companionship. Consequently, the monster behaves according to rational instincts. Romantics feared a society, however, in which the use of pure reason sparks decision-making. For, if people behave according to rational thought exclusively, the “eye for an eye” philosophy controls the world.

However, as a result of a tight-knit family experience, cultivated by the mother, Romantics trusted in man’s ability to transcend the uncivilized state of nature. The monster, even without a semblance of maternal guidance, realizes that companionship fosters happiness. He orders Dr. Frankenstein to create an “Eve,” so to speak, a companion that would alleviate the monster’s evil nature: “Remember, that I am thy creature. . . . I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous.”

In order to facilitate his personal happiness and ethical behavior, the monster understands that he needs a companion. However, his creator proves unwilling to comply; thus, the monster sinks into the abyss of evil.

Shortly thereafter, the monster murders Frankenstein’s fiancée, exacting revenge at a terrible cost. Up to this point, the creature constrains his emotional fluctuations. However, when both his creator and other human beings reject him, then why even attempt to live morally? Percy Shelley provides a unique commentary: “The great secret of morals is Love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own.”

In other words, a romanticized concept of the world entails a recognition that every being possesses worth and beauty. Love inspires people to act morally. If people could not love their neighbors, the world would lack civilized societies. The dissolute individual, whom the monster represents, would steal, kill, and lie to fulfill his or her worldly desires.

According to the tenets of romanticized domesticity, mothers boast the capacity to defeat wanton conduct in the world. Moreover, they have a societal duty to raise young men and women to become model, patriotic citizens. The Romantics championed the

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13 Key, 173.
14 Shelley, 66.
ideals of the French Revolution, in general, yet they believed that every individual has a value to the state. Thus, with the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars that preceded the invention of *Frankenstein*, mothers became “pillars of the new national state.” Families flourished along with a new patriotic duty to the state. The hideous monster of *Frankenstein* connotes the failures of this domestic lifestyle that the Romantics, including Mary Shelley, held so dear. “Motherliness,” according to Ellen Key, “must be cultivated by the acquisition of the principles of heredity, of race-hygiene, child-hygiene, child-psychology. Motherliness must revolt against giving the race too few, too many, or degenerate children.” A successful mother, according to this school of thought, stabilizes society by providing a moral, *guided* education to her offspring.

Within this hierarchical family structure, furthermore, children have a duty to obey their mothers. In a larger sense, this obedience prepares them for their lives as responsible citizens. Again, *Frankenstein* warns nineteenth century European society about the dangers of a motherless world. In demanding a companion, the monster asserts, “You [Frankenstein] are my creator, but I am your master.” Dr. Frankenstein’s creature utterly destroys the hierarchical model of domestic society. In a society that relied upon deferential models to produce both loyal children and citizens, the monster disintegrates this idealized model, leaving disorder to reign in its place.

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* embodies an author’s attempt to come to grips with the revolutionary nature of her time. Science became a dominant force in the world in the early 1800s. Romantics fought against all proposals to manipulate nature, even if

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15 The words of Percy Shelley, as cited in Poovey, 338.
17 Key, 175.
they resulted in progress. In addition, the question of gender roles arose. Economically, a man provided substance for his family, while the woman nurtured the household by offering moral direction. In a society that depended on these proscriptions, *Frankenstein* represents a chaotic world in revolt.

Moreover, the novel alerted nineteenth century society to the necessity of preserving domesticity in the home, so that the outside world would benefit as a result. Mothers, in particular, fostered love and companionship for their children. In return, children utilized this maternally inspired foundation later in life to cultivate an ideal society. Human beings could become “good,” in essence, by revolting against the evil state of nature, a tenet the Romantics emphasized. What Dr. Frankenstein’s monster symbolizes, to the shock of European society, is man in his uncultured, uncivilized, and *sinful* form. Since the monster lacks the maternal figure in his life, the companion who teaches unconditional love, he possesses no capacity to behave lovingly and morally at all. Rather, he rejects both the creator and the society that has rejected him.

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18 Shelley, 116.
And Then There Was One:  
How the Ruling Styles of Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots Affected the Outcomes of Their Reigns

Anushia Sivendran

In the mid-1500s, England was reeling from its first experience under the rule of a female queen. Mary Tudor had proved to be a ruthless Catholic, a monarch who took every opportunity to persecute Protestants, yet in all other realms of politics, was ineffective. Near the end of her reign, England was torn by religious strife and suffered from a huge government debt.\(^1\) England was not to be alleviated of female rule even after Mary died in 1558, as she named her half-sister Elizabeth to succeed her. Not long after, Mary Stuart, the daughter of a French princess, and the heir-apparent to the Scottish throne ascended to the French throne upon marrying the young Dauphin.\(^2\) Now, it seemed, the fate of two key players, England and Scotland, lay in the hands of queens. The fate of these women’s monarchies rested not only on how they presented themselves as formidable rulers, but on the reign of the other, as well. Both brought significant strengths to the table, as well as some detrimental weaknesses. The outcome of their reigns would be determined by whether or not the effectiveness of their ruling styles challenged the very nature of the misogynistic society over which they governed. In the end, only one queen, Elizabeth I, would remain standing, showing that her style of rule clearly outweighed that of Mary’s.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the reigns of both Elizabeth and Mary, one must first examine the prevalent thought of the day concerning the duties and expectations for women. The role of women was primarily that of a wife and mother. In all endeavors, she was to answer to both her husband, and any other male figure. She could rarely be vocal or give advice to men.\(^3\) Because of this, it may be inferred that since women were expected to hold a subservient role to that of men, it would be difficult for a queen to be deemed legitimate by her male subjects.

Not only were Europeans uncertain as to how to regard a female monarch, but kings themselves also had strong feelings on the matter. Henry VIII married six times in order to ensure himself a male heir, believing that women were unfit to rule over any man, let alone an entire country. Though he eventually reinstated both Elizabeth and her half-sister Mary to the Line of Succession,\(^4\) he no doubt believed that Edward would live long enough to produce a male heir himself.

Commenting on the reigns of Mary Tudor in England, Marie de Guise in Scotland, and Catherine de Medici in France, John Knox published his “First Blast of the Trumpet” which condemned rule by women.\(^5\) Knox was provoked to write this argumentative document while living in England under Mary, a Catholic monarch presiding over a large faction of Protestant subjects. Knox prayed for her conversion and for her to be lenient towards his fellow Protestants, but when he realized that Mary was set in her ways, he published his “First Blast” which detailed the religious reasons as to why females should never be in such a position of power. In effect, Knox echoed the

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\(^5\) Knox, 376-381.
beliefs of many others, when he remarked that female monarchs went directly against the order of nature, and of God. He believed that the reason that there were queens on the thrones of Europe in the first place, was because it was “evidence of God’s vengeance and retribution for national sins.” Knox believed that instituting female monarchs was a punishment for the religious unrest between Catholics and Protestants.

The argument against ruling queens was deeply rooted in these religious principles. Two particular reasons that were always cited spoke about the very unnaturalness of women in power. God’s commands had made it a virtue for women to serve man. Also, God’s punishment of Eve had put women in subjection to man. A woman, therefore, had no natural right to rule any realm, even when the royal line of succession included no male heir. In the words of Calvin, “government by a woman [was] a deviation from the original and proper order of nature, and therefore among the punishments humanity incurred for the original sin.”

Amidst great turmoil and religious upheaval, Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, the Protestant answer to a period marked by persecution. As she ascended the throne, she realized that her subjects did not unanimously accept her as queen. Many from the Catholic faction put their lot in with Mary Stuart, who had a blood connection to Henry VIII through his sister. To those among this group, this meant that Mary had a more legitimate claim to the throne, since it was actually proven that she was a true relative of the former king. Because of Henry VIII’s matrimonial history, and the fact that he divorced his first wife in order to marry Elizabeth’s mother, Elizabeth was still

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6 Ibid., 372.
7 Ibid., 376.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 372.
illegitimate in the eyes of Catholic Europe. The Pope and other heads of state, on the other hand, supported Mary.\textsuperscript{11} Mary Tudor’s succession had been provided for under the terms of the Third Act of Succession of Henry VIII, which stated that she and her heirs were to inherit the throne after Edward and before Elizabeth. This Act, however, did not recognize the legitimacy of either woman, both of whom Henry had declared bastards in the Second Act of Succession.\textsuperscript{12}

From the start, Elizabeth played the role of both king and queen of her country. In deciding how to rule her people, Elizabeth looked no further than the example that her father had set. She ruled in the only way she really knew how – as a man. On the fields of Tilbury after the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth spoke to the soldiers, saying that “I may have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king.”\textsuperscript{13} This embodied the image that she hoped to project as both the mother and the ruler of her people.

On her plate of techniques, the greatest portion was reserved for manipulation. Elizabeth was a keen manipulator, always pitting her advisors against one another without seemingly doing so. When Elizabeth was in her mid-twenties, rumor arose that she and Robert Dudley were planning on marrying. Instead of dispelling any rumors, she used this situation to her advantage. Knowing full well that the people were outraged by the possibility of the marriage, she used it in an attempt to close the marriage debate once and for all. She pledged marriage proposal against marriage proposal, both British and

\textsuperscript{10} Brincombe, 45.
\textsuperscript{11} Knox, 381.
\textsuperscript{12} Jordan, 424.
foreign, so that she could prolong the Council’s quest for a suitor. Clearly, it was evident that she was in control of the situation, as the Council continued to find another suitor, and she countered with yet another reason as to why she could not marry.

In great contrast to the circumstances arising Elizabeth’s rise to power, Mary Stuart was primed for monarchy from the start. Equally as distinct, however, is that before she began her rule at Queen of Scotland, she played the role of the consort of a monarch. Married at a young age to Francois I, the Dauphin of France, she began her life as queen-apparent very early on. After Francois died, Mary returned to Scotland to begin her reign.

From the beginning of her reign as Queen of Scotland, Mary let it be known that she had cast her eyes on the British throne. She believed that she was the legitimate heir to the throne, and she was determined to be Queen of England, at any cost. She quickly went into action, parrying support for her cause among Catholics in England and the rest of Europe. Her ambition was voracious, and throughout her reign, she would stop at almost nothing to get what she wanted.

Though to her public the weaknesses of women in the position of power were undeniably evident, Elizabeth brought a great many strengths to her role as queen. She quickly came to realize that in order to stay on the throne, she needed the support and love of her people, because this is truly where power could be found. With her red-gold hair and majestic presence, she heavily reminded her subjects of her father, and she used this to her advantage early in her reign, by associating with him, noting whenever

14 MacCaffrey, 74.
15 Knox, 382.
16 MacCaffrey, 83.
possible that she was most certainly “her father’s daughter” in an attempt to solidify her legitimacy.\textsuperscript{17}

In order to set herself apart from the vices and frivolity that women were surmised to take part in, Elizabeth chose to portray herself as a Virgin Queen.\textsuperscript{18} In doing so, she gave her people an alternative to worshipping the Virgin Mary, since worship of any female figure, along with female saints, had been stricken out of Protestant doctrine. Elizabeth used the image of the Virgin Mary throughout her reign, molding it to fit her needs. Over time, associations with the Virgin were used in various states, such as the “virtuous Queen, chaste goddess, mighty imperial monarch, and the all-powerful being at one with the cosmos.”\textsuperscript{19} Various other depictions of Elizabeth as a celestial being rose from this, such as Gloriana, Diana, Cynthia, Pandora, Belphoebe, Astraea, and Oriana.\textsuperscript{20} What set her apart from these heavenly beings, however, is that she remarkably never lost her human touch, her link with the people.

Elizabeth chose to actively involve herself in politics and was equally manipulative here as she was elsewhere. Fluent in French, Italian, Latin, Greek and German, she artfully conversed with visiting ambassadors, and was known for being witty and learned.\textsuperscript{21} In the words of her childhood tutor, Ascham, Elizabeth’s “mind [had] no womanly weakness, her perseverance…[was] equal to that of any man…”\textsuperscript{22} Elizabeth used her mind to her advantage, showing fellow heads-of-state that she was on

\textsuperscript{17} Sir Robert Naunton, \textit{Fragmenta Regalia} (Washington, Folger Books, 1985), 67.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Naunton, 189.
\textsuperscript{22} Jordan, 47.
the same level as any man, if not higher. Her vast knowledge enabled her to be an effective diplomat, as she knew the histories of most of the countries she dealt with.

Queen Elizabeth took great pains to dance around the art of courtship in an effort to delay marriage as long as possible. This is evident in the sheer number of her favorites, as she called them, including Pickering, Dudley, Hatton, Herbert, de Vere, Devereux, and Raleigh, to name a few. To possess Elizabeth meant the world, the power, and the glory that went along with her, which created a very seductive version of the queen. She had as many suitors both domestic and foreign, but she strongly believed that her true power as a female monarch rested in being a virgin, unmarried queen. In living her life in such a manner, however, she had no hope of producing an heir, something her country desperately needed. In an attempt to humor her people, and perhaps even to strengthen foreign relations, Elizabeth continued to entertain thoughts of marriage with those foreigners such as the Archduke Charles, and Alencon. Although neither of these negotiations ended in an eventual marriage, they served their purposes in strengthening foreign relations.

The strongest theoretical cases for woman’s rule were actually developed as defenses of Mary, such as Leslie’s “Defense of the Honor of Mary, Queen of Scots,” in which he states that men and woman were included among the brethren, those who may be chosen to be monarchs. For her part, Mary defended herself through her actions as queen. Her insatiable ambition, coupled with her various other strengths as a ruler, made her a force to contend with.

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23 Watkins, 323.
24 Ibid., 325.
25 Jordan, 442.
Mary liked being in the limelight, and being noticed by those around her. The debate over her second marriage, therefore, came as a great gift to her. Suitors from around Europe were being pushed by various leaders, such as Henry, Lord Darnley, and even Robert Dudley, by Queen Elizabeth herself. Lord Darnley was at the top of the list, since, being English-born, he would strengthen her legitimacy to that throne. Elizabeth hoped that she would choose Dudley, so that Mary would be tied to her apron strings and would be easily manipulated. Mary, however, was determined to choose someone who would strengthen her own position and assist her in obtaining her rights to the succession, so she chose Henry, Lord Darnley.26

In the religious realm, Mary proved to be very tolerant of her Protestant subjects, while remaining Catholic herself. She recognized that while her people could not be changed easily, neither could she. Throughout her reign, and especially during her imprisonment, Mary invoked the image of the Virgin Mary as the “sorrowing mother” and applied it to herself. In a letter written to Elizabeth was she was imprisoned in England, she mentions the upbringing of her son, and says that if she cannot see him, then to at least take care of his future for her.27 By creating this image, Mary portrayed the alternative to Elizabeth’s embodiment of Mary as the Virgin Mother. Mary was not only a mother (which Elizabeth was not), but she was one who suffered and was a martyr for her cause, placing everything in God’s hands.

Though Elizabeth clearly had a great number of strengths, she had a number of weaknesses as well. Since she typically dealt with men in positions of power, she was unsure as to how to deal with other women. With Mary, she attempted to use the

26 MacCaffrey, 87.
27 Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, The Trial of Mary Queen of Scots (New York, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999), 78.
manipulation tactics that had worked so well with the men around her, but found that they did not work. Also, she was so used to her subjects and councilors flattering her, and admirers pursuing her, that when Mary became the center of a marriage debate, she was at a loss as to how to act. Mary posed a threat to Elizabeth’s position, and put her on the defensive, while Elizabeth was typically a queen who worked on the offensive.  

Since Elizabeth had no real intention of marrying, she was in one sense, putting the future of England in jeopardy. She threatened to lose her much-needed Protestant support if she would not produce a Protestant heir and secure the British throne as a Protestant one. Catholics, seeing this opportunity, turned to Mary when they saw that a Protestant future was an uncertain one.

On the opposite end of the spectrum there was Mary, the coquettish youngster who, to her critics, embodied sexual lust. Wyngfield, one such critic, wrote an account of Mary’s execution, showing her as being a flirtatious being, even until the end. Even her dress, “dressing of lawn edged with bone lace…a pair of beads…gown of black satin…shoes of Spanish leather” invoked an image of a woman who is set to impress. Wyngfield states that she made quite coquettish comments even when her maids were disrobing her, saying that “she never had such grooms before her to make her unready, nor ever did put off her clothes before such company.” Granted, Wyngfield was known as an outspoken admirer of Elizabeth and renowned critic of Mary, but nonetheless, he represents a large faction of people who believed that Mary portrayed every ill virtue of the female species.

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28 MacCaffrey, 87.
29 MacCaffrey, 111.
30 Lewis, 115.
31 Ibid., 119.
To many, Mary was an obvious example of why society did not believe women were fit to rule. She was a weak political manipulator, despite her grand ambitious plans for the future. In marrying at such an early age, she thrust into the light the question of her inferiority. If she must be subordinate to her husband who had no real claim to the throne, many believed this undermined any ability she may have had to lead. Although her first husband died at a young age, her second marriage to Henry Darnley ended scandalously when he was found murdered. It appeared that along with the Earl of Bothwell, Mary had played an equally important role in her husband’s murder. What made this even more incriminating was her whirlwind romance and marriage with the Earl, and act of personal and political self-destruction.

The relationship between these two women who had never met was put to an extreme test when Mary secretly sailed out of Scotland and placed herself at the mercy of Elizabeth, seeking refuge from her assailants and enemies, her own Scottish subjects. Through her position of weakness, Mary showed her strength by appealing to Elizabeth’s past promises of support, and as a fellow queen said that she was victim of rebellion and came seeking aid.\textsuperscript{32} In this case however, Mary had placed too much worth on her skill, and her enemies quickly outmaneuvered her, laying a trap from which she could not escape.

After being imprisoned in England, Mary was brought to trial on the account that she was conspiring against Elizabeth. Mary did not believe, that as a Queen, she should have to go before the court and tried as a mere subject. She distinctly stated that she wished no harm to come to the Queen, and she did not understand why she had been kept

\textsuperscript{32} MacCaffrey, 105.
imprisoned all these years. Though Elizabeth herself was not present at the trial, 36 peers, judges, and members of her Privy Council represented her. Mary was denied council in the proceedings, and was forced to defend herself. She rose to the occasion, even though she was unfamiliar with the laws of the land, the language, and was allowed only to make brief statements on her behalf. The situation was clearly weighed against her, as the judges were also the prosecutors. She faithfully denied any wrongdoing; although evidence was presented that showed she had been conspiring to overthrow the queen while she was imprisoned. At the end of the trial, the judges found her to be guilty of this very crime, and advised the queen to execute her. Mary’s fate now lay in the hands of Elizabeth, who had a difficult task ahead of her – to decide what was better for England, to keep Mary alive, or end her life.

The existence of Mary raised the question concerning England’s place in Europe. If the Catholic factions under Elizabeth in England were to have their way and anoint her as their monarch, this would bring forth the issue as to whether or not a queen who had ties to both France and Scotland was fit to rule in England. Going one step further, as Jayne Lewis does, her ascension to the throne could undermine England’s growing influence in the European sphere if it was deemed that Scotland was a superior country, and not an inferior nation, as was the belief of the time.

The largest threat Mary brought with her against Elizabeth, along with her tie to the British throne, was her insatiable ambition. Even as a teen, Mary had claimed England’s crown as rightfully hers. From anyone else this may have seemed a harmless threat. But Mary was much more than a Scottish-born queen. She was also a Catholic

33 Lewis, 95.
34 Ibid. 94-96.
icon. Her ascension to England’s throne would mean a Catholic country. The shadow that Mary cast over Elizabeth’s reign was one of stark contrast, and one that many of Elizabeth’s subjects sought to embrace. As Lewis remarks, “To imagine Mary was to imagine England’s shadow self – Catholic rather than Protestant…and intimately bound to the Valois sector.”

Although the count was very much against Mary, in Elizabeth’s eyes, there were some very real reasons for keeping her alive that could benefit Elizabeth’s rule. By not putting Mary to her death, Elizabeth could keep from alienating her Catholic subjects even more so than she already did, simply by being a Protestant monarch. Elizabeth also feared that both Scotland and France would retaliate and seek revenge for the death of their Queen. Equally important, Elizabeth had realized that Mary’s life basically guaranteed that Phillip of Spain would not bring it upon himself to invade England. Perhaps even the largest factor for not killing off the Queen of Scots was because Elizabeth merely did not want the blood of another monarch, particularly a fellow female one, on her hands.

All of these reasons, the ones for keeping Mary Stuart alive, and the ones against her, made Elizabeth’s decision very difficult, indeed. In her speeches to Parliament, we see Elizabeth debating this very problem out loud, using pointedly ambiguous language. She talks about the “answer answerless” and how there are many “who would give their lives to save a princess” but at the same time, we can see that she acknowledges that she

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35 Ibid., 11.
36 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 220.
39 Ibid., 222.
must execute Mary, as she alludes to her own safety, and the safety of her people. In the end, Elizabeth makes the decision to execute her fellow monarch, a decision that greatly affected both her reign, and obviously, that of Mary Stuart.

Reviewing the reigns of these two women shows that Elizabeth had a larger number of accomplishments to her name. Along with the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the religious tolerance that, on the whole, prevailed, Elizabeth also opened up exploration to the west, bringing riches and wealth to the growing British Empire. She turned England from a nation of troubles, to one on the brink of prosperity. She laid down the framework for the British Empire that flourished even centuries later as a dominant world power.

Mary, Queen of Scots, on the other hand, had great potential, but potential does not always get the job done. Her reign was short-lived, her ambition too great, and her weaknesses too strong to outweigh her strengths. Her Catholic legacy made it no further than her own reign, as her son was raised Protestant and ruled England in such a manner.40 She was a worthy opponent of Elizabeth, nonetheless, as proven by the anxiety she caused her fellow queen. But this does not alter the fact that she was manipulated far more than she manipulated.

There is a reason why the era during which these two women lived is now referred to as the Elizabeth Era. It is because the mark that Queen Elizabeth I left on history is an indelible one, while Mary, Queen of Scots will more often be seen as a chapter in her book. In this age where women were deemed as unfit to rule, Elizabeth proved many of the stereotypes placed on her to be false. Unlike Mary, she ruled without

40 Bingham, 89.
a husband, without a male heir, and yet in the end, she was the only one of the two to remain standing, victoriously.
“The Tenter-Hooks of Temptation”:
The Debate Over Theatre in Post-Revolutionary America

Meredith Bartron

In Royall Tyler’s 1787 play The Contrast, the innocent and simple Yankee Jonathan unknowingly attends a playhouse, mistaking it for a hocus pocus show. He says a green curtain was lifted and he looked right into the neighbor’s house. Although he was unaware that the play was not real, he joined in the festivity saying, “Gor I—I liked the fun, and so I thumpt away, and hiss’d as lustily as the best of ‘em.”¹ When asked what he thinks about theatre he naively responds, “…why ain’t cards and dice the devil’s device, and the play-house the shop where the devil hangs out the vanities of the world upon the tenter-hooks of temptation?”² The historian and eighteenth-century theatre manager, William Dunlap, later criticized Tyler’s play because his hero was a clown who misrepresented the new nation that the Revolutionary War created.

Tyler’s satirical portrait of his hero, however, is not an attack on the Yankee, but rather a symbol of the ideological conflicts within America. Jonathan repeats the religious charges against theatre, but he also joins in the fun at the playhouse. He is simple and honest, but he does not have a mind of his own. Thus, Tyler both supported and critiqued the arguments against theatre from the 1780s and 90s. The Contrast is not only a play about theatre, but it is about the new American. Jonathan represents the common man, but his ignorance reveals that the common man could be dangerous. The debate over theatre at the end of the eighteenth century exemplified this paradox.

² Ibid., 33.
Republicanism meant freemen should have the right to choose their own entertainment, yet it also meant freemen had the right to be protected from dangerous elements of society.

Theatre is a social art. Therefore, theatre’s right to exist was contested since the establishment of the American colonies because it influenced not only the actors, but the audience as well. Theatre was finally legalized for the first time in the northern states in the late 1780s and early 1790s. The debate over theatre was the most intense in large cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, especially where religious groups retained power. Although the debate addressed issues of national importance, it was handled locally, and therefore different cities accepted theatre at varying times. New York never officially banned theatre because of British influence during the Revolutionary War, while Pennsylvania and Massachusetts each repealed anti-theatre legislation in 1789 and 1793, respectively. The debate over theatre focused on the imagined power of theatre as an institution, rather than on the ability of certain plays to corrupt or uplift. Additionally, the debate did not divide between any social classes or political groups, showing that although economic and political events influenced the nature of the discussions, it was an ideological contest that transcended class, race, gender, and political boundaries. It was about the role government should take in shaping society’s amusements, and about what should be considered advantageous and detrimental to society. The opponents and supporters of theatre, however, did not question the right of government to intervene. The large number of petitions that were

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circulated by both sides reveal that they thought public entertainment was the domain of the state legislatures.

The petitioners used similar logic to argue for and against theatre, but they used these arguments to come to different conclusions. The proponents of theatre looked to the future works of genius that Americans must produce, while the opponents cited the present degeneracy of theatrical entertainment, yet neither side praised the current state of theatre. Many theatre supporters believed theatre represented the future of American culture that was not dependent upon England. Their opponents also desired to disengage Americans from English culture by banning theatre, yet most of the plays performed in this period were imports, and advertisements included descriptions of a play’s success in London to attract larger crowds. The language of the petitions for and against theatre was preoccupied with the issue of morality. America was a moral nation and like previous moral nations it deserved the right to reflect its greatness through art. Conversely, opponents of the theatre worried about the nation’s decline if immoral performances were accessible to a public demanding democracy.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the reasons for the repeal of anti-theatre legislation at the end of the eighteenth century by examining the arguments for and against theatre, and the influence of democratic and republican values on the debate. The arguments were expressed in petitions, newspaper editorials, legislation, and even plays. The most important and famous American play of the late eighteenth century, The Contrast, self-consciously examined the role of theatre and its paradoxical relationship to American patriotism and British aristocratic principles. Ultimately, Tyler supported theatre because the play was created to be performed, yet Jonathan’s inability to
distinguish a play from real life reinforced the argument that the lower classes were too easily influenced and corrupted by both the material of the plays and the environment in which they were performed.

The historiography of theatre is often contradictory because many early sources are inaccurate since the legislation of the period was confusing. The inconsistency of the debate about theatre is related to the complexity of the laws. Many were not repealed, but rather reworded, and the British often made pre-Revolutionary legislation inactive. In 1797 William Dunlap wrote the first complete history of the theatre. His *History of the American Theatre* is often quoted by later secondary sources, even though it has been criticized for its historical inaccuracy and biases. Dunlap managed the Old American Company from 1796 and therefore his history is based on personal memory and experience. Although his facts are not all accurate, the use of his history by all subsequent historians shows that even if his facts are incorrect he is still useful when analyzing arguments for theatre. Even as late as 1797 he defended the right of theatre to exist and made suggestions for how it should be regulated.  

American theatre history did not gain legitimacy until the latter half of the twentieth century. In the 1800s actors, managers, or critics wrote the histories. These works are more interested in the specific people involved in the production of a play, than with the plays or the debate about theatre. Theatre history expanded in universities in the post World War II era. It was originally associated with literature departments and consequently early academic works focused on the plays, rather than the legislation of the

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time period. Most sources on theatre are separated into either the history of theatre or the history of drama, and little synthesis between these two fields exists. Comprehensive histories of the theatre do not focus on the era before 1800 because this is considered a barren time in American theatre. Also, contemporary historians have not been debating between one another about why theatre was legalized after the Revolution because most sources simply fill in the gaps of earlier histories and solve problems of historical accuracy. Therefore, the history of theatre is not a controversial historical field.

The few sources that address the reasons for the repeal of the laws, however, do not adequately focus on the ideological arguments of the petitioners. In the 1930s the historian William Dye explained the repeal of the anti-theatre laws by focusing on economics. He said the depreciation of the currency in the 1780s made the laws unenforceable. His analysis is limited because he does not examine the complex debates carried out in newspapers and pamphlets. There are articles on the political and social implications of specific plays; yet again the history of the plays has been separated from the history of the theatre. Few contemporary sources on the history of theatre examine the ideological components of the eighteenth-century theatrical debate in detail, nor do they establish connections between the opponents and proponents of theatre, and the values of the new American nation.

There are many reasons for the repeal of the anti-theatre legislation in the post-Revolutionary period. Theatre was legalized in Philadelphia and Boston, and accepted in

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7 Ibid., 3.
New York, because the threat of revolution was defeated and the citizens of the new country claimed the right to decide how to spend their leisure time. Most importantly, however, the repeal of anti-theatre legislation reflected a change in the definition of American freedom. Britain’s refusal to accept local laws forbidding theatre was an affront to the freedom of Americans as represented through their legislative bodies, but once independence was achieved the legislature’s ban on American rights after the Revolution because of the opinions of a minority was unacceptable. The ability of all levels of society to petition their local representatives and their confidence in the legislative process proved that the former colonists viewed themselves as politically conscious citizens of states. But the new nation was trapped within a paradox. It espoused egalitarian rhetoric, and therefore the legislature did not have the right to limit rational entertainment, but theatre would also then be subject to the whims and fancies of the public, most of whom were not enlightened and wise members of the upper classes. Both opponents and proponents of theatre addressed this paradox. Neither side embraced the unequivocal freedom of the people to do whatever they like, but the opponents did not believe theatre regulation was realistic and thought theatre must cease to exist altogether. The proponents, however, did not agree that theatre was inherently harmful to a nation’s social fabric, rather they trusted in the ability of the wise to restrict immoral shows. Ironically, the proponents won the debate, but the opponents were correct in predicting the ineffectiveness of regulations. In the nineteenth century, theatre was still criticized for its content even though debates about its existence waned. The opponents presented the most realistic argument, but their defeat suggests that although the rhetoric for both sides stressed morality, it was less about ethics, than rights.
LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Theatre was not a controversial issue in the southern colonies in the pre-Revolutionary period, but the northern colonies disapproved of it on religious grounds. William Penn said plays caused people to neglect their vocations and engage in pernicious living. Laws prohibiting theatre were passed in Pennsylvania in 1700, 1706, and 1713, but they were repealed by Britain. Interestingly, these laws were passed when groups were not attempting to build theatres or perform plays. Rather, theatre was associated with other vices, such as card playing and drinking. In the first half of the eighteenth century, however, there was little threat the laws might be broken so theatre was not a controversial issue.

In 1754 the Lewis Hallam Company came from England and requested permission to show plays in Philadelphia. Governor Hamilton granted Hallam a license as long as he promised to show nothing indecent, but Philadelphia residents sent letters to the Governor and the local newspaper, complaining of the possible lewdness of the plays and the scandalous lives of the actors. Early Americans believed it was their right to protest against the infiltration of their communities with foreigners who did not conform to their social code. In 1759 David Douglass’s London Company received permission to build a theatre on the outskirts of Philadelphia. The possibility of a permanent theatre aroused the strong opposition of religious groups who presented petitions to the assembly. Other groups also cited the French and Indian War as a more pressing concern than frivolous entertainment. The House of Representatives in Philadelphia enacted a law

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11 Ibid., 216.
against theatre, but the Governor did not make it effective until January 1, 1760 because he had already promised the Company the chance to show plays. The law pointed to the actors as “idle Persons” from “foreign Parts” who would cause Philadelphians to neglect their duties. Although religious groups were vital in passing this law, it was not imbued with religious language. The Crown again declared this law void, feeding into the disjunction between Britain and its colonies. Therefore, theatre was not only prohibited because it promoted vice, but ultimately because it represented the aristocratic and trifling values of Britain.

Boston passed its first official law banning theatre in 1767, but New York did not propose similar legislation. New York was traditionally the home of more British sympathizers, while Philadelphia and Boston resented British influence. Additionally, Philadelphia and Boston were the homes of the Quakers and Puritans. Thus, religion did play a part in anti-theatre legislation, but the timing of the laws reveals repeal was more closely connected to British influence. The right to prohibit theatre was linked to the independence of the American people. Britain consistently refused to acknowledge the colonies’ right to create their own legislation. Therefore, pre-Revolutionary anti-theatre legislation had less to do with the right of theatre to exist than with the right of Americans to rule themselves.

Despite local legislation against his theatre, Douglass toured American towns and built utilitarian playhouses. In 1766, Douglass opened the Southwark Theatre in

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Philadelphia, and in 1767 he premiered the John Street Theatre in New York City. In 1766 Douglass also changed the name of the London Company to the American Company. Most likely, he tried to distance the image of his Company from the British because Americans would favor entertainment brought from their own communities. Patriots did not want foreign control of their politics, economics, or culture.

In 1774 the Continental Congress threatened anyone holding office under the United States with a loss of his job if found acting in, promoting, or attending a play. Meanwhile, British soldiers put on plays in Boston and then New York. Dunlap defended the British by saying they could have done worse things with their time, but Dunlap’s family were Loyalists and spent the duration of the Revolution attending these British performances. Revolutionary Patriots, however, would not have agreed with Dunlap. The British put on shows that ridiculed the Yankees and renamed the John Street Theatre the Theatre Royal, while the Patriots tried to mobilize Americans for a higher cause. The British preoccupation with theatre reinforced the connection in American minds between theatrical entertainment and British tyranny. In 1778 the Continental Congress expanded their ban on theatre to include all Patriot controlled territories. The act started, “Whereas true religion and good morals are the only solid foundations of public liberty and happiness….“ Congress used religious rhetoric, but more importantly, emphasized morals as the foundations of the new society they were trying to build. In the post-Revolutionary period, the definition of morality was debated

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as it related to theatre. Religious opponents of theatre equated morality with the Bible. Proponents of the theatre also advocated for morality, but they defined it in relation to the Enlightenment beliefs of a secular society.

On March 30, 1779 the Pennsylvania Assembly enacted the first law against theatre that could not be repealed by England. Anti-theatre legislation epitomized independence for the colonists. In 1784, Boston passed a similar law, which revisited a previous anti-theatre act. Again, New York did not pass legislation restricting theatre, yet theatrical entertainments were still subject to the approval of the civil authorities. The 1780s are an important era in theatre history because this was the only period in which laws against theatre were enforced on a large scale and not subject to the approval of the British Crown. This was also the period in which attitudes about theatre began to change and eventually resulted in the repeal of the anti-theatre legislation. In 1782 actors and managers returned to Philadelphia from Jamaica, where they had waited for the end of the Revolutionary War. In his history of the theatre, Dunlap emphasized that these actors “crept from their hiding-places and approached warily to the land in which they felt that they had no part or portion as partakers in its dangers, its sufferings, or its glories.” The manager John Henry asked permission to perform for one night, but local authorities refused, showing the law was being enforced. Although Americans had won their independence, they still resented foreigners, who did not deserve the right to question the law because they had not proved themselves as Americans.

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21 William Dunlap, History of the American Theatre, 244.
22 Joseph N. Ireland, Records of the New York Stage (New York: Burt Franklin, 1866-7), 67.
Throughout the 1780s in Philadelphia, however, petitions were submitted to the legislature in favor of establishing a permanent theatre. A 1784 petition suggested a theatre should be taxed so that it would economically benefit the community. The petition also called for a superintendent to revise any indecent plays. Theatre would only be accepted as long as it did not hurt the morals the community was based upon, and it benefited the government. In the same year Hallam also petitioned the legislature to repeal the law, but a bill calling for the repeal was defeated by forty-one to twenty-one votes. Although the legislature defeated the bill, many people still questioned the merit of a law that banned entertainment. In 1786, however, another anti-theatre law was passed, and in 1788 the Supreme Executive Council resolved that the law should be given full force and effect. This resulted in the formation of the Dramatic Association “for the Purpose of obtaining the Establishment of a Theatre in Philadelphia, under a liberal and properly regulated plan.” The new law was repealed less than a year after the Council’s resolution, so its enactment was not simply the result of religious revival or a sudden distaste for the theatre. Rather, the 1788 decision to enforce the law was very similar to the 1789 decision to repeal it. The legislature created unenforceable laws that either had to be followed or repealed. When the law was enforced the opposition became so great that it made more sense to issue its repeal.

Hallam reverted to thinly disguising plays as moral lectures in the newspapers. In July 1787 Hamlet was advertised at the Southwark Theatre, which had been renamed the

25 The suggestion of the theatre tax is interesting when compared to the recent quarrel with Britain, which had stemmed from issues of taxation. A theatre tax was not issued, but the proposal highlights the ongoing debate between the right of government to intervene in the everyday life of Americans.
“Opera House,” as “a Moral and Instructive TALE called FILIAL PIETY: Exemplified in the HISTORY of the Prince of Denmark.” There was also a small tagline for those who were slightly dense that read “Shakespear’s Hamlet.” In 1788 She Stoops to Conquer was cleverly advertised as “A Lecture on the Disadvantages of Improper Education, Exemplified in the History of TONY LUMPKIN.” Hallam was able to get away with this ruse until January 1789 when he was forced to cancel a miscellaneous entertainment after advertising it in the Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post. Ironically, when the legislature prohibited theatre because it was too closely associated with British entertainment, the plays shown were almost exclusively English because American authors did not have an outlet to showcase their plays.

In 1788 the Dramatic Assembly presented a petition signed by 1,900 people in favor of theatre, but a counterpetition with 3,445 signatures against theatre was also presented to the legislature. The Dramatic Assembly linked theatre to freedom of choice for the first time in a widely circulated petition. 1788 was also the year the Constitution was finally ratified and the Articles of Confederation were abandoned. Therefore, the debate was now framed within the concept of liberty that the new nation and the new Constitution supported. On February 16, 1789 the Dramatic Assembly gave the Pennsylvania Legislature a statement of rights, and then on February 28, a bill was passed by thirty-five to twenty-seven to allow a theatre in or near the city. Although the Southwark Theatre was legalized it would still have to pay two hundred pounds if caught

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28 Ibid., 44.
without a license. The legislature accepted the Dramatic Association’s argument for freedom of choice of entertainment, but also questioned the ability of unregulated citizens to establish a moral and upright theatre. The vote was close, proving that many still felt theatre threatened an already tenuous social structure. The tension between those who argued for the right of the individual to choose his own entertainment and those who argued for the right of the public to limit the options of the individual did not disappear with the repeal of Philadelphia’s anti-theatre legislation. The repeal of the law, however, provided an important shift in the direction towards individual freedom. The power of group action was vital to the law’s repeal because the legislature listened to the opinions of the people as expressed through mass petitions organized by the Dramatic Association, and these people wanted the right to patronize the theatre without fear of persecution.

When examining Philadelphia, New York, and Boston it is revealed that the greater a colony’s antagonism toward Britain before and during the Revolution, the longer it took to repeal anti-theatre legislation. New York was occupied by the British for a greater part of the war, and in 1784 a large portion of the city still expressed sympathy with the British, a possible explanation for why New York never prohibited theatre in this era. During the era of the Articles of Confederation the prosperity of the city was manifested through theatre. Although the John Street Theatre was allowed to stay open in the 1780s, it still required regulation by the civil authority. In 1785 Hallam announced he was giving lectures, but then decided it was not necessary to disguise his attempts at putting on a play, and produced a full-length drama. His play was not

suppressed, but when he tried to donate a hundred dollars to the Alms-House for the poor, they refused to accept the money because he did not have a license.35 In 1785, a petition with 700 names was presented to the state legislature to suppress theatre, but a counter petition with 1,400 signatures quickly rebutted and successfully prevented theatre’s prohibition.36 The first American full-length drama was soon after performed at the John Street Theatre in 1787. New York was the birthplace of American theatre in the 1780s because it housed British theatricals during the Revolutionary War.

Boston, however, had a poor relationship with the British during the war, and its strong aversion to theatre partially stemmed from the city’s suspicion of anything associated with British luxury. Like Pennsylvania, Boston had a large conservative religious population, but the repeal of the anti-theatre laws in the early 1790s was not simply the result of the loss of religious influence or the secularization of society; it was related to a distinct shift in the ideological and political environment. Popular opinion was against theatre throughout the 1780s, but in 1791 the attendees at a town meeting brought up the subject and formed a committee to discuss the possibilities of opening a theatre. The report of the Boston Town Meeting was sent to the representatives of the General Court, causing another committee to form in the House of Representatives.37 This committee, however, still refused to repeal the law. Wealthy members of society protested the committee’s decision by organizing a subscription to build a theatre. In 1792 they erected the New Exhibition Room and performed The School for Scandal. The

37 Paul Judson Little, “Reactions to the Theatre: Virginia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania 1665-1793” (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1969), 98.
Sheriff interrupted the performance and the audience tried to unsuccessfully persuade the players to finish the play. The New Exhibition Room also displayed tightrope walkers, songs, and gymnastic tumbling. Dunlap claimed that the theatre resorted to these vulgar and irrational amusements because Boston citizens were not allowed rational, uplifting amusements by the law. A banned theatre was not a regulated theatre. Governor Hancock made a statement that “the existence of a legislative enactment, which has become obsolete, or is contrary to the sense or will of the community, is at all times the source of evil.” In other words, an unenforceable law hurt the public’s respect of the legislature and undermined the fabric of society. The February 1, 1792 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* recorded the speech of a member of the committee on theatre. He said he would only vote against theatre if the opponents could prove that it was “detrimental either to Liberty, Morality, Religion, or the Rights of Society.” The opponents and proponents of theatre all sought to safeguard these four tenets, but they disagreed over whether theatre undermined them. Finally, in 1793 the anti-theatre legislation was repealed and Massachusetts joined the nation’s theatre culture.

Elaborate partisan theatres were constructed in the 1790s. In Philadelphia the Chestnut Street Theatre was built in 1791 and modeled after the Theatre Royal in Bath, England. By 1796 Boston had two theatres, the Federal Street Theatre and the Haymarket Theatre, each catering to a separate partisan political group and both built by subscription. The Federal Street Theatre even had Corinthian columns and a dancing

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40 “Legislature of Massachusetts,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1 February 1792.
The elaborate architecture of these new buildings reveals that theatre was quickly accepted by all levels of society, but it also shows that America still modeled its entertainments after the British. Religious groups blamed the 1793 Yellow Fever epidemic in Philadelphia on God’s displeasure with the city for allowing plays. Yet, overall, public protest against theatre declined rapidly after the laws were repealed.

Theatrical criticism flourished in the late 1790s and early 1800s with the appearance of *The Thespian Oracle* and *The Thespian Mirror*, whose sole purpose was to examine dramatic compositions. Additionally, a company of critics frequented the theatre and published theatrical critiques. The appearance of the critics suggests theatre was successfully regulated, but the plethora of pantomimes, dancing ballads, and comedies meant the hopes of the theatre supporters for a moral and rational entertainment never actually materialized. New American plays were occasionally performed, but the theatre schedules from the late eighteenth century show that they never achieved the popularity of this lowbrow entertainment. The debate over theatre in the 1780s must be addressed to understand how the cultural and religious climate of the new country changed to such a degree that not only was recent legislation against theatre abandoned, but theatre became accepted by all levels of society and political groups. The arguments put forth in legislative committees, newspaper editorials, petitions, pamphlets, and sermons, for and against theatre elaborate on the mindset of the citizens in post-

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45 “Petition to Pennsylvania Legislature by Clergy of Various Denominations,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1 January 1794.
Revolutionary America and explain why Americans thought they had a right to choose their own entertainment.

THE ARGUMENTS

The *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, the first daily United States newspaper appeared in 1793, providing the forum for a debate on theatre that was updated continually and contributed to by all sections of society. It also provided citizens with a wide variety of arguments for and against theatre so that they could make informed decisions. The newspapers gave detailed information on the decisions made by the state legislatures and local town meetings, prompting those who disagreed with the resolutions of their representatives to quickly organize large-scale petitions. Advertisements for plays were also highlighted in the daily newspapers.

Religious groups maintained the longest and most sustained attack on theatre. Puritans believed the element of spectatorship made theatre an especially dangerous crime because it hurt not just the performers, but also the audience who chose to participate. It was not a crime of passion because the performers rehearsed and the audience bought tickets with the knowledge it would view something pernicious. The argument against theatre’s duplicity carried over from the pre-Revolutionary period. Puritans believed that men came closest to God when they were honest, sincere, and unvarying. If a person changed it was considered a re-enactment of the first change of Lucifer and his fall from Heaven. Even in 1793 Reverend John Witherspoon, a famous American Presbyterian who signed the Declaration of Independence, still attacked theatre because it caused a loss of sincerity and a move away from God. The religious

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arguments for theatre did not alter because of the new political, economic, and social environment after the war, rather only the number of people who subscribed to these beliefs decreased.

Clergymen in Philadelphia also made the case of theatre’s inherent danger. They claimed that any person who was not corrupted by comedy was already wicked, and that if anyone claimed not to be negatively affected by theatre, he was unaware of the damage. Additionally, they assumed the actors must be depraved because those who represented a passion had internalized it.\textsuperscript{49} The clergy predicted that women would expect to be treated like goddesses after viewing a play, causing the family to fall apart. They ultimately argued that the community was responsible for group morality and anyone who encouraged theatre with his consent, money, or presence would rip apart society’s moral fabric. They did not accept the argument put forth by theatre proponents that drama was not forced upon an audience, and consequently did not affect those who chose not to attend.\textsuperscript{50} In an address to the Senate and House of Pennsylvania a group of clergy stated that “each individual shall be bounded to his pursuits, by the limits of the public good.”\textsuperscript{51} Theatre opponents saw the furtherance of public good as essential to the safety of private good.

The religious arguments against theatre also stemmed from a distrust of the British. The historian Bruce C. Daniels explains the Puritans’ fear of theatre in reference to the reasons for their immigration to America. Puritanism emerged in England at the same time theatre appeared as the center of entertainment in the Elizabethan era.

\textsuperscript{49} “Extracts from the Writings of Divers Eminent Authors, 1789,” in American Bibliography, ed. Charles Evans, Number 21813, 2-5.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 6-9.
\textsuperscript{51} “Address to Senate and House of Pennsylvania by Clergy,” Evans number 25986.
Therefore, the stage became associated with English monarchical life and luxury.\textsuperscript{52} Fear of British extravagance was then adopted by non-religious groups before and after the American Revolution. In 1785 as members of the Pennsylvania Legislature argued over the anti-theatre bill, many members addressed the distinction between America and Britain. Dr. Logan, a prominent Philadelphian, said theatres were only fit for monarchies. He claimed the kings of France and Sardinia tried to establish a theatre in Geneva to subvert the republic. Another member agreed with Dr. Logan and suggested amusements made people forget their political duties. He said that Cardinal Mazarine established the Academy of Arts and Sciences in France to make the French unquestioningly accept their despotic government.\textsuperscript{53} In 1785 the American political structure was still tentative, and local politicians feared any activity that threatened the nation they had fought to create. The freedom of the American people rested upon the restriction of their freedom to attend dangerous forms of entertainment. These opponents of theatre concluded that monarchies have theatre, therefore America should not. This argument against theatre reveals a distrust of monarchical forms of government, but also of the inherent intellect of the masses. The masses could not be trusted to know what to believe because they were subject to the whims of dishonest playwrights and players.

The distinction between the rights of citizens versus the rights of the government appeared often in the arguments against theatre. A 1791 issue of a Boston newspaper printed a letter aimed at theatre supporters. The author criticized the supporters because “they ought to regard the character of their country; and not connect the solemn ideas of natural and inalienable rights, for which so many lives have been lately sacrificed, with

\textsuperscript{52} Bruce C. Daniels, \textit{Puritans at Play}, 66.
The amusements of the theatre, and frolic of a playhouse.”

The arguments put forth in Boston were the most concerned with national rights because theatre was not permitted in this state until after the ratification of the Constitution and the election of George Washington as President. The language used for other issues of national importance permeated into the debate over theatre. The dissenting minority against the repeal of the anti-theatre law in the 1789 Pennsylvania Legislature explained that every free government has the right to preserve its own existence by restricting any conduct of its citizens that it deems injurious. Therefore, prohibiting theatre was associated with freedom. This viewpoint coincided with the legislation of the Continental Congress that banned plays during the war because public responsibility meant abandoning frivolous activities. The government had the right to restrict activities to preserve the foundation of the country and the experiment of republican government.

The theatre opponents also emphasized the impracticality of theatre regulation. The clergy argued that judges can not regulate theatre without destroying it, and if judges had been successful at stopping vulgar and vile entertainments then petitions would not be necessary. The clergy stated that in a republican society the taste of the people must be consulted, yet when the masses have control over the theatre, the ability of government to regulate becomes impossible. Ironically, the opponents of theatre defined the rights of the masses more liberally than many theatre supporters when they suggested that any entertainment for the public must be subject to the control of the public. Those who argued for theatre consistently called for government regulation. The opponents, however, did not trust the spectators and surmised that “it is the part of wisdom and

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54 *The Columbian Centenial* (Boston), 9 November 1791; quoted in Paul Judson Little, “Reactions to the Theatre,” 100.
sound policy to discern not only what is possible, but what is practicable…” The author of a letter to the editor in *The Independent Chronicle* satirized the concept of a regulated theatre by comparing it to a brothel. A brothel may be regulated, but government can still not eradicate its immoral purpose. Opponents of theatre were aware that the pantomimes and farces were most popular, while their opponents envisioned an idealized version of the future.

The debate around theatre did not split along political party lines, but some members of the different political parties, especially in Boston, had varying reasons to oppose theatre. Democratic Republicans who opposed theatre said it fostered luxury and class division, while anti-theatre Federalists claimed it sprang from the depravity of the lower class and undermined the authority of the nation’s leaders. The anonymous author of a letter to the editor in the *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post* said most plebeians opposed theatre because they valued simplicity, moderation, and sobriety. The common man had fought for his country, and had signed petitions against theatre because he wanted to return to his daily labor and safeguard his family from “ruinous amusements.” The Dramatic Assembly, however, also claimed to speak for the common man. Thus, before political parties became firmly entrenched in the national identity, the controversy over the identity of the masses had already begun. This conflict was later carried out in the plays of the time period as the vision of the yeoman farmer and patriotic plebian was adopted by city authors for urban audiences. While the elite

56 Ibid., 6.
claimed the common man would not understand drama, the author of the editorial said the common man does not want to be corrupted by aristocratic values. Therefore, the opponents could not agree on whether theatre was the institution of the elite or the work of the poor, but both agreed it threatened the values upon which America was founded.

The religious and political environment shaped the arguments against theatre, but economics also played a small role. The historian Peter Davis argues Puritans reacted against theatre because they did not want to appease London based trade. The acts of the 1760s against theatre were in response to the London acts, such as the Molasses Act and Stamp Act, and Puritans were sensitive to the trade imbalance. Therefore, by 1790 the depression of 1785-86 was over, and Boston had a secure bank and political stability. Davis’s analysis puts the debate in a broader economic historical context and it makes sense that Bostonians accepted theatre at a time when they had extra money to spend on the entertainment. But a purely economic approach to the issue does not explain why Puritans continued their arguments against theatre when the legislation was repealed, and were the most vigilant opponents to theatre even after the Revolutionary War. Additionally, the end of the depression must have made the legislature more confident and willing to extend the rights of the public, but the arguments for and against theatre were remarkably void of economic discussions, with the exception of the concern that the lower classes would waste their money. This does not mean theatre opponents were not concerned with the economy, but economics was not as important as ideology.

The printer of the *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post*, however, was unusually preoccupied with the economic problems of theatre. While some supporters

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said theatre should bring money into the city, Mr. Brown argued it would hurt the individual tavern owner. His argument is not logical, but his preoccupation with his individual rights gives an example of how the relatively uneducated common man saw his position in individual economic realities, rather than in broad notions of national liberty. Mr. Brown could not bear to see the public deceived by the tax-gatherer. The tax-gatherer made people believe he was against theatre, but Mr. Brown claimed he was actually working for Hallam. Hallam supposedly told the tax-gatherer if he informed against him in public he would let him see plays for free. Mr. Brown believed that “after goin to a play, instead of taking up and studyin his tax book, when he got home…he takes up the works of that Heathen riter Shakespur…and then goes to Hallum, and tells him that the best means of establishing his cumpany in the city, will be to raise up a law persecution against him, which will bring many friends and strenthen his party.”

Mr. Brown was not opposed to theatre on moral grounds because half of his letter detailed the plots of all the plays he had ever seen. But he said that it was the duty of the citizen to attend taverns that pay a license fee to the government. If theatre was legalized, taverns would lose money, and then the government would suffer. It is not until the end of the letter that Mr. Brown revealed he owned a tavern. This letter is intriguing because Mr. Brown attempted to disguise his individual motives for disapproving of a theatre in language that called for the common good. He had also internalized the rhetoric of the elite and religious, but used this rhetoric in a contradictory way. His argument does not address the obvious fact that the theatre could also be taxed and bring in revenue for the public. Furthermore, he called Shakespeare a “Heathen,” but he inadvertantly praised his

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plays by reciting their plots from memory. His argument against theatre was not about democracy, or the right to choose entertainment, but about his right to make a living.

The arguments for theatre were not drastically different than the arguments for its suppression. Few theatre enthusiasts defended the drama as it existed, but expressed optimism about what it could become. Supporters of theatre responded to the argument that theatre corrupts society, by emphasizing its power to improve manners and virtue. William Dunlap desired a rationally governed society, and believed common sense and democracy would uplift and improve theatre. Many theatre proponents connected democracy with literary potential.\(^{62}\) If given an opportunity, American drama would differ from British drama because Americans were a more enlightened and rational people. The eighteenth century historian and playwright, Mercy Otis Warren, defended theatre in the introduction to her 1790 book of plays. She asserted that theatre was sometimes used for vice, but in “an age of taste and refinement, lessons of morality, and the consequences of deviation, may perhaps, be as successfully enforced from stage, as by modes of instruction…”\(^{63}\) Fittingly, she dedicated the introduction to the new American president, George Washington, who was an avid fan of drama, but who also embodied the characteristics of the virtuous and hardworking American citizen.\(^{64}\) The defense of theatre with a moral argument, however, insinuated theatre could be banned if a country did not retain its virtue. In her introduction Warren alluded that the sole goal of


\(^{64}\) It is recorded that George Washington purchased four tickets for the Southwark Theatre in 1784, years before theatre was officially legalized in Philadelphia. Thomas Clark Pollock, *The Philadelphia Theatre in the Eighteenth Century*, 42.
public entertainment was to instruct and enlighten the audience, but it is of note that most of her plays were not intended for the stage.

The arguments for theatre were concerned with America’s place in world history. As a civilization progressed, so did its art. The Athenians were more civilized because they had Aeschylus, and conversely Aeschylus was able to produce his masterpieces because Athens embraced democratic values. Furthermore, if theatre reverted to portraying the wicked or deceitful, it was the fault of a nation’s citizens. As late as 1830 theatre was defended with classical references. An anonymous author in *The American Monthly Magazine* wrote, “If, in the licentious periods of Grecian or Roman history, Aristotle or Ovid denounced it as immoral, the fault was in the people and not in the amusement.” Thus, this argument alluded that the opponents of theatre did not trust the new republican citizens if they did not trust theatre. Supporters argued that theatre was only as good as its government, and if Americans doubted theatre then they obviously did not trust their government. This stance, however, failed to address the lack of American plays in the theatres and the public’s eagerness to consume British drama.

Many theatre proponents also blamed theatre opponents for trying to ban all of theatre, when only improper plays and farces should be regulated. In his history Dunlap compared the suppression of theatre because of a horrible play, to the eradication of the press because a vile book was printed. If it was illogical to ban print, then theatre must also be accepted. Dunlap further argued that if the educated and rational members of society were allowed to frequent the theatre then the plays would embody wise principles. Dunlap suggested the government build and open a theatre, and then pay a man to

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manage it so that he would not be concerned with profits, and consequently cater to the immoral. 67 The editor of *The Thespian Oracle* presented a similar argument when he said the more secret a theatre is forced to become, the more vices it can hide. 68 The argument for regulation presupposed that theatre was divided between the enlightened and the vulgar. Like religious opponents of theatre, supporters who used this argument did not believe the masses had the right to choose any form of entertainment, but rather that the enlightened had the duty to uplift the ignorant through theatre.

The Bostonian William Haliburton claimed in a pamphlet entitled “Effects of the Stage on the Manners of a People” that the stage, if regulated, would help the “public weal” by reforming morals. 69 He alluded that government and entertainment should not be separated because is the duty of government to protect its existence by encouraging decent morals. Theatre opponents also believed government had a duty to protect society, but they favored prohibition as the solution. Haliburton rebutted the opponents by stating theatre would not just disappear if banned. His image of the perfect theatre was a building reserved for drama and for town meetings. He suggested that any registered poor who was convicted of disorderly conduct pay a fine and promise good behavior in the future. Also, he thought playwrights should be paid between twenty five and fifty pounds by the government, depending on the moral merit of their work. 70 Haliburton’s scheme was never realized, but it proves that he did not view theatre as a right. It was a

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69 William Haliburton, “Effects of the Stage on the Manners of a People: And the Propriety of Encouraging and establishing a virtuous theatre,” 1792, Evans number 24371, 15.
70 Ibid.
privilege that the government might take away, but theatre’s intrinsic merits were too
great to justify its disappearance.

The basis of most of the support of theatre was over its benefits as a rational
amusement. Americans believed their government was rational, therefore its citizens had
the right to participate in other rational pursuits. In an essay from 1792, the Bostonian
Philo Dramatis blamed Puritan bigotry for the anti-theatre law. He said the determined
minority does not have the right to force its notions of morality into the law. He wrote,
“cunning has invented a thousand terrors to alarm simplicity…” and that “patriotism is
cold to the bigoted heart.” Therefore, Philo Dramatis grouped together all opponents of
theatre as members of an outdated religion. Puritans not only hindered rational
entertainment, but they were bad Americans. In Philadelphia, the Dramatic Association
expressed a similar argument in a statement of rights to the Pennsylvania Legislature
when it wrote that it is peculiar that “men, who have suffered under the lash of
persecution, should now wage a virulent war against freedom of thought and action.”
The Dramatic Associations' arguments, however, did not situate the role of government
within public entertainment. Attending theatre was a right, not a privilege, which had
come with the liberty obtained by the Revolutionary War. If Americans allowed an
ignorant minority to curtail their rights then the present freedom would revert to the
bigotry of the Middle Ages. The Dramatic Association claimed if a group can dictate the
types of amusements that are allowed, they may easily dictate mode of dress, or
religion. Therefore, the supporters of theatre broke into two camps between those who

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72 “Petition by Dramatic Association,” The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post, 17 February
1789.
73 Ibid.
believed government must regulate theatre and those who believed the freedom of individual choice about entertainment was as vital as religious freedom. A letter by Civis in a Philadelphia newspaper took the Dramatic Association’s argument even further. He said if the opponents of theatre who were trying to infringe upon American liberties had worked as hard during the war for the “noble cause of liberty,” then the years of bloodshed would have been lessened. Therefore, he equated theatre opposition to British tyranny.

Not all the arguments for theatre were related to patriotism, rights, or morality. A few tried to justify theatre with economics. Some theatre opponents feared the poor wasting their money on frivolous entertainments, but theatre supporters said the poor not only had a right to choose how to spend their own money, but that theatre would benefit the economy of an entire city. John Gardiner, Esquire, delivered a speech to the House of Representatives in Boston in 1792 in which he emphasized the economic potential of theatre in the city. He claimed, many trades, such as masons, bricklayers, carpenters, merchants, and even shoemakers, would benefit from the construction of an elaborate building and the outfitting of an acting company. Also, visitors to Boston would no longer shorten their stay so they could attend the theatres in New York or Philadelphia. He called the current anti-theatre law “illiberal” and “despotic.” Gardiner’s focus on economic benefits was similar to the Dramatic Association’s concern with the fundamental rights of the people; both articulated the necessity of establishing a theatre by villianizing their opponents as irrational and un-American. They equated the right to

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75 “The speech of John Gardiner, Esq. delivered in the House of Representatives in Boston on Thursday January 26, 1792,” Evans number 24338.
attend the theatre with the “natural right of every freeman” to spend his money how he pleased. Theatre supporters looked to the future and put faith in the form of government they created.

Each side in the debate over theatre insisted they spoke for the common man. Although, it must be noted that the citizens who composed the petitions were not the average theatre goers, but were most concerned with theatre as it related to the rights of freemen. The true common men were the citizens who bought tickets for the farces, pantomimes, and foreign plays to escape the concerns of their everyday lives. The debate was largely played out through petitions. Although petitions allowed men and women who were not part of the privileged classes to have a voice in government, the petitions over theatre did not represent a cross section of all parts of America because they were primarily urban. In 1789 the Pennsylvania General Assembly received a petition against theatre from 3,446 inhabitants of Philadelphia, including schoolboys, servants, and blacks. A few days later, a local newspaper noted that not only boys, servants, and blacks signed the petition, but also girls, apprentices, and mulattos. The next day a letter to the editor criticized the General Assembly’s acceptance of a petition that included the signatures of boys under the age of eighteen. The theatre opponents tried to strengthen their case by advertising the diversity of their signatures, but their need to resort to the signatures of young boys and girls reveals they could not get the support of the rest of society.

77 The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post, 19 February and 20 February 1789.
The faith in petitions by both sides, however, was a faith in government and rationalism. Dunlap provided an example of a clergyman who attacked the theatre from the pulpit so harshly that his audience threatened to pull down the theatre, but the clergyman told them to petition instead. The truth of this story is less important than Dunlap’s emphasis on the power of petitioning to the people who were not given a voice in other forms. The abundance of petitions also relates to the importance of theatre as a social art form because all members, elite or poor, were affected by its presence. They either desired the right to participate in theatrical entertainments, or they felt it was their right to live in a community free of the vicious influences of theatre. Each side assumed others would agree with them if they were only better informed. Newspaper editorials referred to the ignorance or prejudice of their opponents. A letter in a 1789 issue of the Federal Gazette and Pennsylvania Evening Post admitted that many German countrymen were enemies of the theatre, but the author said they were simply ill informed and had never even read a play. Theatre proponents blamed ignorance for the continuance of the law against theatre, while theatre opponents said the supporters were unrealistic in supposing theatre would not corrupt society. Both sides claimed to advocate the side of reason. At the top of every issue of the Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post there was a quote by George Washington; “Whatever measures have a tendency to dissolve the union, or contribute to violate or lessen the sovereign authority ought to be considered as hostile to the liberties and independence of America.”

79 “Thoughts on Theatre Translated from Mr. Steiner’s German Paper,” The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post, 14 February 1789.
80 The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post. I looked at all the copies from January and February 1789 and each day included this quote. I do not know when the paper started or stopped placing it at the top.
supporters and opponents of theatre measured their case against this quote, only they disagreed over whether the absence or presence of theatre was hostile to American liberties.

The successful campaign for the repeal of the laws against theatre reinforced the belief that Americans had fought for, and created, a government founded upon the people. The small regulations imposed upon theatre in the new laws also implied that a licensed theatre was necessary to regulate the people. The laws, however, were never able to solve the double bind of theatre in the 1790s, between the government’s desire to control what people saw, and its recognition that the nature of an egalitarian and democratic society allowed the audience to choose its entertainments.

**CONCLUSION**

The incongruity in post-Revolutionary America between the prejudice against American authors and the country’s concern with breaking free from English culture shows that the ideological arguments for and against theatre did not greatly affect the type of plays shown after the repeal of the anti-theatre laws. Rather, the arguments are important because they follow the creation of an American self-identity after the Revolutionary War. The opponents of theatre did not argue against specific plays, but against the degradation of society because of the hypocrisy, duplicity, and immorality that was inherent within theatre. They argued that these negative qualities came from England, and it was in the best interest of the young nation to separate itself from its former ruler. The definition of freedom for those who protested against theatre meant freedom to live in a safe and well-regulated society. The proponents of theatre, however, agreed that negative English values should not permeate American society, but that
Americans must create their own theatre culture. The laws were circumvented and would have continued to be ignored if the government had not listened to the people. They argued government control would prevent immoral plays from being shown, and that America deserved the right to showcase artistic achievements similar to the historically great nations. The arguments over theatre were idealistic, and connected to the meaning of independence for the new American people.

Realistically, however, the political and economic environment of the late eighteenth century had some influence on the timing of the repeal of the laws. The short period of time from when theatre was banned until when anti-theatre legislation was repealed, shows that the revision of the laws was directly connected to anti-British sentiment, the end of the Revolutionary War, and then the desire to form a new nation on its own terms. As the country was able to politically distance itself from England, Americans were more willing to embrace British culture and accept theatrical entertainment as separate from the moral fiber of the nation. But politics and economics do not adequately explain why the laws were repealed. The lectures, petitions, and letters to the editor stayed away from specifically referring to the Constitution or the past economic crisis. References to theatre’s place within the country were most concerned about abstract values, such as virtue, reason, and the common good. The disjunction between the ideal image of theatre and its reality also proves that the debate about theatre was not only about religion, or morality, but about who had the right to control entertainment in the new nation. Each side in the debate believed in the “natural and unalienable rights” of the American people, yet disagreed over whether this meant the right to attend theatre, or the right to be protected from theatre’s vices.
The success of petitioning and the repeal of the laws shows that the common man ultimately could affect the legislative process. The fear of tyranny overcame the fear of chaos, and once Americans claimed their right to attend theatre, the elite could not regulate the type of entertainment they chose. When the majority of the petitions opposed the establishment of a theatre, the state governments passed laws against it. But when supporters of theatre began to mobilize and use their numbers to appeal to their elected representatives, the governments reversed their previous decisions. The definition of independence changed as a result of the Revolutionary War and the laws accordingly reflected this change. Few desired an unregulated theatre, and most still feared the vices of the masses might ruin their hopes of a great nation. Yet, most Americans agreed that the laws must suite the needs of the people for a rational entertainment. Ultimately, the ideological beliefs of the opponents and proponents of theatre did not differ greatly, reflecting a trend in American thought that was connected to, but more important than, the political and economic environment.

APPENDIX:

“Prologue” to Royall Tyler’s The Contrast81

EXULT, each patriot heart!—this night is shewn
A piece, which we may fairly call our own;
Where the proud titles of “My Lord! Your Grace!”
To humble Mr. and plain Sir give place.
Our Author pictures not from foreign climes
The fashions or the follies of the times;
But has confin’d the subject of his work
To the gay scenes—the circles of New-York.
On native themes his Muse displays her pow’rs;
If ours the faults, the virtues too are ours.

Why should our thoughts to distant countries roam,
When each refinement may be found at home?
Who travels now to ape the rich or great,
To deck an equipage and roll in state;
To court the graces, or to dance with ease,
Or by hypocrisy to strive to please?
Our free-born ancestors such arts despis’d;
Genuine sincerity alone they priz’d;
Their minds, with honest emulation fir’d;
To solid good—not ornament-aspir’d;
Or, if ambition rous’d a bolder flame,
Stern virtue throve, where indolence was shame.

But modern youths, with imitative sense,
Deem taste in dress the proof of excellence;
And spurn the meanness of your homespun arts,
Since homespun habits would obscure their parts;
Whilst all, which aims at splendour and parade,
Must come from Europe, and be ready made.
Strange! we should thus our native worth disclaim,
And check the progress of our rising fame.
Yet one, whilst imitation bears the sway,
Aspires to nobler heights, and points the way.
Be rous’d, my friends! his bold example view;
Let your own Bards be proud to copy you!
Should rigid critics reprobate our play,
At least the patriotic heart will say,
“Glorious our fall, since in a noble cause.
The bold attempt alone demands applause.”
Still may the wisdom of the Comic Muse
Exalt your merits, or your faults accuse.
But think not, *tis her aim to be severe;—
We all are mortals, and as mortals err.
If candour pleases, we are truly blest;
Vice trembles, when compell’d to stand confess’d.
Let not light Censure on your faults offend,
Which aims not to expose them, but amend.
Thus does our Author to your candour trust;
Conscious, the free are generous, as just.