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Letter from the Editors

Our publication team hopes you enjoy the four articles that were chosen by *The George Washington University Historical Review*. On behalf of all the editors and advisors, we must thank Alison C. Dundore, Ciaran Lithgow, Samuel B. Tiratto, and Spencer Wong for their trust and patience in allowing us to publish their scholarship.

The support of the history department has been tremendous. Professor Tyler Anbinder's guidance since the conception of the journal cannot go unnoticed. Since the beginning, he devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to the journal and it is much appreciated. And thanks to Dean Ben Vinson III for being a fierce advocate and advisor. Lastly, we are grateful to the faculty who shared their expert knowledge.

Mount Vernon. Conservative politics. Islamic poetry. The Vienna State Opera. Our first issue covers both depth and breadth in terms of world regions and periods in time. George Washington's contributions to American agriculture in the eighteenth century, conservative ethics during the Cold War Era, Islamic reactions to twelfth century crusaders, and cultural politics in the Habsburg Empire from the mid-seventeenth century to the turn of the nineteenth century are covered by our authors. We hope you enjoy these scholarly works.

Sincerely,

Jordan D. Cassel

Editor-in-Chief

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Gilbert Stuart, *Lansdowne Portrait*, 1796, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC, http://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.2001.13.

**WHEAT FOR IT:
George Washington's Contributions to
American Agriculture**

Alison C. Dundore

George Washington has an important place in the United States' relatively short history as a military hero, Founding Father, and the first president of the new nation. Few realize, however, that in addition to his political and military contributions, George Washington was also a farmer, entrepreneur, and an agricultural innovator who influenced the development of American agriculture considerably with the tools and methods he implemented at the Mount Vernon Estate in the second half of the eighteenth century. Washington felt most comfortable at Mount Vernon and spent a majority of his public life wishing to return home. When he was physically at Mount Vernon, and even when he was not, a lot of his time was spent trying to improve the agricultural practices of the day. He saw the potential for Mount Vernon to become a "model agricultural operation, one intended to inspire all Americans."¹ He corresponded frequently with agricultural experts of the day and adopted many new and innovative practices, such as crop rotation and the use of fertilizer.² One of the most important changes Washington made was growing wheat as the estate's main cash crop starting in the mid-1760s. It not only became the first of many ideas that made Washington a successful businessman, but it also paved the way for the United States to become an agricultural superpower.

The Introduction of Wheat to Mount Vernon

At the age of twenty, George Washington inherited the 4,200 acre Mount Vernon Estate from his half-brother, Lawrence.³ Washington divided Mount Vernon into five farms: Mansion

¹ Jean B. Lee, *Experiencing Mount Vernon: Eyewitness Accounts, 1784-1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2006), 3.

² Lee, *Eyewitness Accounts*, 3.

³ Edward G. Lengel, *First Entrepreneur: How George Washington Built His – and the Nation's – Prosperity* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2016), 25.

House Farm, River Farm, Muddy Hole Farm, Union Farm, and Dogue Run Farm.⁴ Similar to other estates in Virginia at the time, Mount Vernon's cash crop was tobacco. While tobacco was an incredibly lucrative crop, there were also plenty of disadvantages to growing it. Virginian estate owners were subject to heavy taxes from Great Britain as well as legislative acts that restricted trade opportunities. Additionally, tobacco depleted the soil and was extremely labor-intensive.⁵ The slaves that worked in the tobacco fields were forced to "pick off worms and pests, hoe weeds, and prune the plant to achieve a larger leaf."⁶ Even with all of the work that was required, Washington's tobacco harvest was never as successful as that of the other Virginia planters due to Mount Vernon's poor soil quality.⁷ It eventually became clear to Washington that in order to avoid the many obstacles of tobacco production, he would have to introduce a more efficient crop.

After first considering both hemp and flax to replace tobacco, Washington decided to introduce wheat as Mount Vernon Estate's new cash crop in 1764. The switch to wheat was motivated by multiple factors. First and foremost, Washington wanted to avoid dealing directly with British merchants.⁸ Furthermore, the British economic system as well as competition from other tobacco farmers had pushed Washington to the brink of debt and inspired him to replace tobacco with wheat, a much more cost-effective crop.⁹ Following the introduction of wheat to Mount Vernon, production rates increased at a steady rate: from 1764 to 1769, the estate went

⁴ Paul Wiltach, *Mount Vernon: Washington's Home and the Nation's Shrine* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1916), 78.

⁵ Lengel, *First Entrepreneur*, 58-61.

⁶ Alan and Donna Jean Fusonic, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer* (Mount Vernon: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 1998), 8.

⁷ Fusonic, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 8.

⁸ Lengel, *First Entrepreneur*, 58-61.

⁹ "18th Century Farming at Mount Vernon," *George Washington's Mount Vernon*, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/pioneer-farm/18th-century-farming/>.

from producing just 257 bushels of wheat annually to a staggering 6,241 bushels per year.¹⁰ While the market had initially stayed local to Virginia, it expanded as production increased. It was Washington's wish that "some day [sic] or another we shall become a storehouse and granary for the world," and he made great headway toward that goal with his own wheat business at Mount Vernon.¹¹ His decision to make wheat the estate's main cash crop improved the profitability of Mount Vernon overall by allowing him to incorporate new farming methods and tools as well as produce additional goods such as flour and whiskey.

Along with the introduction of wheat, Washington began to adopt new husbandry methods that were already popular among agriculturists in England. He purchased British books such as Batty Langley's *New Principles of Gardening*, William Gibson's *A New Treatise on the Diseases of Horses*, Jethro Tull's *The Horse-Hoeing Husbandry*, Edward Lisle's *Observations in Husbandry*, and Thomas Hale's *A Compleat Body of Husbandry*. These books covered a variety of new tools and practices, many of which Washington adopted at Mount Vernon.¹² In addition to gaining knowledge from books, Washington also corresponded frequently with agricultural experts to discuss recommended practices. One such correspondent was Arthur Young, one of Washington's admirers who commended his resignation from the army in favor of a private life at Mount Vernon. Young wrote in a 1766 letter to Washington, "the spectacle of a great commander retiring in the manner you have done from the head of a victorious army to the amusements of agriculture, calls all the feelings of my bosom into play and gives me the strongest inclination, I fear an impotent one, to endeavour in the smallest degree to

¹⁰ Lengel, *First Entrepreneur*, 58-61.

¹¹ George Washington, Letter "To Lafayette, 17 June 1788," *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 6, ed. Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 338.

¹² Fusonie, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 8-9.

contribute to the success of so laudable a pleasure.”¹³ He also complimented Washington on his use of fertilizer, stating that he “may be as great a farmer as a general.”¹⁴ Young later sent Washington copies of his work entitled *Annals of Agriculture and other Useful Arts*, which began a long and significant relationship between the two men.¹⁵ They regularly exchanged recommendations on tools, livestock, and other topics, and Young became a big influence on Washington and the way that he ran his estate.¹⁶ Through their correspondence, Washington came to believe that England was far superior to the United States in their husbandry methods and “concluded that the *Annals [of Agriculture and Other Useful Arts]* could serve as a guide for improving farming throughout the United States.”¹⁷ As one of the most prominent Americans to be using English farming techniques, Washington put the United States on a course to similar agricultural greatness.

Methods for Planting, Harvesting, and Separating Wheat

After his retirement from the military in 1783, George Washington returned home to Mount Vernon and began to establish his place at the forefront of American agriculture.¹⁸ Washington’s determination to succeed was matched by his “personal desire to learn, to experiment, and to implement the right action” that would most benefit him and the state of agriculture in America at the time.¹⁹ Washington adopted many new husbandry practices from

¹³ Arthur Young, Letter “To George Washington from Arthur Young, 7 January 1786,” *National Archives: Founders Online*, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-03-02-0425>.

¹⁴ Young, “To George Washington from Arthur Young, 7 January 1786.”

¹⁵ Gwendolyn K. White, “Arthur Young,” *Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/arthur-young/>.

¹⁶ White, “Arthur Young,” *Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*.

¹⁷ Fusonie, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 13.

¹⁸ Fusonie, 12.

¹⁹ Fusonie, 12.

British agriculturists, including the utilization of crop rotation, fertilizer, livestock, plows, and threshing barns, which helped to improve America's own agricultural practices.²⁰

On his quest to maximize Mount Vernon's agricultural potential, Washington heeded the advice of many prominent farmers, one of whom was Scottish agriculturist Henry Home. Home believed that "the proper use of crop rotation to be the most important aspect of good husbandry."²¹ Washington owned his book *The Gentleman Farmer* and took extensive notes on his ideas about "agricultural implements, cattle and horses, soil preparation and fertilization, grass and plant cultures, reaping and storage of corn and hay crops, and crop rotation."²² He took note of a plan for a six-year crop rotation that called for the alternation between fallow land, wheat, peas, barley, soy, oats, and pasture.²³ He adjusted the plan to better suit Mount Vernon and its clay soil. He did so by planting "Indian Corn...with intermediate rows of potatoes, or any other root more certain or useful...that will not impede the plough, hoe or harrow in the cultivation of the Corn" in the first year.²⁴ The second year would include "Wheat, Rye, or Winter Barley at the option of the Tenant."²⁵ The third year would be "Buckwheat, Peas or Pulse; or Vegetables of any sort...or anything else, except grain."²⁶ The fourth year of the rotation would include "Oats, or Summer barley, at the discretion of the Tenant, with Clover, if and when the ground is in condition to bear it."²⁷ The fifth year would "remain in Clover for cutting, for feeding, or for both--or if Clover should not be sown--or if sown should not succeed;--then and in that case

²⁰ Fusonie, 8-9.

²¹ Fusonie, 15.

²² Fusonie, 15.

²³ Fusonie, 8, 15.

²⁴ Wilstach, *Mount Vernon: Washington's Home and the Nation's Shrine*, 80.

²⁵ Wilstach, 80.

²⁶ Wilstach, 80.

²⁷ Wilstach, 80.

the field may be filled with any kind of Vetch, pulse or Vegetables.”²⁸ In the sixth and final year of the rotation, the fields should “lie uncultivated in pasture, and for the purpose of manuring, for the same round of crops again.”²⁹ Instilling a system of crop rotation ensured that the soil replenished itself of its nutrients for the sake of producing successful harvests year after year.

To better fertilize the soil, Washington adopted the idea for a dung repository from British agriculturist Thomas Hale’s book *A Compleat Body of Husbandry* [sic].³⁰ The earliest mention of a dung repository at Mount Vernon is from 1787, and it was most likely one of the first of its kind in America. The dung repository was a structure “for horse manure to be deposited and mixed with other organic matter to produce fertilizer for the nearby gardens, orchard, and fields.”³¹ Washington wrote to his nephew and farm manager, George Augustine Washington, in May 1787 about the repository for compost, telling him to make sure that the clay at the bottom of the pit was good and solid before paving over it.³² Fertilizer, in fact, was considered a key element of progressive agriculture.³³ Washington believed it to be so important that he once said in a letter that “when I speak of a knowing Farmer, I mean one who understands the best course of Crops; how to plough—to sow—to mow—to hedge—to Ditch & above all, Midas like, one who can convert every thing [sic] he touches into manure, as the first transmutation towards Gold.”³⁴ The fertilizer used at Mount Vernon mostly contained animal manure, fish head and

²⁸ Wilstach, 80.

²⁹ Wilstach, 80.

³⁰ Fusonie, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 24.

³¹ Dennis J. Pogue, Ph.D., “Dung Repository,” *Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, accessed December 6, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/dung-repository/>.

³² George Washington, Letter “To George Augustine Washington, 27 May 1787,” *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 5, ed. Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 197.

³³ Fusonie, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 22.

³⁴ George Washington, Letter “To George William Fairfax, 30 June 1785,” *The Papers of George Washington: Digital Edition*, accessed December 6, 2016, <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=GEWN-print-04-03-02-0080>.

guts, marl, plaster of Paris, and mud from the Potomac River.³⁵ Washington also experimented with other types of fertilizer in order to improve his harvests. One source shows that he tried growing wheat, oats, and barley in various different substances, such as earth, sand from the river, horse dung, mud from the creek, cow dung, sheep dung, black mold, and clay to see what would best improve their growth.³⁶ He concluded that sheep dung and black mold were “the most productive.”³⁷ The use of fertilizer at the Mount Vernon Estate was not only revolutionary but also necessary for successful harvests that would supply the estate’s other industries, namely flour and whiskey.

Washington was not one to shy away from incorporating new and innovative inventions into the agricultural process at Mount Vernon. One such innovation was the plow. Before requesting two English plows from friend and fellow farmer Arthur Young, Washington tried to construct his own plow and “successfully devised his own improved version of the barrel plow.”³⁸ Following its introduction, the plow became an integral part of Mount Vernon’s operation, which in turn resulted in increased need for the assistance of farm animals. Agricultural success at Mount Vernon relied heavily on animals, such as mules, cattle, and horses. Washington began breeding mules in 1785 when he received a jackass from the King of Spain. From then on he frequently used mules to assist in plowing the fields, hauling compost, and pulling wagons, believing that they “worked longer and harder than horses and required less feed.”³⁹ Washington made the use of mules more mainstream in American culture, so much so that he is sometimes

³⁵ Fusonie, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 22.

³⁶ Wilstach, *Mount Vernon: Washington’s Home and the Nation’s Shrine*, 80-81.

³⁷ Lengel, *First Entrepreneur*, 61.

³⁸ Fusonie, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 14, 17.

³⁹ “The Animals on Washington’s Farm,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*, accessed December 6, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/farming/animals/the-animals-of-mount-vernon/>.

referred to as “The Father of the American Mule.”⁴⁰ Cattle and horses also played an important role on Mount Vernon. In addition to providing meat and dairy products, cows were used for labor at the estate. Like mules, they often plowed and pulled carts. Horses were used at Mount Vernon to provide transportation, pull carriages, and work in the fields and treading barn.⁴¹ Plowing and the use of livestock at the estate greatly improved the efficiency of farming for Washington and American farmers after him.

After wheat was harvested from the fields, the kernels needed to be separated from the stalks. Washington initially used a process called threshing, which was extremely inefficient and required many additional steps before the product could be sold or milled. The wheat would have to be either flailed by hand or walked on by horses, adding unnecessary time and effort to an already labor-intensive process. These threshing techniques were dependent on the weather and entailed further separation and cleaning of the wheat. While serving his term as President, Washington began planning the construction of a building that would “revolutionize the threshing process at Mount Vernon.”⁴² The sixteen-sided treading barn was completed in 1795 for the Dogue Run Farm and was the first of its kind in the new nation. Inside the treading barn, “horses trotted in a placid, never-ending circle, breaking out the wheat as grain kernels fell through the slotted floor boards into storage bins located in the building’s base. The process was clean, efficient, and carried on whatever the weather.”⁴³ About 90% of the seeds would be removed from the stock and knocked down to the floor below where they could be easily

⁴⁰ “The Animals on Washington’s Farm,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*.

⁴¹ “The Animals on Washington’s Farm,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*.

⁴² Lengel, *First Entrepreneur*, 158-159.

⁴³ Lengel, 159.

gathered and then stored or transported for further processing.⁴⁴ The idea for the treading barn was unique and innovative in the sense that Washington took an existing agricultural process and designed an original structure to accommodate it.⁴⁵

While Washington was the landowner and made most of the decisions about the day-to-day operations of the Mount Vernon Estate, it is important to remember that he was not working in the fields. Like many of his contemporaries, Washington owned slaves. Enslaved African Americans were the largest single group living at the estate and performed most of the labor against their will.⁴⁶ When Washington made the switch from tobacco to wheat, he “decided that it was necessary to implement a new division of labor, by sex, among his field hands.”⁴⁷ The male slaves utilized the plows and other machinery, while the women raked, gathered, bound, and carried the harvested wheat and spread fertilizer.⁴⁸ Just as Washington’s innovation was essential to Mount Vernon’s success, so, too, was the tireless labor of his slaves.

Mount Vernon’s Gristmill and Distillery

When George Washington inherited the Mount Vernon Estate, a water-powered gristmill on Dogue Run Creek was already a part of the property. It was run by slaves to “ground mainly corn and wheat for daily sustenance.”⁴⁹ American millers in British America had already begun selling their processed flour overseas in the West Indies to feed the great number of slaves

⁴⁴ “George Washington’s 16-Sided Treading Barn,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/pioneer-farm/treading-barn/>.

⁴⁵ Dennis J. Pogue, “16-Sided Barn,” *Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/16-sided-barn/>.

⁴⁶ Lengel, *First Entrepreneur*, 42.

⁴⁷ Fusonie, *George Washington: Pioneer Farmer*, 17.

⁴⁸ Fusonie, 17.

⁴⁹ Steven T. Bashore, “Milling Flour at Mount Vernon,” in *Dining with the Washingtons: Historic Recipes, Entertainment, and Hospitality from Mount Vernon*, ed. Stephen A. McLeod (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 92.

working in sugar production. Southern Europe also became interested in the flour market.

Washington saw the profit that could be earned with his new, larger wheat crop, and in 1771, a newly constructed gristmill was completed at Mount Vernon. Just months after the mill was finished, the estate had already produced 128,000 pounds of flour to be shipped to market.⁵⁰

The mill, constructed between 1770 and 1771, was powered by a sixteen-foot-diameter waterwheel, which ran one set of millstones for grinding corn and another for grinding wheat. The cornmeal produced in the mill fed the Washingtons as well as their guests, slaves, and livestock. The wheat was ground between two high quality French millstones to create a superfine and high-demand product. After the wheat was ground between the two millstones, the wheat meal was taken to an upper-level floor to be sifted. The wheat meal was fed through fine silk cloth to produce superfine white flour. Washington was proud of his product, writing that “at present my Mill has the reputation of turning out superfine flour of the first quality; it commands a higher price in this Country & the West Indies than any other.”⁵¹

During his first presidential term, Washington learned of a new gristmill design created by Delaware miller Oliver Evans when he signed Evans’ patent application. Washington visited a colleague who had already adopted Evans’ system at his own estate and then decided to bring the new mill design to Mount Vernon. The existing system at Mount Vernon had been very profitable for about two decades; however, Washington believed Evans’ newly patented design could further increase his profits. He was correct. The automated system increased the mill’s

⁵⁰ Bashore, 92-93.

⁵¹ George Washington, Letter “To Robert Lewis and Sons, 12 April 1785,” *The Papers of George Washington: Digital Edition*, accessed December 6, 2016, <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=GEWN-print-04-02-02-0354>.

efficiency, making the process faster and also requiring less manual labor.⁵² As one of the first Americans to incorporate Evans' method on his estate, Washington set the bar high for millers who had to try and compete with Mount Vernon's exceptional production rate of high quality flour.

George Washington stepped down from the presidency in 1797 after serving as commander in chief for eight years. He returned home to Mount Vernon to spend the remaining years of his life out of the public eye. James Anderson, who had previously managed his own farm, mills, and distillery, had been serving as the Mount Vernon Estate's farm manager since October 1796. He proposed the idea of establishing a distillery at the estate to Washington, and Washington agreed to have one built at the estate. Construction began next to the gristmill on Dogue Run Creek in 1797, and the distillery was operating by the spring of 1798. The distillery was quite large in size, and thus produced a considerable amount of whiskey.⁵³ According to one of Washington's guests, "they distill up to 12 thousand gallons a year (they can distill 50 gallons per day if the weather is not too hot); each gallon at 4 Virginia shillings; that alone should bring in up to 16 thousand doll[ars]."⁵⁴ While the actual amount of whiskey produced in 1799 was closer to 11,000 gallons, of all of Washington's business ventures, whiskey was by far the most profitable.⁵⁵

Rye and corn from both Mount Vernon and elsewhere were used to make whiskey. With the gristmill located next door to the new distillery, the meal did not need to travel far to be made

⁵² "The Magnificent Millworks of Oliver Evans," *George Washington's Mount Vernon*, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/gristmill/oliver-evans/>.

⁵³ "James Anderson," *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/james-anderson/>.

⁵⁴ Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, "Acute Observations: From Domestic Pursuits to Concern for the Nation," in *Experiencing Mount Vernon: Eyewitness Accounts, 1784-1865*, ed. Jean B. Lee (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2006), 77.

⁵⁵ "James Anderson," *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*.

into whiskey. Mount Vernon's whiskey business supplied not only those who lived and worked on the estate but also the community at large; much of the finished product was sold in nearby Alexandria.⁵⁶ The distillery was in operation until 1808, nine years after Washington's death.⁵⁷ Because of Washington's decision to change his main cash crop to wheat, he was able to expand the market by producing flour and whiskey at the Mount Vernon Estate as well.

Conclusion

George Washington contributed to the development of the United States in more ways than one. His public life as military hero, politician, and president may have revolutionized American society, but his private life as a farmer, businessman, and agricultural innovator made a significant impact on American agricultural advancement. On multiple occasions, Washington was the first to take the necessary steps towards the future of agriculture. Whether it was adopting British techniques, namely crop rotation and the use of fertilizer, or acting as one of the first Americans to use certain practices such as the breeding of mules, Washington was not afraid to experiment with new practices in order to discover what would best work for him and American agriculture at large. Most notably, the production of wheat and other grains at Mount Vernon helped Washington become a wildly prosperous agricultural leader in America. The invention of the sixteen-sided treading barn, adoption of Oliver Evans' revolutionary milling technique, domination of the whiskey market, and expert record keeping greatly contributed to his agricultural success and, in turn, that of the United States as a whole. By inventing

⁵⁶ "Washington's Distillery," *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/washingtons-distillery/>.

⁵⁷ Emma Bilski, "Whiskey Production," *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/whiskey-production/>.

techniques of his own and becoming one of the first American agriculturists to use British methods, Washington accelerated the development of the United States into an agricultural superpower through the techniques used at the Mount Vernon Estate in the latter half of the eighteenth century. George Washington was not only a Founding Father, but a Founding Farmer as well.

CONSTRUCTING THE CONSERVATIVE VISION: Housing Policy in the Cold War

Ciaran Lithgow

It is easy to mislabel conservatism as monolithically “Anti-Big Government.” Even nuanced definitions of conservatism fail to accurately describe the ideology. Some clarify that conservatives are against federal free market intervention, but promote federal interference in the private and social sphere on behalf of traditional “family values.” Others note that there is a range of conservative values, which places neoconservatives and libertarians in the pro-free market, anti-private affairs intrusion camp. The rest are labeled a mix of fiscally and socially conservative. In both arguments, conservatives are associated with fiscal responsibility. But the political climate of the Cold War proved that conservatism is much more complex than merely small government and traditional morality. As Peter Marcuse argues in “The Liberal/Conservative Divide,” conservatives have actually been proactive when it comes to government intervention in the economy, so long as it economically benefits “the market” instead of the individual.¹ This market intervention has been justified by their moral code.² Conservatives and neoconservatives alike adhere to the traditional value of hard work and self-sufficiency (a concept which is often gendered and racialized), and have incorporated these principles into federal policy.

By Marcuse’s logic, conservative support of multiple Cold War housing policies is justified. These policies included the backing of home mortgages at lower interest rates and providing no-down payments for select members of society on new-track suburban housing. Viewing these housing policies through a conservative lens, we understand that governmental mortgage subsidization provided the market *supplier* (not the consumer) with the assurance that their investments would not be lost through defaults and foreclosures. Suppliers were more

¹ Peter Marcuse, “The Liberal/Conservative Divide in the History of Housing Policy in the United States,” *Housing Studies* 16, (2001): 719-720.

² Marcuse defines the “market” in this instance as the *network* of producers, not the goods themselves.

willing to provide better loans at reduced interest rates. This allowed “hard-working” Americans who deserved housing (as opposed to those “undeserving”) to purchase a house and partake in the American Dream.³ So long as government intervention did not threaten to de-incentivize hard work, for example, through direct government subsidies, federal intervention into the market was justified.

This argument, however, was confounded by many conservatives’ activism in the Cold War on behalf of public housing and direct subsidization of individuals. This paper will examine the transformation of conservative leadership through the lens of federal housing policy during the era, as well as the racial implications of pursuing such policies. These instances prove a deeper level of complexity in conservative arenas of thought while simultaneously outlining the historical changing values of conservatism.

Cold War Era Ideology & Housing Conflict

The housing policies of the Cold War seem to conflict with American international goals of promoting capitalism and free markets. But despite these contradictions, most federally elected conservative officials and policy experts of the era did not view government intervention in the housing market as an anti-capitalist threat. Anti-communist arguments against public housing seemed to be few and far between; most anti-public housing McCarthyist scare tactics

³ Marcuse would argue that conservatives view the market (in other words, the network of producers) as generators of both market goods *and* jobs. By investing in the producers, the government promotes their ability to create jobs for the working and middle class, who in turn fulfill their role in the American workforce and become “deserving” Americans (Marcuse, 731). The myth of the bootstraps/hardworking American is often paired with the dichotomy of the “deserving vs undeserving,” perpetuated and reinforced by toxic displays of whiteness and masculinity in everyday American culture. It led to racialized and gendered ideas of who should access jobs, social programs, and housing, often leaving accessibility of government programs limited to white men.

were concentrated at the local levels.⁴ Diverging from these localized anti-communist politics, most federal conservatives broadly viewed housing social welfare programs as *temporary* government assistance, used to promote the eventual full employment and upward mobility of American citizens in the poor and working classes. Similarly, government-sponsored housing loans through the Federal Housing Authority were viewed as “steps to the creation of a Federal policy which facilitated home ownership,” a uniquely American ambition.⁵ By restructuring housing loans, conservatives in the federal government believed they were providing Americans with the ability to make market choices *outside of* the government, which reinforced ideas of freedom of choice and capitalism.

In many ways, conservatives justified their support of federal housing policies by positing federal actions as a venue to promote domestic individualism. However, a shift during the Civil Rights Movement caused conservatives to break with their traditional support of federal housing and reassess conservative values. This culminated in President Richard Nixon’s 1973 moratorium on funding to housing programs, which led to conservative restructuring of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This bolstered the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, which was arguably one of the most inaccessible housing programs in American history.

⁴ Jo Ann E. Argersinger, “Contested Visions of American Democracy: Citizenship, Public Housing, and the International Arena,” *Journal of Urban History* 36, (2010): 800.

⁵ Nathan Glazer, “Housing Problems and Housing Policies,” *The Public Interest* 7, (1967): 30.

Early Developments of Housing Policy

The beginnings of government housing policies can be found in the Progressive era. From the 1880s to the 1920s, cities like New York passed local zoning codes outlining and mandating minimum “shelter” standards to prevent tenements, which were considered public health hazards due to overcrowding, poor ventilation, and little-to-no plumbing. However, these efforts were largely localized and only necessary in major urban areas affected by immigration and high populations. The next major government intervention into the housing market, and arguably the first major pieces of housing legislation at the federal level, occurred during President Roosevelt’s New Deal era.

In an effort to ensure that some Americans kept their homes during the aftermath of the 1929 market crash, the New Deal government passed a series of housing acts, supported by both liberals and conservatives. The Homeowners Refinancing Act of 1933 created the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC); the National Housing Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Both agencies worked to offer refinanced mortgages at lower interest rates; the HOLC refinanced eligible homes deemed “at-risk” of foreclosure while FHA regulated interest rates and repayment terms, providing the improved loans through local banks.⁶ In 1937, yet another Housing Act created local public housing agencies. These agencies were charged with deciding how to direct federal aid to support low-income families. The overarching goal of the 1937 Housing Act was to ensure the “elimination of unsafe and insanitary housing conditions, [the] eradication of slums, [and the] provision of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families

⁶ The FHA would grow in later years while the HOLC would become obsolete by 1950. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 196; 203-204.

American's right as a citizen was "guaranteed housing" and that right "should not be denied."⁹

This contention over public housing, paired with the 1939 Act's delegation of responsibility to local Housing Authorities, led to uneven implementation of public housing and slum clearance policies across U.S. metropolitan areas.

The uneven implementation was indicative of civic unease with public housing, which was echoed by officials at the local level. Some even ran campaigns against the implementation of local housing—seen most prominently in Los Angeles. These anti-public housing efforts largely played into the deserving-undeserving dynamic, leaving low-income individuals without access to federal housing programs. One such campaign, chaired by Frederick C. Dockweiler, a justice of the California Supreme Court, was the "Committee Against Socialist Housing." They argued against public housing on the grounds that the government was building what was insinuated to be luxury housing at the "expense" of the public.¹⁰ It labeled public

housing as a "socialist scheme" in which Los Angeles taxpayers would be left "[paying] somebody else's rent." The development of public housing projects in Los Angeles and other cities was largely diminished by coordinated local efforts like these, making much of the low-income housing efforts of the 1937 Act obsolete.

*Committee Against Socialist Housing -
"Don't Pay Somebody Else's Rent."
1952*

In addition to local opposition to public housing, access to more affordable housing mortgages was not universal, and was mostly limited to white men. The HOLC had developed a system to methodically assess the potential quality of a loan based on the applicant, the home's location, and the physical home itself. HOLC officials considered qualities of applicants who

⁹ Argersinger, 799.

¹⁰ Committee Against Socialist Housing, Campaign Advertisement "Don't pay somebody else's rent! vote no on Prop. B, 1952," Series 2, Box 2, Folder 10, Dockweiler Family Papers, CLAS-12, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA.

wished to refinance loans, including “occupation, income, and ethnicity of the inhabitants” as well as considering the “age, type of construction, price range, sales demand, and general state of repair of the housing stock” in question.¹¹ Most importantly, however, the Corporation assessed the quality of neighborhoods through a rating system based on the age of the neighborhood, its density, and its level of “mixing” (which referred to the ethnic makeup of the area). Areas were rated on a 1-4 basis (1 being the best); level 1 areas (marked in “green” on maps) were newly developed and had a “homogenous” makeup of “American business and professional men” (which exclusively noted that an “infiltration of Jews” was unacceptable for a “green” area).¹² “Red” areas were typically older neighborhoods that had “declined” with a mixed but predominantly black population. These areas had red lines drawn around its borders (hence the term “redlining”) and were blacklisted from any refinancing through the HOLC.

This caused many African Americans during this time to lose their homes to foreclose, devastating a primary source of wealth during and following the Great Depression. FHA and GI Bill loans ran into similar problems; because loans were distributed by private bankers at the local level, many African-Americans had a difficult time securing loans due to racial attitudes held by personal bankers (despite applicants being otherwise qualified for these loans).¹³ This was not unintentional. As political scientist Ira Katznelson observed in *When Affirmative Action was White*: conservatives often lobbied to keep distribution power of social services in local hands in

¹¹ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 197-198.

¹² Jackson, 197-198.

¹³ Hilary Herbold, “Never a Level Playing Field: Blacks and the GI Bill,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 6, (1994): 104-108.

order to sanction racial biases without explicitly writing discriminatory practices into law.¹⁴ This conservative tactic was continued in future housing legislation.

New Conservative Leadership in Housing Policy

Led by one of the U.S. Senate's staunchest conservatives, the federal government sought to rectify the execution problems of previous legislation through a post-war housing bill (while continuing its racialized implementation): the American Housing Act of 1949. While this legislation was passed under a Democratic president with the support of a Democratic congress,¹⁵ the 1949 legislation was actually introduced and sponsored by Senator Robert Taft, a Republican who had been an important leader of the "Conservative Coalition" (established to fight the New Deal and active from the late 1930s to the mid-1950s).¹⁶ Taft was a conservative by most measures; arguably, his chief legacy was his quest to strip labor unions of their power and to block fair labor laws on the floor of the Senate. His leadership was confounding to modern scholars of housing policy. One historian wrote that,

...[Taft] emerged as the unlikely standard-bearer for public housing. Known as "Mr. Republican" for his tough partisan stands, Taft vigorously opposed the waste and centralizing tendencies of Roosevelt's New Deal programs. Yet he had frequently

¹⁴ Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 22-23.

¹⁵ Despite being introduced by a conservative Republican (who would later be named the Republican's Senate majority leader in 1953), the Housing Act of 1949 was passed through thanks to a majority of Democrats. The Senate voted: 24 R in favor, 33 D in favor (with 11 R and only 2 D opposed). Congress was much more divided: 192 D and 34 R voted in favor (with 131 R opposed and 55 D opposed). Others in the Senate and House presumably abstained. "Housing Act of 1949 S 1070 — P.L. 171," CQ Almanac 1949, 5th ed., 04-273-04-286, Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1950, <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal49-1399761>.

¹⁶ Jeff Taylor, "Fighting Bob vs. Silent Cal: The Conservative Tradition from La Follette to Taft and Beyond," *Modern Age Quarterly Review* 50, (2008): 297.

visited the urban slums of Cincinnati, his hometown, and was convinced that only a government program could provide good homes for low-income families.¹⁷

Taft's sponsorship of the bill, indicative of what conservatives today refer to as the "welfare state," spoke volumes about the nature of Taft's conservatism, conservatism generally at the time, and how conservatism transformed when placed in a dialogue with the issue of housing and shelter.

The 1949 American Housing Act intervened deeper into both public and private housing markets, further confounding traditional theories on conservatism. The legislation accomplished several things: it expanded the production of public housing (which allowed the *addition* of stock, as opposed to the 1937 legislation's requirement that for every unit built, a slum unit must be destroyed); reduced the cost of building by ensuring a base sum of money to urban builders of large housing developments; expanded federally backed housing loans; and allocated grants to localities for urban development and redevelopment projects, which included slum clearance.

Senator Taft issued a statement in 1949 in support of his collaborative bill, stating that:

We have long recognized the duty of the state to give relief and free medical care to those unable to pay for it, and I think shelter is just as important as relief and medical care. ... I would hope that [public housing] might take care of the needs of 10 per cent of the people, namely, those of the steadily employed low-income group.¹⁸

His sentiments were similarly reflected in the introduction of the American Housing Act, which similarly promised that the federal government should be responsible for housing in some sense:

The Congress declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage, the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of

¹⁷ Alexander Von Hoffman, "A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949," *Housing Policy Debate* 11, (2000): 308.

¹⁸ Richard O. Davies, "'Mr. Republican' Turns 'Socialist': Robert A. Taft and Public Housing," *Ohio History* 73, (1964): 135.

slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family, thus contributing to the development and redevelopment of communities and to the advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the Nation. The Congress further declares that such production is necessary to enable the housing industry to make its full contribution toward an economy of maximum employment, production, and purchasing power.¹⁹

This statement affirmed that conservatives and liberals alike agreed that housing was a right to be ensured to all Americans, and that it was the governments' responsibility to ensure that right. Therefore, the bill expanded the federal governments' role in providing safe and decent housing.

While the Act provided major monetary and structural investment in urban areas, it failed to fully redress the shortcomings of the 1937 legislation. Public housing was still met by local hostility. Construction of public housing was still halted by local activism (as seen in the Los Angeles case). Additionally, the bill failed to address redlining tactics and local bank discrimination against individuals of color applying for housing loans.

Defending Public Housing

From the Great Depression to the beginning of the Cold War era, Democrats controlled the Presidency and most of Congress. It was not until 1953, the first time in eighteen years, that the United States elected a Republican president: Dwight D. Eisenhower. In October of 1953, the newly Eisenhower assembled a team of housing experts to compile a report on the efficacy of the programs implemented by the Housing Act of 1949 and make recommendations based on their findings. The President's Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs was chaired by Albert M. Cole, a former Republican representative from Kansas and

¹⁹ Emphasis mine.

Eisenhower's newly appointed Administrator (equivalent to Secretary) of the Housing and Home Finance Agency.²⁰ The committee was largely staffed by a diverse set of interests: advisory members consisted of housing advocates, private real estate investors and brokers, politicians, and local housing administrators. The Advisory Committee consisted of four subcommittees: FHA and VA Housing Programs and Operations; Urban Redevelopment, Rehabilitation, and Conservation; Housing for Low-Income Families; Housing Credit Facilities; and The Organization of Federal Housing Activities in the Federal Government.

The Committee's findings and policy recommendations generally tended toward the side of keeping, expanding, or modifying (but rarely eliminating) the housing policies set forth by the 1949 legislation. Like the introductory statement in the 1949 Act, the Committee began by asserting their support for the original sentiment of the Housing Act, which affirmed unequivocally that it was the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that every family was sheltered in a safe and decent home. However, the Committee attempted to make a clear distinction between their policies and those of the 1949 legislation. Through frequent references to the free market, the Committee hoped to convey that no matter the apparent indications of government interventionism, these policy recommendations were supposedly based on a belief that *temporary* government regulation can promote a strong economy in which individuals are capable of eventually securing their own housing, without government assistance. They wrote:

It is the conviction of this Committee that the constant improvement of the living conditions of all the people is best accomplished under a strong, free, competitive economy, and that every action taken by Government in respect to housing should

²⁰ The Housing and Home Finance Agency oversaw the Federal Housing Administration, Public Housing Administration, Urban Renewal Administration, and other urban and housing-related agencies created by the 1949 Housing Act.

be for the purpose of facilitating the operation of that economy to provide adequate housing for all the people.²¹

However, many of their policy proposals directly contradicted their assertion that the “free market” was the best market. Their recommendations—which included expanding and strengthening mortgage refinancing programs, insuring more housing loans, aiding private entities who wish to rehabilitate their housing, etcetera—seemed to indicate a much more involved federal government in American housing market. Their stance as conservatives was further complicated by their continued support for public housing.

Conservatives and neoconservatives alike, while theoretically opposed to the concept of public housing, championed its continuation. The 1953 Housing Advisory Committee conclusively agreed that public housing was a necessity. They asserted that while “private enterprise should be relied upon to the maximum extent possible,” public housing programs were “an essential part of a program for low-income individuals and must be continued.”²² They elaborated:

It is the sincere hope of our Subcommittee that over the long term a solution ... will be found both in the ability of private enterprise to reach a lower and lower income group and by raising of substandard incomes through greater productivity of our people. We recognize, however, that even then there will be a hard core of low-income families—the aged, the broken families, the incapacitated—who may represent a continuing housing problem for whom public housing assistance may be needed if they are to live in keeping with our accepted American standard of living.

Through this statement, the committee asserted that it was the government’s responsibility to ensure a basic standard of living for *all* Americans through, in some form or another, federal regulation and intervention in the housing market. They substantiated this claim by citing the

²¹ President's Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs, *Recommendations on Government Housing Policies and Programs* (Washington, 1953), 5.

²² President's Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs, 257.

words of the intended recipient of the report, President Eisenhower, who stated at a dedication of a public housing development in New York, “this [the public housing development] is the heart of America. In it we expect to see living happy families, families who because of their standard of living are our Nation’s best weapon against Communism.”²³ Thus, by ensuring a basic standard of living through federal means, public housing became a *tool* for battling Communism as opposed to a symbol of socialist/communist practices.

This logic was similar to then-Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s “Kitchen Debate,” in which the two leaders debated the distinctions between Soviet and American homes and appliances. Nixon argued that America surpassed the Soviet Union in this arena because, although the affordability of housing may have been similar between the two countries, “diversity, the right to choose, the fact that we have 1,000 builders building 1,000 different houses is the most important thing. We don’t have one decision made at the top by one government official. This is the difference.”²⁴ The government did not mandate a housing type; rather, it provided assistance to those who desired to make choices, and provided additional “public” housing for those who could not afford to make a choice from the “1,000 different houses” available.

Differing conservative justification of federal housing market intervention and government production of housing can be found in neoconservative thought in the 1960s. Neoconservative thought diverged from “leftist” politics of the ‘60s and transplanted itself into the conservative notions of fiscal responsibility. The leading neoconservative journal of its time, *The*

²³ President’s Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs, 257.

²⁴ Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev, “The Kitchen Debate,” July 24, 1959, CIA Freedom of Information Act Digital Reading Room, transcript, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1959-07-24.pdf>.

Public Interest, published extensively on housing policy. Over the 159 issues it produced from 1965 to 2005, *The Public Interest* generated nearly 40 articles on the topic of housing—most relating directly to federal housing policy. While many of the articles engage in scholarly debates over best practices (often with one another), most authors in the ‘60s and ‘70s were able to agree fundamentally that there should be federally-driven policies designed to help house Americans. Disagreements manifested themselves as hyper-specific, individualized policy variations instead of broad, dichotomous disagreements that one might see in other policy arguments (such as federal involvement in healthcare).

One such example can be found in Irving H. Welfeld, a *Public Interest* contributor who once served as a senior analyst at HUD. Welfeld opened his 1970 critique of federal housing policy by acknowledging that, “for some time now, it has been generally accepted that the federal government has a duty to ensure adequate housing for all its citizens.”²⁵ Basing his argument in this central belief that housing should be ensured for all Americans, he went on to critique the government’s policy as well intentioned. However, he noted that “federal housing policy ends by giving virtually no assistance to the very poorest,” meaning that even public housing was mostly limited to Low Income households, and did not extend as far as Very or Extremely Low Income households.²⁶ He ended by suggesting that government policies should promote positive changes in the market. This could be achieved by directly subsidizing middle-income and low-income families through government cash transfers to create higher turnover in housing, allowing low-income families to move up into middle-income housing. He suggested that this would eliminate the need for the government to build public housing themselves, as it would stimulate

²⁵ Irving Welfeld, “Toward a new federal housing policy,” *The Public Interest* 19, (1970): 31.

²⁶ Welfeld, “Toward a new federal housing policy,” 36.

competition among developers, instead of directly subsidizing the developers. This policy proposition was in basic opposition to the leading conservative narrative of permissible government intervention that promotes investing in the “producers,” not subsidizing the “consumers.”

Other influential neoconservative thinkers of the time more closely aligned with conservative market-based thought. Nathan Glazer, co-editor of *The Public Interest*, was a popular neoconservative sociologist and professor at both UC Berkley and Harvard. Glazer wrote extensively on issues of poverty housing policy in this era, and worked in the federal government for a year as a part of President John F. Kennedy’s administration as a part of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (which would later become the Department of Housing and Urban Development). In “Housing Problems and Housing Policies,” Glazer sought to understand what “good housing” meant by modern American standards. He then analyzed the implications of setting a standard in the federal housing policy arena. First, he established that housing expectations were “mediated through a complex culture” that resulted in various expectations for each class of Americans.²⁷ These complex systems of expectations, paired with available but substandard housing units, complicated the ability of the federal government to successfully implement effective policies. Because the federal government’s public housing units were often expensive to build and maintain, and were generally aesthetically unappealing, the government was ineffective at “competing” with existing private housing units. Glazer pointed to capitalism’s freedom of choice as the ultimate bane of public housing’s existence. Had the government *mandated* public housing for extremely low-income individuals, the program may

²⁷ Glazer, “Housing Problems and Housing Policies,” 26.

have been successful. He rationalized, “where people have more choices before them, and more freedom to make such choices, it is certain that some of their choices will not correspond with the range that government policy has made available.”²⁸ This choice caused government projects to hemorrhage money through vacancies. Vacancies decreased the amount of capital available to fund general maintenance, which led to unsafe living environments and drove inhabitants out, leading to more vacancies in a never-ending cycle. Eventually, many public housing developments failed and were demolished, like the Pruitt-Igoe projects of St. Louis, which the city demolished in 1972.²⁹

Glazer conceded that this is not always the case, and that many residents of public housing find their living environments “unobjectionable.” But he marked a site of importance: the majority of Americans took issue with public housing based on standards of living constructed and reinforced by cultural expectations.³⁰ Glazer noted that the “middle class liberal and radical ally of the poor” disliked public housing on the basis that their *own* standards of living are high. When “the overwhelming preference of the American family in housing” was “owner-occupied, single-family, freestanding house with a bit of land around it,” it was impossible for the federal

²⁸ Glazer, 28.

²⁹ Pruitt-Igoe was a public housing project in St. Louis that lost many of its white residents due to desegregation and white flight in the ‘50s. Often cited as the case against public housing, it became dangerous due to high vacancies and poor maintenance, which represented failures of the local public housing agency. Elevators, plumbing, and garbage incinerators were often broken and never fixed. Squatters involved in drug and violent crime took over entire towers; the project became so unsafe that police stopped responding to calls from the project. Chad Friedrichs, *Pruitt-Igoe Myth*, (New York City: First Run Features, 2011), Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKgZM8y3hso>.

³⁰ It is important to remember that the rise of public housing aligned with the suburbanization of America. During the late ‘40s and ‘50s, veterans returning from WWII saw an increase in housing benefits from the GI Bill. However, due to segregation in the armed forces and racial covenants (contracts that permanently prohibited selling a particular home, building, or piece of land to a racial minority) drawn by the architects of suburbia kept many African Americans from realizing the “New American Dream” of picket fences and track homes. Cultural expectations regarding the rising standard of living were largely white—an unattainable prospect for racial minorities. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 191, 204.

government to meet these expectations. The government was willing to subsidize this preference, as we saw in the 1949 legislation and government-insured HOLC loans; however, it was not willing or able to distribute such housing to every citizen, especially the “neediest” in society.³¹ Importantly, Glazer noted that the government did not see public housing as a solution to the “problem” of affordable housing. Rather, they saw it as a program for the poorest who live in abject poverty and for whom public housing is a substantial “step up” from their previous living situations. Glazer, in fact, criticized federal housing policy for meeting the needs of the poorest (who received public housing) and upper-working/lower-middle classes (who received subsidized housing loans and were often lifted to middle-class status) while failing to meet the housing needs of those in “the middle” of these two demographics. He concludes:

Just as we are rich enough to provide decent minimal family settings for the economically deprived in our population, so I believe we are rich enough to provide some resources to the aesthetically deprived so as to maintain our more successful urban settings, and to devise new ones. But both new directions of policy must be fed, of course, through the complex procedures of a democratic society; and their proponents must convince the majority that they, too, will benefit from these extensions of our major policy commitments.

In this, Glazer presents the familiar argument that connected democracy to a wide variety of housing choices *enabled* by government intervention.

Shifting Tides: The Civil Rights Movement & Nixon's Housing Moratorium

By the late 1960s, perceptions of housing policy and public housing had become more nuanced on the federal level. A 1971 review of federal housing policy noted that “[it became] clear

³¹ Despite home-ownership being a more affordable and stable housing option in the long-term, the “neediest” did not have access to low interest government mortgages. This was often either due to aforementioned racist lenders and redlining policies or because many rarely had the capital to provide a down payment on a house. Glazer, “Toward a new federal housing policy,” 34.

that housing all poverty-stricken people in standard housing is not by itself going to end poverty.”³² The author continued,

Indeed, without attacking other deprivations at the same time, it is quite possible that the result will be quick deterioration of structurally standard housing... Poor housing, thus, is one of the set of mutually reinforcing depravations in the vicious cycle in poverty—and quite probably not the most important one.

This was the context in which President Lyndon B. Johnson introduced his Great Society.

Johnson declared “War on Poverty,” creating policies that assisted low-income individuals and families through a series of federally funded programs. Johnson’s Great Society created a Job Corps, Medicare and Medicaid, Food Stamps, and other anti-poverty programs. The Great Society was also responsible for the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (known colloquially as HUD, and still acts as the nation’s primary federal housing department today). The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, which created HUD, received significantly less bipartisan support than the 1937 or 1949 Acts did (only 20 percent of House Republicans and 27 percent of Senate Republicans voted in support of the bill). Additionally, many Southern Conservative Democrats (from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Mississippi) voted against the bill. Most House Democrats who voted against the bill were also from southern states, but also included some coastal opposition.

This was the first major conservative departure from their traditional support of federal housing policy. This could be in part due to the provision in the 1965 legislation that created Community Development Corporations (CDC’s), which inserted federally run and staffed

³² Harold Wolman, *The Politics of Federal Housing* (New York: Dodd Mead & Co., 1971), 5-7.

organizations into affected communities on a needs-basis.³³ Many of the neighborhoods most desperately in need of these funds consisted of a minority-majority population. When placed in the context of the Civil Rights Movement, it became clearer why the Housing and Urban Development Act was the piece of legislation that sparked the shift in conservatives' stance on housing, and brought out Conservative Democrats' true colors. As the aforementioned Katznelson noted, previous housing legislation provided localities the ability to staff programs like these with local authorities—authorities who were often motivated by racist attitudes. Not tied to any federal non-discrimination policies, they had more freedom to distribute funding on a case-by-case basis. This ensured that federal funding was directed to the “right places.”³⁴

These racial discrepancies in funding for housing and other poverty programs can be clearly seen in southern states, where black applicants received remarkably *less* funding than white counterparts, or in many cases, no funding at all.³⁵ By bypassing the state and local government with community development corporations, the Housing and Urban Development Act threatened the fragile, unspoken agreements between the federal government and southern segregationist states. A last-minute amendment proposed by conservatives recommended repealing portions of the Act intended to give direct grants to homeowners in designated “urban renewal” areas for home rehabilitation.³⁶ This amendment would disproportionately limit federal

³³ David Erickson, *The Housing Policy Revolution: Networks and Neighborhoods* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 2009), 4-5.

³⁴ Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, 39.

³⁵ Katznelson, 41-50; 120-121.

³⁶ This portion of the bill was included presumably to redress the “redlining” tactics that took place during the ‘40s and ‘50s, which kept homeowners of color from restructuring loans. By failing to grant people of color access to restructured loans, many either lost their homes or were kept in poverty due to high interest rates. Remarkably, the amendment also suggested revoking Section 101, which would be the first Housing Voucher (private rent subsidy) program in federal history. Housing voucher programs were generally popular among conservatives, and remain today to be their favored housing subsidy program. Katznelson, 163.

funding to citizens of color, and was only rejected by six votes. Katznelson argues that this amendment highlighted conservative fears of the Civil Rights Movement. Republicans and Conservative Democrats demonstrated that they would rather revoke their previously consistent support of federal housing practices than invest in struggling communities of color. Soon after, the 1968 Fair Housing Act would desegregate public housing, outlaw racial covenants, and protect renters and purchasers of homes from discrimination based on race (along with other protected classes), which banned redlining tactics utilized by private banks and the FHA.

Not all conservatives tied their support of housing programs to racialized requirements. George Romney, Republican governor of Michigan during the civil rights era and later the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Nixon, was a strong advocate for desegregation and open housing. During his first year in office, in 1963, Governor Romney made clear that desegregation and fair housing would be a top priority for his administration, stating, "Michigan's most urgent human rights problem is racial discrimination—in housing, public accommodations, education, administration of justice, and employment."³⁷ During his tenure as HUD Secretary, Romney "set out to dismantle segregation and what he described as a 'high income white noose' formed by the suburbs that surrounded black inner cities" by withholding funding from cities and states who imposed segregation in their housing stock.³⁸ When Nixon was alerted to Romney's actions, he reportedly ordered staff within his administration to "shut it down."³⁹ Romney was later ostracized and slowly "pushed out" of his position as HUD Secretary; in 1975 Nixon replaced Romney with James Thomas Lynn, a man

³⁷ Sidney Fine, *Expanding the Frontiers of Civil Rights: Michigan 1948-1968* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 218.

³⁸ NYT Editorial Board, "Housing Apartheid, American Style," *New York Times*, May 16, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/17/opinion/sunday/housing-apartheid-american-style.html?mcubz=1>.

³⁹ NYT Editorial Board, "Housing Apartheid, American Style."

with literally no prior experience in housing and only five years of experience in any government administrative work.⁴⁰

Another conservative—a Republican from Maryland—was quick to pick up the fight against the Nixon Administration’s stance on housing. Declassified documentation from Representative Gilbert Gude’s personal congressional correspondence demonstrates a long history of constituency work related to and advocating for housing. Many of his constituents wrote to him requesting special consideration in disputes with HUD; others asked for extensions on late payments on FHA loans (several of these cases appeared to be resolved by Gude).⁴¹ In a public remark to Congress in the summer of 1969, Gude read aloud, in its entirety, an article from the *Washington Post*. His oration was intended to “give new impetus and fuel to the general trend of investigating the national priorities and, second, that it might again reveal the vast inadequacies in our present approach to poverty.”⁴² The article in question was aptly titled “The Subsidies to 10,000 Richest Farms Exceed U.S. Funds for Housing Poor.” It both challenged Congress’s budget priorities while simultaneously accusing farm funding to be unfairly skewed towards affluent farm corporations, noting, “That system [of government spending] has decreed that ceilings of some sort should be placed on welfare handouts to poor people, whether in the form of subsidized housing or subsidized incomes.... The same system has decreed that ceilings of that sort are inappropriate for the welfare handouts to wealthy

⁴⁰ David Rosenbaum, “H.U.D. Chief ‘with a Personality’,” *New York Times*, Dec 06, 1972, 28.

⁴¹ Gilbert Gude, Conrad M. Shirley, and Abner D. Silverman, “HUD & Constituents Correspondence,” MS2081, Box # 201, Folder 3, Gilbert Gude papers, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, DC.

⁴² Gilbert Gude, “The subsidies to 10,000 richest farms exceed U.S. funds for housing poor,” MS2081, Box # 201, Folder 3, Gilbert Gude Papers.

commercial farmers.”⁴³ This lecture was indicative of the recent shifting values of conservative federal government officials, a tumultuous change from their original affirmation of the government’s responsibility to ensure an “American standard of living” for all, to a market-based approach of investing in companies rather than individuals.

Most notably, Gude successfully lobbied for continued investment in a senior public housing project located in his district during Nixon’s 1973 housing moratorium. The complex, called the “Emerson House,” had been in the works prior to the 1973 moratorium that stopped funding to housing loans and halted construction and funding to all new public housing projects. A series of previously classified correspondence between HUD officials, Nixon staff, and Gude’s office revealed that Gude was able to successfully force the continued construction and funding of the Emerson House (whose rent was entirely subsidized) given its status as a “unique ‘special exception,’” as described by one HUD staffer.⁴⁴ While the Emerson House surely aided those in the housing project, there were thousands of other projects halted during this period that were surely equally as “advantageous” and “unique.”⁴⁵ Yet Gude’s status as a champion for housing in Congress served his constituents well in the wake of the moratorium. But despite his continued advocacy on the Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation, the moratorium and the subsequent Housing and Community Development Act would fundamentally change the way in which conservatives would practice housing policy.

⁴³ Gude, “The subsidies to 10,000 richest farms...”

⁴⁴ Gude, Gilbert, Lynn, James T., Katz, Sheldon T., et. Al, “Confidential Emerson House correspondences,” MS2081, Box # 201, Folder 3, Gilbert Gude Papers.

⁴⁵ Gude et. al., “Confidential Emerson House correspondences.”

Conclusion

While many conservatives had considered housing an exception to their general distaste for welfare, following the mortgage crisis of the early '70s and the subsequent rent inflations, they became disillusioned with the federal government's direct approach. This was reflected in the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act. The bill was crafted by both congressional Democrats and Republicans to present legislation that was consistent with Nixon's wishes (as Democrats had a majority in both Houses but faced a staunch conservative in the Presidency).⁴⁶ Nixon and his administration, as well as conservative congresspersons, began to advocate for a decentralized approach to housing support. Yet Nixon's main request—a direct “cash transfer” to individuals in the form of housing vouchers—still challenged modern theories of conservatism. Nixon argued that by investing directly in the individual, the federal government could create “families with sufficient real income and sufficient confidence to create an effective demand for better housing on the one hand, and builders and credit institutions able to respond to that demand on the other.”⁴⁷ This wish was realized in the Section 8 (now Housing Choice Voucher) program. But still, other conservatives, like Congressman Bob Taft Jr., questioned the benefits of federal authority, commenting, “[in] my experience... the more you get of federal programs the further you are likely to get away from humanity and understanding.”⁴⁸ The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program was the ultimate negotiation between

⁴⁶ Nixon would undergo preliminary impeachment trials during this period and resign before the bill reached the President's desk. The bill was signed into law by Ford, but was passed by the House and Senate *prior* to Nixon's impeachment and resignation. Therefore, the bill can still be considered a part of the Nixon administration. National Low Income Housing Coalition, “40 Years Ago: August 22, President Ford Signs Housing and Community Development Act of 1974,” NLIHC, Aug. 18 2014, <http://nlihc.org/article/40-years-ago-august-22-president-ford-signs-housing-and-community-development-act-1974>.

⁴⁷ Erickson, *The Housing Policy Revolution*, 20.

⁴⁸ Erickson, 3.

conservative and liberal wishes; liberals wanted to continue federal funding to support urban rehabilitation while conservatives like Taft Jr. lobbied for decentralization. CDBG's were a merging of these two ideologies; conservatives removed direct federal authority, as seen in the Community Development Corporations, to allow for expanded local autonomy, and liberals tied them to federal nondiscrimination policies as well as a needs-based application program.

Conservative housing policy remains consistent in its selective application of state favor. In the 1940s and '50s, affordable mortgages and public accommodations were often restricted to white, middle-class families. The 1960s saw neoconservatives, such as Nathan Glazer, champion public housing's continued funding as a bulwark for Nixon's "silent majority." And George Romney, at HUD in the 1970s, pushed for desegregation under the Nixon administration. Today, CDBG's remain underfunded, and the waiting list for a Section 8 housing voucher can be as long as eight years in some cities. Additionally, by failing to create Section 8 recipients as protected class, negative perceptions of "welfare recipients" have continued to make renting market-rate housing difficult for recipients of housing vouchers.⁴⁹ Thus, these programs have successfully continued the unspoken racialized divisions in federal housing access and achieved one early and twisted goal of conservatism: racial segregation.

⁴⁹ Tamicha H. Daniel, "Voucher Program: Addressing Voucher Discrimination Under the Federal Fair Housing Act," *Georgetown Law Journal* (2010): 770-772.

**THE DELICIOUS NIGHTS THAT
HAD CEASED: Islamic Poetry in the
Age of the Crusades**

Samuel B. Tiratto

Poets have long used the written verse as a means of expressing the inexpressible. The Crusades into the Muslim world during the eleventh and twelfth centuries brought about the inexpressible for the Muslim targets of Christian violence.¹ The Muslims responded with their own religiously-driven armies and justifications for violence on the battlefields. They also responded with unique forms of poetry that drew from ancient traditions in Arabic culture that long predated Islam. The epic poems that court poets composed for their patrons were as impressive as the size and scale of the armies that reconquered the land occupied by the Christian invaders.

Studying the poetry of a culture is a way of studying how that culture interprets the world in the abstract. Poetry reveals what a culture sees as beautiful or what a culture sees as cursed. Before the Crusades, the poetry of Arabic society was strongly rooted in spiritual revelation. The court-scholar relationship of the Abbasid Caliphate created a fertile ground for the growth of poetry as both a form of entertainment and a form of propaganda.² During the Crusades, the military leaders of the Muslim world, who hailed from the upper echelons of royal families, brought with them scores of poets and scholars to document their victories against the invaders. In this paper, I will be analyzing some of the poems that comprised the literary reaction to the Crusades in Muslim society. I will be looking at the writings of many notable court poets from the era, primarily focusing on the poets under the patronage of iconic Muslim military leaders, Nur ad-Din and Saladin. I will also discuss the origins of *jihad*, or holy war, and how poetry led

¹ The Crusades were a series of religious conflicts initiated by the Latin Church that occurred primarily in the Muslim world. During the Crusades, Christian soldiers and pilgrims—known as Latins or Franks—were sanctioned to wage war against the Muslim world of the Eastern Mediterranean, known as the Levant or the Holy Land, for its significance in the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths. For this essay, only the early Crusading expeditions will be considered, excluding later Crusading expeditions that occurred outside of the Holy Land and against non-Muslim targets.

² The Abbasid Caliphate ruled the Muslim world from the mid-eighth century to the mid-thirteenth century.

to its development during the time of Christian incursion. Finally, I will discuss how the Muslim poets wrote about the Frankish invaders, their occupiers, and how the cultural gulf between the two groups led to a unique poetic commentary. The significance of anti-Crusader poetry cannot be understated, as it reveals much about the religious scholarship and the aesthetic pleasures of medieval Muslim society. For one, the existence of such a large and specific treasury of poetry relating to the Crusades is worth noting. Furthermore, much has been written on the Latin interpretation of the Crusades, whereas the Arabic take on their invaders is not nearly as extensively analyzed in the English language. The anti-Crusader poems of the Muslim world show a dedication to the lyrical verse and the varied, evolving reaction to an event seemingly beyond words.

Poetry and Islam before the Crusades

Before the spread of Islam in the Middle East, Arab society heavily embraced the art of poetry as both a means of communication and a way of perceiving worldly phenomena. In many ways, poetry was the “main vehicle” for Arab art and communication prior to Islam.³ Arabic culture relied heavily on oral storytelling as a means of historical remembrance, and poetry often served this purpose.⁴ The advent of Islam brought about an important change in how Arabic poetry was written. Early Islamic scholars saw poetry as a means of base expression that praised indulgence rather than the values put forth in the Qur’an.⁵ This interpretation was at odds with

³ Amidu Sanni, “Perspectives in a Religious System: The Role and Status of Poetry in Islam,” *Islamic Studies* 29 (1990): 347.

⁴ A. A. Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, trans. and ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 137.

⁵ The Qur’an is the central religious text of the Muslim faith. Sanni, “Perspectives in a Religious System,” 343.

pre-Islamic Arab society, which often placed the poet in a high-ranking tribal position and considered poetry to be a vital form of creative expression.⁶ Instead, Islamic scholars seeking to preserve the tradition of poetry amongst the Arabs encouraged poetry of a divine interpretation. Poetry, they argued, should express “virtuous concepts instead of base or unethical concepts,” and it soon became a “fundamental element of both culture and narrative” in the holy city of Medina and elsewhere.⁷ As Islam entered its second century, Muslim scholars and historians started to collect poetry as historical records to preserve both pre-Islamic Arab genealogies and early pieces of circulated writing.⁸ With the progression of Islam, the Arabic poetic tradition maintained traditional folklore while also incorporating new themes and recollections from the Qur’an.⁹

As the poem evolved into a vehicle of remembrance for Abbasid stories and Islamic legends, the poet evolved into a trusted member of court society prior to the First Crusade. In addition to telling the tales of old, poets now occupied the role of propagating court interests. The high courts of the Abbasid ruling class were stocked with poets—in addition to jurists, scholars, and grammarians—because of their ability to wield political rhetoric and disseminate propaganda.¹⁰ A court would sometimes have only a handful of highly educated people, each occupying multiple roles, who would offer their knowledge and services in poetry, grammar, scholarship, history, rhetoric, and many other fields to the ruler.¹¹ In addition to writing poetry, these scholars would teach their rulers’ children, research history and genealogy, and compose

⁶ Sanni, 342.

⁷ Sanni, 346; Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 93.

⁸ Duri, 139.

⁹ Duri, 137.

¹⁰ Sanni, “Perspectives in a Religious System,” 345.

¹¹ Letizia Osti, “The Practical Matters of Culture in Pre-Madrasa Baghdad,” *Oriens* 38 (2010): 154.

“digests” used for intellectual public debate regarding rhetoric and poetry.¹² By the tenth century, the courts of the Abbasid Caliphate had produced a system of dependence between rulers and their intellectuals. Poets needed the income of a wealthy patron to continue their research and composition; thus, the goal of a poet was to receive a position in the court of a wealthy patron.¹³ In many ways, poetry existed in the divine and in the service of the powerful, and a poet who wrote for a powerful ruler would achieve not only religious sanction but also an audience as far and wide as a ruler’s reign.

As the Abbasid Caliphate expanded and became more centralized, the intellectual work it produced followed suit. Tribal scholars and poets used to focus solely on tribal genealogies, but with the development of the Abbasid system of court patronage, narratives of Islamic history began to concentrate on widespread events and public affairs.¹⁴ With the conquests of Abbasid rulers, who brought with them entourages of scholars and poets, the Abbasids’ unique form of panegyric poetry began to develop. This style of poetry, known as *badi`*, came about in the courts to reflect the awesome power of Abbasid rulers. Panegyric odes—forms of poetry often used by cultures to exalt a great person or event in sweeping lyrical verse—were an integral part of how a poet demonstrated his loyalty to his patron.¹⁵ The *badi`* style, the most common means of composing an Abbasid panegyric ode, was complex and innovative, but it also drew on many ancient poetic traditions. Heroic lyrics written to celebrate the victories of the Prophet Muhammad were now used to celebrate the modern victories of Abbasid rulers and give them a

¹² Osti, “The Practical Matters of Culture,” 155.

¹³ Osti, 160.

¹⁴ Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 140.

¹⁵ Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, “Abbasid Panegyric: *Badi`* Poetry and the Invention of the Arab Golden Age,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44 (2017): 49.

“divine right.”¹⁶ Prior to the First Crusade, court poets were already composing panegyric odes celebrating Muslim victories over the Byzantine Empire in the *badi`* form.¹⁷ The Abbasid courts needed these odes as propaganda just as the poets needed roles in the courts to sustain themselves. The development of panegyrics was important to Islamic poetry because it allowed rulers to proclaim divine victory over their enemies by enchanting their subjects with tales of conquest. For example, the panegyric poems celebrating victory over Byzantium would later serve as direct inspiration for the *jihad* poetry of the twelfth century that developed in response to the Crusades.¹⁸

Poetry, Jihad, and the Reaction to the First Crusade

By the time the First Crusade reached Jerusalem, Muslim poets were poised to respond with inspiring and denunciatory verse thanks to the development of the *badi`* style, in conjunction with the progression of *jihad*, in Islamic scriptural interpretation. Echoing past battles with Byzantium, *badi`* poems written in response to the fall of Jerusalem carried heavy feelings of grief as well as moving calls to action. One of the first responses to the fall of Jerusalem to the Franks in 1099 came from an Iraqi poet, Abu al-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi. In the *badi`* style popularized by his forebears, al-Abiwardi mourned the suffering that had taken place in Jerusalem:

When blood has been spilt, when sweet girls for shame hide their lovely faces in their hands!

¹⁶ Stetkevych, “Abbasid Panegyric,” 51.

¹⁷ The Byzantine Empire was the continuation of the Roman Empire that ruled in the Eastern Mediterranean before and during the time of the Crusades. Stetkevych, 59.

¹⁸ Hadia Dajani-Shakeel, “Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry: A Moral and Religious Force to Counter the Crusades,” *The Muslim World* 66 (1976): 96.

When the white swords' points are red with blood, and the iron of the brown lances is stained with gore!¹⁹

Similarly, an anonymous poet from around the time of the First Crusade decried the treatment of Muslim men and women at the hands of the Franks:

How many Muslim men have become booty
And how many Muslim women's inviolability has been plundered?
How many a mosque have they made into a church!²⁰

This poetic response began to take a new form as the Muslim military's response to the Crusades turned from cries of sadness to cries of rage and retribution.

Jihad as an interpretation of Islamic scriptures began to grow in popularity in the Muslim world at around the same time that the poetic response to the Crusades shifted from grief to retaliation against the invaders. Poetry began to echo the language of *jihad* and eventually became a primary conduit for the dissemination of *jihadist* rhetoric. Those who propagated the concept of holy war against the invading Christians asserted that the counter to the Crusades should match the Crusaders' attack in severity. The noted court scholar Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami, a contemporary of the Crusades, composed his *Kitab al-Jihad*, or his call for holy war against the invading Christians, in 1105.²¹ The *Kitab* looked to doctrinal justification for the many Arabs who were already resisting European occupation. Resistance to the Franks often unified locales that were under siege. It became not only expected but also necessary for the civilian population of a city to unite with martial forces in defense – a phenomenon that occurred in cities like Antioch

¹⁹ Abu al-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi, "Abu al-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi on the Fall of Jerusalem," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 79.

²⁰ Anonymous, quoted in Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 298.

²¹ Dajani-Shakeel, "Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry," 99.

and Jerusalem.²² Violent resistance against invaders was encouraged due to some success townspeople had at repelling Christians in cities like Tyre.²³ Before poets and religious leaders alike preached *jihad* across the Levant, marginal coalitions of local Muslims and even Syrian Christians and Jews provided violent defenses against the Franks. The concept of *jihad* helped unify Muslims resisting Frankish sieges through self-defense because they saw themselves as “redressing” the wrongs of invasion.²⁴ Thus, the concept of defensive *jihad* quickly spread throughout the fertile land. *Jihad* came about less as a call to slaughter Christians and more as a means of defending the Muslim homeland by repelling invaders who actively sought to kill Muslims. *Jihad*, in this context, was made more accessible because it was a call for *all* Muslims in the Levant to resist their occupiers. The severity of the conflict already had Muslims doing this *en masse*. And like the Muslim residents of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Tripoli, the poets of the high courts also fought against the Christian invaders.

Due to their influence on the ruling courts in Abbasid society, poets often led the initial charge in favor of *jihad* against the Christians. A poet tied to the rulers of Tripoli, Ibn al-Khayyat, was outraged by the massacres committed by the invading Christians and wanted a swift response to save the Muslim world:

The cutting edge of their [the Franks] must be blunted
And their pillar must be demolished.²⁵

Crusade-era poets often chastised Muslim leaders for continuing Islamic disunity in the face of Christian peril.²⁶ The Iraqi poet Al-Abiwardi implored that all who “fight in the way of Allah” be

²² Alex Mallett, *Popular Muslim Reactions to the Franks in the Levant, 1097-1291* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 15.

²³ Mallett, *Popular Muslim Reactions to the Franks*, 17.

²⁴ Mallett, 28.

²⁵ Ibn al-Khayyat, quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 71.

rewarded, seemingly rebuking the traditional divides between Islamic sects and empires.²⁷ Al-Abiwardi used the tragedy of Jerusalem to underscore the opportunity for a unified fight against the invaders:

Sons of Islam, behind you are battles in which heads rolled at your feet.
Dare you slumber in the blessed shade of safety, where life is as soft as an orchard
flower?

...
While our Syrian brothers can only sleep on the backs of their chargers, or in
vultures' bellies!²⁸

Al-Abiwardi's colorful verse stresses unity—“Sons of Islam”—and clarifies that if one group of Muslims is harmed by the Crusaders, then all Muslims should be concerned. Poetry provided the perfect means for *jihad* to spread through an inflamed society.

Nur ad-Din, Saladin, and Jerusalem

As the concept of *jihad* evolved, so did the poetic response to the Crusaders. With the success of the Zengid ruler, Nur ad-Din, in pushing back Crusaders in the Levant and unifying Muslims against a common enemy, *jihad* became a pan-Islamic call to arms to not only defend the homeland from invading Christians but also retake Jerusalem.²⁹ Nur ad-Din was a prominent patron of poetry who, at the time, called for *jihad* because it supported his unifying and expansionist goals as a conqueror.³⁰ The poets Ibn al-Qaysarani and 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani both composed panegyrics for Nur ad-Din during his reign.³¹ Al-Qaysarani was forced to flee his home

²⁶ Dajani-Shakeel, “Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry,” 102.

²⁷ Dajani-Shakeel, 102.

²⁸ Al-Abiwardi, “Fall of Jerusalem,” 79.

²⁹ The Zengid Dynasty, to which Nur ad-Din was an heir, was a part of the Turkish Seljuk Empire that ruled the Levant and portions of Mesopotamia. Dajani-Shakeel, “Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry,” 105.

³⁰ Niall Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders: Christianity's Wars in the Middle East, 1095-1382, from the Islamic Sources* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 39.

³¹ Dajani-Shakeel, “Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry,” 105.

on the Syrian coast after the Crusader conquest, thus coloring his poetry with bitter feelings of longing and even reconquest.³² The poetry commissioned by Nur ad-Din frequently reflected this desire to reconquer Jerusalem, as exemplified by al-Qaysarani's following lines:

May it, the city of Jerusalem, be purified by the shedding of blood
The decision of Nur al-Din is as strong as ever and the iron of his lance is directed
at the Aqsa.³³

Al-Qaysarani's call for retaking Jerusalem is one of the earliest examples of Jerusalem as a religious objective of *jihad*.³⁴ Nur ad-Din's poets often worked as propagandists, offering both skeptics and supporters justification for Nur ad-Din's conquests. Furthermore, many poems depicting the fall of Jerusalem came from ordinary civilian refugees like al-Qaysarani. These civilians mourned the loss of their homeland and felt tied to the Jerusalem that had been taken from them.³⁵ When al-Isfahani was employed by Nur ad-Din's court, he too boasted *jihad*:

I have no wish except *jihad*
Repose in anything other it is exertion for me.
Seeking achieves nothing except by striving.
Life without the striving of *jihad* is an [idle] pastime.³⁶

Al-Isfahani's support for *jihad* against the invaders long preceded his time in Saladin's court. After Nur ad-Din died, al-Isfahani carried these sentiments with him and into the court of Saladin. Saladin used al-Isfahani's rhetoric to serve his expansionary interests. Rulers and poets alike understood the significance of Jerusalem as a rallying cry, a call for war, for a humiliated and disparate group of people.

³² Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 114.

³³ Ibn al-Qaysarani, quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 151.

³⁴ Dajani-Shakeel, "Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry," 108.

³⁵ Dajani-Shakeel, 106.

³⁶ Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 166.

Saladin, nephew of Nur ad-Din and leader of the great anti-Crusader counter-offensive, relied heavily on poetry to inspire his subjects and soldiers and to translate anger into a call to arms. The victories of Nur ad-Din, Saladin, and other anti-Crusader leaders were openly compared to the victories of the Prophet Muhammad against the infidels.³⁷ Court poets captured the *zeitgeist* well; poets and soldiers who pushed *jihad* believed that Saladin's conquests ought to include the recapture of Jerusalem, a feat which Saladin accomplished in 1187.³⁸ Saladin's large entourage of poets rewarded him with many lyrical celebrations commemorating his historic retaking of Jerusalem.³⁹ Al-Isfahani, one of Saladin's closest and most trusted poets and secretaries, composed many of these works. On Saladin's victory at the Battle of Hattin, al-Isfahani exalted Saladin as the "sultan encamped on the plain of Tiberias like a lion in the desert or the moon in its full splendor."⁴⁰ Saladin depended on these instances of praise to rally his subjects around him. To Ibn Sana' al-Mulk, one of Saladin's court poets, the conquest of Syria was a victory for the entire Muslim world:

Syria is not the only object of the congratulations addressed to you [Saladin], but
it is also every region and country.
You have possessed the lands from east to west.⁴¹

The poets neither created the rage nor concluded it upon Saladin's retaking of Jerusalem. They did, however, interpret it into the written word and offer their high praises for leaders, like Saladin, who won successful military campaigns against the invaders. Similar to the time before the Crusading era, when rulers relied on poets to support their conquests and policies, anti-

³⁷ Dajani-Shakeel, "Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry," 107.

³⁸ Dajani-Shakeel, III.

³⁹ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 53.

⁴⁰ 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, "Imad al-Din on the Battle of Hattin," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 155.

⁴¹ Ibn Sana' al-Mulk, quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 180.

Crusader leaders like Saladin relied on the same kind of support to sustain public admiration of ambitious campaigns, such as the retaking of land lost to the Franks.

The Poets and the Franks

In addition to encouraging the subjects of famous leaders to support the cause of reconquest, many poets used their words to convey their most intimate feelings regarding the invasion. Poets like al-Abiwardi and al-Qaysarani joined the many thousands of those fleeing destruction. Their words are tinged with extreme sadness and loss for their homelands, and they sometimes wrote in language, seemingly for their eyes only, that was satiated with personal grief rather than thundering proclamations for action by the masses. For example, Usama ibn Munqidh's poetry recalls picturesque childhood scenes that would later be devastated by the Crusades:

Moisture-swollen rain-clouds pour abundantly on their dwelling
And the dry and withered gardens burst into blossom.
The delicious nights that had ceased have returned there
...
By one who hopes too far, heartsick, lost.⁴²

Many poets, situated on the courts of powerful rulers like Nur ad-Din and Saladin, had to have regular contact with the people who caused such loss, the Franks. Al-Isfahani interacted with high-ranking Frankish invaders, like Raymond of Tripoli, and wrote extensively about such meetings.⁴³ Poets like Munqidh even negotiated and fought with the Franks, earning the title of

⁴² Usama ibn Munqidh, quoted in Paul M. Cobb, *Usama ibn Munqidh: Warrior Poet of the Age of Crusades* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 45.

⁴³ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 342.

“the Warrior Poet.”⁴⁴ The Muslims felt that they had “little to learn” from the Franks, who they viewed as inferior in most ways.⁴⁵ Munqidh chastised Muslims who allied themselves with the Franks in his work, *Kitab al-I'tibar*, and declared that those who do will be divinely punished.⁴⁶ Munqidh’s moving verse on loss helps to illustrate the deep hostility Muslims felt toward their invaders.

However, not all Muslim reactions to the Crusades were negative. When in the context of reconquest and defense, Muslim poets tended to suggest annihilation of their invaders, yet when dealing with the Franks in day-to-day activities, they would often reflect on the curiosities of the Franks’ foreign culture. Munqidh, the bellicose Warrior Poet, noted that some Franks, who had been in the Holy Land for a substantial amount of time, started to adopt Muslim ways, such as abstaining from eating pork.⁴⁷ Munqidh even befriended a Frankish knight who referred to him as “my brother.”⁴⁸ In addition to Crusade leaders, the poets also wrote of their encounters with Frankish women. Al-Qaysarani wrote of the Frankish women he saw:

A Frankish woman has captivated me.
The breeze of fragrance lingers on her.
In her clothing there is a soft branch
And in her crown is a radiant moon.⁴⁹

Al-Isfahani remarked on the rare employment of Frankish women in battle, praising the women for doing “acts of intelligent men” in combat but ultimately condemning their inclusion as an “error” nonetheless.⁵⁰ Sometimes the fighting spirit of the Franks impressed the Muslim writers.

⁴⁴ Cobb, *Warrior Poet of the Age of Crusades*, 41.

⁴⁵ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 420.

⁴⁶ Mallett, *Popular Muslim Reactions*, 131.

⁴⁷ Usama ibn Munqidh, *Memoirs of an Arab-Syrian Gentleman*, trans. Philip K. Hitti (Beirut: Khayats, 1964), 169.

⁴⁸ Munqidh, 161.

⁴⁹ Ibn al-Qaysarani, quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 347.

⁵⁰ Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, quoted in Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 84.

The Knights Templars, one of the most prestigious Crusading military orders, impressed many Muslim courtiers with their adherence to such strict code, even eliciting rare moments of praise from the Muslims.⁵¹ It was common for these poets to offer light, tempered praise of the Franks, especially when referencing combat styles or peculiar customs. Munqidh fittingly summarized the casual relationship high-ranking Muslims had with the Franks: “[Allah] sees [the Franks] as animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else; just as animals have only the virtues of strength and carrying loads.”⁵²

Conclusion

The poets of the high courts of Muslim society occupied an extremely unique position in history because they recorded the emotional, political, and personal sentiments of their contemporaries in an era fraught with religious war and conquest. Some of these poets had access to the most powerful men in Muslim society and, thus, a platform to voice their own opinions to all subjects. Therefore, the epic poems of the Crusading era, which exalted the heroic victories of Muslim military leaders and condemned the atrocities committed by the Frankish invaders, were how the Muslim world reacted to such an unprecedented series of events. No prior military engagement with the Byzantines or the Persians quite prepared the Muslim world for the fervor and ferocity of the Franks primarily because, in the Levant, the Crusades affected almost every aspect of life within each social class of Muslim society. Limiting the panegyric odes patronized by Nur ad-Din or Saladin to the role of propagandistic pabulum does a great disservice to the ingenuity and power of their words. Just as the unprecedented societal stress of

⁵¹ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 355.

⁵² Munqidh, *Memoirs*, 161.

the American Civil War or the First World War created foundational literature for the modern Christian world, the Crusades precipitated foundational literature for the early Muslim world. The Arabic poems that have survived the Age of Crusades contain not only the unique perspectives of those who wrote them, but also a summation of the oft-forgotten Muslim experience in an epochal clash of civilizations.

**FROM METASTASIO TO
MOZART:
A Multinational Art Form for an
International,
Multiethnic City**

Spencer Wong

Vienna is often called the City of Music. This is most profoundly expressed in the number of operatic and orchestral premieres it was home to and the fertile creativity that it produced during its long reign as a musical epicenter. As a musical epicenter, Vienna often set the tone for which music was to develop across Europe. For example, Vienna was one of the leading centers of opera and served as the venue for numerous operatic innovations. In addition, opera not only served as entertainment, but also as a showcase of royal power. This manifested itself in one of the earliest operas presented in the Habsburg capital—Antonio Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro* (The Golden Apple).¹ Originally written to celebrate the wedding of Leopold I and Margaret Theresa of Spain in 1666, it was an extravagant spectacle par excellence. Lasting over eight hours and staged with opulent and intricate set pieces, the opera was a potent expression of Habsburg power and set the standard for the art form's possibilities. This opera represented the ethos of seventeenth century Habsburg Vienna during a time of turbulence and exuberance.

Meanwhile, during the eighteenth century, opera itself was dynamic and ever evolving. Opera moved from the dominant genre of Metastasian² *opera seria* to the unrestrained *opera buffa*, *opéra comique*, *Singspiel*, and other late eighteenth century genres. These performances were undoubtedly inextricably linked to the historical developments occurring not only in Vienna itself, but also across the empire. Just as opera was transformed from the monarchical and aristocratic confines of *opera seria* to the more plebeian operatic forms, such as *opera buffa*, *opéra comique*, and *Singspiel*, the art form's development also reflected in many ways the growing national consciousness that was to affect the Habsburg lands over the next century. The

¹ Based on the myth of the Judgment of Paris, the opera depicts how the Trojan prince Paris is asked by the gods to decide whether Venus, Juno, or Minerva is most beautiful and deserving of the Apple of Discord. Paris ends up giving up the prize to Venus, which angers the other two goddesses, who seek revenge. To stabilize the situation, Jupiter gives the apple to Empress Margaret Theresa.

² After Pietro Metastasio, or formally known as Pietro Antonio Domenico Trapassi (1698-1782).

seemingly elitist Italian was abandoned in favor of vernacular languages. As nationalism was brewing, the cultural landscape of Vienna was undoubtedly transformed. This was best displayed in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's German operas. Ultimately, by studying the late history of the Habsburg Empire through the lens of opera, one can understand the cultural and social dynamics that were to take place throughout the realm and which, in many ways, led to its downfall.

Opera in Vienna was a quintessential aspect of the city's cultural life and played a vital role in defining the city's history and direction of the empire that it ruled. Indeed, Max Graf and Arthur Mendel's "Death of a Music City (Vienna: 1600-1938)" perfectly illustrates how opera, and music in general, shaped the ethos of the Viennese and enticingly invited composers and librettists from all across Europe to partake in the city's musical richness.³ Thus, Vienna as a music center is an essential perspective from which to study the linguistic and cultural dynamics of the Austrian capital and its empire. As mentioned earlier, works like Antonio Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro* presented the Habsburgs, in this case, the royal couple of Leopold I and Margaret Theresa, as a family blessed by the gods, or in this case, the Catholic God. In the age of Kings Louis XIV of France and Charles I of England, this message was most appropriate. The age of the divine right of kings was in full swing, a period of European history during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which defended the legitimacy of kingship and proclaimed that God had divinely ordained monarchs to rule without question.

This notion was to continue through much of the eighteenth century, and it was under Metastasio's literary genius that this was to be fully expressed. Coming after the dramatic and

³ Max Graf and Arthur Mendel, "The Death of a Music City (Vienna: 1600-1938)," *The Musical Quarterly* 26, (1940): 9.

tempestuous Counter-Reformation, which dominated Habsburg politics during the seventeenth century, Viennese music carried forth the exuberant and moralistic overtones of the baroque. Upon Metastasio's arrival in Vienna in 1730, both opera and oratorio (sacred drama, usually without staging) continued the baroque themes of previous decades.⁴ Under Metastasio's pen, these musical art forms continued to express the "Habsburg 'image of majesty'—of Habsburg piety, moral stance, divine favour, awe, power and order—to be projected at *Hofkapelle* (and subsequently reported) or at the court theatres...the projection of the 'image of majesty' played a vital role in the very survival of the monarchy itself."⁵ For example, Metastasio's *La Betulia liberata* presents Judith's human doubt and frailty against her sense of resolution and purpose, and highlights her unshaking faith in God, while *Isacco, figura del Redentore* presents Abraham's return with the living Isaac as an expression of the goodness of God.⁶ These moralizing and pedagogic stories would be transplanted onto secular opera. Concerning Metastasio's operas, the treatment of royal figures and other protagonists was to be taken with great precaution:

Metastasio was criticized over his heroine leaping to her death at the conclusion of *Didone abbandonata*, and was required to write an alternative ending for *Catone in Utica* to replace the on-stage tragic suicide of the title role; similarly, the murder of Xerxes in *Artaserse* and the attempted assassination of Titus in *La clemenza di Tito* are all off-stage events.⁷

The sensitive treatment of these protagonists, especially those of royal position, is quite important. Metastasio's reconfiguration of the plot reflects how Habsburg monarchs wanted to present themselves as dignified and omnipotent, impervious to all assaults on royal power. For

⁴ Don Neville, "Opera or Oratorio?: Metastasio's Sacred 'Opere Serie,'" *Early Music* 26, (1998): 596.

⁵ Don Neville, "Metastasio and the Image of Majesty in the Austro-Italian Baroque," *Italian Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (1998), in Neville, Don, "Opera or Oratorio," 597.

⁶ Neville, "Metastasio," 601.

⁷ Neville, 601.

both opera and oratorio, the notion of teaching was paramount. Indeed, “the essential task of a dramatic writer or preacher was ‘to instruct’, ‘to persuade’ (move the passions), and ‘to please’, all three elements contributing to the moral task of inculcating a love of virtue and a detestation of vice.”⁸ In this way, opera and oratorio were to ennoble the audience member and leave them with a sense of moral and spiritual uplift. Certainly, political propaganda guided Metastasio’s writing and assured his acceptance within the Viennese court.

As most of Metastasio’s operas were written in the *opera seria* style, it is important to discuss what *opera seria* is and why the Habsburg courts of Charles VI and Maria Theresa chose to support composers who used Metastasio’s librettos. *Opera seria* is an operatic style whose plots focused on the triumphs, exploits, and tragedies of mythical heroes and historical figures. Such examples include *Alessandro* (Alexander), *Siroe re di Persia* (Siroe, King of Persia), *Didone abbandonata* (Dido Abandoned), *Teseo* (Theseus), *La clemenza di Tito* (The Clemency of Titus) and *Artaserse* (Artaxerxes). The political theatre associated with *opera seria* would become more pronounced in Vienna than in any other European capital, with the exception of Italian opera powerhouses, such as Naples, Venice, and Rome.⁹ *Opera seria* can be best compared to Lullian *tragédie lyrique* at the Sun King’s court of Versailles.¹⁰ Like French court opera, Viennese *opera seria* had a distinct role in shaping the image of the monarch. Indeed, just as Jean-Baptiste Lully’s partnership with Pierre Corneille, Philippe Quinault, and Molière defined French court opera, it was Metastasio’s relationship with Habsburg court composers

⁸ Neville, 602.

⁹ Vlado Kotnik, “The Adaptability of Opera: When Different Social Agents Come to Common Ground,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 44, (2013): 318.

¹⁰ Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) was the principal composer at the court of King Louis XIV of France and his operas served to enhance the prestige of the French monarch. See Robert M. Isherwood, “The Centralization of Music in the Reign of Louis XIV,” *French Historical Studies* 6, (1969): 156-71 or Leo Samama and Dominy Clements, “Lully: The King Is Dancing,” in *The Meaning of Music* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 185-93.

that forged the identity of Viennese court opera. In addition, unlike *opera seria* in London, dominated by George Frideric Handel, which was largely a commercial enterprise geared towards the artistic interests of King George I, *opera seria* in Vienna continued the Habsburg dynasty's effort to assert its authority throughout the realm. Indeed,

Opera's ability of being taken as socially highly valued phenomenon in every society in which it was presented enabled opera to communicate or perform a relationship with the elites and masses, the courts and the crowds, the rulers and the citizens, the publics and the audience.¹¹

Not only was opera a powerful tool in shaping the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, but also the opera house itself (in this case, the Hofoper and Burgtheater)¹² served an expression of Habsburg society. Opera houses, like the Hofoper and Burgtheater, are

Transnational promenades and multicultural venues where different people represented by different cultural backgrounds, class diversifications, ethnic identities and national belongings gather or meet on one place for one common reason and purpose that is to fulfill their common or similar cultural and symbolic needs. Due to this multicultural, international and transnational character, opera has always surpassed the national borders, the social boundaries and the ethnic and other cultural differences in audience by stimulating cultural migrations, intercultural experiences and multicultural exchanges.¹³

This notion would be of great importance, especially with the rise of *Singspiel*, which will be discussed later, and its implications for the evolving cultural and ethnic makeup of the Habsburg Empire.

Metastasian *opera seria* served to promote the policy interests of Emperor Charles VI and his daughter and heir, Maria Theresa. As mentioned earlier, the early decades of the eighteenth century were still dominated by the politics of divine right and the Counter-Reformation. Furthermore, the Wars of the Spanish (1702-1715) and Austrian Successions (1740-

¹¹ Kotnik, "The Adaptability of Opera," 304.

¹² Now the Vienna State Opera (Staatsoper).

¹³ Kotnik, "The Adaptability of Opera," 304.

1748) were the main foreign engagements of the Habsburg Empire during the first half of the eighteenth century. These conflicts, along with the overall political environment of the early to mid-eighteenth century Habsburg Empire, would influence the political resonance of art forms, such as opera. It was during this conflict-ridden time that Metastasian opera was at its height. A crowning example of *opera seria*'s power as a propaganda tool is Christoph Willibald Gluck's 1748 setting of Metastasio's *La Semiramide riconosciuta* (Semiramis Revealed).¹⁴ Presented to celebrate the birthday of Empress Maria Theresa, the libretto was adapted from its original 1729 setting.¹⁵ Like numerous *opera seria* before and after it, *Semiramide*'s plot closely mirrored the political environment in which it was presented. The opera follows Semiramis, the legendary wife of the Assyrian king Nimrod, and later of Ninus. Semiramis, in the tale, after the death of her husband Ninus in battle, masquerades herself as their son and heir and commands the Assyrian army. She conquers much of Asia and rules as regent for her son. Omitted from the libretto is the fact that her son murders her when she tries to commit incest with him. This omission takes place because Empress Maria Theresa is Semiramis, and this dynamic would be curiously reflected in the co-rulership of Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II more than fifteen years later. Concerning the current state of political affairs, the opera's message was that strong and resilient women, like Semiramis and Maria Theresa, could weather political storms and emerge triumphant against the patriarchal world in which they lived. In Empress Maria Theresa's case, the opera's message served to legitimize the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713. By the war's end and the resulting Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Maria Theresa secured acceptance of the

¹⁴ Don Neville, "Semiramide' in Vienna: Beyond Metastasian Metastasis," *Studien Zur Musikwissenschaft* 44 (1995): 115.

¹⁵ The opera was presented on May 14, 1748 while the War of the Austrian Succession would not be concluded until October 18, 1748. Thus, the opera was presented while war still raged on across the Continent. See Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy: 1618-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005), 158.

Pragmatic Sanction from all European great powers that had previously contested it.

Furthermore, under Maria Theresa and her ministers' leadership, the Empire was largely maintained.¹⁶ With such examples as *Semiramide*, Metastasian opera served to powerfully reinforce the legitimacy of imperial rule and forge the dominance of such dynasties as the Habsburgs.

Soon, however, new musical and political currents would challenge the seemingly undisputed dominance of Metastasian opera in Vienna during the first half of the eighteenth century. The same Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787) who composed *Semiramide* would refashion operatic tastes in the Habsburg capital. Under Gluck, opera would undergo serious reforms that would soon displace the seemingly hallowed mainstay of *opera seria*. The Bohemian-born Bavarian composer returned to Vienna in 1752 after a continental tour of Europe. Molded by his experiences abroad, Gluck emerged onto the Viennese cultural scene brimming with ideas of how to transform the operatic world. While Gluck continued to use Metastasio's librettos for some time, his operas would pursue a new pathway. Fusing Italian (Neapolitan) *opera buffa* with French *opéra comique*, Gluck's musical style reflected the changing politics of the Habsburg Empire. While Prussia's emergence as a new European great power neighboring Austria was viewed as a threat to Habsburg interests, the dynasty was no longer embroiled in either dynastic struggles or the religious wars of the seventeenth century. The empire continued sparring off with Prussia and its allies, but Austria continued to teeter on, albeit precariously.

Maria Theresa had come to recognize Austria's weakness, especially compared to Prussia's military prowess, and embarked upon a program of reform. No longer constrained by

¹⁶ The only significant losses that the Habsburg Empire suffered were in Italy and the peripheral, though resource-rich and industrialized Silesia. See Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy: 1618-1815*, 158.

the administrative stagnancy of her predecessors, Maria Theresa believed that a break from the culture of the Counter-Reformation was necessary to strengthen and modernize the empire's institutions and reshape its foreign policy.¹⁷ Indeed, Charles W. Ingrao explains that this break "was partly motivated by a desire for greater autonomy from the Papacy and the rest of the Church establishment. Yet it stemmed primarily from the belated recognition that the monarchy's close adherence to the values of the Counter-Reformation had retarded the evolution of the kind of rational political culture that had made Prussia such an imposing threat."¹⁸ This rationalism that emerged in the mid-eighteenth century was to become a, or even the, defining feature of mid- to late-eighteenth century Habsburg politics. Led by Maria Theresa and Joseph II, it was to transform the empire.

This Enlightenment spirit, far removed from Counter-Reformation culture, would impact cultural dynamics in the empire. The moralizing and pedagogic *opera seria* was soon out of fashion, as such satirical opera forms as *opera buffa* and *opéra comique* quickly replaced it. These operatic styles embraced plots primarily focusing on light-hearted, often contemporary stories. Gluck, embarking on cultural reform, would spearhead this movement. As the most prominent non-French composer of *opéra comiques*, Christoph Willibald Gluck brought French opera to the Viennese court. Such works as *Livrogne corrigé* (The Drunkard Reformed), *La fausse esclave* (The False Slave), and *Le cadi dupé* (The Duped Qadi, or the Duped Judge) illustrate both the changing political climate, in which the dynasty did not have to assert itself to

¹⁷ Habsburg foreign policy was to radically change with the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756, in which Austria abandoned its traditional Maritime Power ally Britain, in favor of France, its traditional foe. See Jonathan R. Dull, "The European Balance of Power, 1763-1775," in *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (Yale University Press, 1985), 18.

¹⁸ Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy: 1618-1815*, 165.

the degree that it previously did, and the growing relationship between France and Austria.¹⁹ For example, under the auspices of the Francophile Chancellor Kaunitz, in 1752, a French repertory company was established. It was with this institution that Christoph Gluck produced his *opéra comiques*. Certainly, prior to the Diplomatic Revolution, French culture would have been viewed with suspicion among members of the Habsburg court. However, with this diplomatic rearrangement—which would manifest itself in the future marriage of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette—French culture weaved its way into the cultural tapestry that was the Habsburg Empire.

The opening up of Gluck's operatic revolution in Vienna would impact later operatic developments in the capital. With this "liberalization," opera would enter into a new stage and, it could arguably be considered, uncharted territory. Under Joseph II's rule (1780-1790), opera in the empire would enter into its German phase. In 1784, the Emperor embarked on a policy of Germanization in which German was to be the official language of administration and the principal language of instruction in secondary schools and universities.²⁰ Replacing Latin as the lingua franca of academia and administration, German emerged as the new language to harness towards literary and cultural expression. It is with German that a new opera genre appeared: *Singspiel*. The leading composer of *Singspiel* was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. While Mozart is known for such works as *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro), *Così fan tutte*, and *Idomeneo*, his German works provide insight on Habsburg developments during the 1780s and 1790s. With the Austrian Enlightenment in full swing under the leadership of the enlightened absolutist Joseph II, the Viennese cultural environment was fertile ground for

¹⁹ Daniel Heartz, "From Garrick to Gluck: The Reform of Theatre and Opera in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 94, (1967): 121.

²⁰ Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, 203.

Mozart's *Singspiele* to flourish. But why did the native tongue of the Habsburgs only emerge as a dignified and worthy musical language at this time?

Peter Branscombe's "The *Singspiel* in the Late 18th Century" provides an enlightening analysis of why German did not emerge as a prominent musical language until composers, such as Mozart, brought it to the forefront of Viennese cultural life.²¹ As mentioned earlier, Latin and Italian dominated musical drama and performance in Vienna until the late eighteenth century. Whether it was court operas or Jesuit-sponsored oratorios and hymns, these two languages became the mainstay of Viennese musical culture. Furthermore, when considering the entertainments available at the time to the common people, it is evident not much was on offer comparatively. The baroque works of individuals like Antonio Cesti and Pietro Metastasio remained the preserve of the court and nobility, and Jesuit works did not inspire attendance, as the Austrian "Third Estate" would often not understand Latin, the primary language for religious works. While vernacular works, either religious or secular, were certainly present in Habsburg cultural life, they did not gain the prominence that Italian opera or Latin hymns did. For example, seventeenth century Bohemia underwent a similar transformation.²² Prior to the arrival of the Counter-Reformation, Bohemia was a creative center of vernacular plays and musical drama. Indeed, both Latin and Czech coexisted as literary and musical languages, with, at times, Czech superseding Latin. However, with the Catholic victory in the Battle of White Mountain in 1620 and the crushing of the Hussite movement, Czech national culture was largely suppressed. For the Jesuit order itself, works were written in Latin and rarely in Czech. This was paralleled by the unification of the Bohemian Court Chancellery with its Austrian counterpart in

²¹ Peter Branscombe, "The *Singspiel* in the Late 18th Century," *The Musical Times* 112, (1971): 226-228.

²² John Gassner and Edward Quinn, "Czechoslovakia: Bohemia and Moravia," in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama*, Mineola, (New York: Dover Publications, 2002), 159-65.

1749 and its relocation to Vienna. Thus, overall, there was little way for German subjects, much less members of other ethnic groups, to participate in the cultural life of the empire. Until the creation of works like Mozart's *Singspiele*, only touring bands of actors and singers were able to service the musical tastes and cravings of the empire's commoners.

Italian, and to a lesser extent, French, were the languages that drove Viennese musical life. Indeed, "virtually no native Austrian musician of importance considered his education to be complete until he had studied in Italy" and "that even in the music of popular theatre impresarios turned naturally to 'the foremost Italian masters.'"²³ Even in Bohemia, composers looked to Vienna and Naples for inspiration rather than influences from their northern neighbors. Indeed, two chief Czech composers of the eighteenth century were Jan Dismas Zelenka and Josef Mysliveček. Both composers, though their careers largely did not take place in Habsburg lands, turned to Latin and Italian, respectively, for their vocal music.²⁴ However, by the late-eighteenth century, national cultures began to assert themselves. By the end of the eighteenth century, a professional Czech theatre was coalescing and was accompanied by a period of rapid development in Czech drama.²⁵ As proto-industrial developments spread across Habsburg lands, particularly in such regions as Bohemia, a rising middle class formed. It was this middle class that helped patronize the resurgence of national culture. For Czechs, the theatre was a vehicle for

²³ Branscombe, "Singspiel," 226.

²⁴ Jan Dismas Zelenka's career was primarily based in Dresden, Electorate of Saxony, while Josef Mysliveček worked in Italian cities. See Ortrun Landmann, "The Dresden Hofkapelle during the Lifetime of Johann Sebastian Bach," *Early Music* 17, (1989), 23 and Michaela Freemanová and Eva Mikanová, "My Honourable Lord and Father . . .': 18th-Century English Musical Life through Bohemian Eyes," *Early Music* 31, (2003): 211.

²⁵ Gassner and Quinn, "World Drama," 161-162.

“the rights and perfection of the Czech language [and] for bolstering the national self-confidence by dramatizing famous events from Czech history,”²⁶ among other political goals.

Turning back to the German *Singspiel*, it is essential to explore the role of popular theatre in Viennese cultural life. Underneath the visible cultural façade of Italian and French opera in eighteenth century Vienna was a vibrant German theatre scene.²⁷ The rise of German musical theatre can be best attributed to the establishment of the Kärntnertortheater in 1709 and its subsequent takeover by the Austrian theatre director Josef Stranitzky and his company of German actors in 1711.²⁸ This theatre, envisioned as a counterweight to the court opera and equivalent to the *commedia dell'arte*, was a civic project and was frequented by Viennese of all social classes. According to Eva Badura-Skoda, Vienna, more than any other German city, was well positioned to act as the cultural center for German popular theatre.²⁹ Unlike such cities as Berlin, Munich, and Dresden, Vienna was characterized by drama and improvisation that were more cultivated and appreciated and its ability to sustainably finance one or more popular theatres.

But German popular opera in Vienna was not only influenced by German musical developments; it also brought together Italian and French ideas, creating an interesting mélange of musical styles that would merge into Viennese *Singspiel*.³⁰ In fact, one of the first *Singspiel* was Joseph Haydn's *Der krumme Teufel* (The Lame Devil, 1751 and later revised as *Der neue krumme Teufel*, or The Return of the Lame Devil, in 1757). Its arias were Italianate and, like

²⁶ Gassner and Quinn, 162.

²⁷ Eva Badura-Skoda, “The Influence of the Viennese Popular Comedy on Haydn and Mozart,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 100, (1973): 185–199.

²⁸ Badura-Skoda, “The Influence,” 185.

²⁹ Badura-Skoda, 187.

³⁰ Badura-Skoda, 189.

other German comedies, included French ballet. It was Hadyn's contemporary and friend, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who would bring *Singspiel* to the forefront of Viennese cultural life. Mozart was introduced to *Singspiel* during his second visit to Vienna, at the age of twelve, in 1768.³¹ He found the Viennese theatre scene to be quite enjoyable and viewed the opera as his primary musical passion. After leaving his post at the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg, he moved to Vienna in 1781. It was in Vienna where he would produce two of his most famous works: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Abduction from the Seraglio, 1782) and *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute, 1791). Both works achieved instant success, confirmed Mozart's place as permanent fixture of Viennese cultural life, and would become a part of the operatic repertoire. Furthermore, their popularity expressed the growing German national consciousness, as evidenced by Emperor Joseph II's Germanization policies. The newly established reputation of *Singspiel* in the 1780s and 1790s was reinforced by Joseph II's death in 1790³² and the end of Antonio Salieri's³³ operatic career soon after. Thus, the arrival of *Singspiel* as a favored opera style was, in many ways, the death knell of Italian opera's dominance.

After dissecting almost a century and a half of Austrian musical history, why is it important to understand the history of the Habsburg Empire? Well, in this case, rather than life imitating art, it was art, in this case, opera, that imitated life. From *Il pomo d'oro* to *Die Zauberflöte*, opera in the Viennese capital reflected the ever-evolving state of politics and cultural

³¹ Badura-Skoda, 196.

³² Joseph II's death was a pivotal moment for Viennese musical cultural life because it effectively marked the end of court-sponsored opera, especially with the onset of the French Revolution, which sapped away Austrian funds. See Charles W. Ingrao, "The Habsburg Monarchy: 1618-1815, 230-233.

³³ Antonio Salieri (1750-1825) was the director of Italian opera at the Habsburg court and dominated Italian opera in the capital. His celebrity would be eclipsed by Mozart's and this depiction by Russian writer Alexander Pushkin was the inspiration for Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, which was later adapted into the 1984 film. See Martin Bidney, "Thinking about God and Mozart: The Salieris of Puškin and Peter Shaffer," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 30, (1986), 183-95.

taste. The politics of late-seventeenth century and early eighteenth century Austria were dominated by the Counter-Reformation, threats to the dynastic succession, and a Hungarian uprising. In order to counter these threats and project Habsburg power, among the tools that the dynasty employed was music. Composers like Antonio Cesti and librettists like Pietro Metastasio used their music and words to exalt and express the power and prestige of the Habsburg monarch. Like music at the French court, Habsburg-sponsored music served to present the monarch as omnipotent, dignified, and magnanimous.

However, with the confirmation of Emperor Charles VI's Pragmatic Sanction and the end of the Counter-Reformation, the political environment was no longer conducive for *opera seria* to flourish. In its place came Christoph Wilibald Gluck's reforms. Upsetting the long-standing dominance of *opera seria*, Gluck's reforms brought a new tempo to Viennese music, promoting French influences and musical comedy. Like Gluck's reforms, his patron, Empress Maria Theresa, also embarked on projects marked by a spirit of change. For both music and politics, French influence became more pronounced. It was under Maria Theresa's successor, Joseph II, that German would also assert itself as a hallowed musical language. Following his Germanization policies, composers, such as Mozart, would transform Vienna's cultural landscape. Though influenced by Italian and French music, Singspiel marked the end of these two languages' dominance. This seemingly radical break with Viennese cultural norms would manifest itself in cultural developments of the succeeding century. Intensified by the nationalist undertones of the French Revolution, national cultural revivals across the Habsburg Empire became visible. Nineteenth century composers, such as Bedrich Smetana, Franz Schubert, and Franz Liszt, employed vernacular languages on a scale not previously seen. For example, the

Czech Smetana composed such works as *Má vlast* (My homeland) and eight operas in the Czech language that promoted Czech patriotism and history. Another significant Czech composer was Antonin Dvorák who followed Smetana in his use of Czech folk music. Furthermore, the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt produced a number of works inspired by Hungarian folk music, such as the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. It was during the Romantic period of the nineteenth century that such music wholly departed from the universal language of Italian and convention. Such cultural dynamics would be reflected in the political world by the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 and later the Compromise of 1867, which would establish Austria-Hungary. As mentioned earlier, the Czech national revival was already underway since the late-eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century was led by František Palacký. Though not all of these nationalisms and nationalities sought to break away from the Habsburg Empire, the fissures they created helped contribute to the weakness of Austria-Hungary during World War I. Such debilitating conditions ultimately brought down the monarchy and ended centuries of Habsburg rule in Central and Eastern Europe. It is from music that one can best understand the cultural and political dynamics of the Habsburg Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from its heights of power to its ultimate demise.