



2-25-2019

Honors Thesis Abstracts

SENIOR HONORS THESIS ABSTRACTS

“The Lion, the Tiger and the Teddybear”: The Plurality of Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Experiences in London, 1948-1962.

Helen Berhanu

This thesis is a social history examining Afro-Caribbean immigration to London from 1948 to 1962. The argument highlights specific interactions between the White British and Afro-Caribbean immigrant populations in order to convey the plurality of experiences and add nuance to the larger discussion of immigration and multiculturalism. This research aims to apply the lens of individual experience to complicate the competing master narratives of postcolonialism on one hand and seamless integration on the other. The first chapter examines the Afro-Caribbean experience upon arrival, refuting the mythologized account of the Empire Windrush by employing oral histories. The second chapter uses accounts from various local newspapers from the boroughs of Lambeth and Kensington and Chelsea to highlight the simultaneity of positive and negative social interactions between the immigrant and White British communities in London. The final chapter examines the Notting Hill race riots of 1958 in order to extricate the multitude of contributing factors obscured at the time by contemporaries speaking in absolutist terms. In summation, these findings indicate that one must utilize the available primary evidence to craft a history that is sensitive to the everyday experience of the immigrant; an experience composed of peculiarities, random occurrences, and lengthy processes of cause and effect that cannot be accounted for in a master narrative.

Women in Bacon's Rebellion: Female Political Action and the Making of Gender in Colonial Virginia

Caitlin Doolittle

In 1676, a man named Nathaniel Bacon led a group of white and African residents of the Virginia colony to attack a group of nearby Indians in retaliation for a raid by the Doeg Indians. The attack was an act of rebellion against the Virginia government and, more specifically, against Governor William Berkeley. This thesis examines the role that three women - Sarah Grendon, Cockacoeske, and Lady Frances Berkeley - played in Bacon's Rebellion. The Rebellion is often hailed as a significant turning point in terms of the solidification of race-based slavery as the primary economic system in America. In addition to that, this paper argues that the Rebellion provided an opportunity for women in colonial Virginia to exert political authority to influence. Each woman had a unique perspective on and role in the Rebellion; Sarah Grendon was a rebel woman, Cockacoeske a Native American chieftess, and Lady Frances Berkeley the wife of Governor William Berkeley. Each of these three women exerted political authority in their own way, operating within the relatively loose understanding of gender roles for women in their particular location in society to achieve their own goals. They adapted established female political behaviors – Anglo and Native American – as a means of exerting power over the outcome of the Rebellion and over the major political actors in it. Though these three women faced different challenges and experienced different levels of success, their undeniably political behavior served as the catalyst of a major shift in gender roles in colonial Virginia, making Bacon's Rebellion not only a race-making moment, but a gender-making one as well.

Re-imagining the Past and Questioning the Present: Oliver Cromwell in Nineteenth-Century British and Irish Historical Fiction

Isabel Gendler

This thesis examines depictions of Oliver Cromwell in nineteenth-century historical fiction, supplemented by references to non-fictional sources. Historical novelists' work occupied a liminal space between history and fiction and was subject to a critical demand for both historical authenticity and broad accessibility. From the perspective of certain literary critics and editors, who dismissed the genre of historical fiction, historical novelists were perhaps those least qualified to take up the weighty task of depicting Oliver Cromwell.

A reading of the novels reveals that historical novelists, as part of or in addition to their attempts to entertain their readers, raised issues relating to the significance of the past and its proper interpretation. Through the words of their characters or in statements aimed directly at the readers, historical novelists discussed the impact of Cromwell's actions on future generations, described the power of memory, and questioned the justness of the historical record. Historical novelists exemplify not only the wide range of views on Cromwell but also the manner in which discussions of Cromwell resonated with particular contemporary tensions. More specifically, fictional depictions of Cromwell appear to contain discussions of two pressing contemporary issues: the proper role of religion in political and personal life and the nature of masculinity.

The Search for Solidarity Beyond Bloom: Jewish Advocacy in Ireland, 1933-1958

Rebecca Heilweil

First, I explored how Irish-Jewish leaders traversed and addressed the politics of Ireland, Europe, the U.S., and Israel-

Palestine, within their stewardship of their small, Orthodox and incredibly-Zionist community. This project analyzed the leadership of Chief Rabbi of the Irish Free State Isaac Herzog, who guided the Jewish community through Irish domestic politics and Germany's increasing threat to Jews during the 1930s. Second, the project explored the role of Chief Rabbi of Ireland Immanuel Jakobovits, who took leadership of the community in 1949, just as the State of Israel (1948) and the Republic of Ireland (1949) were declared. Finally, this project analyzed the advocacy of Robert Briscoe, a magnanimous Irish Republican Army member who in 1956 was elected to be the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin. An ardent Zionist, Briscoe gained global fame while traveling the United States, simultaneously encouraging Irish-American tourism to Ireland and fundraising among Jewish-Americans on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal. This research determined that instead of declaring an exclusively Irish-Republican or Jewish-Zionist identity, Irish Jewish leaders argued that their Zionism was justified by the same principles that supported the Irish fight for independence from the British.

“Promoting the Cause of Freedom”: Female Consumption in British Abolition, 1787-1833

Vibha Kannan

This thesis examines the role of female domestic consumption during the British anti-slavery movement from 1787 to 1833, focusing primarily on the 1791 sugar boycott and the late eighteenth century purchases of abolition medallions and goods. In exploring this topic, this paper seeks to add to historiography of women in British abolition. Prolific eighteenth century English writers like Hannah More have been the central topic when discussing female involvement in abolition, but there are few works on ordinary middle class British women. Although a few historians have examined female domestic consumption during anti-slavery in the form of the sugar boycotts, most have

not extensively researched how British consumer culture allowed women to create a fashion and moral value out of the purchase of abolition goods. The historiography of anti-slavery also does not include an extensive discussion of how these abolition movements affected public perception of female consumption, something that was often seen as excessive and immoral, but gained new legitimacy. This thesis primarily examines prescriptive eighteenth century writings like political pamphlets, newspaper articles, journals, and the visual imagery of medallions and consumer goods to reconstruct how abolitionists appealed to women as household managers and domestic consumers to further the anti-slavery cause. In appealing to this particular demographic, middle-class white women were able to enter the political sphere of abolition while also finding a new moral value and legitimacy in their luxury consumption.

Touching the Lord's Anointed: The Justification for the Execution of Charles I

Joe LaSure

This thesis examines rhetorical works from the English Civil War that justified opposing, and ultimately killing, King Charles I, even though such actions ran contrary to contemporary political theories based on divine right. I argue for a tripartite categorization of the anti-Caroline corpus, based on the themes of history, religion, and law. This project began as a challenge to the claims of scholars who assert that there is no detectable continuity between the pockets of tyrannical thought that developed throughout Europe during the Wars of Religion. Demonstrating that this thread did indeed exist, this thesis compares the influence of tyrannical works produced earlier in the period to the influence of other sources from which Charles' opponents drew inspiration. Because few advocated for the king's death long before it occurred, most of the sources this project analyzes only call for limiting his power. Thus, this work's

methodology involves identifying charges that were intended to capitally indict the monarch, most of which come from the king's trial, before reverse-chronologically looking at older sources in which the same charges were raised for a less extreme purpose. I find that rhetoric centered on religious and legal themes was more prevalent than history-based arguments, which includes appeals made to older early modern tyrannicidal works. I attribute this considerably to the secularization of thought in the modern era which produces distinct thematic categories of rhetoric which, for the 17th-century English, were much less discreet.

Civil Society and Gender Politics in Batista's Cuba, 1952-1958

Amanda Nart

On March 10, 1952, in the midst of a presidential election, Fulgencio Batista seized control of the Cuban government in a military coup. My thesis explores the 1950s in Cuba through the lens of gender politics and civil society by focusing on the organizational materials of two large women's organizations—the Young Women of Catholic Action (JFACCC) and the Democratic Federation of Cuban Women (FDMC) from 1952-1958. Exploring the JFACCC and the FDMC in the same project reveals convergences and divergences in the visions of femininity that these organizations presented, the rhetorical strategies that they employed, and their ideological assessments. Although these organizations had very different aims and, in some senses, opposing politics, both groups of women politicized womanhood in distinctive styles to achieve their campaigns, including but not limited to labor organizing, speaking out against U.S. economic imperialism and exploitative capitalism, or protesting against the Batista regime. This project challenges the perception that women were politicized only by and after the 1959 Revolution.

The Dreyfus Affair in Vichy France: An Afterlife

Kyra Schulman

In 1898, anti-Semitic mobs assembled in cities throughout France chanting “death to the Jews.” These mobs gathered four years following the initial conviction of the Jewish French army Captain Alfred Dreyfus, who was wrongly accused of selling French military secrets to the Germans. The Dreyfus Affair divided France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries into two camps: the Dreyfusards who believed in Dreyfus’s innocence and the anti-Dreyfusards who believed in Dreyfus’s guilt. The anti-Dreyfusards formed their own social clubs, newspapers, bookstores, publishing houses, and political parties. When Dreyfus was officially exonerated by a French military commission in 1906, the anti-Dreyfusards lost. Dreyfus’s exoneration was seen as a victory for the French Republic that the anti-Dreyfusards so opposed. Half a century later at the start of the Second World War, the collaborating Vichy government rose to power. Marshal Pétain, Chief of State, received full powers through a parliamentary vote in July 1940 effectively ending the Third Republic. The inheritors of the anti-Dreyfusard tradition, as well as some key anti-Dreyfusards still living, were given a second chance to put their vision of France in place. This thesis explores the Dreyfus Affair, and the ways in which the Vichy regime and its supporters dealt with its memory. The Dreyfus Affair served as a touchstone guiding the actions of journalists, the Vichy Ministry of Education, and Vichy administrative officials in their journalistic and political discourse, elementary school textbooks, and revision of street names in French urban sites. During the Vichy era, these key actors evoked, distorted, and removed the memory of the Dreyfus Affair as a historical event in French consciousness.

Christian Higher Education & China: A Study of Two Institutions

Mei-Li Thompson

This thesis examines Ginling College and St. John's Medical School, two prominent Christian missionary higher education institutions in early twentieth century China. Both institutions were extremely respected in their niche fields of education – women's education for the former and modern medical training for the latter – and adopted various changing strategies to serve their niche clientele. Through a study of the establishment, the curriculum, and the response to the Second Sino-Japanese War of both institutions, this work aims to add to the complexity of a more general current historiography, and provide a novel interpretation of how Christian missionary higher education institutions served certain facets of Chinese society. The research methods used include the analysis of a wide range of sources, from pamphlets to letters, from the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center, as well as contemporary medical missionary journals to study the origins and operation of both. Ultimately, this research found that while Ginling was immensely adaptable to its peacetime environment, establishing a great reputation in the community and flexibly using both English and Chinese to teach its students, it was unable to undergo any sort of acculturation during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Conversely, St. John's experienced the opposite – in war, the school carved out an irreplaceable place for itself in the wartime ecology.

Terrains of Justice: Theft, Power, and Resistance in Kershaw County, South Carolina, 1853-1874

Samuel Tolbert

In my undergraduate History Honors Thesis, titled “Terrains of Justice: Theft, Power, and Resistance in Kershaw County, South Carolina, 1853-1874,” I am examining the changes undergone by the communities of the cotton growing Midland region of South Carolina- Planter, Freedmen, and Yeomen- as a result of Emancipation, the defeat of the Confederacy, Northern occupation, and Southern attempts at industrialization. Three written records of formal and informal justice are used to examine the day-to-day, psychological and social realities of the inhabitants of the American South in the shadow of the Civil War

“June 16th is Ours”: The Power of Memory in Commemorations of the 1976 Soweto Uprisings

Zoe Stern

This thesis focuses on how the events of the 1976 Soweto Uprisings have been memorialized over time. I argue that despite the specificity of the apartheid-era student experience in Soweto, the commemorative processes of the Uprising have been used as both a powerful political and cultural force years later. Specifically, chapter 1 draws from interviews from student activists from the Karis-Gerhart collection, “South African Political Materials, 1964-1990,” in order to argue for the complexity of the student experiences of the Uprising and the ways in which they were often erased by the African National Congress’s political claims and needs. Chapter 2 examines clips from South Africa Now, an American television program that was broadcast between 1989 and 1991, in order to argue that the representation of the Soweto Uprising was used to build support for the

end of apartheid in the United States. Chapter 3 relays the power that an iconic photographic image of the Uprising continues to have in mobilizing support for a host of contemporary issues affecting South Africans today, such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as political corruption. In sum, while Soweto historiography has often seen narrowed representations of Soweto as problematic, this thesis argues that memory may be used for positive political outcomes as well. More broadly, this work builds upon the relationship between history and memory, putting forth that individuals over time can successfully make history relevant and useful to themselves if they actively seek to find meaning in it.