# *New Errands*

**Welcome to New Errands!**

The Eastern American Studies Association and the American Studies Program at Penn State Harrisburg are pleased to present the fifth issue of *New Errands*, an online journal that publishes exemplary American Studies work by undergraduate students.

Seeking to develop the next generation of Americanists, *New Errands'* mission is both to provide a venue for the publication of important original scholarship by emerging young scholars and to provide a teaching resource for instructors of American Studies looking for exemplary work to use in the classroom.

New Errands will be published semi-annually, after the end of each academic semester. The goal of this timetable will be to collect and publish essays produced during the previous term, so that they can be made available as quickly as possible for use in the following term. We encourage both self-submission by undergraduate students and nominated submissions by instructional faculty. They must have an American focus, but can employ a variety of disciplinary methods. Submissions can be emailed as Word documents to: newerrandsjournal@gmail.com.

Essays can be of any length, but they must have a research focus. Any visual images should be placed at the end of the manuscript, and tags should be placed in the text to indicate the intended placement of each image. Manuscripts should conform to MLA guidelines. Papers found in this volume were presented at the Undergraduate Roundtable of the Eastern American Studies Association Annual Conference in March of 2015.

For further information about the Eastern American Studies Association, including the annual undergraduate roundtable and the EASA undergraduate honors society, please visit: http://harrisburg.psu.edu/eastern-american-studies-association.

A Message from the Editors—

We at *New Errands* are proud to present the outstanding papers from the Undergraduate Roundtable of the Eastern American Studies Association Annual Conference, held in March 2015. These papers have been selected because they represent exemplary undergraduate research and demonstrate an appreciation for and critical understanding of American culture.

Encouraging undergraduate study and research of American culture and society is our goal at *New Errands.* By recognizing and publishing the exceptional work of undergraduate students, we are able to meet this goal. Our hope is to inspire a new generation of American Studies scholars and provide a forum to share their work.

We look forward to continuing this tradition in the years to come.

Tiffany Weaver and Nate Davis

# Table of Contents

# "Why Every Girl Isn't a Riot Grrrl": Feminism and the Punk Music of Bikini Kill in the Early 1990s

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In 1991, when Jen Smith, a college student and member of the little known band Bratmobile, "called for a girl riot" members of the punk band Bikini Kill had not yet met (Meltzer 11). Punk music, a subculture of mainstream rock music, "remained resolutely, with some notable exceptions, a boys' club," and women were justifiably frustrated by their exclusion from such an influential and unique form of expression (Meltzer 6). The preexisting stereotypes of women in punk hindered women's ability to break into the genre. There would be no progression without action, and many women like Jen Smith were tired of their assumed "roles of groupie, girlfriend, or back-up singer" (Schilt 5). So commenced what would be known to the generations to come, as the Riot Grrrl Revolution.

Bikini Kill was not the only female-dominated band that thrived during the Riot Grrrl movement in the nineties. They were, however, leaders among the first, "women reclaiming punk's radical energy for their own catharsis and general social insurrection" (O'Dair 454). The band consisted of three women: Kathleen Hanna (vocalist/bassist), Kathi Wilcox (drummer/bassist), and Tobi Vail (drummer/vocalist), and one man: Billy "Boredom" Karren (lead guitarist) (O'Dair 461). Historians have seldom explored the inclusion of a white male in a band whose core message centered on defying the white male patriarchy. Tobi Vail stated that Karren was "one of the best guitarists I knew", he was an "identified feminist and a revolutionary," and at that point the three women needed a guitarist and were willing "to compromise on the initial idea of having an all-girl group" (Marcus 52). Although Vail defends his role in the band, his visibility throughout the band's documented career is representative of the feminist political message Bikini Kill wanted to reflect. In early 1991 the band was playing shows but not receiving the cult following they are known for today. The wheels were certainly moving but it was not until summer 1991, when the zine, *Riot Grrrl*, was published by members of Bikini Kill and Bratmobile. At that time, that goals were more formally set and ground was staked out to take on the revolution (Meltzer 13).

Bikini Kill embodies the Riot Grrrl Revolution during the early nineties. They took "the utmost pride not just in individuality but also in being an outcast" and empowered countless girls and women to pursue creative outlets they were previously excluded from. This website will investigate the music, fashion, and political activism of Bikini Kill. Examining each separately demonstrates the way in which they worked together to form a revolution. It became clear through the analysis of the three perspectives that the success of one depended on the success of the other. Because of the close link, the Riot Grrrl movement becomes inaccessible to girls who could have benefitted from Bikini Kill's overarching message due to the importance of "authenticity" in regards to appreciation of punk, appearance, and political activism.

## Musicology
### Why Punk?

Bikini Kill created art. The band did not care about singles and catchy hooks that their fans could sing along to. They regarded their music as superior to the mindless radio products, they wanted their fans to *scream* to their songs, to mosh at their live performances, and to write their own lyrics or learn an instrument. Bikini Kill created safe and intimate spaces for their fans at their live shows that gave girls a chance to connect with the other concert goers as well as the members of Bikini Kill, which was a departure from the violent environments seen at male dominated punk shows. This community was able to feel connected with Bikini Kill because they chose to stay at a personable level of fame, which was why it was so unique that the band became such a sensation.

Bikini Kill's attraction to punk music was no accident. In fact, it was a very deliberate choice. Punk music by nature is youthful, politically charged, angry, and most importantly for Bikini Kill—male dominated. Punk as a genre that "gave a generation of boys who didn't fit the All-American Boy Scout type a new blueprint for masculinity and a license to be whatever they needed to be" (Meltzer 6). In other words, punk gave boys who defied their dominant gender norms a creative space

built for them to critique the world in which they did not fit into. However, for girls searching for the same release, there was no comparable outlet for release. The members of Bikini Kill were attracted to punk due to the "rapid tempo", "instruments, played at breakneck speeds" "on the verge of outrunning one another and the singer" (Thompson 98). The musical composition symbolized the political and societal chaos that Bikini Kill felt women was experiencing. It may seem that punk has no order but when the dynamics of the band is broken down each band member plays a monumental part, "Kathi Wilcox's bass guitar lines establish simple, repetitive figures that drive many of Bikini Kill's songs, while Billy Karren's repeated chords yield a buzz saw whine that fills out the band's sound. Behind them, Tobi Vail beats out the rhythm in straightforward 4/4 time, while Kathleen Hanna's vocals strike the ear as rhythmic chanting punctuated by screams" all of which contribute to a deliberate rhythmic disorder that rejects the mainstream catchy hooks and rhymes (Thompson 63). Kathleen Hanna, Billy Karren, Kathi Wilcox, and Tobi Vail chose this genre to support a revolution that dispelled the mainstream that historically had held women and girls down creatively.

Punk wasn't just the novel choice due to the emotional response it emits, it was also was a grassroots genre in which women were encouraged to learn instruments themselves and teach one another. The genre was based on a "movement that rejected technical virtuosity and professionalism in favor of amateurishness, iconoclasm, and a do-it-yourself aesthetic," which gave women a chance to create music with no formal training (Meltzer 6). Regardless of punk's dominating male presence, punk actually gave women more equality than any other genre. Bikini Kill recognized the versatility of punk and used it to their advantage in order to put their political message to a tune. Part of their message was hinged on getting girls and women on stage, feeling not just comfortable but confident in their ability to produce worthwhile music. While musicologists often critique the lack of skill involved in the creation of punk music in turn delegitimizing the genre, Bikini Kill reveled in "rejecting masculine notions of expertise and mastery" (Reynolds, Press 324). In *Where The Girls Are*, author Susan Douglas explains the magnetism that Riot Grrrls had towards punk stating, "the reason it spoke to us so powerfully, was that it gave

voice to all the warring selves inside us struggling, blindly and with a crushing sense of insecurity, to forge something resembling a coherent identity" (Douglas 87). Girls and women who didn't relate to stereotypes of pink ribbons and saddle shoes found solace in the bands of the Riot Grrrl Revolution, but for Bikini Kill, the space they carved out in punk music, specifically, held even more significance.

While punk's rebellion towards corporate America served purpose for part of Bikini Kill's overarching message, they were still tasked with bringing their presence as girl performers to the genre. The band wanted to bring feminism to punk, they saw the benefits of the already established "connotation of alienation and anti-establishment social discontent" but felt discontent with the "token women in punk" at the time who felt that "to identify themselves as feminists would only make their non-maleness more central" and make it more difficult to be seen as musicians (Carson et al. 91, Meltzer 8). While Kathleen Hanna doesn't discount these women who "just want to rock", her goals were different: "I'm into the revolution and radicalism and changing the whole structure," she continued, "What I'm into is making the world different for me to live in" (Reynolds, Press 327). These were the words of a driven and fed up girl who would, along with the other members of Bikini Kill, inspire a generation of girls and change the discourse of feminism for the generations to come.

*Lyrics*

The instruments played a monumental part in the success of Bikini Kill's entry into punk, but the lyrics were what differentiated them from their male counterparts. Punk gave Bikini Kill an opportunity to sing about "subjects previously considered taboo, such as incest, rape, and eating disorders," bridging the divide that previously existed between feminist issues and music of any genre (Meltzer 15). Bikini Kill's most famous single "Rebel Girl" was an anthem of the Riot Grrrl Movement as it emphasizes strong friendships among girls, and the power of being a "girl". Their lyrics brought Bikini Kill from just another punk band to a band that gripped "the imagination: the spirit is wild, but the musical fresh is puny" (Reynolds, Press 329). The band created a balance between call to action lyrics meant to mobilize girls: "Hey girlfriend/I got a proposition goes something like this:/Dare ya to do what you want/Dare ya to be who you will/Dare ya to cry, cry outloud" from

their song "Double Dare Ya." Some lyrics were aggressive and angry lyrics such as those from "Suck My Left One": "Daddy comes into her room at night/He's got more than talking on his mind/My sister pulls the covers down/She reaches over, flicks on the light/She says to him:/SUCK MY LEFT ONE/SUCK MY LEFT ONE."

The latter song dealt with the issue of incest head-on in front of rowdy crowds. They changed the location of the conversations concerning women's issues of incest, sexual abuse, and oppression from private to public. Bikini Kill used incest, not as a metaphor, "but an omnipresent threat", a "symbol of patriarchal domination"(Reynolds, Press 329). Survivors of incest, assault, harassment, and much more were able to listen to the music, in a crowd or alone wearing headphones and feel less alone in a society that commonly told them to hide their histories. Bikini Kill told girls through their music it was not only not their fault that it happened but it was okay as well as encouraged to be angry. Had their music had more exposure more girls and women could have felt less alone but unfortunately exposure was compromising to their image.

*Performance*

The lyrics written by Bikini Kill were personal and relatable to their many fans, but the band was known for their unique performances that excited and empowered crowds of girls and women. To see Bikini Kill perform live was the closest many had come to seeing "feminism translated into an emotional language," the shows were "brutally honest, so utterly moving, and just, well, so true" and fans gravitated towards the authenticity that defined the movement (Meltzer 21, Potter 195). Recordings of the band evoked emotions from the listener due to Hanna's vocal technique that "employs a monolithic declamation which avoids the sensuous shaping of notes," and somehow even over the loud instruments her voice forces "the listener's attention to the text" (Potter 196). That being said, the environment of the live show could not be captured in a recording. There was a certain group aesthetic that was present at the Bikini Kill shows that added to the experience. For example, "microphones were often passed around so that the audience could share stories of sexual abuse" giving the audience a chance to participate in the show where they clearly felt comfortable recalling private and sensitive events (Schilt 9). At times "Hanna

would interrupt shows to get guys to stop harassing women, and try to relegate men to the back of the mosh pits to ensure the safety of the women dancing up front" (Carson et al. 91). Women and girls were finally able to see punk music up close, to obtain the privilege that men were born with. It may seem small but cultivating a punk concert environment that encouraged women to mosh or dance in the front row was a step towards equality and an act of hostility towards the patriarchal system that had relegated women as inconsequential.

Hanna was truly an anomaly when it came to her ability to balance music, political statements, and style during live performances. She was no stranger to performing, as a former stripper she knew "how to manipulate a gaze, then explode the ordeal of objectification by confronting her audience, pogoing out of pigeonholes or just doing a cartwheel" (O'Dair 461). She challenged stereotypical assumptions of female musicians and the Riot Grrrl Movement in every concert through her wardrobe or her dance. Concertgoers weren't just subjected to the music of Bikini Kill but a full experience directed at their mind, body, and soul. Additionally Hanna's "voice is a marvel of power and versatility: She can go from bored breathing sing-song to mournful sweetness to an explosion of lungs and emotion, expressing in rough but pure tones not only anger but also pleasure, pain, and transcendence" (O'Dair 461). This vocal versatility speaks not only to the versatility of punk but also of women, capable of so much but limited to so little. Hanna's energy was infectious, her voice was unusually captivating, her clothing was thought provoking, but arguably most important her message was entirely relatable to girls across the nation and world.

*Label*

Bikini Kill's decision to sign with the independent record label, Kill Rock Stars, furthered their persona as anti-corporation and gave them much more create free will in terms of the production of their music. Kill Rock Stars was an independent label started by Slim Moon in 1991 because he "had talented friends" whose "music and message should reach a wider audience" and had a "right to get paid for their work" (June). Punk's rejection of corporate America meant that independent labels like Kill Rock Stars were the answer because they could still receive help with

distribution but could retain "creative freedom and access to a vibrant musical community" (Uehlein 27). Bikini Kill "avoided major record labels because these contracts could potentially threaten the integrity of the bands by forcing them to 'tone down' their music and change their image to include new clothing and hairstyles" (Schilt 10). Because Bikini Kill was a female-dominated band there was added stress that a record label would try to mold the image of the group into one that fit certain beauty standards that was essential for mainstream female musicians of the time. Women in the music industry faced discrimination and standards that were unique only to other females struggling in the art world. Kill Rock Stars gave Bikini Kill the ability to distribute to their tight knit fan-base without compromising their grassroots identity or their rejection of the mainstream.

The production of Bikini Kill's music contributed to their creation of a small but committed community of fans while simultaneously limiting the distribution of their message even more. Bikini Kill's music was released exclusively in the form of cassettes, seven-inch records, and ten-inch EPs and would be sent to listeners with a handwritten note, ensuring fans knew "there's a real person on the other side of this transaction" (Marcus 271). Yet another defining aspect of Bikini Kill's punk "rejection of *cool*" because cool was part of male culture (Reynolds and Press 326, Laura June). Vinyl is nostalgic, it's authentic, and creates "a different listening experience, one involving more involvement and participation from the listener" (Thompson 131). There is more effort involved in finding a vinyl record or LP and the hope was that once a listener did come across either they would have more appreciation for the music due to the time devoted to the search. Listening to a vinyl record wasn't about skipping to a specific song; it was about the album as a whole. For Bikini Kill, they wanted their listeners to consciously hear the music and the messages each song held. Unfortunately for the masses, vinyl wasn't an option for many individuals in the 90s.

The vinyl production, in combination with the independent record label, made a statement but they also made Bikini Kill difficult for women and girls to hear let alone consciously hear. The band's dedication to renouncing all things mainstream isolated their music, the revolution, and the message. The complete rejection of major-label artists, common in Riot Grrrl bands, did attempt to

bring solidarity to those who were represented by small labels or not represented at all. It also showed girls that success in art did not revolve around sales and covers of glossy magazines but, at the same time, worked to delegitimize the artists who were major-label stars or girls who rather enjoyed the music put out by the mainstream labels. This became a defining feature of the movement that distanced a group of people in similar ways that the girls and women of punk had been alienated.

**Subculture of Dress**
*Clothing Aesthetic*

Bikini Kill's clothing style reflected the freedom of expression that the movement was based on; their choices symbolized visually the contradictory nature of girlhood in the United States that their lyrics spoke to. The band's clothing style was similar to many of the Riot Grrrl bands. The style was built upon drawing attention to the conflicting ideologies of how girls should look and act. Bikini Kill's "penchant for dressing up like anarchist school-girls, pairing plaid Catholic school kilts, knee socks, pageboy haircuts, pigtails, barrettes, and baby tees with ripped stockings and combat boots" was not meant to fetishize their music, quite the opposite, the band members wanted to use their clothing choices to highlight confusing and frustrating aspects of growing up as a girl (Meltzer 19). Their contradictory clothing pairings acted as a commentary on the "tween" years every girl goes through when she can't quite gather if she is supposed to be a pure little girl or a sexy teenager. In addition, their overtly girly attire told society "these girls were girly enough to carry handbags and wear lipstick but were still tough," telling society that girls and women who want to engage in the "girly" still can be feminist while also denouncing notion that women can only be respected in punk and the world if they take on male characteristics and practices (Meltzer 19). Style, beauty, and fashion are inherently issues that women are told will dictate their success. Because appearances were so intertwined in being female, appearances became a political issue that Bikini Kill protested through their dress.

Bikini Kill wanted to prepare themselves against the criticisms they felt they would inevitably receive due to their gender. Often women in the limelight "are constrained, penalized, or rewarded based on their approximation of culturally appropriate standards of beauty" in ways that men

are not (Carson et al. 134). Bikini Kill's style of dress came from a necessity they felt to speak to society, critics, and their fans. They were public figures and it was inevitable that they would not only be heard but also seen; therefore, it was smart for them to have created a conscious dress code that represented their message. Their style became a hybrid that could only be described as "girl power," a term used very differently today. It "married the optimism of their pre-adolescent years with the sense of activism, and, sometimes, rage that they felt as adults", in short it gave girlhood the opportunity to share the spotlight with adulthood and be taken seriously (Meltzer 17).

### Mom Says, "Stop Objectifying Yourself!"

Their dress was representative of feminism of the moment as it rejected second-wave ideologies of appearance. It "gave Generation X feminists a uniform immediately discernible as different from the Birkenstocks, turquoise jewelry, and long hair of their mothers" (Meltzer 18). The intentional departure from second-wave feminist style was not meant to discount the great accomplishments and efforts made by their mothers, instead was an attempt to express the internal progressive third-wave ideals externally. The Bikini Kill punk fashion made an undeniable impact on the Riot Grrrl fan base. Appearance became an outright political statement, what had once been an undeniable aspect of being a girl was being brought to attention and questioned. Bikini Kill became known as trailblazers of fashion largely due to Kathleen Hanna.

Kathleen Hanna's concert dress was one of the reasons she became the unofficial face of the Riot Grrrl Revolution. Her outfits ranged from satirical "punk parody of Madonna" complete with "bikini top" and "biker shorts" to completely topless with "SLUT or RAPE or WHORE scrawled in Sharpie marker" across her stomach (Meltzer 27, 18). The latter outfit was in reference to the idea of "self-objectification—taking what you imagine sexist guys in the audience are saying to themselves, and confronting them with it", yet another example of Bikini Kill making the personal political in ways that had just been too taboo for the public sphere previously (Meltzer 18). The image of Hanna in a bikini top with "SLUT" written across her stomach was jarring at first but that was the intention. Seeing the word so casually scrawled across Hanna's stomach wasn't sexy, it wasn't

created for a male gaze, and it meant to desensitize the word. If a girl was called a slut, the image of Hanna would delegitimize the power the word had. Hanna didn't want to give critics the satisfaction of labeling her a slut so she did it for them and hoped it would empower her fans to do the same. She wanted to reclaim slut in the same way that the movement wanted to reclaim "girl". Perhaps it seems counterproductive, but the shock value was a marking of the new feminist discourse. This excessive presentation of sexuality was another example of third-wave feminism distinguishing itself from second-wave.

Bikini Kill, with their third-wave feminist ideas, wanted to make their audience uncomfortable when it came to sexuality. Sexuality was a political statement, the band wanted to their message to be clear. Their lyrics and dress complemented one another to express a message: women are not sex objects but they aren't necessarily nuns either and they shouldn't have to choose between two very polarized options. Bikini Kill's dress revealed the Riot Grrrl Revolution as a very well thought out movement loaded with symbols and caricature but also hints at how young and somewhat confused they were, not old enough to know exactly who they were so they tried everything at once.

Bikini Kill's message was centered on celebration of individuality, but footage of their concerts showed fans attending their concerts looking undeniably similar. They were an army of "short bangs", "vintage cotton dresses with thrift store cardigans", and "combat boots" and while it seems ironic to anyone looking back on the identical outfits, at the heat of the Riot Grrrl Revolution the girls and women saw their style as a symbol of solidarity against the patriarchal society that constrained them (Marcus 125). They were rebels rejecting gender norms of the dominant culture. The dress code that formed during the Riot Grrrl Revolution empowered some girls and women but it also created an "us" versus "them" that could be categorized through appearance. Wearing pink tails and combat boots became too closely entangled in having certain ideologies and those who deviated the dress code, or wore trends enforced by the "dominant culture" were seen as drones of the patriarchy. This led to many judging the movement by its image and feeling pressure to conform their attire to that of a valid riot girl, contradicting what Bikini Kill wanted their message to be.

## Political Activism
### Zines

The analysis of their genre and fashion choice supports the ideology that everything about Bikini Kill tied to making a political statement. Even the band's name, which according to Vail, "encapsulated the nexus of sexiness and violence" and exemplified the connection between "gender, politics, and geopolitics" was connected to their rebellious message (Marcus 47). Bikini Kill wanted to "transform culture" and "change society" starting with the integration of women into punk music (Meltzer 11). They were tired of seeing the female figureheads in music rejecting feminism so they took action instead of waiting for someone else to. For Bikini Kill, however, music wasn't enough. Their message was more general than just showing women they can rock, they wanted to educate and inspire girls and women to do anything. They broadened the movement with the creation and distribution of Zines, held and attended conscious raising meetings, and enforced media blackouts all of which were helped and hindered the development of their success in different ways.

### Manifesto

In 1991, members of Bikini Kill authored "The Riot Grrrl Manifesto" the unofficial mission statement for the Riot Grrrl Revolution. Structured as a list, the manifesto is direct, angry, and empowering. It attacks a "society that tells us Girl = Dumb, Girl = Bad, Girl = Weak" along with "capitalism", "racism, able-bodieism, "ageism, speciesism, classism, thinism, anti-semitism, and heterosexism", it calls for support of "girl scenes and girl artists", and above all the manifesto states, "I believe with my wholeheartmindbody that girls constitute a revolutionary soul force that can, and will change the world for real" (Hanna et al. *Bikini Kill*). The sixteen sentences, each began with "BECAUSE" followed by a sentence that critiqued dominant culture and the damaging effects it had on girls and women. Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling all seem to be inventive, perhaps a comment on the patriarchal English rules learned in school. Bikini Kill reached out specifically to girls, who are often discarded as useless, and proposed this revolution that revolves around "the girl". It called for girls to take action instead of waiting for someone else to do something about the frustrations that girls related to. This debuted Bikini Kill as not an average girl band, they were musicians who were taking a stand as feminists, rebels, resisters, and activists. This Manifesto gave Bikini Kill exposure and a cult following that could have elevated them to fame that many musicians dream of. The fandom that surrounded Bikini Kill proved that girl fans were a new powerful market. Major record labels took noticed but Bikini Kill resisted because their message rested on the rejection of "cool according to traditional standards", in other words, the dominant culture (Hanna et al. *Bikini Kill*). This document was not the whimpering of girls, it was a *manifesto,* and it unabashedly urged girls to do it all, to "cry in public, join bands, teach one another how to play instruments, and fight back against both possible aggressors and the Man" (Meltzer 13). The Manifesto marked the beginning of zine creation within the movement. Over the next several years, "The Riot Grrrl Manifesto" was never edited; through all the critiques of the movement and internal friction the ideals that formed the revolution outlived the movement itself.

The zines that Bikini Kill created were another way that the band spread their message while remaining a grassroots movement. Zines vary greatly depending on who is creating them but the zines Bikini Kill published were "grounded in aesthetics, narratives, and iconography that emerge from the experiences of girls in the early 90s" while also complementing their punk origins by being "self-proclaimed anti-corporate" (Piepmeier 2). The Zines were punk in many ways; they were a true example of DIY; they could be angry and emotional; they were a place where girls could share stories that society deemed off-limits; they had no advertisements or sponsors and therefore did not support the corporate, capitalist America; and they were undeniably fascinating and entertaining. The similarities to zine production to independent labels is indisputable as zines were about "producing a paper unhampered by corporate structure, cash, and censorship", almost identical to the perks of recording with and independent label (Schilt 6).

The zines acted as a response to the lyrical anger and confusion from the music Bikini Kill made. It gave girls and women a chance to respond "to the larger culture, a culture in which girlhood and womanhood are composed of sometimes radically contradictory ideas, unresolved double binds, double standards, and mixed messages" (Piepmeier 92). Zines were handed out at Bikini

Kill concerts but construction was so simple and the messages were so powerful girls across the country and the world were inspired to create their own with friends exploring issues on both personal and cultural levels. Zines gave girls yet another creative and artistic outlet that they could once again occupy like never before. They became "sites where girls and women construct identities, communities, and explanatory narratives from the materials that comprise their cultural moment" and while the political outcomes of zines may seem micro the legacy they created of females resistance and questioning is crucial to the gains women and girls have made since then (Piepmeier 2). One image taken from a 1991 publication of the *Bikini Kill* zine encouraged female friendships. The image was a black and white drawing of two women in futuristic ensembles stamped with the statement, "STOP the J word jealousy from killing girl LOVE" "encourage IN THE face OF INSECURITY" (*Bikini Kill* 1991). This zine creates an illustration for their encouragement of friendships among women instead of feeling envious. The stereotype of girls fighting is seen time and time again in the media and the zine, in combination with songs like "Rebel Girl", called attention to the power of female friendships.

### Blackout

Bikini Kill recognized that dominant culture was produced and reinforced by the media and decided early in their career that they would avoid it at all costs. The media was seen as a cog in the patriarchy forcing women in the underbelly of society. Zines were produced by Bikini Kill and Riot Grrrls because they were able to take "seriously the literary, cultural, and interpersonal productions of girls and women" in ways that the mainstream media would not (Piepmeier 7). When zines alone were not strong enough of a rejection of the mainstream media the revolution made the ultimate power move: a media blackout. Riot Grrrl bands had a notoriously tense relationship with the mainstream media and Bikini Kill was no exception. They felt the media had too much control over how the world saw them and that their legitimacy was constantly being compromised through articles capitalizing on a group of "ridiculous girls", "punch-drunk off their first taste of feminism "and Vail felt they were "too often the band had been misrepresented and taken out of context, making them appear immature" (Meltzer

30, Schlit 9). This depiction of women in the media is nothing new. The second wave feminist movement was under a constant microscope and Bikini Kill was not about to let the mainstream have any role in labeling them when they felt their movement was so abstract. Their movement was about shutting down corporate faceless media outlets not about staging sit-ins at *Ladies Home Journal*, there seemed to be no point and Bikini Kill was pissed off.

Similarly to Hanna writing "SLUT" across her stomach, the media blackout was a strategy used by Bikini Kill to make a statement. Politically, the media blackout intended "to take power back" from outsiders who couldn't understand the movement but their choice inevitably took potential knowledge and growth away from their revolution (Meltzer 33). Of course it is hard for artists to read magazines like *Rolling Stone* when they write things like, "they do things like scrawl SLUT and RAPE across their torsos before gigs, produce fanzines with names like *Girl Germs* and hate the media's guts. They're called Riot Grrrls, and they've come for your daughters" but to Vail it was about "how something which was once mine and genuinely meaningful to me has been taken from me and has been made into something quite else than was initially intended" (Schlit 8, Marcus 256).

### Sassy

Tobi Vail's critique of *Sassy* contradicts the band's original aim at supporting girls as a whole, and reveals that the movement was based instead on only the validation of only certain girls. *Sassy*, "the unabashedly feminist, indie-obsessed teen magazine whose brief publication coincided with Riot Grrrl", seemed like it could bridge girls and the empowering feminist message of Bikini Kill together. The magazine was well circulated and met the needs of many different kinds of girls, mixing the mainstream with Riot Grrrl Revolution ideologies. *Sassy* serves as an example of the rigidity of the blackout, and how the movement burned the very bridges that could have connected them to fans that needed them the most. Tobi Vail condemned *Sassy* stating, *"*Not only did *Sassy* seem like it was for rich, preppy, private school girls, but it was upwardly mobile and embraced pop culture and a lot of traditional femininity I have been taught to reject" (Meltzer 30). Through this quotation Vail does not just criticize Sassy as a publication but also its readership, girls and teens that should be

celebrated for being girls no matter what they read or where they go to school. She continues, "it was confusing to find them writing about my friends—and later me—because I was young and felt they were from a different social group, people who would have hated me in high school for not liking new wave or not shaving my legs or washing my hair or wearing a bra" (Meltzer 30).

Therein lays a core contradiction that Bikini Kill held. A direct line from the "Riot Grrrl Manifesto" is, "BECAUSE we see fostering and supporting girl scenes and girl artists of all kinds as integral to this process" (Hanna et al. *Bikini Kill*). This idea seems to be completely forgotten to Vail as she chastises *Sassy*, it's largely female staff of writers, and arguably most importantly it's readership full of girls and teens. Their blackout of the mainstream media ended up reinforcing the criticism that "reverse snobbery can still be elitist" as the "predominately white East and West Coast, urban- and college-town- dwelling Riot Grrrls forgot about their sisters living in places that didn't have built-in music scenes or a feminist presence, who might have found the message just as useful" (Meltzer 34). This criticism was one of the main reasons why the movement could not survive more than a decade.

**Conclusion**

The music, fashion, and politics of Bikini Kill hold many common themes and reveal several problematic aspects of the Riot Grrrl movement. Though the band was famous for its music and fashion statements alike their political statement remained central throughout their seven-year career. Tobi Vail sums it up when she says, "gangs of girls—teenage girls in gangs all across America, breaking through boundaries of race and class and sexual identity, girls so strong together that they don't listen to people who tell them they are stupid or that they don't mean anything because they don't really exist" (Piepmeier 1). Bikini Kill indeed influenced a many girls and women and showed the world that girls were powerful. The band created safe spaces for girls at each of their live punk shows but it is important to note that these spaces only validated girls who looked and acted a certain way. In this regard, Bikini Kill became a product of their own culture. Their baby doll dresses paired with utility jackets became a uniform that defined who was a Riot Grrrl; it was a way for the revolution to discern insiders from outsiders. What started as a

movement committed to empowering women of all walks of life soon became a movement alienating those who did not conform.

This is a pattern that can be seen throughout many examples of underground movements and subcultures. The creation of the Riot Grrrl Revolution stemmed from feeling unwelcome in the punk scene; the message of the movement was much broader. It would be impossible for Bikini Kill to remain an underground and achieve its goal of enlightening all girls. It seems indisputable that the movement's demise was "in part due to their tendency toward orthodoxy. Dividing the world into sellouts and true grrrls, they formed an elite, and only those who knew the language could find access" (O'Dair 272). The relationship Bikini Kill created between their style, music, and political statement restricted fans from participating in different degrees of the movement. Girls were expected to embody all of what being a Riot Grrrl was all about, or they were not a true Riot Grrrl. Because Bikini Kill "vowed never to record for a major label and 'lose control of their image,' this women's movement in music proved inaccessible to the millions of women who consume pop culture", and deprived many from a chance of feeling the power that came with the Riot Grrrl identity (O'Dair 476). Zines seemed to be the answer for girls who didn't like punk but liked the message of the movement since they were "spaces to try out mechanisms for doing things differently—while still making use of the ephemera of the mainstream culture", but they were not readily available to girls who were not already listening to bands like Bikini Kill (Piepmeier 191). Additionally, the movement's college campus East and West coast origins combined with the complete mainstream media blackout created educational and economical barricades for women of lower class and women of color, distancing themselves from yet another group of girls and women.

Bikini Kill changed popular music for girls and women. The band had become an overnight phenomenon and tensions began to arise regarding the future of Bikini Kill's career. By early 1993, "many of the Riot Grrrls felt the scene had been mediatized out of existence, misrepresented and trivialized; some refused to use the term to describe themselves, because it had so rapidly become a free-floating signifier circulating through media hyperspace" leading to many groups disbanding (Reynolds, Press 323-4). Bands were confused by

the Riot Grrrl Revolution's sensationalize entrance into society and felt out of control in terms of where the movement would go. The brevity of Bikini Kill's career, however, should not discount their influence. Their mere entrance into punk-rock represented bravery that would blaze the trail and make it easier for female artists to come. As their career flourished they became "better musicians, better songwriters, better performers," and defended their place in musical history (Marcus 272). Bikini Kill was based on inaccessibility and ironic exclusivity and it isolated them from the very girl they were supposedly trying to reach. So, in retrospect, not every girl was a Riot Grrrl but maybe that is a good thing. Bikini Girl exposed a new niche within girls, it showed society that girls like and dislike different music, different clothing, and hold different ideologies. The movement gave punk bands visibility and girls and women a new genre to follow and look up to while highlighting the need and market for strong women in other genres leading to an opening of the music industry. Every girl is not a Riot Grrrl, but in reality, every girl shouldn't be.

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# Exploring the Domestic Ideology of the Postwar Era through Cookbooks

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Cookbooks were increasingly published and marketed to overwhelmingly female audiences during the aftermath of the Second World War, when tensions with the Soviet Union escalated and the new consumer culture of the 50s materialized. Upon first glance, these instructional guides may have seemed a frivolous and unnecessary part of history, not unlike commonly held attitudes about women's roles themselves. These books did more than merely show readers how to prepare the perfect Baked Alaska, however, because they also provided evidence of a burgeoning anxiety toward gender roles in postwar America. Cookbooks, which were carefully constructed by primarily male editors, utilized gendered language in their recipes that aimed not only to help women help themselves but also to simultaneously oppress them by reminding them of their proper place in the home. In sharing time-saving, cost-efficient recipes that often stressed the necessity of convenience foods, cookbooks affirmed, consciously or otherwise, that expectations on women to maintain the home were not only burdensome but unavoidable. Postwar cookbooks were fraught with contradictory language that revealed concerns about the gender hierarchy in1950s and 1960s America thinly veiled by encouraging, often complimentary language that damaged rather than fortified women's standing in society.

The mixed messages found in postwar era cookbooks seem unsurprising when one considers how closely they resembled paradoxical depictions of women in the mass media at large. In her 1994 book *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female in the Mass Media*, Susan J. Douglas examined how the generation of women and men born after World War II were constantly exposed to multiple representations of gender roles. She problematized this advertising phenomenon and declared, "There is a crucial contradiction here: baby boom culture for girls didn't matter at all, yet it mattered very much. It was laughable and historically insignificant, but at the same time, it was a dangerous and all too powerful enforcer of suffocating sex-role stereotypes."[1] Douglas wondered how the media could portray women as gentle and submissive on one hand and encourage them to be resilient and perceptive on the other? She argued that women's growing understanding of their inconsistent representation in the media prompted many of them to doubt societal norms and the reliability of the media and to take their femininity into their own hands. She attributed second-wave feminism to advertisers' tendencies to portray women in extremes, from the humble housewife June Cleaver to sex symbol Marilyn Monroe.

The muddled language of cookbooks followed suit with these preexisting and conflicting notions of traditional gender roles. The language of postwar cookbooks often reflected similar dualities displayed by the media with regard to gender roles, including such paradoxes as women serving as both consumers and producers, men as powerful legislators and progressive thinkers who were helpless in the kitchen, and most importantly, America's assuredness and doubt that women would remain subordinate to men in the social hierarchy.[2]

Women and food preparation were habitually connected for hundreds of years, but the 1950s highlighted this relationship more clearly than any other decade in American history. Cookbooks had existed as early as 1796, when Amelia Simmons introduced her food instructional guide *American Cookery* to the masses. Though cookbooks became popularized in the era after World War I, they further expanded into the mainstream during the Cold War, when the nation was relieved to have dissolved tensions that had arisen during the Second World War but had entered into additional conflicts with the Soviet Union shortly thereafter. Cookbook sales experienced an increase after the first major war, when the Great Depression's impact was felt across America, and particularly in kitchens. Just as women felt a greater pressure to take care of their families' nutritional habits during this crisis, homemakers were compelled to cater to the needs of their husbands and children after the Second World War. With the resolution of the war, the United States government as well as businesses

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[1] Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female with the Mass Media.* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994), 6.
[2] Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 6-18.

urged women to vacate the jobs they secured while their husbands were off fighting and encouraged them to resume their work in the private sphere. One mentality of cookbook authors and others that was used to justify women's duties in the kitchen was the concept that American men had done their part by protecting their country in the war and preserving democracy abroad, so the least women could do was help maintain this stability by providing home-cooked food in the domestic sphere. Cookbooks often emphasized their recipes as comforting during a time when everyone searched for respite from the communist menace.[3][4][5]

Americans looked no farther than their homes to find seclusion and peace from the turmoil of the outside world and the nation's messy foreign relations with the U.S.S.R. The development and popularization of convenience foods during the 1950s was one method businesses used to differentiate the U. S. from the Soviets.

Americans often showed their patriotism by shopping for canned and already prepared foods at supermarkets, an important symbol of democracy and modernization. Advertisers capitalized on the public's new spending habits and were encouraged by the threefold increase in food sales between 1941 and 1953. Stores gave shoppers the opportunity to browse hundreds of shelves that contained many different brands and options for creating the perfect meal with minimal effort. Supermarkets, therefore, set the nation apart from its communist enemies by allowing choice and convenience to characterize a distinctly American way of life.

Another important symbol meant to counteract the Soviet threat on a smaller scale was the cookie jar, which represented Americans' yearning for the warmth, innocence, and nostalgia of peacetime. The image of the cookie jar was alluring and often used by cookbook authors as an inviting ploy to encourage readers to buy their books. For example, *Betty Crocker's Cookbook for Boys and Girls* included an illustration of a cookie

jar on its cover to impress upon readers from an early age that the cookie jar was the epitome of the coziness and sanctuary of home. *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* told readers, "Long after the spicy fragrance of her ginger cookies baking has faded into the years…the thought of that ample cooky jar on the shelf will bring back vividly the old-time peace…and comfort…and security of Home."[6] Postwar associations of supermarkets and cookie jars with U.S. superiority demonstrated how Americans' perceptions of food, its availability, and its preparation were closely intertwined with national politics. [7][8][9][10]

If one food characterized American industrialization and women's cooking habits in the postwar era, however, it would be gelatin. Many housewives appreciated its versatility and were intrigued at the very least by claims made by companies such as JELL-O and Knox about its health benefits and attractive appearance. Laura Schenone even argued that gelatin companies' penchant for changing their taglines closely mirrored society's tendency to reshape images of femininity itself over the years. She reflects,

> Perhaps no other food has come to embody postwar conservatism and suburban womanhood as JELL-O brand gelatin, which peaked in sales during the early 1960s. Pastel colored with fruity perfumes, gelatin was a pretty, shimmery thing, a decorative object as much as a food. Pliable in spirit and texture, it could form itself to the trends of any generation—not unlike the stereotypes of women. During the 1920s, it had been dainty. During the 1930s, economical. During the 1940s, quick. Now, during the 1950s, JELL-O was light-hearted and comforting, perfect for a generation struggling with the memories of war, fear of communism, and worry that an atom bomb might fall…[11]

Schenone echoed Douglas's observation that the image of women in American culture was

[3] Jessamyn Neuhaus, "The Way to a Man's Heart: Gender Roles, Domestic Ideology, and Cookbooks in the 1950s," *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 3 (1999): 531-532, accessed September 27, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3789341.

[4] Laura Schenone, *A Thousand Years Over a Hot Stove: A History of American Women Told Through Food, Recipes, and Remembrances* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2003), 317.

[5] Jessamyn Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 218-225.

[6] *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), 187.

[7] Katherine J. Parkin, *Food is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 105.

[8] Neuhaus, "The Way," 532.

[9] Neuhaus, *Manly Meals,* 223-226.

[10] *Betty Crocker's Cookbook for Boys and Girls* (New York: Golden Press, 1957).

[11] Schenone, *A Thousand Years*, 320.

inconsistent and, like gelatin, molded by those in power to fit the country's changing needs. During the Roaring Twenties, women were expected to carry themselves with poise, reflecting the growing wealth of the nation and the lavish celebrations of American modernism in the decade before the depression. After the stock market crash, women were encouraged to provide nourishment for their families using the limited means available while educating their children about the value of the dollar. When women increasingly pursued men's jobs in factories during World War II, they needed instant foods like JELL-O to put food on the table after a long day of work.

After the war, this trend toward quick meals continued and intensified with the introduction of new household appliances into American kitchens that coerced women into spending money on these new products and utilizing them to prepare food for their families in order to show their patriotism. In their instructional manual *Knox On-Camera Recipes: A Completely New Guide to Gel-Cookery*, the Knox Gelatin company flaunted all the different recipes homemakers could prepare using only their gelatin product, a mold, and a few other ingredients. In the introduction to a recipe for Brown Derby Black Bottom Pie, Knox promises, "Famous and rightly so, this scrumptious pie will add stature to your reputation as a hostess."[12] The guide's message to a targeted female audience and the inclusion of a women using the product on its cover spoke to the inherently gendered nature of cooking guides in the postwar years.

A woman's duty to provide home-cooked meals was rarely questioned in society, and cookbooks reiterated these presumptions. The authors of *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* asserted, "Just as every carpenter must have certain tools for building a house, every woman should have the right tools for the fine art of cooking."[13] They equated a man's chosen career path with a woman's obligation to maintain the home by performing menial tasks like cooking and cleaning.

In her book *Food is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America*, Katherine J. Parkin examined advertisers' preoccupation with female consumers, referencing a statement made in the late 1950s by Stouffer's which declared, "Our

present customers and future customers are and will be primarily women. Women carry the responsibility for feeding the families of America."[14] This confident assertion by the company reflected the prevailing domestic ideology of the postwar years that women were to serve as the indisputable keepers of the home.

This immense pressure placed on homemakers to provide their families with nurturance and nutrition was echoed throughout cookbooks published after World War II. Mothers and wives became scapegoats whenever family matters did not run smoothly. The makers of *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* implied that when a woman's children became sick, it was her fault for not preparing the right types of food and her duty to reverse this mistake. Under the heading "A Mother Can Give Her Family a Priceless Gift," the cookbook pondered, "Why are some mothers tired all the time and some children fighting colds all winter? Probably because they don't eat the right things."[15] The statement may seem ironic to modern readers, who would understand that mothers were constantly fatigued due to social pressures on them to run their homes smoothly by placing the needs of her family above more selfish needs. Rather than attribute this phenomenon to any deficiency of American culture, however, cookbook writers stressed in an offhand way the woman's role in setting matters straight. This message became engrained in women's minds and prompted many to passively accept the hand they had been dealt by society to avoid personal feelings of failure.

Food preparation guides such as *America's Cookbook* dictated messages intended to help women prove their adequacy as mothers and wives by providing matter-of-fact instructions like "The child's lunch box should contain sandwiches that are suitable to his needs…The man who carries his lunch requires at least two substantial sandwiches with a protein base."[16] The recipients of these tips were automatically assumed to be females, and those who enjoyed the fruits of women's labor were typically males, as evidenced by this cookbook's emphasis on the needs of the man of the house and the male child. This theme was displayed so consistently in postwar cookbooks and food advertisements that the women in these images

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[12] *Knox On-Camera Recipes: A Completely New Guide to Gel-Cookery* (New York: Knox Gelatine, Inc., 1962), 32.
[13] *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 18.

[14] Parkin, *Food is Love*, 24.
[15] *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 40.
[16] *America's Cookbook,* The New York Herald Tribune Home Institute (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 814.

were rarely shown to find satisfaction in the act of eating because the emphasis was placed so heavily on finding fulfillment through serving and pleasing others.[17]

Homemakers were expected not only to cater to their families' needs but to enjoy their station and outwardly display their contentedness. After listing some of the joys of cooking, *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* concluded, "Best of all, there's the rich reward of seeing the beaming faces of the family as they enjoy these fruits of your homemaking."[18] An array of delicious food and a cheery demeanor were especially crucial when preparing meals for outside company. Because prepackaged foods made up many of the ingredients found in postwar recipes, homemakers simply had to combine these canned foods and add a garnish in order to create a "unique" dish for company. This combination of ingredients often produced what would be considered ornamental and garish meals by today's standards, with the cuisine of the 50s defined by the mantra "appearance was all and reality was the cook's own little secret."[19] A hostess often aimed to prepare foods so dazzling that their female guests would observe her cooking skills with admiration and inquire about the recipe. Women went to such lengths to prove their worth as cooks and entertainers because housewives were expected to bolster their husbands' social standing.[20] [21]

One effective strategy cookbook authors employed in order to remind women of their place was to caution them against growing lazy in their cooking habits because their marriages might crumble if their husbands were not satisfied with their culinary abilities. Writers frequently targeted married women, knowing many of their readers would feel susceptible to this risk because of their economic dependency on their husbands. Cookbooks often offered tips to a new bride or a housewife about which meals would best satisfy her husband's taste palette and how wives could help their spouses by offering small gestures of love, namely by fussing over his food or drink. *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* declared that "the simplest fruit juice cocktail—for a tired husband

just home from work" could ensure a successful meal, and by extension, a fulfilling marriage.[22]

Many food advertisements regarded food preparation as the essence of love and femininity. Parkin cites a Green Giant advertisement from 1957 that featured a wife feeding peas to her lover as a cupid hovered above them with arrows and told women to "fuss over 'em like a hen over her only chick."[23] The postwar domestic ideology that shaped this image was problematic because it limited opportunities for both sexes; women were subject to the every whim of their husbands, while men were considered lazy, oversized children who needed to be fed and nurtured by their wives. At the same time, men were credited with having sound judgment where tasting meals and gauging economic practices was concerned. Many cookbooks presented men as authority figures who understood food preparation even better than women did, such as *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* suggested with an image of a male police officer brandishing a ruler at a homemaker in an intimidating manner and ordering her to "measure that pan!"[24] Portrayals of men in cookbooks, however, were often as equally inconsistent as those of women.[25]

Cookbook authors typically attempted to prove men's superiority by presenting seemingly paradoxical representations of men that wavered between praising men's cooking intuition and confirming the masculinity of the men in the kitchen despite their culinary know-how. Some cookbooks chided women for their lack of innovation in preparing food. For instance, *America's Cookbook* proclaims in their section on produce, "For some reason, women in the past have generally been poor vegetable cooks. Overcooking, bad seasoning, and lack of imagination in serving have been the chief weakness."[26] Cookbook author Malcolm LaPrade accused women of focusing more on the outward attractiveness of a dish rather than the quality of its ingredients.

Recipes intended for men, by contrast, emphasized the daring choices men made in the kitchen compared to those of women, who were more likely to follow a cookbook's instructions verbatim than risk diverging from the recipe.

[17] Parkin, *Food is Love*, 36-37.

[18] *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 40.

[19] Sylvia Lovegren, *Fashionable Food: Seven Decades of Food Fads* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 218.

[20] Lovegren, *Fashinonable Food*, 182-253.

[21] Catherine Manton, *Fed Up: Women and Food in America* (Westport: Bergin and Garvey, 1999), 44.

[22] *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 57.

[23] Parkin, *Food is Love*, 32.

[24] Ibid., 20.

[25] Parkin, *Food is Love*, 49-127.

[26] *America's Cookbook*, 515.

Whereas a woman may have been assigned the menial task of making appetizers with ready-made ingredients for a special gathering, the husband was in charge of the more inventive enterprise of preparing cocktails. This language distanced men's culinary ventures from women's compulsory, insipid cooking. The need to distinguish between the two genders was significant during the 1950s, when the McCarthy era and the lavender scare had further politicized gender issues and caused Americans to fear anyone outside the norm.[27]

Another technique authors utilized to differentiate men's cooking habits from women's was to use language that appealed to men's interests and food preferences. Cookbooks from the 20s, 30s, and 50s all encouraged men to take an interest in the kitchen by equating cooking with traditionally "masculine" pastimes like sports. The language of recipes intended for men used verbs associated with power and aggression, such as a recipe for hot dogs that concluded, "Pull out toothpicks, slosh with mustard to taste, clamp both pieces of the bun together, and fling your lips over as delicious a dish as Hebe ever served on Olympus."[28] By invoking the authority of the gods and the rhetoric of warfare, cookbook authors subliminally assured male cooks of their masculinity despite the common association between cookery and females.

Additionally, men and women were frequently linked with the preparation of specific meals. A typical meal for a gathering of women included mixed nuts, tea, and delicate finger food such as cucumber sandwiches. Men, on the other hand, were assigned the role of cooking meat, which was considered an inherently masculine food. Many recipes justified the act of men cooking over a stove by suggesting that men and meat were connected since the first cavemen created fire, and images of cowboys cooking meat over fires supported this notion. Even within the realm of food preparation, women were relegated to the private sphere of the home, while men cooking outside was perfectly acceptable. Jessamyn Neuhaus credited Marguerite McCarthy, author of the 1954 cookbook *The Queen is in the Kitchen*, for asserting, "To my way of thinking, no member of the gentler sex can appear at her best lugging wood for a fire or stooping over it to give a final poke. This is strictly a man's department and should be turned over to

him."[29] Not only were wives discouraged from barbequing, but "women's food"—particularly gelatin salad—was rarely found in these settings because such meals were not deemed substantial or "macho" enough.[30][31][32]

While some cookbooks targeted their recipes at men, authors made sure to underscore that men were not expected to cook for their families on an everyday basis. One inconsistency in the representation of men in the kitchen was that they were sometimes portrayed as creative, and at other times dependent on their wives. Many cookbooks implied that men did not understand even the most basic aspects of cooking. *America's Cookbook* declares, "Food freezing is so simple and the results are so satisfying that not only the women of the household but the menfolk, as well, enthusiastically endorse this easy and effective way of food preservation."[33] Cookbook authors presumably concluded that men did not spend time in the kitchen and could hardly grasp the most basic processes like food freezing.

These gendered assumptions about food and its preparation were communicated to Americans from an early age. For example, *Betty Crocker's Cookbook for Boys and Girls*, released in 1957, featured a girl on its cover assisting her mother with cooking while a boy in the background ate out of the cooking pot. Even though the book was intended for boys *and* girls, the cover promoted the message that females were meant to work in the kitchen while males were allowed to be more negligent. In another illustration next to a recipe for Whiz Nut Bread, a boy observes and pokes a loaf of bread while his sister does dishes in the background. Most recipes in this cookbook for children were accompanied by pictures of girls cooking, except for a section on "Campfire Cooking" that featured three boys building "the Hunter's Fire"—language that appealed to the same male audience who believed barbequing meat was not a task for the weak.[34] Furthermore, while a young boy reflected, "Baking is as much fun as my chemistry set. And you can eat what you mix up," a girl from the same book affirmed "If I were a

[27] Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 212-217.
[28] Neuhaus, "The Way," 541.
[29] Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 193-198.
[30] Ibid, 198.
[31] Neuhaus, "The Way," 539-542.
[32] Lovegren, *Fashionable Food*, 170-176.
[33] *America's Cookbook*, 853.
[34] *Boys and Girls*, 64-65.

mama, I'd cook all day long."[35] While boys could have varied and scholarly interests, postwar society trained girls from a young age not to look farther than their duties as a homemaker for fulfillment.

Despite cookbooks' emphasis on the gratification wives and mothers could find through cooking for their families, they often hinted at the tediousness of this task. Authors regularly emphasized how their cookbooks would make cooking less of a chore, exposing the underlying and often unspoken consensus that women's jobs were not enviable, despite society's insistence that American women were privileged. Guides such as *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* often acknowledged that women had other hobbies besides cooking and advised their readers to plan meals in advance to avoid having to fix dinner later. The authors promised that an orderly cooking schedule would not only ensure that homemakers had more time for their "sewing circle" and other activities, but also that more organized homemakers would have a "relaxed spirit," "happy smile," and "cheerful attitude" that was an essential complement to any winning meal with family or friends.[36] The authors of *America's Cookbook* admitted that modern women had trouble factoring in time for meal preparation because they had so many other duties to worry about when compared to those of their female ancestors.

In an effort to alleviate the burdens of 1950s housewives, cookbook authors frequently touted the huge selection of appliances introduced during and after the war that would save homemakers time and money in their culinary responsibilities. Consequently, women had no excuse to abstain from cooking because most of their work was already done for them. Postwar cookbooks credited canning, pressure cooking, and new agricultural techniques offered by this new and superior consumer culture with making domestic chores more bearable.[37] [38] [39]

Many women were not convinced by the manipulative strategies used by advertisers—including cookbook writers—to present an inaccurate depiction of women in the mass culture in an effort to indicate male superiority. In a poll conducted as early as 1958, J. A. C. Brown found that eighty-six percent of American women were disillusioned with advertising and its tendency to bend the truth.

The tensions about a woman's proper place were displayed in subtler ways in 1950s cookbooks, but these issues became more pronounced in the 60s with the rise of social movements that brought awareness to oppressed minority groups. Women in the postwar era became increasingly cognizant of their subjugation, as expressed by women like Peg Bracken, author of the popular 1960 guide *The I Hate to Cook Book*, and more famously by Betty Friedan in her 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*. Bracken's work did not explicitly advocate for gains for women but was progressive nonetheless because she bluntly stated that many women were repulsed by the idea of cooking—an "unwomanly" idea for the time period. She boldly addressed her audience from the outset that "This book is for those of us who hate to, who have learned, through hard experience, that some activities become no less painful through repetition: childbearing, paying taxes, cooking."[40] Bracken created a satire of traditional cookbooks, selecting witty chapter names such as "Last-Minute Suppers: Or This Is the Story of Your Life" and "Company's Coming: Or Your Back's to the Wall" that clearly expressed her dissatisfaction with the expectation on women to serve others through cooking for their families and guests. Though she expressed her resentment at this longstanding injustice, she did not provide an alternative and even appeared to accept stratified roles for men and women, telling her female audience, "But perhaps the most depressing thing about those big fat cookbooks is that you have to have one."[41] Despite Bracken's seeming indifference to a more reformist mode of thinking about gender roles, *The I Hate to Cook Book* was a significant addition to the literature of postwar cookbooks because it subverted many of the ideas of writers who insisted that a woman's only livelihood was to serve her family.[42]

Betty Friedan was more direct in her assessment of separate spheres and the limitations this concept placed on both genders. In *The Feminine Mystique*, she asserts, "Love and children and home are good, but they are not the whole world, even if most of the words now written for

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[35] *Ibid.*, 8, 107.
[36] *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 34-35.
[37] Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 246-249.
[38] *America's Cookbook*, 29, 914, 958.
[39] *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 421.

[40] Peg Bracken, *The I Hate to Cook Book* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 1960), 1.
[41] Bracken, *I Hate to Cook,* 2.
[42] Parkin, *Food is Love* , 24.

women pretend they are. Why should women accept this picture of a half-life, instead of a share in the whole of human destiny?"[43] She believed the kitchen was a jail for women and observed that public education and the invention of new household appliances undermined the valuable work that had been assigned to women. Betty Friedan furthermore maintained that women's lives should be governed by their own choices and they should not feel compelled to practice any one chore over and over again. She received wildly positive feedback on her work, with hundreds of homemakers writing to her to thank her for labelling the crippling domestic ideology that left so many women feeling discouraged or empty during the postwar era.     Attitudes about women in the kitchen slowly began to change with both the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* and the airing of Julia Child's television show. Though she stood in a kitchen, Julia Child defied previous boundaries set for women because she demonstrated that cooking could be empowering and that food could be a source of enjoyment after women had been taught for years to take pleasure in the process of serving meals to others rather than savoring food themselves. Julia proved that women could pursue their preferred career paths and earn a living without feeling obligated to get married or have children. The blatantly sexist language of cookbooks has since faded and cooking became more inclusive as the domestic ideology of the postwar years faltered and men gradually joined women in the kitchen.[44] [45]

Cookbooks produced during the mid-twentieth century and earlier had a legacy of confining women to certain tasks, while assigning another set of responsibilities to men. This ideology was deeply engrained in American society during the Cold War, when the nation took every measure to contain communism by offering new goods and services to consumers and dictating women's moral duty to prove themselves as patriots and homemakers. As Susan Douglas surmised, this limiting depiction of women persisted for so many years because both advertisers and cookbook editors had "carefully, relentlessly researched" females'

most profound worries, including the fear that they would be insufficient wives and mothers.[46]

Cookbook authors' relentless badgering of women to cook for men and children exposed society's anxiety and understanding that women did not *have* to cook for their families. Many writers implored women through cookbooks to remain in the kitchen in order to push the agenda of male authority. Revolutionaries like Peg Bracken and Betty Friedan grew tired of these stereotypes and paved the way for women to combat traditional gender roles. As a result, many women decided to cook for their own pleasure, while others resisted the undertaking entirely. Though women are still associated with food preparation in contemporary society, they have more options and have realized that this relationship does not have to be a source of shame, but an empowering manifestation of feminine compassion.[47]

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[43] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1963), 120-121.
[44] Schenone, *A Thousand Years*, 324-328.
[45] Neuhaus, *Manly Meals,* 237.

[46] Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female with the Mass Media.* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994), 15.
[47] Catherine Manton, *Fed Up: Women and Food in America* (Westport: Bergin and Garvey, 1999), 87.

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# Comedic Relief in a Culture of Uncertainty: The Contribution of Life Magazine to 1920s America

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Amidst the chaotic atmosphere of the 1920s, *Life* magazine was a common sight in the homes of middle-class Americans everywhere.[48] During this period of massive social and cultural change, many Americans experienced an unprecedented loss of certainty. As a humor and general interest publication existing during the time, *Life* capitalized on the vulnerability of Americans. *Life* worked on two distinct levels – while it fostered anxiety about modernity and the changing times, it also used humor to provide middle-class Americans with comedic relief from the very anxieties it fueled. In perpetuating the feeling of uncertainty, *Life* simultaneously offered itself as a salvation from the unsettling problems afflicting 1920s society.

It is essential to establish the parameters of this examination. As a publication that has existed for over 100 years, *Life* has undergone significant changes since its inception in 1883 to the contemporary era. Readers of *Life* from the late 20th and early 21st century would likely associate *Life* as a publication predominantly focused on photojournalism, producing some of the most iconic images in American culture since the 1940s. Yet in the late 19th and early 20th century, *Life* magazine existed as an entirely different type of publication. During this period, *Life* was a general interest magazine that relied heavily on articles and illustrations, using humor as a platform for social commentary. It is this style of *Life* magazine that must be envisioned when evaluating the purpose, function and effect of *Life* during the 1920s. The evidence used in this argument is derived from numerous *Life* issues belonging to the *same* year: 1922. In using *Life* source material from only one year, recurring themes and content can be traced more accurately, with a deeper analysis on the specific narratives evident within *Life* during the period. In addition, by limiting the body of source material to 1922, it can be determined whether or not certain sentiments or attitudes found within *Life* were simply anomalies and not characteristic of principal *Life* themes.

The 1920s were a period marked by massive transformation. Newly arriving immigrants combined with the rise of urbanization to alter the American demographic landscape. Technological developments and new management techniques in the industrial sphere led to substantial increases in production and a reimagining of the workplace environment. However, this emphasis came at a cost to workers. Workers were no longer needed for their specific skills, but rather for their ability to simply operate equipment and perform menial tasks. This led a number of workers to feel unsatisfied with their decreasing autonomy and increasingly regimented lives.[49] At the same time, scientific developments in the global arena permeated into American culture, casting doubt upon previously held assumptions regarding the nature of existence. For instance, physicist Albert Einstein's theory of relativity implied that measurements of time and space were relative to the location and movement of the observer; there seemed to be no one definitive measurement of reality.[50] Einstein's theory along with others in the field of quantum physics eerily suggested that there were aspects of life that science may never be able to account for. A number of these change-inducing agencies were well in place prior to the 1920s – mechanization, urbanization and the redefinition of social norms were all factors that were evident in the early years of the century.[51] Yet it was in the 1920's that these forces culminated, sparking what historian Lynn Dumenil describes as an: "acute consciousness of social and cultural change that challenged tradition, religion, rational order and progress."[52] These forces, or the "acids of modernity" as termed by Dumenil, coalesced to create an atmosphere riddled with uncertainty, and left many Americans in search of something.[53]

Within the American cultural climate of the 1920s, *Life* augmented the feeling of uncertainty in a multitude of ways, one of which was through

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[48] Kathleene Drowne, *The 1920s* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004), 176.

[49] Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 61.
[50] Jon Roberts, "Science as a Source of Cognitive Ideals and Relativist Realities." (Lecture, Boston University, Boston, MA, November 8, 2013).
[51] Dumenil,10.
[52] Dumenil, 148.
[53] Dumenil, 172.

advertising. *Life* featured a number of advertisements that instilled fear in its readers. These advertisements worked to promote products or services by disrupting the stability of readers, posing unsettling questions that created fear and concern. For example, in an advertisement titled "Who does your thinking for you?" (Fig. 1) it is implied that one is not in control of one's own opinions, rather that others govern one's thoughts and actions. It is expected that upon seeing this, readers would worry about whether or not their thoughts are manipulated by outside influences and begin to look for ways in which they could regain their independence. In a similar fashion, the advertisement titled "Will your marriage be a failure?" (Fig. 2) also features the same kind of scare tactic. Rather than thoughts, this advertisement focuses on the supposedly joyous institution of marriage, and frightens readers into wondering whether or not they will fail in having a successful and happy relationship. These advertisements generated anxieties regarding issues that were possibly nonexistent; they posed alarming questions designated to terrorize readers into imagining a variety of potential problems.

These types of ads of course were not unique to *Life*; rather they were simply characteristic of preexisting advertising styles during the time period. In the early 20th century, advertising deviated from its descriptive, utilitarian-based origins and shifted towards ads that manipulated consumer emotion. Advertisements that dealt with a broad range of consumer products contained rhetoric and illustrative depictions aimed at intimidating readers into purchasing consumer goods or services. Yet despite the fact that the majority of ads during the 1920s featured some form of fear mongering, the presence of these distress-inducing ads in *Life* undoubtedly contributed to the magazine's promotion of uncertainty.

The references to the acids of modernity were not only evident in *Life*'s advertisements, but in its content as well. During the 1920s, *Life* predominantly used illustration as its medium. *Life*'s illustrations were not simply light-hearted cartoons or meaningless depictions – they were images that dealt with contentious topics of the time. One of these topics featured in *Life*'s illustrations was industrialization, a prominent issue that played a substantial role in altering the landscape of 1920s society. To cite one example,

the *Life* illustration titled "The Last Horse" (Fig. 3) portrayed an artist meticulously studying what is supposedly the last horse in existence. In the scene, an airplane, a symbol of machinery and technological innovation looms in the background, lingering over the horse.[54] It is implied that the horse, a representation of pre-industrial activity and transportation is on the verge of extinction, while machines are preparing to take over. This illustration alludes to the changing tides taking place in America that were innovating previously established aspects of life. Other illustrations were more wary in their characterization of industrialization. One untitled cartoon (Fig. 4) depicted a scene where industrialization unnecessarily complicated things that did not need to be improved in the first place. In this illustration, a boy is shown asking his father for a simple toy ball after being unable to figure out how to play with a new mechanical toy.[55] Although seemingly harmless in subject matter, the cartoon solemnly implies that the forces of industrialization may not necessarily be a good thing, or an improvement to American culture.

In addition to industrialization, *Life* also delved into issues related to scientific developments. Science, a controversial and highly debated issue in the 1920s, was frequently featured in *Life*'s illustrations. One science related cartoon (Fig. 5) depicted a man with an ape's body wielding Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man*, crying out: "it's a lie!"[56] Darwin's work, identifying humankind within the framework of evolutionary theory, was indubitably a concerning matter for Americans in the early 20th century. Americans aware of Darwin's work found themselves caught in between their longstanding theistic foundations and the mounting scientific evidence for an evolutionary perspective on humanity. The cartoon portrays the struggle of Americans to understand their origins in the midst of two conflicting forces. The cartoon also seems to support the notion of a biological explanation regarding the creation of humanity, depicting the contradiction of a man ignoring evolutionary theory despite his obvious physical appearance as a pre-evolved primate. Yet it can also be argued that the cartoon simply illustrated the

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[54] Broughton. "The Last Horse." Illustration. *Life* (Life Publishing Company)*,* May 4, 1922, 11.
[55] *Life,* December 14, 1922, 25.
[56] *Life,* April 2, 1922, 22.

unsettling dilemma for Americans at the time - religion was the historically embraced ideology that provided mankind with purpose, however scientific theories offered tangible and testable explanations for the process by which humans came to be. Regardless of the interpretation, this illustration and others of a similar variety unquestionably intensified sentiments of uncertainty regarding the role of science.

Outside the realm of science and technology, *Life* also presented other change-inducing social forces in its illustrations, such as female gender roles. During the 1920s women looked to redefine not only their attitudes, but also their roles within American society. The constitutional ratification of the 19th amendment provided women not only with the undeniable right to vote, but also a sense of new independence. In response to this freedom, female characters like the loose and rebellious flapper emerged to cast doubt upon previous notions of what it meant to be a woman. *Life* perhaps best captured this aura of female transformation through Frank Xavier Leyendecker's now well-known illustration titled "The Flapper" (Fig. 6). The illustration, featured on the cover of one 1922 *Life* issue, depicts a smiling woman with brightly colored and outstretched wings, equating the flapper with a butterfly, having undergone a considerable metamorphosis.[57] In *Life*'s illustration, it was clear that the any notions of homogenized or rigid female roles were no longer applicable in the modern climate. Also notable is the placement of the illustration – rather than simply being used as a page in the magazine, "The Flapper" was the first and most prominent image seen by readers, a likely indication of the importance and significance of changing femininity during the time. Conceivably for the same reason, other illustrations of a similar subject matter were also featured on the cover pages of 1922 *Life* issues. The September 1922 cover titled "The Mirage" (Fig. 7) for instance, depicted the flapper looking into her reflection and seeing a more traditional, possibly Victorian woman.[58] The cover is indicative of the fact that women were not of one opinion during the time – not all women strived to achieve the same purpose or forge the same identity and

thus there was no one universally accepted notion of femininity. In this regard, *Life* illustrated both the diversity and ambiguity found within the changing concept of the woman. In addition to referencing modernizing forces, *Life* also offered critiques of the *ways* in which Americans responded to modernity.

For traditional Americans loyal to the cultural standards of the past, modernity was a threat. Modernity involved substantial societal changes that challenged and attempted to reinvent longstanding concepts of living. Americans who embraced the traditional way of life reacted defensively in the face of these changes. These Americans sought to combat change by creating a homogenous society "held together by shared values and assumptions."[59] One way these old-stock Americans attempted to achieve this goal was through restrictive measures such as Prohibition.

*Life* in the 1920s offered an incessant assault on Prohibition. *Life* regularly provided illustrations and articles aimed at exposing the absurdity and irrationality of the overly restrictive regulation. One article titled "Modernized" featured an exchange between two characters that clearly ridiculed the role of prohibition in society. In the article, one character poses the question, "How do you like living at Knapps Creek Junction, is it an up-to-date town?" In response, the other character replies: "you bet, the milkman will leave you with a pint of milk and a quart of liquor every morning."[60] The witty exchange points to the ineffectiveness of Prohibition – in light of the ban on alcohol, Americans who sought liquor simply resorted to other methods of obtaining it. A substantial number of Americans in 1920s disregarded the 18th amendment, turning towards alternatives of bootlegging, and speakeasies to consume alcohol. A similar, yet slightly different sentiment can be derived from the article "From the Journal of a Prohibitionist". In the article, the protagonist visits several outlandish locations searching for alcohol in order to determine if Prohibition has been effective. Failing to find either alcohol or alcohol consumption in a public library, a gas tank of a vehicle and in an exhibit within the Museum of Natural History, the speaker concludes, "it is obvious that Prohibition has been a tremendous

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[57] Leyendecker. "The Flapper". Illustration. *Life* (Life Publishing Company) February 2, 1922. Cover.
[58] "The Mirage". Illustration. *Life* (Life Publishing Company), September 14, 1922. Cover.

[59] Dumenil, 202.
[60] *Life,* February 23, 1922.

success".[61] Clear in the sarcasm of the article's conclusion is that while alcohol consumption may have appeared to be controlled in public areas, it was still a lively practice in private environments, regardless of its illegal status. Put differently, Prohibition did not eliminate alcohol consumption, but simply privatized it into an experience that took place secretly in people's homes and in hidden speakeasy establishments. Although Prohibition was the one response primarily criticized by *Life*, it was certainly not the only response to modernity that *Life* disparaged.

While not nearly as frequent or severe as the criticism afforded to Prohibition, critiques of the Ku Klux Klan also found their way into *Life*'s pages. One article titled the "Diary of a 100% American" offered a fictional account of a white man who joins the KKK in order to defend the purity of 100% Americanism against the forces of ethnic diversification and culture blending taking place in the 1920s.[62] As each day of the week progresses, the man gradually realizes that everything around him–food, business and even his fellow members of the KKK–have non-American affiliations. By the end of the week, the man finds himself with nothing, as nothing around him, not even himself, possesses the idyllic notion of 100% Americanism. The article subtly implies that the goal of the KKK is unattainable for the simple fact that everything within the cultural climate of early 20th century America bore foreign or non-white features. In this depiction, the KKK is thus portrayed as a futile attempt to homogenize an already diverse environment. *Life*'s criticism of restrictive forces, in this case both the KKK and Prohibition, was indicative of the fact that even the *responses* to modernity were ineffective and brought no relief from the uncertainty permeating through the 1920s.

While it may be interpreted that *Life*'s willingness to critique the KKK and hence old-stock white Americans implied that the magazine was directed towards a more racially diverse audience, this was in no way the case. *Life* commonly featured offensive racial caricatures of immigrant and non-white groups, making it highly unlikely for the magazine to be directed at, let alone appeal to anyone besides the white middle class. One magazine section titled "Greetings from Japan" (Fig. 8) featured racist depictions of notable American figures with stereotypical Asian qualities. The illustration portrays slant-eyed, buck-toothed Asians wearing traditional Japanese clothing and wielding samurai swords.[63] In a similar fashion, a recurring cartoon (Fig. 9) found throughout several 1922 issues embodies *Life*'s use of exaggerated stereotypic features of African Americans.[64] In these cartoons, excessively shaded, big-lipped African Americans are shown speaking to one another in poorly constructed English sentences. These illustrations and others of the same variety were indubitably insulting in nature, likely offending any readers who belonged to the ethnic groups at the center of *Life*'s racist caricatures. The presence of these derogatory illustrations indicates that *Life* was not a magazine intended for a diverse audience that included immigrant groups and African Americans. However, at the same time, it would be inaccurate to suggest that *Life* promoted an all-white agenda. More accurately, *Life* attacked both extremes of the 1920s racial conflict; *Life* criticized the actions of Anglo-Saxon Protestants who wished to homogenize the country, but also ridiculed the physical and mental attributes of immigrant and black groups as well. In this sense, *Life*'s target audience was people in the middle – white, middle-class Americans who were simply attempting to forge a meaningful existence in an atmosphere riddled with uncertainty.

Although *Life* regularly reminded readers of the problems that came with modernity, it ultimately did so for the purpose of comedy and satire, referencing the issues in humorous contexts in order to lighten the anxieties derived from the very issues it perpetuated. *Life*'s comical accounts were designed to light-heartedly poke fun at a broad spectrum of controversial topics. For example, the article titled "The New Bone-Dust Theory of Behavior" parodied the ridiculousness of scientific theories that promoted a biological basis for moral behavior. The article details an exaggerated hypothesis that the friction caused when extending one's elbow results in the buildup of bone dust, a dangerous and potentially harmful compound. According to the satirical theory, the presence of excess bone dust predisposes one to commit various criminal acts, ranging from theft to murder. The article concludes by stating that this bone-dust theory will govern American society until the next

[61] *Life*, March 30, 1922, 15.
[62] "Diary of a 100% American", *Life,* May 4, 1922, 20.

[63] "Greetings from Japan", *Life*, November 9, 1922, 4.
[64] *Life*, April 2, 1922, 9.

preposterous theory emerges to propose another seemingly harmful bodily or spiritual condition.[65] Other articles directed satire towards the transformation of women. Titled "The law and the ladies", one article presents a courtroom scene where a woman is on trial for divorcing her husband. Women in the scenario have risen up to erode the patriarchal structure of society, and have thus switched roles with men. The woman on trial is questioned as to why she did not properly care for her husband by sending him flowers and buying him silk hats. The woman is eventually cleared of all charges after the entirely female jury leaves to go shopping. In humorously reversing the longstanding cultural norms of male chivalry, the article depicts female transformation taken to an absurd, comical extreme. While *Life* provided frequent parodies of female life in the 1920s, *Life* perhaps directed the bulk of its comedy and satire towards practices of conformity, namely Prohibition.

As Prohibition was one of *Life*'s most commonly dealt with topics, comedic ridicule of Prohibition could be found within almost every *Life* issue in 1922. The illustration captioned "Bootlegging" encapsulates the quintessential image of *Life*'s attitude towards the ban on alcohol. In the illustration (Fig 10.), members of the United States Senate are depicted huddled around a bottle of brandy while snickering: "SCANDALOUS!".[66] The image alludes to the fact that prohibition was a commonly violated regulation that not even members of the senate seriously respected. The article titled "The Also Rums" further joked about the failed attempt of Prohibition to eradicate alcohol consumption. In the article, it is fictitiously claimed that Prohibition has reduced the number of alcohol consumers from twenty million to two million. While the decrease in consumers seems to indicate that Prohibition has been successful, the conclusion of the article offers a counter explanation – these eighteen million consumers did not abstain from alcohol but simply found other ways to get it, and thus could not fall under the category of a recognized alcohol consumer. The article offers several alternative possibilities for how these Americans obtained alcohol despite Prohibition's

restriction – six million turned to bootlegging, three million made their own and two million idiotically drank wood alcohol and died. The final category is a clear indication that the article was in no way intended to be serious; the article presented comical possibilities for how the average American dealt with the absurdity that was Prohibition. The humor derived from these texts and other *Life* texts of a similar variety worked to turn concrete issues of the 1920s into markedly innocuous subjects that could be made fun of and laughed at.

Outside the issue of alcohol, *Life* also featured satirical commentary on government restriction as a whole. The piece titled "The Moral Life" for example, offered *Life*'s humorous depiction of a dystopian America ruled by an invasive and oppressive government. The article describes the routinized life of an American in the far future of 1989 after laws like Prohibition have completely regimented society. The regulatory measures described in the story were clearly outrageous – actions such as waking up, going to work and using the bathroom were all movements dictated by the government in order to standardize all aspects of American life.[67] The article offers an exaggerated account of the potential extents to which government regulations could be taken. Yet again, content such "The Moral Life" and others relating to a multitude of other subjects were largely indicative of *Life*'s use of satire and humor in regarding issues related to modernity. Through these humorous articles and illustrations, *Life* acted to reduce the tensions associated with the issues of the 1920s and alleviate reader anxiety.

Some may dispute the findings of this conclusion and argue instead that *Life*'s humorous cartoons and satirical articles were not attempts to relieve public concern over modernity. Such an argument might follow that *Life* in the 1920s was just a lighthearted humor magazine that had no purpose besides attracting readers with meaningless, yet creative comedy. Following this line of reasoning, *Life* simply drew upon the issues of the time for inspiration and used them as subject material in its harmless content. While this argument may seem to make sense, it fails to contextualize and give value to the subject matter of *Life*'s content. *Life* commonly dealt with numerous controversial topics of the time; topics that were

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[65] "The New Bone-Dust Theory of Behavior", *Life,* May 25, 1922, 8.
[66] Eebster. "Bootlegging". Illustration. *Life* (Life Publishing Company), February 2, 1922, 8.

[67] James McGuinness, "The Moral Life", *Life* (Life Publishing Company), March 16, 1922, 4.

important, contentious and frequently troubling for many Americans. When mentioning these issues, *Life* used humor and comedy to ridicule aspects within the very problems causing Americans distress. In doing so, *Life*'s material acted to ease the worries Americans had about the problems related modernity. To say that *Life* was simply an aimless humor magazine providing meaningless commentary is to ignore the incredibly significant fact that *Life*'s humor was based upon the significant historical forces of modernity permeating through the 1920s.

In an ever-changing environment dominated by the feeling of uncertainty, *Life* magazine was something that perpetuated this feeling. Yet *Life*'s ultimate purpose was not to cause readers distress, but rather to provide a basis for light-hearted comedy. *Life* applied its brand of humor and satire to modern issues in order to create a more atmosphere in which these issues could be laughed at and joked about. For many middle-class Americans, it was likely the case that *Life* was a necessary and relieving force that alleviated the tensions derived from the problems of the 1920s. In a culture of relentless uncertainty, *Life* magazine offered a release.

## APPENDIX



FIG. 1. Advertisement, "Who does your thinking for you?" 1922. From Life, No. 2045 (January 12, 1922): 1.



FIG. 2. Advertisement, "Will Your Marriage Be a Failure?" 1922. From Life, No. 2045 (January 12, 1922).
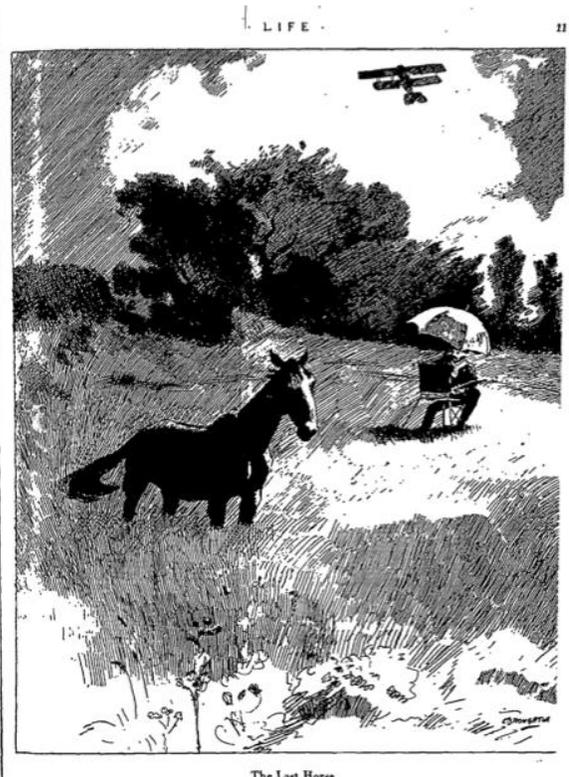


FIG. 3. Illustration, Broughton, "The Last Horse," 1922. From Life (May 4, 1922): 11.
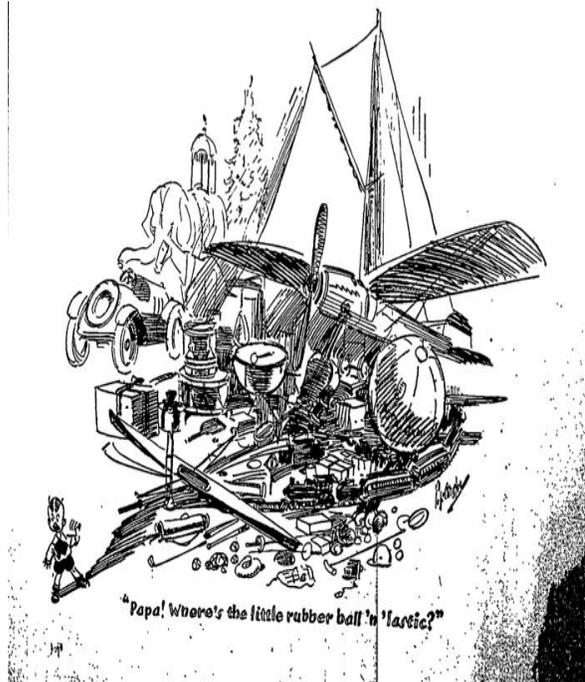


FIG. 4. Illustration, Untitled, 1922. From Life (September 22, 1922): 25.

FIG. 5. Illustration, "It's a Lie!" 1922. From Life (April 2, 1922): 22.
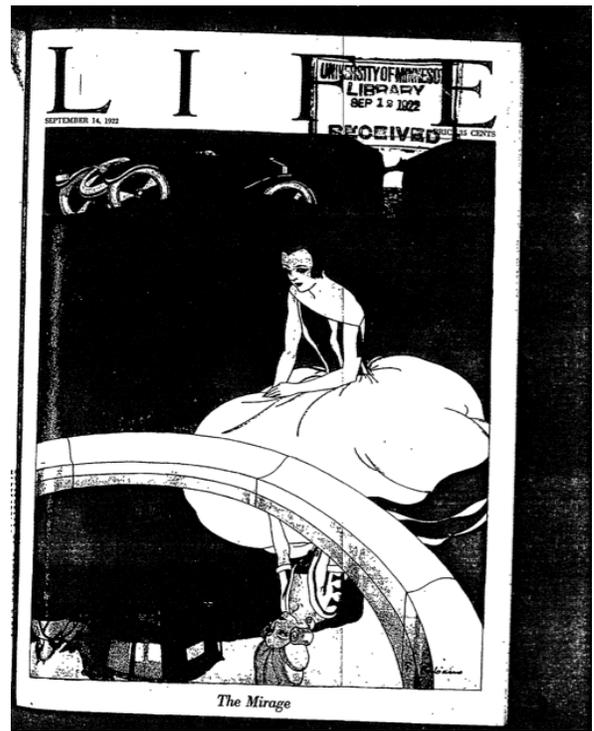


FIG. 7. Illustration, "The Mirage," 1922. From Life (September 14, 1922): Cover page.



FIG. 6. Illustration, Frank Xavier Leyendecker, "The Flapper," 1922. From Life (February 2, 1922): Cover page.
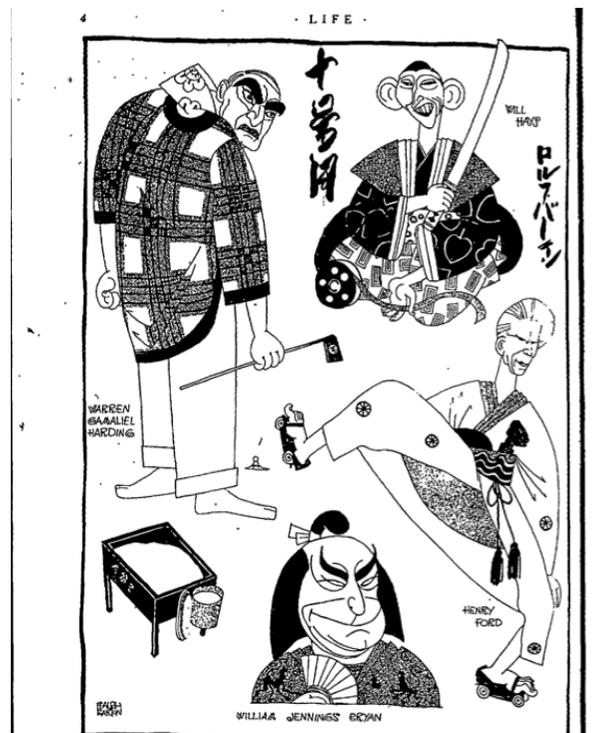


FIG. 8. Illustration, "Greetings From Japan," 1922. From Life (November 9, 1922): 4.

**Figure 9 Illustration, Arb. Frost, Untitled, 1922. From Life (April 2, 1922): 9.**



**FIG. 10. Illustration, Eebster, "Bootlegging," 1922. From Life (February 2, 1922): 8.**

# Nations not Tribes: Subtle Misrepresentations on Colonial Era Maps

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## Introduction

Education in history is a fundamental aspect of high school curriculum. An understanding of the past, and the formative events that shaped our present are considered a foundation to a well-educated population who are able to be productive members of modern society. However, the biases of the past often influence the selection of materials used in education. The use of tertiary materials carries a definite point of view from the author. To offset this tendency, secondary and primary source materials are utilized to allow the student a more direct connection to the materials and aspects of the past. Maps are an important graphic component of these source materials.

Maps fall into many categories. Geophysical characteristics, environmental forces, as well as geopolitical divisions can all be depicted on maps. Maps themselves have an intrinsic point of view. The creator chooses the things to be depicted on the map. The map is intended to illustrate a state so that the viewer can quickly grasp the relevant data and have an easier time remembering it. The subconscious impact of the images on the map, which are often color coded, serves to shape the interpretation and point of view that the viewer forms often without any reflection or analysis of the map's accuracy.

In the education of US history at the high school level maps are often incorporated into the textbooks, or used as supplemental material in the classroom. In Nassau County, New York, the history materials used in eleventh grade history incorporate a number of maps that depict the Native Americans in relation to the European colonists. These maps create a bias in the mid of the viewer due to the choices made in their organization. This paper examines the maps and their intrinsic bias, as well as their impact on the students exposed to them.

## History Education

Education in history is part of the high school curriculum in all fifty states of the USA. Different states mandate the required education in history to varied levels. This paper looks specifically at one aspect of US history education in New York State in 2014-15. The New York State Board of Regents determines the requirements in history for the state.

In New York State, there are five key ideas that must be fulfilled in history education from kindergarten to twelfth grade. They are History of the U.S. and New York, World History and Geography, Economics and Civics, Citizenship, and Government ("Social"). In order to graduate high school, the state requires each student to complete one full year course of American History. High school students must also pass the United States History and Government Regents Examination with a score of 65 or higher ("Frequently"). United States History education in New York State has four main stated objectives. High school level students must understand American democratic culture, New York history and U.S. Foreign policy, past ethnic interactions and relationships, and be able to evaluate/determine a historical perspective's credibility ("Social").

The understanding of past ethnic interactions and relationships is directed toward the Native Americans. On the New York State Education Department website it places a standard that social interactions between the Native Americans must be taught to New York's students as well as Native's "contributions to American society and culture" ("Social").

Although the state has mandated that this standard must be taught to students, each school determines the method. School districts are allowed to select textbooks and other classroom materials to teach toward the fulfillment of the learning objectives. The measure of success is the attainment of a passing grade on the Regents Examination delivered at the end of the year for a majority of the student population taking the test at the school.

Although textbook selection is not regulated, the adherence to performance standards on the state wide Regents examination creates an intrinsic uniformity in textbooks and approaches. Teachers must "teach to the test," since their performance is evaluated via student passing rates. The biases and emphasis on the test trickles down to the teaching materials and contributes to an implicit uniformity in education in the state as is evidenced in the material examined in the body of this paper.

## Representation of Native Americans on Maps

US History education in New York is administered in both a Regents track and an honors or Advanced Placement (AP) track. Although all students must take the Regents Examination, talented students are able to take a more demanding class that further prepares them for the Scholastic Aptitude Test II Subject Examination in US History, or the Advanced Placement Examination in History. Within these two tracks of high school level US History, there is a presentation of the colonization of North America. The presentation as depicted graphically in the maps chosen to be included in the teaching materials, creates a subconscious subtle yet pervasive bias toward viewing the Native Americans as less organized and less sophisticated than the European colonists.

Each school is allowed to choose the textbooks it uses. There are 56 School districts in Nassau County, New York ("Nassau"). The Wantagh Union Free School District is one of them. In Wantagh High School there are two different textbooks used to teach U.S. History. For regents and honor level it is *History Of a Free Nation* by Henry W. Bragdon. According to the New York State Education Department website, New York is a "Non-Adoptive State" which means the state does not suggest any material for teaching ("Frequently").

This means there are potentially unlimited options for supplements to teach students because schools select the books. However the NYS Education Department website also advises the schools to contact the publishers to find textbooks that include the information need to pass the Regents Examination. The Wantagh School District's Textbook office noted that the majority of the schools in Nassau County use the same textbooks, while private and parochial schools do not. Although NYS allows free adoption of textbooks, the true state of affairs is that the textbooks are selected to allow the student to pass the Regents Examination and therefore contain almost identical content. For Advanced Placement Level US History, Wantagh High School selected *The American People* by Gary B. Nash. According to College Board, the company that makes the Advanced Placement Test, there are 26 acceptable textbooks teaches AP U.S. History ("AP"). Again although the selections seem unrestricted the realities of the standardized test create a uniformity of included information.

The textbooks used in Wantagh have a flaw. They unjustly represent Native Americans on Colonial Maps. For Example, In the *History of a Free Nation* textbook, the some of the maps do not give any indication that there are differences in Native American groups. The only map that displays any variation in Native Nations is the map on page 12 labeled "Native American Cultures".
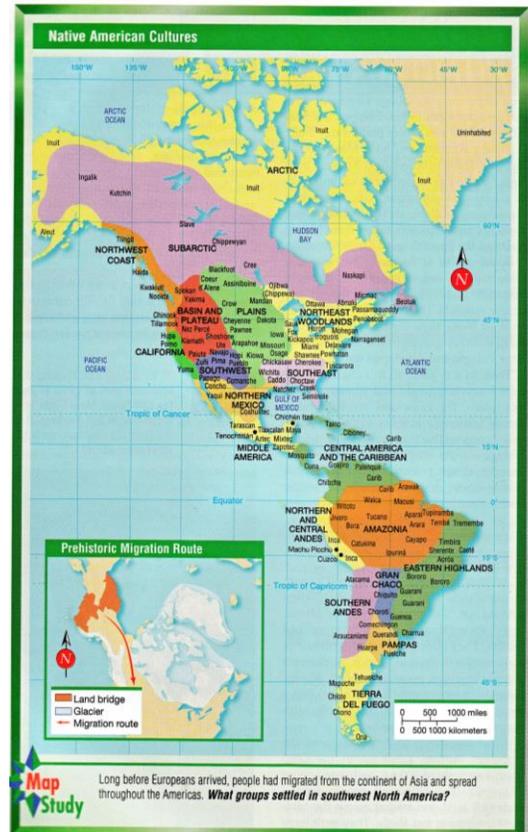


FIG. 1. Map of Native American Cultures from *History of a Free Nation* page 12

This map (see FIG. 1.) lists many different ethnic groups of the Natives but it does not have any definite lines that would separate their lands. The culture groups are delineated in various colors. However the individual nations are listed and seem to "float" on the map lacking any definite boundaries. Although some of the groups were nomadic, even they still had areas that they considered to be theirs and used definite geophysical boundaries to define their geopolitical world. Interestingly, this is the most informative map on the Native Americans in this textbook. The next map from the same book on page 57 is labeled the "Settlement of the Colonies, 1587-1760".
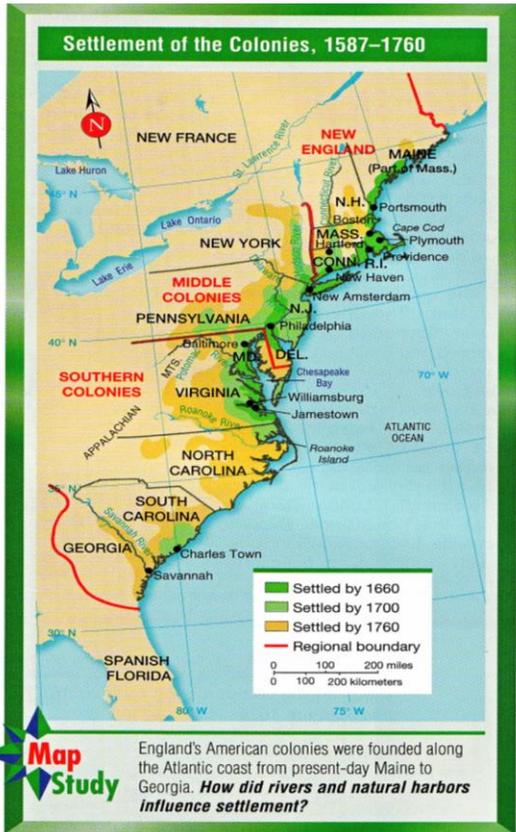
**FIG. 2. Map of Settlement of the Colonies from** *History of a Free Nation* **page 57**



**FIG. 3. Map of The Proclamation of 1763 from History of a Free Nation page 99**

This map (see FIG. 2.) is illustrative of an intrinsic bias. The colonies are depicted with heavy black lines, which create definite impressions psychologically of the clear geopolitical divisions. From 1587-1760, the Native Americans existed in highly organized and populous nations, but they are nowhere to be seen on the map. This map completely ignores the Native Americans presence during the European Colonization of America. Lacking any indication of the Native American nations, the student subconsciously accepts the position that there was no competing geopolitical system in the Americas.

In the same book, the map on page 99 labeled "The Proclamation of 1763" (see FIG. 3.) clearly displays the established colonies. The only mention of the Native Americans is the area labelled, "Indian Reserve." However, according to the colored legend on the map, the yellow area is "Other British Territory." Again the implication is that the colonies had definite demarcations while the Native American presence did not.

In *The American People* on page 216 there is a map labeled "Indian Land Cessions, 1750-1830."
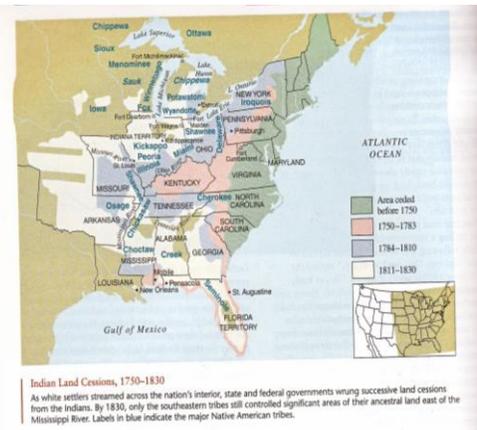


**FIG. 4. Map of Indian Land Cessions, 1750-1830 from** *The American People* **page 216**

This map (see FIG. 4.) indicates the time Indian lands were ceded by use of different colors. Yet the map does not have solid lines for Native territories but has definite borders states. The Native American Nations are only labelled as names that "float" without definite boundaries. This inserts a certain bias within the readers' mind making them believe that the Natives were disorganized when they were not.

In the same book, on page 334 the "Native American Land Cessions in 1840" map labels general areas with only some titles for the Native Americans.
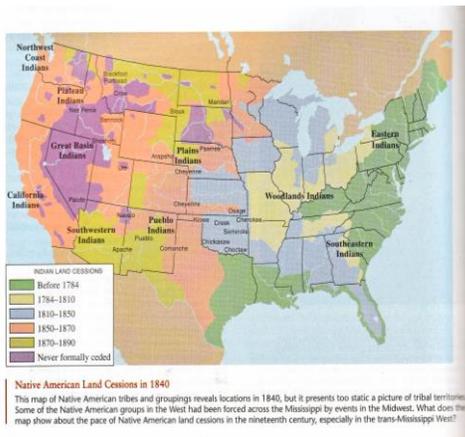


**FIG. 5. Map of Native American Land Cessions in 1840 from *The American People* page 334**

In this map (see FIG. 5.), again the sates are depicted with definite boundaries. The Native's lands are highlighted with color by year in which they were ceded but the map does not define any definite Native boundaries. Also there is the use of general descriptive terms like "Eastern Indians" which further drives home an amorphous undefined sense of the Native American geopolitical presence.

All of the maps in these textbooks are biased. They do not depict the geopolitical state that existed when the European's arrived. When the Colonists came to America in the early 1600's their maps were established from using landmarks and other geographical features. The Natives had their own boundaries. Although the Native American view of land rights was collective, while the European one was individual, the Native Americans had clear boundaries and demarcations of their own lands. The demarcations of the Native Nations should be used to educate students in New York toward a more accurate appreciation of the history of the period. As a side note, the maps use the term "Indian" to refer to the Native American and the

word "tribe" for the Native Nations. These terms are inappropriate. The word "tribe" implies a lack of sophistication, further reinforcing the idea that the definite depicted colonial geopolitical boundaries had more veracity than mere "tribal" habitats. Native Americans labeled themselves as Nations. They should be presented as that on the maps that exhibit them.

**Availability of Materials on Native American Lands and Political Boundaries**

In our modern age we have more resources available to us than before. If one inserts "American Indian Maps" in the search engine Google, 62,500,000 search results come up. There is an enormous supply of Native American maps and information which textbook manufacturers ignore. The information is easy to obtain but the effort to properly include accurate information seems lacking.

In Maryland there is the National Museum of the American Indian. This museum is a branch of the National Smithsonian Museum. According to the National Museum of the American Indian they have, "…one of the most extensive collections of Native American arts and artifacts in the world— approximately 266,000 catalog records (825,000 items) representing over 12,000 years of history and more than 1,200 indigenous cultures throughout the Americas" ("Collections").

This abundance of material could be used to further student's knowledge in the textbooks in New York State. This museum is dedicated to expanding information and spreading cultural awareness of the Native Americans. There seems to be a disconnect, perhaps unintentional, between the educators and the regulations on history education.

Also there are many historic maps of the Native Americans stored in the Library of Congress. These maps clearly show the boundaries of the Native's lands as well as labeling them as nations and not tribes. A clear example is a map of the Virginia Colony in 1754 (see FIG.6.).
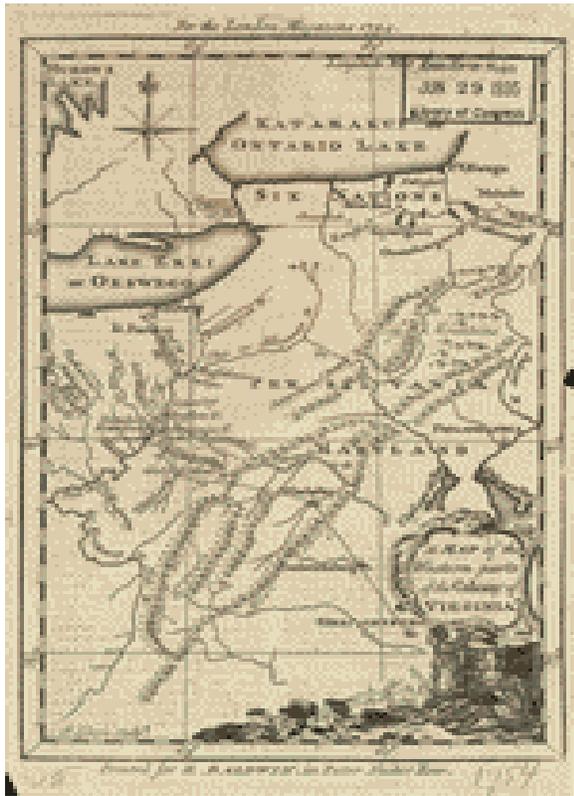
**FIG. 6. Map of the Virginia Colony in 1754, Library of Congress.**

The Library of Congress has 113 maps associated with Native Americans as well as 25 available online ("Maps"). It also has short excerpts that give a summary of what each map is representing. This source is easily accessible and is more historically informative than standard history textbooks used in New York.

There are multiple websites that have Native American maps. One Google page gives at least 9 websites that provide maps. For example, on Flutopedia.com it has many Native American maps that clearly show lands that belong to Natives and which lands belong to individual Nations (see FIG. 7.).



**FIG. 7. Map of American Indians and Alaska Natives from the US Census Bureau**

This website also has a map that lists all of the Nations that lived down the Atlantic Coastline in 1693 (see FIG. 8.).
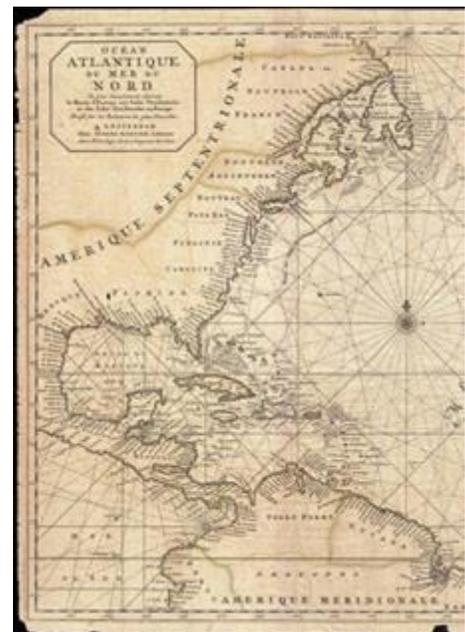


**FIG. 8. Map of Native Nations of the Atlantic Coastline by Pierre Mortier, 1693**

Although there are many websites, the best is reepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com. This site has many maps that give distinct boundaries of Native Nations like map 4.a The Cherokee Country (East) 1793-1838 .
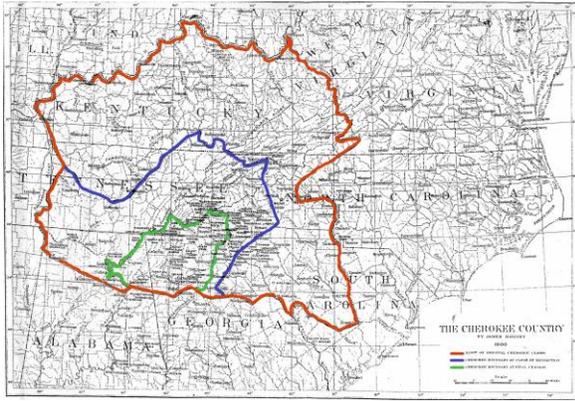
FIG. 9. Map of The Cherokee Country by James Mooney

This map (see FIG. 9.) outlines the Cherokee's border before, and during the American Revolution, as well as before the ceding of the land to the US. Clearly these maps are readily accessible.

*Atlas of The North American Indian* by Carl Waldman has many maps that show specific native territories. On page 133 the map "New York" by Guy Johnson, 1771 (see FIG. 10.) is a great example of a better format of Native American map.
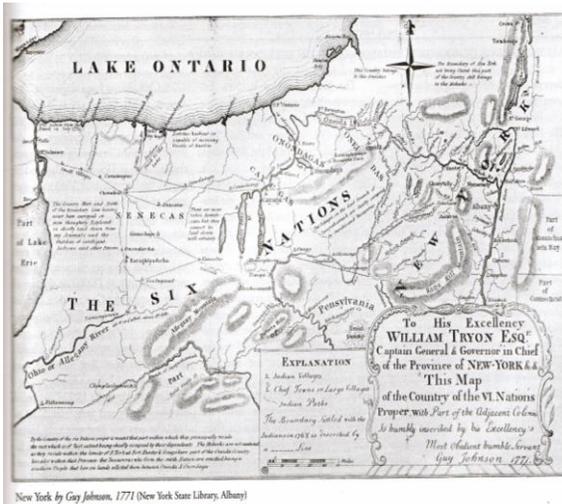

FIG. 10. Map of New York from *Atlas of the North American Indian*

This map labels the Native American groups of the Iroquois as the Six Nations. It also has small captions on the map indicating where each nation resides. It has a legend that indicates where native villages and major paths were located. This map is one of many in this collection that are well


FIG 11. Map of The English Plantations, 1754 from *Atlas of the North American Indian*

formatted. On page 194 the map "The English Plantations" by Emanuel Bowen, 1754 serves the same purpose (see FIG.11.).

This map shows the Native's rivers as well as the regions belonging to certain Native groups. Another interesting thing about this map is that it labels the Native American regions and the Colonists' regions in the same way.

There are many more examples of these more accurate maps. These are the type of maps students need to use to more accurately and unbiasedly understand the historical development of early US history. There is no dearth in material so there is no excuse for mediocre textbook maps.

**Impact of Maps on Modern New York State High School Students**

Maps play an important role in education. They help further understanding of the material being taught visually. They also provide additional information that students would not know without observing them. These textbooks intentionally chose maps to represent Native Americans and their historical significance in United States History. Maps depicting American colonization placed definite lines showing the colonies' borders. The bold demarcation of the settler's colonies psychologically alters the average student's

mindset. It gives the student the perspective that the colonists had definite political presence and legitimacy. The lack of demarcated lines in Native American territories gives the student the perspective of weak political presence and no legitimacy. It ultimately makes the Native Americans seem to be a disorganized lot of apolitical aborigines with no legitimate political claim to land rights. The improvement of these maps would create an even playing field between the Native Americans and the Colonists in the mind of the student more accurately reflecting the historical truth of early America.

These maps send subconscious messages to the student. The textbook maps create a subtle subconscious predisposition to accept a type of Manifest Destiny and inevitability of colonial expansion as well as domination of America. The by-product of this presentation is the minimization and devolving of the Native American psyche which contributes to a non-legitimized view of them leading to an ongoing discriminatory bias for their history and their current state.

## Conclusion

This study has examined the textbooks used in Wantagh High School for History Education and presented the subtle bias that is implied in the maps depicting Native American Nations and European Colonies. In New York State, there is a Board of Regents that seeks to set standards and guidelines for quality education. However the textbooks developed and selected for use to prepare students for the state wide Regents Examination in history perpetuate a bias against the Native Americans creating an on-going subtle and subconscious devaluation of their presence as a geopolitical force in early America. This bias will influence students not only in their history studies, but also in their subsequent appreciation of the Native American and the modern issues related to them. A better more balanced representation in the maps incorporated in the textbooks would be a first step to a more fair presentation of early American history.

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# The American Dinner Party

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The dinner party is a seemingly simple part of the American culture. At its core, a dinner party is a gathering of family, friends or honored guests, who come together to share in food, drink and conversation. Contradictory to this simple appearance, dinner parties contain a wealth of historical influence, social expectations, and gender roles. This intriguing part of American life is, unfortunately disappearing from mainstream society. This decline can be explained by the shift in American dining, from formal to informal, as evidenced by dinner parties.

The modern dinner party has historical roots that can be traced to ancient civilizations. Ancient Greeks would host gatherings that have elements of today's dinner parties. As with modern dinner parties, the host could simply invite friends or family to gather for a meal, however the most popular and prestigious social dining experience in ancient Greece society was the symposium. The symposium, traditionally translated as "banquet", but more literally "gathering of drinkers" was one of the preferred pastimes for the Greeks.[68] It consisted of two parts: the first dedicated to food, generally a simple meal, and a second part dedicated to drinking. However, wine was consumed with the food, and the beverages were accompanied by snacks such as chestnuts, beans, toasted wheat, or honey cakes; all intended to absorb alcohol and extend the festivities.[69] The second part consisted of after dinner drinks and entertainment that usually included conversation or table games. The guests would recline on couches around low tables, which held the food or game boards. Dancers, acrobats, and musicians would entertain the banqueters. The idea of after dinner entertainment, either through conversation, games, or other activities is a common element of modern day dinner parties or social gathering. These great feasts, however, could only be afforded by the rich and were strictly reserved for men.[70] These events were the ultimate statement of status and wealth in Ancient Greek times.

The Romans also hosted social dining events that contain elements of modern day dinner parties. The Greek practice of reclining and dining continued into ancient Rome, but with a few additions, for one, respectable women were invited to join the party, and for another, drinking was not a separate, post-dinner event, but became part of the dining experience.[71] In Rome, couches for single, generally male, diners existed, but by the later part of the period the practice at dinner parties was for guests to recline on three large beds placed in a U shape.[72] Reclining at parties continued to be primarily an elite practice; poorer citizens did not have the room for beds of this size in their modest homes. Although in previous years, reclining had been shameful for respectable women, they now reclined with men.[73] Class and status was also reflected at these parties. There were specific places that were designated for the host, favored guests, and less-favored guests. The favored guests were situated on couches that were close to the food spread and entertainment, while the less-favored guests were placed behind or further away from the central group.[74] The act of seating guest according to status or social standing can be seen in formal parties through the centuries, even in twentieth century dinner parties.

The birthplace of the modern day dinner party is arguably the Victorian Era formal dinner party. Elegant dinner parties were considered among the most popular form of entertainment in this age, and etiquette and tradition guided the host and guests through the formal affair. *Godey's Lady's Book*, one of the leading guides for etiquette in Philadelphia stated, "The most fashionable as well as pleasant way in the present day to entertain guests is to invite them to evening parties, which vary in size from the 'company,' 'sociable,' 'soiree,' to the party, par excellence, which is but one step from the ball."[75] The Victorians had an

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[68] Robert Garland, *Daily Life of the Ancient Greeks* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 175.

[69] Ibid, 177

[70] Ibid

[71] Patrick Faas, *Around the Roman Table: Food and Feasting in Ancient Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994), p. 50.

[72] Ibid

[73] Ibid

[74] Ibid, 52

[75] Duncan A. McKee, "A Gilded Age Dinner: According to Godey's Lady's Book," New England Antiques Journal (2005): 5, Accessed May 4, 2014,

obsession with detail, and the attention given to preparing for such an event was paramount for its success. The lady of the house would send out invitations two days to two weeks prior to the gathering, depending on the elaborateness of the event, and some form of reply was expected. Again, Godey's gave guidance, saying, "In writing an invitation for a small party, it is kind, as well as polite, to specify the number of guests invited, that your friends may dress to suit the occasion. To be either too much or too little dressed at such times is embarrassing."[76] The guests were selected to form a group of socially harmonious people who would be comfortable together. The people in attendance of the party were as, if not more, important than the meal itself. A party of highly respected guests was the sign of status within society.

Once the guest list is assembled, the extravagant party can begin. In the earlier years of the period, dinner guests were received at 7 o'clock and could expect to find the formal table spread abundantly with food. As each course was finished, another was set out.[77] These were usually solid and rich dishes, such as roasted or boiled meats, hashes, potatoes, and rich cakes. Guests could expect to dine for nearly two hours, after which they would sometimes retire to another room to eat a dessert of fresh or preserved fruits.[78] A few years later, dinner party fashion had changed, and guests were now expected to arrive between 7:30 and 8:30, with 8 o'clock being the most popular time for dinner. Guests were expected to arrive punctually; period etiquette books recommended no more than fifteen minutes late.[79] The guests, dressed in formal attire, for the gentlemen this meant black pants, waist-coat and jacket, with white tie, shirt and gloves and for the ladies, formal evening dresses and accessories, would gather in the drawing room before the meal.[80] Receiving the guests was the duty of the hostess, and Godey's, as usual, mapped the proper course,

> "It is better to be ready too soon than too late, as your guests will be embarrassed if you are not ready to receive them…For the early part of the evening take a position in

your parlor near or opposite to the door, that each guest may find you easily… As each guest or party enters the room, advance a few steps to meet them, speaking first to the lady, or, if there are several ladies, to the eldest, then to the younger ones, and finally to the gentlemen… Do not leave the room during the evening. To see a hostess fidgeting, constantly going in and out, argues ill for her tact in arranging the house for company…Prior to any dinner party, a good hostess had acquainted herself in advance with everyone's rank. Then, the hostess instructed the gentlemen as to which ladies they would escort into the dining room, one at a time, in strictest accordance to both their social standings; the persons of greatest rank or distinction went first while the remaining guests continued to mingle casually in the drawing room. The man of the house typically took the arm of the highest-ranking lady." [81]

Victorian Era dinners were usually served "à la russe", meaning that the footman would stand at the guest's side, offering a dish from which guests served themselves, and the table remained clear of serving dishes and bowls.[82] It was also common for the butler to take a portion from each serving dish that was on the sideboard, and individually arrange each guest's meal upon a plate, then a servant placed the prepared plate before each guest.[83] The number of objects that appeared on a properly set Victorian dinner table was staggering, and if a guest did not use the proper instrument for the proper food, it was seen as vulgar and uncivilized. In many cases, it was not unusual for as many as 24 pieces of silver to be at each place setting. As many as eight forks would be laid out, ranging from a fish fork and dinner fork to an ice cream fork.[84] Knives could add up to eight pieces, being used for butter, cheese, game, roast, and fruit, all accompanied by individual knife rests. All the stemware that would be needed through the meal was placed on the table beforehand, arranged in two rows: a water glass, a glass for chambertin, champagne, a green glass for sauterne, a sherry glass, and a red glass for Rhine

https://www.antiquesjournal.com/pages04/Monthly_pages/sept05/gilded.html

[76] Ibid
[77] Ibid
[78] Ibid
[79] Ibid
[80] Ibid

[81] Ibid
[82] Ibid
[83] Ibid
[84] Ibid

wine.[85] Center pieces were also a vital element of the Victorian table setting, including elements such as lace, garlands, fruit, flowers and even candies or bonbons. These elements could define a good hostess from a mediocre one.

The food at the Victorian dinner party was just as extravagant as the other elements. Victorian dinners were well known for the endless procession of soups, meats, salads, puddings, ices, and meringues or pastries.[86] It was not unusual for a period dinner menu to consist of nine courses. *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* gives a sample menu:

> "First Course: Julienne or Vermicelli Soup, Second Course: Broiled Salmon, Turbot in Lobster Sauce, Filet de Soles, Red Mullet, Trout, Lobster Rissoles, Whitebait, Entrees: Canards a la Rouennaise, Mutton Cutlets, Braised Beef, Spring Chicken, Roast Quarter of Lamb, Tongue, Roast Saddle of Mutton, Whitebait, Third Course: Quails, Roast Ducks, Mayonnaise of Chicken, Green Peas, Charlotte Russe, Strawberries, Compote of Cherries, Neapolitan Cakes, Madeira Wine."[87]

After dinner, it was customary for the women to retire to a separate sitting room while the gentlemen remained in the dining room or go to the library where they would pass around the port wine while exchanging stories. It was during this time that the men would smoke, something that a gentleman would never do in the presence of a lady.[88] After about a half-hour had passed, the host would suggest to his male guests that they join the ladies in the drawing room, where they would enjoy coffee, tea, and mutual conversation for perhaps yet another half-hour. At last the evening would end, usually around eleven o'clock, and upon acknowledging a lovely evening, guests took their leave.[89] Once again, Godey's Lady's Book had advice on how to say goodnight, "When your guests take leave of you, it will be in the drawing-room, and let that farewell be final. Do not accompany them to the dressing-room, and never stop them in the hall for a last word. Say farewell in the parlor, and do not repeat it."[90] The Victorian dinner party was

controlled by social expectations and rules of etiquette. Both the dinner and the guests were expected to have a formal manner about them, as reflected in the strict etiquette of the event. The pressure to follow these rules while creating the perfect atmosphere of elegance and grace came down on the shoulders of the hostess. It was the woman's role to execute the perfect dinner party to show the status of her and her family. The formal dinner party was not only a symbol of class and a snapshot of the woman's role in the home, but also a portrait of the formality and strict social rules of the Victorian Era.

Many of the elements of the Victorian era dinner party are present in the 1950s formal dinner party. Similarly to the previous era, dinner parties in the 1950s came with their own set of strict rules of etiquette and expectations. *Amy Vanderbilt's Complete Book of Etiquette: A Guide to Gracious Living*, 1952, is a guide of the appropriate etiquette for almost every element of life of the sophisticated American in this time. There is an entire section dedicated to entertainment, including the formal dinner party. The guide expresses important information the hostess must follow to have a successful party. First, she would need the room to seat all her guests at one dining table, because any variation of this configuration would disqualify the event as a formal dinner.[91] This, as in Ancient Roman times, acted as a sign of wealth and status, for only a family with a large enough home could accommodate the number of people who attended these dinner parties. Also it is important to have a chef or real cuisiniere prepare the appropriate food that exhibits the sophisticated nature of the meal. Also, the hostess would have been expected to have a butler and trained wait staff recruited for the event. These were usually supplied by a catering service, along with any additional kitchen help that may be needed.[92] Once the staff is in place, the next defining element of the formal dinner party is the table settings. According to *The Joy of Cooking* cookbook, originally published in 1931, table décor should include clean pressed linens, high quality flatware, stemware, and china. The table should include the appropriate silverware and glasses

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[85] Ibid
[86] Ibid
[87] Ibid
[88] Ibid
[89] Ibid
[90] Ibid

[91] Amy Vanderbilt, *Amy Vanderbilt's' Complete Book of Etiquette: A Guide to Gracious Living* (Doubleday, 1952), p. 264.

[92] Ibid, 265

according to the food and drink that will be served at the dinner, much like the Victorian table. Also, like at Victorian parties, the table should be decorated with flowers or fruit.[93] One important rule of the formal party is that there are never serving dishes on the table, unless they are for decorative purposes. Similarly to the Victorian dinner, the meal is composed of many courses, including a soup, fish, roast, salad, fruit, and dessert courses.[94] In between each course, a guest should always have a plate in front of them; the plates for each course should be placed on top of the main course plate. The only time the place should be bare is before dessert, after the main course plate is cleared.[95] Quite often, after the meal, guests retire to a separate sitting room for coffee or post dinner drinks, such as port. Either women exiting first, followed by the men, or both men and women exiting the dining room together was appropriate. Once the dinner is over, no guest could leave after a formal dinner in a private home less than two and a half to three hours and even then, not until the guest or guests of honor have departed.[96] The hostess was the in charge of making sure that all elements of the evening unfolded without issue.

Formal dinner parties were the ultimate expression of social and economic class. However, in the beginning of the twentieth century, a new form of dining emerged, the semi-formal or company dinner. These gatherings did not have the stiff formality and elegance of a formal dinner party and were usually given for a smaller group of four to eight guests. This allowed for middle and lower class families to entertain and emulate the high-class event, without the cost of the formal dinner party. Even though these parties are not as extravagant as a formal party, the household was still expected to put its best face forward. These events also had the expectations for proper and formal etiquette to be shown. Hostesses were expected to be the picture of elegance and grace while she prepared and served dinner, entertained guests, and kept the flow of the party continuous. The ideal hostess became a vital part of women's

identities in the 1950s. This phenomenon is part of what is known as the Separation of Spheres.[97] In the 1950's the cultural hegemony of the time was that the man's role is to be in the workplace, providing for his family, while the woman's role is in the home, taking care of her husband and children. This is reflected in the idea of the perfect hostess. Society stated that a woman should be a "domestic goddess" and a dinner party is the perfect way to show others this trait. In the film *Mona Lisa Smile*, a modern-thinking professor comes to Wellesley College in 1953. She is faced with the classical ideas of the students and staff, who believe that a woman's place is in the home once she is married, even though the students are highly educated, intelligent women. This idea is directly witnessed in a scene when the students are taking part of an etiquette class, hosted at the home of one of the professors. In the scene, the students stand around a properly set table and have clearly been learning how to host dinners. She then gives the students a hypothetical situation: their husband is in line for a promotion and is competing against two other people. To get the edge, they invite the boss and his wife to dinner. An hour before the company arrives; they are informed that the two other competitors and their wives have been invited to dinner. The professor says, "Ever the Wellesley girl, you keep your cool, you understand that the boss is testing you as much as your husband"[98] Etiquette and hosting was such an integral part of the woman's role in society that an entire class was dedicated to it at one of the top colleges in the country. The idea of women needing to be the perfect dinner party hostess is also seen in the advertisements of the day. The United States Brewers Foundation ran a series of ads in the weekly and monthly consumer magazines to promote beer drinking at home. The ads were called "Home Life in America" and each featured an illustration of white middle-class families. One of these ads was Ray Prohaska's painting entitled "The Bride's First Dinner Party."[99] In this painting, a woman is seen placing food on the table while her

[93] Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker, *The Joy of Cooking* (New York: Scribner, 1995), p. 16.

[94] Amy Vanderbilt, *Amy Vanderbilt's' Complete Book of Etiquette: A Guide to Gracious Living* (Doubleday, 1952), p. 264.

[95] Ibid, p. 266

[96] Ibid

[97] Joan Bursrtyn, *Victorian Education and the Idea of Womanhood* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984) 19.

[98] Lawrence Konner, *Mona Lisa Smile*, directed by Mike Newell (2003;Columbia Pictures), DVD

[99] See Appendix, picture 1

husband serves drinks to their relaxing guests. The hostess is dressed in a clean nice dress and a stand of pearls, with her hair and makeup done. Her physical appearance gives the impression that she is able to handle the pressure of hosting her first dinner party with ease and enjoyment. This illustrates that she is conforming to the social expectations of taking over the role of the perfect hostess after she is married. Gender roles are heavily reflected in the etiquette and expectations of the 1950s.

Although the American dinner party has deep roots in formal traditions, a shift has occurred in modern society. Formality is no longer an important driving factor in dining and, especially, dinner parties. No longer are women being taught the fine art of hosting the perfect dinner party and the proper etiquette of which spoon to use or who should be seated next to whom. Guy Trebay of *The New York Times* discusses this shift in today's culture in his article "Guess Who Isn't Coming to Dinner: Saving the Endangered Dinner Party." Trebay interviewed famous socialites from around the country and they agreed that the old-fashioned formal dinner party is a thing of the past. Trebay writes,
"Increasingly, such gatherings seem outmoded, squeezed out by overcrowded schedules, the phony urgency of affinity sites, restaurants cultism and overall tectonic shifts in how Americans congregate…The seated dinner, with its minuet of invitation and acceptance, its formalities and protocols, its culinary and dietary challenges, its inherent requirements of guest and host, alike is under threat, many say."[100]
Although formality is in a decline, the ideas behind the dinner party are still alive and well in America. Trebay continues, "'If there's one thing you learn in the etiquette business, it's that life is cyclical," said Judith Martin, the etiquette arbiter known as Miss Manners. "The idea of cooking for others is not something that is going to die.'"[101] This statement is supported by a recent survey, given in May of 2014 to a group of Americans ranging in age and

gender.[102] The results of the survey state that of the 64 participants, 32 (50%) have thrown a dinner party, excluding holiday and birthday parties, within the last year. This is evidence that the basic idea of friends and family gathering around a meal is still a part of the American culture.

However, the presentation of these meals is vastly different from the formal, and even the semi-formal, dinner parties of the 1950s and Victorian age. First, the food that is served at modern parties is different. According to the survey, approximately 60% of the dinner parties that were thrown by the participants were single course meals, about 15% were cocktails and appetizers and 25% were multi-course dinners. This greatly differs from the nine course dinners of the Victorian era dinner party or the four course 1950s dinner party. There is also a shift in how people dress when dining, especially at dinner parties. In today's society, people are just as likely to wear blue jeans to a five star restaurant as they are to a local diner. According to the survey, an astounding 87% stated that their dinner parties where casual dress, with roughly 20% stating that the dress was business casual and only about 3% stating that the dress of their party was semiformal or formal. This is also documented in photographs of the corresponding eras. In a snapshot of a 1950s dinner party, the guests are dressed in formal attire.[103] The men are in suits or sports jackets and the women are in evening dresses and are wearing fine jewelry. This is greatly different from a photograph from a modern day photograph of a dinner party, taken for a magazine article.[104] In this photo the guests are all dressed in casual attire. Another interesting difference in these two photographs is the table settings. In the 1950s photo, the table is set in a typical and proper fashion. The table is dressed with a tablecloth and adorned with a platter of fruit. Although the guests have moved to the coffee portion of the dinner, it is visible that they are using china tea cups and saucers. In the modern day photo, the table does not have a tablecloth and the guests are using what looks like every day plates and bowls. The quality and type of china, silverware and glassware that

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[100] Guy Trebay, "Guess Who Isn't Coming to Dinner: Saving the Endangered Dinner Party," *New York Times*, November 29, 2012, New York edition, sec. E

[101] Ibid

[102] Survey created by Amy Nash, May 2014, distributed online, data recorded and analyzed on surveymonkey.com. Here after, all references to this survey are from this source
[103] See appendix, photo 2. Hereafter, all references to "1950s photograph" are from this source.
[104] See appendix, photo 3. Hereafter, all references to "modern day photograph" are from this source.

hosts use at modern parties have shifted from that of an earlier time. Trebay also touches on this point in his article saying, "What is surprising is that fewer still see the point in accumulating china, silver and crystal at all, a truth driven home by the dwindling of departments devoted to table-top appointments at traditional purveyors like Tiffany & Company."[105] The last major difference in these photographs is the role the women are taking at their respective parties. In the 1950s picture, the woman that is assumed to be the hostess is standing up and reaching for a dish. It can be assumed that she is either serving a guest or is beginning to clear the table. These are both important roles of the ideal hostess. In the photograph of the modern dinner party, all the guests are sitting and are passing plates and serving themselves. This directly contradicts the proper etiquette of either plating the meals separately, having the hostess serves each guest, or the formal tradition of having a footman serve the guests. This not only demonstrates a shift in the etiquette of the dinner party, but also a shift in the role of women in modern society. No longer is the woman of the house expected to be the perfect ideal hostess that is in charge of every aspect of the party, but is now an actual member of the party and can enjoy the company of her guests. All of these differences point to the fact that American dinner parties have transformed from an elegant formal affair, to a casual gathering of friends.

American dinner parties are facing another attack on a different front. Many Americans are choosing to go out to a restaurant for meals with friends and family rather than host guests at their house. In the survey, participants were asked "When you gather with friends, are you more likely to: a) go to a bar or restaurant, b) attend someone's home for a homemade meal or c) other. Only about 30% said that they go to a person's home; 60% said that they would rather meet at a restaurant or bar. Another interesting fact about these results from this question is that the majority of people who responded with the answer a) they would prefer to go to a restaurant or bar, are under the age of 35. When asked why they chose this answer, most stated that it was easier than having to prepare a meal and clean their house for guests. Some also said that in the fast paced world, it is easier to

incorporate everyone's busy schedule to meet at a restaurant. As mentioned earlier, Guy Trebay mentions this factor as to part of the reason dinner parties are becoming endangered saying, "Increasingly, such gatherings seem outmoded, squeezed out by overcrowded schedules, the phony urgency of affinity sites, restaurants cultism and overall tectonic shifts in how Americans congregate."[106] People of the older generation who stated that they would rather go to a person's home explained that they preferred the comforts and relaxed feel of being in a home. They also expressed that it was easier to have conversations in a home setting. This indicates that not only is the shift away from the formal dinner party is related to a change in accepted etiquette, but also is related to generational differences. This idea of the shift in dining being influenced by age and generation would make an interesting course of extended research. Also, examining how class and social status play a role in dinner parties, both historically and today, would be a fascinating study of American culture. Looking through an ethnographic lens and studying the American culture, as it is being lived out in today's society has exposed this shift in the dining habits.

All in all, it is clear that a movement away from the old-fashioned and formal has occurred in American dining, especially in regards to dinner parties. Through time, the face of these parties have evolved from the rigid extravagance of the social soiree in the 1800s, to the high societal expectations of the mid 1900 dinner party, to the casual and informal gathering that is the modern dinner party. Even though the rules of etiquette and social pressures have dissipated over time, the tradition of gathering friends and family together and enjoying each other's company has not changed. This element of community will likely remain a facet of American life for years to come.

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## Appendix
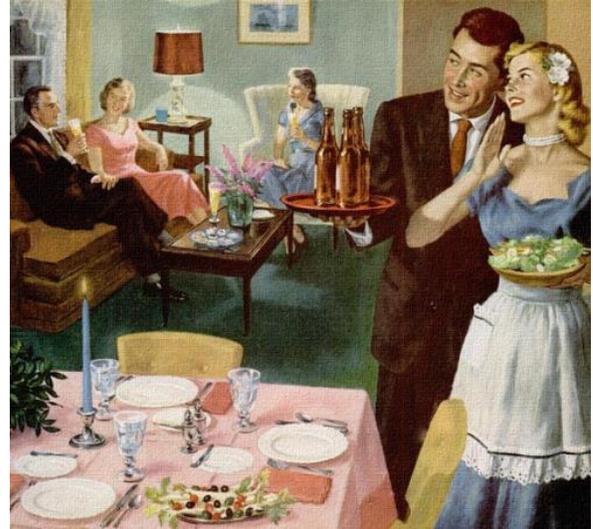


**FIG. 11. 'The Bride's First Dinner Party', artwork by Ray Prohaska. 1952.**



**FIG. 12.**
**http://amberreunion.blogspot.com/2012_03_01_archive.html**



**FIG. 13. www.punchbowl.com**

# A Tale of Two Food Blogs: Culinary Tourism in Hong Kong from a Chinese-American Perspective

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Imagine you are about to go on a vacation. How will you build your itinerary? Depending on your time, money, and interest, you may choose anything from theme parks, national parks, museums, cruises, skiing, just to name a few. If you have an opportunity to travel abroad, chances are that you will treat your taste buds with international cuisines. In fact, when you travel across America or simply enjoy a night out in your neighborhood, you may dine at an ethic restaurant. By consuming food from another culture, you participate in a booming industry known as culinary tourism. Folklorist Lucy Long coined the term "culinary tourism" in 1998 and defined it as "the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of another culture – participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one's own" (Chrzan 40; Long 21). According to the International Culinary Tourism Association, among tourists of different ages, sexes, and ethnic groups, dining is one of their favorite activities wherever they travel because it is an interactive way to explore local food and understand local people (Kivela and Crotts 360). It can even enhance the authenticity of their visits (Okumus et al. 257).

Americans participate in culinary tourism all the time, especially Chinese food. When Chinese Americans consume Chinese food, you may assume that they are simply enjoying food from their own culture. However, it is not always true, especially for first generation Chinese Americans who immigrated to America later in their lives. My culinary tour began when I first tasted a Chinese breakfast in Los Angeles eighteen years ago. Over the years, I have been relying on my memory to judge the authenticity of Chinese food from Kansas City to New York City. When I traveled to Hong Kong in the summer of 2013, I felt like a tourist of my own birthplace as I searched for nostalgic food. This paper will argue that Chinese Americans are culinary tourists in their homeland as they search for the taste of nostalgia, which may have been altered or even disappeared, in a dynamic foodscape.

This paper is not the first to discuss the cultural identity of Chinese Americans and the authenticity of Chinese cuisine. In 2014, historian Yong Chen, a first generation Chinese American, offered his interpretation in *Chop Suey, USA: The Story of Chinese Food in America*, a book that attempted to examine the rise of Chinese food in America since the nineteenth century and its continuous consumption nowadays. In that work, Chen argued that the limited job availability for Chinese Americans in the nineteenth century and the changing consumer culture contributed to the popularity of Chinese food in America. This paper provides an alternative analysis. Whereas Chen focuses on how the adaptation of Chinese food democratized the dining experience of the working class, African Americans, and racial minorities in the nineteenth century and eventually across America, I find that the cultural identity of first generation Chinese Americans is at stake when they compare Chinese food in America with those in their homeland in the twenty-first century.

Famed as the Food Paradise, Hong Kong offers exceptional local (Chinese) and international dining experiences. With more than 30,000 restaurants, Hong Kong boasts the world's most restaurants per capita (Okumus 257). Within 425 square miles, or 6 times the area of Washington D.C., Hong Kong is home to more than 7 million people. How do locals and tourists find good places to eat? Before turning to the internet and mobile applications in this digital era, locals used to pick restaurants based on television, radio, and newspaper advertisements, restaurant guides, or

friends' recommendations while tourists relied on travel guidebooks they bought prior to their departure or brochures created by Hong Kong Tourism Board. Of course, they may choose restaurants at random.

Chinese cuisine is an umbrella term for eight regional cooking styles in China, including Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Anhui, Sichuan, Hunan, and Cantonese. For the purpose of this paper, I focus on Cantonese style Chinese food because it is the local style of Hong Kong, and it is popular in Chinatowns across America. Also, after reviewing food blogs and travel guidebooks on computers and mobile devices, I find that food blogs provide subjective opinions of locals and tourists who have various levels of exposure to the food or cuisines at restaurants, whereas travel guidebooks tend to offer objective comments written by veteran food critics and editors. For a given restaurant, there are usually more entries in a food blog than a guidebook. Since food blogs reflect the experiences of common people and their contents are more diverse, I prefer online food blogs to guidebooks.

Two food blogs will serve as my guide during my culinary tour in Hong Kong. The most popular food blogs consulted by locals (including non-Chinese) and tourists (including overseas Chinese) are openrice.com and tripadvisor.com, respectively. Although locals and tourists are bloggers on both blogs, more locals post in Chinese at openrice.com while more tourists post in English at tripadvisor.com. Instead of selecting a Chinese restaurant randomly, I make sure it appears in both food blogs because I am interested in analyzing their food from a Chinese American perspective. Moreover, with the notion of exploration in mind, I choose a restaurant I have never patronized. After a brief survey of both food blogs, I enter "Prince Edward" as my preferred location and "dim sum" as my favorite cuisine. One Dim Sum (see FIG.1.) shows up. Is it a good place for lunch?

Literally meaning "touch your heart," dim sum consists of steamed dishes in bamboo steamers and other baked, pan-fried, and deep-fried delicacies (Dim Sum). Individuals, generations of family members, friends, and co-workers get together to enjoy dim sum for breakfast, brunch, or lunch. Serving dim sum all day long, One Dim Sum is a Michelin one-starred restaurant. Similar to Zagat Survey which rates restaurants across America, Michelin is the oldest European rating system for restaurants and hotels in Europe and around the world. While some bloggers at openrice.com say One Dim Sum is their best dim sum experience ever at a reasonable price, others say it does not deserve a star from Michelin because it is nothing more than a typical dim sum restaurant. Among 152 reviews at openrice.com, 87.5% of the bloggers have an average to positive experience at One Dim Sum. Bloggers at openrice.com report the average wait time for this 30-seat restaurant is about 30-45 minutes. Is their dim sum something to die for? Before making a decision, I consult tripadvisor.com which shows that One Dim Sum ranks 4th out of 3869 restaurants listed on its website. I head to One Dim Sum with my parents, my sister, and my three children by commuter rail, without a doubt.

Among the 13 dishes we have ordered, most of them look attractive and taste authentic. Four of them are worth discussing, namely, Steamed Cake in Mala Style (see FIG. 2.), Steamed Shrimp Dumpling (see FIG. 3.), Turnip Cake with Dry Salted Meat (FIG. 4.), and Boiled Chinese Vegetable (FIG. 5.). They are standard dim sum served in Hong Kong and America. Let us take a look at their quality, value, and services.

Local bloggers praise and criticize dim sum without hesitation. At openrice.com, the most highly recommended item is Steamed Cake in Mala Style. Almost every blogger who eats the steamed cake give it two thumbs up because it is "hot and fluffy," "soft but not too sweet," and "enough for four people." I have never seen such a generous portion of steamed cake in a bamboo steamer in my life! The taste is not exactly the same as what I had when I was young, but it is pretty close. What about Steamed Shrimp Dumpling, a classic dim sum item? Two bloggers note that the skin (translucent

wrapper) is not as thin as expected while one of them finds the shrimp not big enough but fresh. A non-Chinese blogger who works in Hong Kong thinks the skin of shrimp dumpling "beautiful" and the shrimp "tasty." Indeed, the thinner the skin, the better the dumpling. Although the shrimp is not too big, at least it is not stuffed with fillers. Another popular item is Turnip Cake with Dry Salted Meat. Most bloggers who order this item are disappointed because it is either "too starchy," or there is "not enough turnip," or "not enough meat". What the bloggers write is absolutely accurate! Not only are excessive flours added as fillers to substitute turnip and meat, it is also not crispy enough after pan-frying. A number of bloggers who try Boiled Chinese Vegetable think that it is "nothing special," "too hard to bite onto," or "not that exciting, but it's vegetable, and you need them." Frankly, its tenderness depends on patrons' preferences. More importantly, bloggers fail to point out that oyster sauce is replaced by soy sauce, which is unusual. Soy sauce and boiled vegetable simply do not match.

Non-local bloggers record their experience with relatively less detail. Bloggers at tripadvisor.com, mostly consist of non-Chinese or overseas Chinese, tend to rate the food at One Dim Sum in a general sense, with adjectives like "excellent," "good," "great," "not bad," and "poor." Their brief comments are insufficient for Chinese Americans to determine how good or bad the food is. Perhaps these dim sum novices have yet to season their taste buds with more dim sum before they are confident enough to develop vocabularies to describe them. While a Singaporean blogger who has prior dim sum experience is amazed at the size, softness and sponginess of Steamed Cake in Mala Style, another Australian blogger claims that it is not as fluffy as another restaurant he visited. Some bloggers who love Steamed Shrimp Dumpling usually suggest readers to try it without further description. Turnip Cake with Dry Salted Meat and Boiled Chinese Vegetable are not exotic dishes, but none of the bloggers mention them. Granted, dim sum novices may not have any exposure to turnip or

boiled vegetables before. They may not have any exposure to turnip or boiled vegetables before, and it all depends on their readiness to try.

Bloggers at openrice.com and tripadvisor.com focus on the value of food and the service rendered. Whereas the value is embedded within their posts at openrice.com, such as "The two of us ordered six dishes and we are full and satisfied. It costs less than [HK]$100" and "We ordered a lot (too much), but it didn't bother us because the total bill came to $150 HKD for 3 people," the posts at tripadvisor.com are flooded with titles like "Great value for money," "Cheap and cheery dim sum place with a Michelin star," and "Cheap Cheap Cheap." Without the need to pay tax or tips while dining in Hong Kong, an average of HK$50, or US$6.25 per person, is a good deal at One Dim Sum. A blogger at tripadvisor.com notices that the price of the meal is cheaper than the taxi fare that costs her to travel to the restaurant. While bloggers are happy about the value of dim sum, some are worried about how to order. Undoubtedly, language can be a barrier wherever tourists travel; and there is no exception in Hong Kong. Some restaurants do offer picture menus, but it is not the case at One Dim Sum. Non-Chinese bloggers in both food blogs are especially impressed when the staff at One Dim Sum offer them menus in English, communicate with them in English, and show them how to eat dim sum in a correct sequence, that is, to start with salty dishes first and end with sweet dishes.

Rich in facts and opinions, food blogs provide recent reviews of restaurants. Each post combines together to give a composite image to readers about the atmosphere of the restaurants, hospitality of staff, and the value and quality of food before they decide where and what to eat. The image is enriched when some readers, who have dined at the restaurants, become bloggers. While most bloggers at both blogs claim that they have found "the best and cheapest dim sum" at One Dim Sum, a few ask "why Michelin??" In fact, food blogs help potential patrons to make informed decisions about which restaurants fit their budget,

schedules, and tastes. I cannot agree more with a post written by a blogger at openrice.com who states that she is so excited to eat dim sum at night. One Dim Sum is rather nontraditional in which it is a restaurant serving dim sum throughout the day, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. on weekdays and from 10:30 am to 12:30 a.m. on weekends. Traditional Chinese restaurants in Hong Kong, America, and around the world usually serve dim sum any time from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with lunch menus added around 11:00 a.m. From 3:00 p.m. to closing, only dinner entrées are available. Dim sum is generally considered light and less fulfilling than lunch and dinner entrées. Apparently, One Dim Sum offers a brand new dining experience to patrons because they can enjoy dim sum beyond "normal" hours. It may spark a new trend for locals to have dim sum at night. Tourists may not be aware of this violation of tradition, but they can definitely take advantage of it. A dim sum dinner can still fit into their itineraries after a full day of sightseeing and shopping.

No matter how nice food and restaurants are presented in food blogs, they are not without limitations. First of all, food blogs cannot be analyzed independently. Bloggers at openrice.com inform me that One Dim Sum does not use monosodium glutamate, or M.S.G., an artificial flavor enhancer used in Chinese cooking. I would not have found this out if I visit tripadvisor.com only. Secondly, food blogs are not designed to include an exhaustive list of restaurants. Therefore, locals and tourists may turn to other sources like their mobile applications to locate restaurants or simply choose a restaurant at random. Finally, food blogs cannot convey the smell and taste of food to blog readers. Without any travel plan, some blog readers can only enjoy the food vicariously.

For Chinese Americans who visit Hong Kong, food blogs are an effective way to locate authentic Chinese food which they miss so much since they have immigrated to America. Their childhood favorite restaurants may be out of business. Their tastes may be altered by Americanized Chinese food over the years.

However, culinary tourism gives them an opportunity to revitalize their taste memory. Food blogs provide the latest reviews and culinary trends for virtual and real travelers while invoking collective memories of Chinese Americans around the world. Indeed, traveling from America to Hong Kong is very costly, especially when I bring my three children along over the summer. Yet, as a cultural bearer, I share a taste of Hong Kong with my children and reinforce their cultural heritage through culinary tourism.



**FIG. 1. One Dim Sum, Prince Edward, Kowloon, Hong Kong**



**FIG. 2. Steamed Cake in Mala Style**

**FIG. 3. Steamed Shrimp Dumpling**



**FIG. 4. Turnip Cake with Dry Salted Meat**



**FIG. 5. Boiled Chinese Vegetable**

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