University of Sussex Undergraduate History Journal

US
UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Cover: Alex Jordan

Issue 5: Spring 2020
'History and Us'

Edited by Edward Hewes and John Butcher

Contents

With thanks for the support received from both staff and students we are pleased to introduce you to the 2020 edition of the University of Sussex Undergraduate History Journal.

This year's journal, much like those gone before, seeks to showcase the creative and diverse history written by Sussex students; providing a platform capable of recognising the labours and talent of students whilst also offering the opportunity for debate and reflection on undergraduate work by sharing it with wider academia. Unlike previous journals however, we have chosen not to centre this issue around a core historical theme per se. Rather, in line with our aim to embody the journal's original purpose, we have chosen to devote the focus of this issue to the reflection and exhibition of the inherently personal work created by Sussex history students. In choosing the title 'History and Us' we aim to emphasise the experience of a history student at Sussex as one that is individual and collective, comprised of independent study carried out as part of a wider experience shared by students, staff and academia exterior to the university.

For our first feature we thank Billie Early for an essay so befitting the sentiment of this journal that it is remarkable it wasn't written with it in mind. Billie's essay takes the form of a reflexive essay, an integral part of studying history at Sussex which encourages us to think critically about our awareness of the subject at hand and how this can give us greater insight into ourselves and what we study. By comparing her perception of history on a personal level with her experiences of studying it at university; Billie on one hand, offers a disarmingly honest account of the conflict between personal interest and the requirements of an academic discipline whilst also dissecting key debates between different historiographical schools of thought, centring on disputes between the Annales School and Post-Modernist assessments of history. This analysis of a personal experience offers a thought provoking read regarding the issues of studying history and a compelling account of a relationship between the personal and the academic, forming the perfect starting point to this issue.

For our second feature, the focus moves east with Naomi Hodges' analysis of homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire. By charting changes in the nature of, and attitudes towards, male same-sex sexuality over the course of the 19th century, Naomi's essay offers a fascinating examination of the impact and proliferation of the concept of modernity on a geographically specific area. Effectively drawing upon a burgeoning focus in History the essay challenges traditional conceptions of sexuality in Arabic speaking countries shedding light on its relationship to broader currents and trends in the history of Europe and Asia. Picking up on an element of Central Asia's history that may not be known to many, the essay develops a history that is sure to feel intriguing yet familiar.

Moving on, we thank Toby Shields for a powerful and appropriately relevant essay, which follows the experience of the Windrush generation of migrants arriving in the UK in the middle of the 20th century. Offering an analysis of their social assimilation into British society, Toby's essay explores the origins of racial prejudice at the centre of the 2019 Windrush scandal; providing a detailed account of the history of migrant experience at the same time as illustrating components of continuity between colonial-based prejudices and modern racial animosity. Using an ultra-contemporary issue as a point of reference, this analysis brings history to the forefront of a major political incident that occupied the British mind and media for much of 2019.

For our penultimate feature, we have our own John Butcher to thank for an excellent study of a somewhat novel subject. John's essay sheds light on the way witchcraft has come to be understood in contemporary history; the phenomenon of witchcraft prevailed throughout the early modern period yet a lack of sources owing to the time period and the supernatural elements of the belief system has left ample ground for discussion amongst historians. The essay simultaneously manages to be both interesting and authoritative in its engagement with the historiographical arguments over how collaborative interdisciplinary study can illuminate on hard to reach and often obscure topics.

And Finally, as part of this year's journal we have included a 'Works in Progress' section where we hear from three Sussex students in the final year of their undergraduate degrees, who are currently

in the process of researching and writing their dissertations. The Dissertation is the largest piece of work produced by History students during their time studying at Sussex. With a research topic that is entirely of the students choosing, and carried out via independent study, it is the best opportunity for students to develop their own ideas and arguments. As you will see from the topics chosen by our three students, the focus of the dissertations are inspired by their own experiences and interests both inside of History and without. From the nightlife of Oxford to the artwork of Kurdistan, this section provides an insight into how Sussex history student's personal interests have inspired and determined their own contribution to the field of History and the culmination of their time at Sussex, for what is a truly personal piece of work

We really hope you enjoy this edition and that it may offer the chance for you own reflection and debate on the many topics covered; any feedback would be gratefully received and can be directed towards jb774@sussex.ac.uk or eh377@sussex.ac.uk.

Edward Hewes and John Butcher

The USUHJ Editors

With special thanks to those on the Editorial Panel…

Bijan Kahn, Charlotte Hitchman, Jodie Yettram, Lava Ali, Mads Melluish and Thomas Heasman

Should we do history for ourselves and society, rather than to meet epistemological, ideological and methodological standards?

Billie Early

History B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

Abstract: This article takes a reflexive stance to interrogate the practise of history, arguing that when studying history, we ought to be driven by the relevance history has to our own lives, rather than its structural qualities. I engage with my thoughts after completing a presentation on whether the *Annales* School's Total History approach is a good way to study history, concluding that history should not have to rigorously meet certain epistemological, ideological and methodological standards to be categorised as good history. As a reflexive essay, this is an opportunity for historians to think back to why they chose to study history, and to think about what history really is and should be.

Keywords: Reflexive, methodology, epistemology, ideology, history, Annales School, postmodernism.

After completing a presentation on the validity of the 'Total History' or *Annales School* historiographical approach that stresses the use of different disciplines to analyse the past, it led me to contemplate the purpose of history. The *Annales School* was evaluated in this presentation in terms of methodology, ideology and epistemology, assuming that the purpose of history is to meet these structural standards rigorously – for example, evaluating how 'Total History' is more valid than 'Whig' history because it encompasses other social science disciplines like geography and ecology. It does this to acquire a history spanning generations of "that other, submerged history, almost silent and discreet, which is little touched by the erosion of time."[1] This structural (encompassing epistemological, methodological and ideological criteria) analysis of *Annales* ideas was, as I saw it, a process that would aid my skills as a critical writer but was lacking a relatable element to my own life as a citizen. Perhaps some would argue that the aim of such a presentation is not to be awe-inspiring and relatable, but I cannot help but think back to why I personally took a history degree. I chose to read history because it was full of exciting tales of hardship and derring-do, was an academic subject I could interact with, when I visited castles and museums for example; but also because it gave me important information to learn from as I live my own life in society. I view history as a subject that enriches our imagination and teaches us how generations before us lived, for the purpose of making our present and future the best it can

---

[1] Braudel, 1976, Vol. I:16 cited in James R. Hudson, "Braudel's Ecological Perspective", *Sociological Forum 2*, no. 1, (Winter, 1987): 150.

be. In this essay, I will remind fellow historians to consider their own routes into the discipline in order to highlight the overall purpose of history. This demonstrates that history does not need to rigorously scrutinise and evaluate itself structurally to be valid.

History today may be consumed by pressure to become methodologically, ideologically and epistemologically ('structurally') 'valid' at the expense of disregarding the purpose of history. There have existed many debates in the scholarly field of history as to whether history is a science,[2] if it ought to be subjective or objective,[3] and if historians should move away from traditional history that loses sight of "the obsolete hand-loom weaver" at the expense of the lay-man.[4] Having explored some of these debates, I was tasked with applying the *Annales* ideas to the discipline of history today, choosing to argue how the *Annales* 'ideals' of history "are not altogether dead"[5] through postmodernism. Our presentation attempted to go beyond rigorous structural criteria to show how the *Annales* School is valid. However, my application to history today was fully lodged in epistemological knowledge. For example, I stated how Foucault incorporates psychology and philosophy into his history, as well as other methodological and ideological ideas that I employed at the expense of making it relevant to society today. If I could perform my presentation again, I would attempt to show that while the *Annales* and postmodern history may indeed have structural issues, a more valuable consideration for us as historians ought to be the application of this history to real-world issues – issues that resonate with the very readers of history. If we take the purpose of history to be to relate to people, to interest and to educate, then the fact that postmodernism has "made history more accessible to the general public"[6] is something that ought to have been discussed in our presentation. Not addressing this function of history in my presentation negates why we should do history. It also becomes problematic in that, structurally, "history is never for itself, it is always for someone," or in other words it has an agenda: "particular social formations want their historians to deliver particular things," as Munslow argues.[7] If we focus heavily upon the structure of history, cynical though this may be, a "degree [becomes] a commodity that can (hopefully) be exchanged for a job rather than as a liberal education that prepares students for life, citizenship or the enrichment of a cultural heritage."[8] For example, Keith Windschuttle sees postmodernism as "[denying] the integrity of the West altogether" through its ideology,[9] thus history may be said to be losing out on its ability to connect with people by not exploring the readers' own rich cultural heritage, to avoid 'ethnocentrism'. Important though structural concerns may be, a failure to acknowledge history's

---

[2] Carr, E.H, *What is History?*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 1-24.

[3] Thomas L. Haskell, "Objectivity Is Not Neutrality: Rhetoric vs. Practice in Peter Novick's That Noble Dream." *History and Theory* 29, no. 2 (1990): 129-57.

[4] E.P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London: Penguin Books, 2013), Preface.

[5] Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 40.

[6] Keith Windschuttle, "A Critique of the Postmodern Turn in Western Historiography." In *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Wang Q. Edward and Iggers Georg G., (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 271-86.

[7] Munslow, 'What History Is', 21.

[8] Hugh Willmott, "Managing the Academics: Commodification and Control in the Development of University Education in the U.K." *Human Relations 48,* no. 9 (September 1995): 1002.

[9] Windschuttle, "A Critique of the Postmodern Turn", 274.

relationship to the people that history is for,[10] renders the structural debates much less significant.

Debates about epistemology, methodology and ideology are, undoubtedly, part of the academic study of history, but we must remember the purpose of history – something that can be defined differently to different people, but to me is to ignite a spark of interest in ourselves, and others, for many different reasons. Reflecting back on my presentation now, I can see that my thoughts on applying *Annales* ideas to today's history lacked in them the purpose of *why* we do history at all. The ability to be less focused on how history is structured may make history be more relatable to us all, as individuals in an ever-changing society. Some historians, perhaps feeling similarly to me, see history as "the way historians attend to it,"[11] and that ultimately the purpose is to inform and educate. For example, the teleology of 'Whig' history has often been heavily criticised, and perhaps it may be an ideologically-wayward idea, but focusing on specific events in the past and how they lead to the improvement of society is often what makes children interested in history. We ought to remember that these are the future citizens.[12] Tristram Hunt argues that "if students are to mature into citizens, they need to know their past – not least in a very civic republican manner, to prevent political powers manipulating the present." This links to one of the possible issues of history becoming too lodged in structural debates, that it may be becoming a commodity in schools and universities that only focuses on structural issues because that is what allows students to get jobs. Perhaps this is why there is a lack of pupils being able to connect to history, and lacking knowledge of the broader, chronological narratives.[13] This point is something we could have utilised in our presentation, to suggest how *Annales* ideas can be used in schools to disseminate a broader history. This application of history to today's society, and today's issues, is what to me, history is all about; we should have "belief in its powers to inform the present,"[14] and ultimately evaluate history with the goal of relating it our own lives.

We should adhere to academic, professional standards when writing history; as Jenkins argues, historians should have fundamentals: incorporating the notion of cause and effect, time, and evidence, for example.[15] Even these are perhaps not as important as Jenkins makes out though – this reflexive essay does not utilise cause and effect in the way other history might, but it is still history. History varies. For some historians writing books to get children enthused about history is their motivation. These books often discuss one historical character in detail[16], and is such a Whiggish style to be condemned? Living history at 'English Heritage' sites are often on one main historical event, such as the Battle of Hastings. It certainly meets the criteria for 'Whig' history, but is it poor history? Taking the

---

[10] Justin Champion states how it is 'a priority for history to engage with pertinent matters of public concern'. Justin Champion, "What Are Historians For?", *Historical Research* 81, no.211 (2007), 167.

[11] Alan Munslow, "What History Is" in *Rethinking History*, ed. Keith Jenkins (London: Routledge, 2003) 258.

[12] English Heritage, "Piecing the Past Together: Monastery and Excavations at Battle Abbey", www.english-heritage.org.uk, https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/whats-on/piecing-the-past-together-monastery-and-excavations-at-battle-abbey/, (accessed Sunday 13, 2019)

[13] Tristram Hunt, 'The Importance of Studying the Past', *History Workshop Journal, vol.72*, no.1 (2011), 263.

[14] Hunt, 'The Importance of Studying the Past', 258.

[15] Jenkins, "What History Is", 20.

[16] Examples include: Kate Pankhurst, *Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), Sylvie Boussier, *Greek Gods and Heroes*, (London: Wide Eyed Editions, 2018)

purpose of history to be to enthuse, inform, educate, and interest us all, I do not believe this is poor history. This very essay might be Whiggish in its ideology, its epistemology and even its methodology (for example, focusing on events like the Battle of Hastings), but to relate to an issue of political importance today, is a history of our own significant past events "needed now more than ever to be taught in schools in our age of mass migration and multiculturalism?"[17] In an effort to move away from being seen as biased and ethnocentric, history may be losing out on a portion of the past that will entice future generations, and keep people's interest in history alive. I believe people are interested in what they can relate to themselves. Evidently, professional and scholarly articles are not for young children, but this does not mean that an avid reader of history wants to be bogged down in discussions of objectivity, bias, and ethnocentrism, for example. There ought to be a healthy dose of the history being applied to the avid reader's own life, society and imagination. Of course, writers of history can be biased, at the expense of losing academic integrity[18] - however, to be scholarly and academic is to include structural exploration with regards to maintaining academic integrity, but also to remember why we do history, and let this be seen in the work we do. We may run the risk, otherwise, of relegating our own interest – the spark, the very ignition of enthusiasm – to the bottom of an epistemological, ideological and methodological hierarchy.

---

[17] Hunt, "The Importance of Studying the Past", 258.

[18] Peter Novick; "Historians, "Objectivity," and the Defense of the West", *Radical History Review 1* no.40 (1988):.

Bibliography:

Books

Boussier, Sylvie. *Greek Gods and Heroes*. (London: Wide Eyed Editions, 2018)
Carr, E.H. *What is History?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001)

Jordanova, Ludmilla. *History in Practice*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006)

Munslow, Allan. "What History Is" in *Rethinking History*, ed. Keith Jenkins. (London: Routledge, 2003)

Pankhurst, Kate. *Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2018)

Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. (London: Penguin Books, 2013.)

Online Journal Articles

Champion, Justin. "What Are Historians For?", *Historical Research* 81, no.211 (2007), 167-188

Haskell, Thomas L. "Objectivity Is Not Neutrality: Rhetoric vs. Practice in Peter Novick's That Noble Dream." *History and Theory* 29, no. 2 (1990): 129-57. doi:10.2307/2505222.

Hudson, James. "Braudel's Ecological Perspective". *Sociological Forum 2*, no. 1. (Winter, 1987): 146-165. https://www.jstor.org/stable/684532

Hugh, Willmott. "Managing the Academics: Commodification and Control in the Development of University Education in the U.K." *Human Relations 48*, no. 9 (September 1995): 993–1027. doi:10.1177/001872679504800902.

Hunt, Lynn. "French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and Fall of the Annales Paradigm". *Journal of Contemporary History 21*, no. 2 (April 1986): 209-224.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/260364
Hunt, Tristram. 'The Importance of Studying the Past', *History Workshop Journal, vol.72*, no.1 (2011), 258-267

Novick, Peter. "Historians, "Objectivity," and the Defense of the West", *Radical History Review 1,* no.40 (1988): 7-32. doi: https://doi-org.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/10.1215/01636545-1988-40-721

Windschuttle, Keith."A Critique of the Postmodern Turn in Western Historiography."
In *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Wang Q. Edward

and Iggers Georg G., (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 271-86.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt14brs81.16.

Websites

English Heritage. "Piecing the Past Together: Monastery and Excavations at Battle Abbey".
Accessed Sunday 13, 2018. https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/whats-on/piecing-the-past-together-monastery-and-excavations-at-battle-abbey/,

How did male sexuality change within the Arabic speaking Ottoman Empire during the period 1800-1920s?

Naomi Hodges

History and American Studies B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

Abstract: This essay explores how and why understandings of male sexuality changed in the Arab speaking Ottoman Empire. Although some historians have argued that the impetus for a homo/hetero framework for understanding sexuality was driven by Arab-Islamic exposure to European conceptions of sexuality which engulfed Arabs and Turks in shame and a sense of foreboding. This essay argues that those within the Ottoman empire were not simply passive recipients of these judgments of their culture, rather, those within the higher echelons of Ottoman society actively engaged with the European concept of "modernity" and began to define themselves within these parameters. These actors drove change through harnessing social structures such as the education system, and technological advancements like the printing press. However, the reconfigured understanding of sexual identity took root unevenly within Ottoman Empire, because to the top down nature of its implementation.

Between 1800 and the 1920s, drastic changes took place within the Arab speaking Ottoman empire regarding the conceptualisation of male sexuality. Prior to the 1800s, male sexuality was nebulous, loosely understood in terms of sexual preferences. By the 1920s, and at the beginning of the British Mandate period, male sexuality, particularly on a discursive level, was strictly defined in terms of a heterosexual/homosexual normative /deviant binary. The male subject is the focus of this essay because the patriarchal structure of the Ottoman empire and continued focus on men within historical discussions mean information on male sexuality is far more extensive, thus a more complete historical argument can be made in regards to men. Throughout this essay, I will use Palestine as the eye of the needle through which to weave existing historiography, thereby expanding our understanding of male sexuality in regard to Palestine. I argue that increased interaction with Europe and America exposed the Arab Ottoman world to a new notion of sexuality which was interlaced with the idea of "modernity." Some historians have suggested that the shame this new understanding of sexuality created within the Ottoman Empire was key to the transformation of sexuality. I believe, however, that European spectatorship stimulated desire from elites within the Ottoman Empire to "become modern" which drove a top-down reconstitution of sexuality. Technological and societal changes, notably the advent of the printing press and growth in education, facilitated the implementation of a new conception of sexuality, allowing it to disseminate further through society. Ultimately, however, it

dispersed unevenly throughout Ottoman society, meaning its influence was predominantly on a discursive and elite level.

To assess the ways male sexuality changed in the Ottoman Empire we must first understand how sexuality was understood directly preceding 1800. Male sexuality was not conceived in terms of rigid identities predicated on a dichotomy between homosexuality and heterosexuality, therefore any discussion of sexuality must avoid implementing this anachronistic understanding of sexual identity.[1] Through looking at cultural artefacts and societal structures in place before the 1800s, we can discern that what existed was a preference-based understanding of sexuality - preferences which were not linked to specific identities. For example, the construction of Islamic Law did not create a strict homosexual identity. The law prohibited male-to-male sexual intercourse. Those caught engaging in sexual intercourse with men had to pay a fine. The fine demanded was the same as that for men and women caught in acts of adultery.[2] Importantly, distinctions were usually made between the active and passive partner, the active paying the fine.[3] The law did not strictly distinguish between male-to-male and male-to-female anal penetration. As Khaled El-Rouayheb explains in *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800,* the law does not clearly define a homosexual identity because "there was no single juridical concept and no single punishment for all kinds of homosexual intercourse."[4] Rather, male-to-male sexual acts are equated with other illicit sexual acts. The structure of laws is important because, as Dror Ze'evi argues in *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East 1500-1900*, the law regulates sex and sexuality but also "produces desire, […] by creating and enforcing the boundaries between licit and illicit, punished and unpunished, law is a major influence shaping the sexual world."[5] Early Ottoman law, however, does not produce a homogeneous homosexual identity, rather it mirrors a preference-based understanding of sex through distinguishing between the active and passive partners.

Although sexual intercourse was officially outlawed, public expressions of passionate love between men were not. Pre-1800s literature gives us a rich understanding of how male desire operated, and the simultaneous existence of such literature and Islamic laws suggests the expression of male desire towards other men was not inherently linked to sexual activity. Although, some scholars did find such literature objectionable.[6] A widespread form of romantic literature written by men and dedicated to youthful boys was Ghazal poetry. These poems were part of a larger trend that celebrated the beauty of young men in a plethora of ways. Andrews and Kalpakli, in their book *The Age of the Beloved,* outline that in pre 19th century Ottoman empire "a host of young men became focal points not only for the desire of powerful officeholders and talented artists but also for lavish entertainments and

---

[1] Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East 1500-1900* (London: University of California Press, Ltd, 2006), 167.

[2] Ibid., 64-65.

[3] Ibid., 3.

[4] Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 153.

[5] Ibid., 48.

[6] Ibid., 153.

rich literature of love […] beloveds of every sort were everywhere." [7] This homoerotic culture seems to have been widespread throughout Ottoman society. El-Rouayheb notes that "courting of boys by adult men […] does not seem to have been an elite phenomenon." "Bakers, tailors, street sellers […] could behave likewise."[8] Clearly, there was a strong male homoerotic culture that existed within Ottoman public life and discourse which focused on preference for youthful men.

The Ottoman Empire's homoerotic culture fits into larger homosocial structures that meant it was easier to publicly express sexual desire for men. This is in part because, as Andrews and Kalpakli explain, in circumstances where public life is dominated by men "what people identify as masculine virtues [..] are highly valued. Being attracted to young men, or loving young men, is an affirmation of those values and virtues."[9] Thus, the homosocial makeup of the Ottoman Empire before the 1800s bred a society in which love and admiration of men was not considered deviant or sinful, but rather the celebration of superior masculinity. Therefore, despite the official outlawing of male-to-male sex, male-to-male sexual desire was prevalent within this period and understood as based on sexual preference such as age, and whether one was active or passive, but, crucially, these preferences did not constitute distinct identities. This system would be drastically shifted through interaction with the West.

At the opening of the 19th century, increased interaction between Europe and the Ottoman Empire imported Western conceptions of sexuality and the 'Orient' which imprinted onto Ottoman society. Any explanation accounting for growing global interconnectedness across the 19th Century within this essay will only scratch the surface of a complex historical debate. [10] For this discussion, it is important to note, however, two key factors: the growing economic dominance of Europe and North America, and technological advancements that radically reduced geographical distances.[11] Greater contact with Europe introduced new conceptions of sexuality. Michel Foucault, in his germinal work *The History of Sexuality,* explains the contingent nature of the modern understanding of sexuality, which demarcates the categories of homosexual and heterosexual.[12] Foucault argues the 19th century sees the inception of Europeans understanding of themselves in terms of sexuality which constitutes an identity which was arranged into a set of norms and rules.[13] This understanding of sexuality was crucially intertwined with colonial projects because it operated as a form of ideological domination. Bernard Cohn lays out the connection between colonialism and European knowledge. He argues that Western "investigative modalities," which categorise order and define areas of information, caused a vast shift in epistemological underpinnings. These "investigative modalities […] unknowingly and unwittingly invaded and conquered not only a territory but an epistemological space."[14] A

---

[7] Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpakli, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 18.

[8] El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World*, 10.

[9] Andrews and Kalpakli, *Age of the Beloved,* 17.

[10] C. A. Bayly, "Introduction," in *The Birth of the Modern World* (Oxford: Blackwell's, 2004).

[11] Ibid.

[12] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

[13] Ibid.*, 43.*

[14] Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge: the British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 4.

good example of this is travel literature. Ze'evi argues this was the main "investigative modality" used by the West in order to probe Ottoman conceptions of sexuality up until the 20th century.[15] Travel literature made Ottoman's sexual preferences a reality which had not previously existed, Ze'evi explains: "formerly unquestioned [parts] of the fabric of culture were made tangible through a reflection in a funhouse mirror."[16] Travel literature also exposed prominent Orientalist tropes. Joseph Massad explains in *Desiring Arabs*, by drawing on Edward Said's formative book *Orientalism,* that travel writing also reflected principal Oriental tropes that viewed Arab Ottoman culture as hyper-erotic and free from guilt.[17] By analysing Ottoman sexual preferences through this Western Orientalist lens, writers linked modernity and civility to sexuality, displaying the West as modern, civilized and therefore superior to the sexually deprived "East." Historians like Ze'evi argue that Ottoman exposure to European conceptions of sexuality engulfed Arabs and Turks in shame and a sense of foreboding which became the central impetus for changing conceptions of sexuality.[18] I argue, however, that those within the Ottoman empire were not simply passive receivers of these judgments of their culture, rather, those within the higher echelons of Ottoman society actively engaged with the European concept of "modernity" and began to define themselves within these parameters.

Arab Ottoman intellectuals engaged with European notions of modernity through academia and the education system and thus their desire to be "modern" became a key impetus in the spreading of European conceptions of sexuality. Massad outlines how Arab intellectuals at the end of the 19th century began to centralise knowledge of the Ottoman Empire's past. This was part of the growing Arab Renaissance which attempted to prove the stature of Arab society.[19] When confronted with the Ottoman past, with its vastly different sexual culture, debate arose regarding what knowledge should be retained in collective social memory and reproduced, and what should be left in the archives. [20] The result was a silencing of sex and sexuality within narratives of the Ottoman Empire past. Massad explains that there was "vigorous assimilationism on the part of the Arab historians who insisted that Arab sexual desires were not all that different from Europeans."[21] A desire to be modern also stunted the production of literature and art forms which included "homosexual" themes during the late 19th and 20th Century. For instance, Ghazal poetry disappeared almost entirely as a poetic genre. [22] Debates around the representation of the Ottoman Empire's past were galvanised by social developments.

An important social development was the growth of a centralised education system within the Ottoman Empire as part of the *Tanzimat* reforms.[23] The *Tanzimat* reforms, which began at the end of the 19th Century and were linked to the Arab Renaissance, transformed the structure and reach of the Ottoman State. Historian Rashid Khalidi, argues these reforms were "both the culmination of a long-standing drive from within to reform and

---

[15] Ze'evi, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World,* 163.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Joseph A. Massad *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1
[18] Ze'evi, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World,* 163.
[19] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 51
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 15.
[22] Ibid., 57.
[23] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestine Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 39.

modernise the Ottoman state, and a response to external pressures which increased as the involvement of the European powers in the Middle East grew apace."[24] Thus, the educational reforms clearly mirror the changes in understanding of sexuality. A principal part of the *Tansimat* reforms was the expansion of schools. By 1914 the Ottoman government had established 95 elementary and three secondary public schools throughout Palestine, with a total of 234 teachers and 8,248 pupils. [25] Although the Ottoman education system did not have a homogeneous curriculum the growth in schools still meant a huge increase in the number of people who were literate and educated, therefore, what was presented and available of the Ottoman Empires past became a central question, while simultaneously the centralised education system became a crucial avenue for top-down censorship. The growth in education consequently facilitated Arab intellectuals' aspirations to be "modern."

Top-down attempts to reconstitute the way Ottomans understood sexuality through the erasure of aspects of Ottoman history also coincided with important technological advancements. The advent of the printing press, like the growth in education, brought questions of what knowledge should be reproduced and circulated to the forefront of discussion while simultaneously making censorship increasingly possible. Literary works could now be more widely distributed, and the increasing literacy rates of Ottoman's meant that works which could have previously been discreetly circulated in the form of manuscripts, like homoerotic poetry, were now considered by intellectual elites as a potentially corrupting presence within society. [26] In Palestine, for example, before 1846 printing had remained under the control of Palestinian Jews, but, by the end of the 19th Century Jews owned only five out of the 30 printing presses in Palestine.[27] The explosion of non-Jewish printing presses in Palestine illustrates the growth of printing across the region and in turn the increase in the possibility for the circulation of texts with homoerotic themes. In reaction to this there was increasing erasure of any materials that did not conform to modern homo/hetero hierarchical dichotomy. Ze'evi uses the example of dream interpretation manuals. Before the 19th Century they "accepted homosexuality, extramarital or incestuous relations as a normal part of people unconscious," later they were "reprinted in abridged purged editions."[28] Likewise, Massad argues efforts were made to remove evidence of sodomy and male attraction to younger men in books that were considered significant by Orientalists such as *Arabian Nights,* which by 1930 had all aspects of "homosexuality" erased.[29] The examples of education and the printing press illustrate the coalescing of intellectuals desire to present Ottoman culture in terms of European taxonomies and technological and social developments. This allowed censorship to be possible on a new, larger, scale resulting in the silencing of discourse around what was considered sexually deviant. The silencing of homoerotic sexuality worked alongside the promotion of heterosexuality within the Ottoman empire to cultivate a heterosexual culture.

---

[24] Ibid.*,* 39.

[25] Ibid., 48.

[26] Ze'evi, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World,* 163.

[27] Mohammed Basil Suleiman, "Early Printing Presses in Palestine: A Historical Note," *Jerusalem Quarterly 36* (2009): 81.

[28] Ze'evi, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World,* 169.

[29] Massad, *Desiring Arabs,* 72.

Over the course of the 19th and particularly the 20th century, the male understanding of their sexuality was altered through increased exposure to Western ideas of heterosexual romance and love. A telling example of this is letters sent between Palestinian Khalil Shakaini and Sultana Abdo from 1907. Early on in their relationship, Salim Tamari argues, the romantic tone and terminology employed by Khalil to express his feeling for Sultana would have been "virtually unknown in that period – certainly not in local Palestinian literature, and very rarely in Syrian-Lebanese or Egyptian contemporary narrative."[30] Khalil had spent time in the United States which had been a "formative period of his intellectual development."[31] He was highly influenced by Western thinkers such as Nietzche. Therefore, this romantic conception of sexuality was likely related to his contact with the West and his conception of what it meant to be a "modern" subject. More generally, Tamari suggests that in the 1910s and 1920s young people in the Ottoman Empire were reading European romantic novels. Increased literacy rates meant that a growing number of people would have had access to such books. This also allowed men and women to exchange romantic letters more easily.[32] Due to these changes, the concept of romantic love began to influence male sexual culture, and heterosexual love began to constitute a "modern" masculine identity.

Coinciding with the development of romantic heterosexuality, the structuring of Ottoman society began to change. The strict division between men and women within public spaces began to loosen. Tamari explains how "literacy and mobility allowed men and women […] to have chaperoned rendezvous, sometimes with their families blessing," which previously would have been extremely rare. [33] The increased possibility for interaction between men and women as well as their exposure to conceptions of romantic love, taken together, imply a shift in Ottoman culture which developed into a heterosexual culture at the latter end of the period. It is important to note, however, that Khalil represents a specific class within the Ottoman empire, and it is unlikely that men of lower status would not have had similar exposure to European ideas, even if their interaction with women had somewhat increased. Thus, we must consider the uneven impact these crucial "modernising" developments had in the Ottoman empire.

Vast changes did take place in terms of male sexuality within the Ottoman empire, but this change was not homogeneous or complete. The sources this essay has discussed address an elite and top-down understanding of sexuality, at a predominantly discursive level. The effects of this change in thinking are therefore limited and do not include those without access to education, and those who were not subsumed into the Ottoman state structure. There is evidence that pre 19th century concepts of sexual preference continued to exist throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In Orna Alygon Darr's study of 136 court cases about homosexual offenses which occured predominately in the Haifa District of Palestine during the British Mandate we get a glimpse of how those being tried understood their sexual acts in relation to their sexuality. Even by the British Mandate period, there was,

---

[30] Salim Tamari, "Sultana and Khalil: The Origins of Romanic Love in Palestine," in *Mountain Against the Sea: essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009), 117.

[31] Tamari, "Sultana and Khalil," 114.

[32] Salim Tamari, *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011), 61.

[33] Ibid.

what the British perceived as, a "prevalence" of "sodomy within Palestine.[34] We must consider this within the ideological framework of Orientalism, which perceived Arab subjects as hypersexual, thus, it's likely the British exaggerated its prevalence. However, Alygon Darr's study does support this claim to a certain extent. Those engaging in these acts did not conceive of their sexuality in terms of a homo/hetero dichotomy which implies that top-down dissemination of European conception had not taken root within Arab Ottoman culture. Darr notes that although the term "homosexuality" existed on a discursive level within Palestine, for example in medical texts, those who had been accused of engaging in homosexual acts did not consider themselves as homosexuals because they either didn't know the term or didn't identify with what it meant. Mohammad, for instance, who had intercourse with a younger man, Hussein, did not see it as a "self-defining act of homosexual identity. As Mohammad was not yet married, the younger boy was merely a passing object for his sexual satisfaction."[35] Moreover, Alygon Darr outlines the case of 16-year-old Mustafa Naif, who initially after being caught having sex with an older man tells the police that he loved him and that they had sex with "consent and free will."[36] A month later he revised his statement realising that this was an unacceptable account of the events and instead denied knowing the man. This indicates that to Mustafa Naif being in love with a man was an acceptable explanation for their intercourse, and an understanding of this as "wrong," was a learned response to British policing. Clearly, the top-down silencing of a pre-modern Ottoman conception of preference-based sexuality, and the technological advancements that aided this did not wholly integrate themselves into the fabric of Ottoman society because homosexuality as an identity had not altered all peoples' conceptions of themselves.

To conclude, the reshaping of male sexuality, into a demarcated heterosexual homosexual sexual identities was unevenly diffused through Arab Ottoman society due to the top-down nature of the implementation of these categories. By using locally specific examples, we can understand the interplay between larger forces acting within the Ottoman empire and the individuals they influenced, revealing the impacts and limits on a personal level. The concept of deviant homosexuality was not innate to Arab-Islamic Ottoman society, rather it was imported into the region. On a discursive level it replaced the "pre-modern" understanding of male sexuality that, although limited by the law, included a variety of sexual preferences in which male-to-male sexual attraction was a major part. As I have demonstrated, this new Western understanding of male sexuality was able to have such a powerful reach because Arab intellectuals, desiring to be modern, monopolised on the societal and technological changes taking place. This allowed the upper echelons of Arab Ottoman society to silence previously held understandings of sexuality by only reproducing selected areas of knowledge. Increased literacy and widespread publishing also cultivated a heterosexual culture that turned male Ottoman subjects into protagonists in their romantic relationships. These changes, however, had an uneven impact across Ottoman society. Not all male Arab Ottomans felt the ripple of change created by the elites, technological advancements and a growth in education. The court records from Palestine reveal that the

---

[34] Orna Alygon Darr, "Narratives of "Sodomy" and "Unnatural Offences" in the Courts of Mandate Palestine," *Law and History Review* 35, no. 1 (February 2017): 241.
[35] Ibid., 253
[36] Ibid., 235

homosexual heterosexual dichotomy did not influence all men's perception of their identity in relation to their sexuality.

<u>Bibliography</u>

Alygon Darr, Orna. "Narratives of "Sodomy" and "Unnatural Offences" in the Courts of Mandate Palestine." *Law and History Review* 35, no. 1 (February 2017): 235-260.

Andrews, Walter G. and Kalpakli, Mehmet. *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Bayly, C. A. "Introduction," in *The Birth of the Modern World.* Oxford: Blackwell's, 2004.

Cohn, Bernard. *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge: the British in India.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

El-Rouayheb, Khaled. *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

Khalidi, Rashid. *Palestine Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Massad, Joseph A. *Desiring Arabs*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press, 2007. Suleiman, Mohammed Basil. "Early Printing Presses in Palestine: A Historical Note.' *Jerusalem Quarterly 36*, (2009): 79-91.

Tamari, Salim. "Sultana and Khalil: The Origins of Romanic Love in Palestine." In *Mountain Against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009.

Tamari, Salim. *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011.

Ze'evi, Dror. *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East 1500-1900*. London: University of California Press, Ltd, 2006.

Why Were Migrants from the West Indies Unable to Successfully Assimilate into Post-War British Life?

Toby Henry Shields

History and Politics B.A, University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

Abstract: I wrote this essay for my '1953: Monarchs and Murders' Time and Place module during the second year of my undergraduate degree. During 1953 two contrasting events, the coronation of Elizabeth II and the infamous 10 Rillington place murders captivated Britain and served to highlight the growing dichotomy between tradition and modernity. The module explored what these key events tell us about wider British society and culture at a time where the nation was imbued with pride and pageantry, yet fearful of both changing ideals regarding race and sexuality, and national decline. My essay focuses specifically on the arrival of West Indian migrants to the UK in 1948 and their subsequent, unsuccessful attempts to integrate into British life, or rather society's refusal to allow them to do so. I felt it pertinent to select this topic as at the time of writing (2019), the Windrush scandal had recently taken place, affecting the lives of many British subjects, particularly those from the Caribbean. This essay allowed me to explore the origins of racial prejudice in Britain, something clearly visible today. It argues that the newly emerging social fault lines which followed the arrival of this generation of immigrants were a product of colonial preconceptions, and by focusing on three main themes of employment, sex and violence, it aims to show how these preconceptions of West Indian Migrants seeped into everyday aspects of post-war life.

Keywords: Windrush, Racism, Commonwealth, Empire, Caribbean, Britain, West Indian, Employment, Sex, Violence

Whenever societies change, it is seldom a simple process. There are no guidelines to help fully understand how the actions, interests or reactions of individuals will shape what is to come. Social historians studying the subject of 'morality' in post-war Britain have identified numerous themes, linked with the 'permissive movement' of the 1960's, such as 'deviant' sexualities, the individualisation of femininity and hostile attitudes to race. Despite having been seen as histories with 'long durées', these themes are distinct to a post-war narrative of modernisation.[1] People of varying ethnicities had already been present in Britain before the 1950's but the general consensus among commentators of the time was that the sudden rise in immigration from the colonies differed from past experience. On the surface West Indian migrants should have been able to successfully assimilate into British life, they were an educated workforce, something Britain desperately needed after the war. The 1948

---

[1] Frank Mort, 'Morality, Majesty, and Murder in 1950's London: Metropolitan Culture and English Modernity', in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life*, ed. Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 313.

British Nationality act actually aimed to strengthen ties with former colonies by granting their people the status of British subjects, yet they remained distant in the eyes of the British people.[2]

The problem was not a racial one, but a social one, with the problem of assimilation being seen as conflict between the host community and the 'out group' of immigrants. Bill Schwartz has called this the 'reracialization' of England, with the imagined narrative of the white man as a victim coming to the forefront of British life.[3] Infamous serial killer John Christie summed up this new form of racism, which was beginning to play out on the new inner city frontlines of racial conflict when he stated, "Where there is a white family living, and if they have any young children, especially little girls, they have to watch the black boys".[4] This racist sentiment, embodied in Christie's words and shared by many others at the time, prevented the true assimilation of West Indian migrants into post-war British life, but it did not come from nowhere. This essay argues that these new social fault lines were a product of colonial preconceptions, and by focusing on three main themes of employment, sex and violence, it aims to show how these preconceptions of West Indian Migrants seeped into everyday aspects of post-war life, shaping the attitudes British people had towards a new social group.

The arrival of the Empire Windrush into Tilbury Docks in 1948 is seen by many as the 'the start of mass migration' from Commonwealth countries to the UK.[5] This wave of emigration which took place throughout the 1950's and early 1960's was the largest outward movement of people from the former British Caribbean that had ever taken place. The 1961 census in Great Britain recorded 172,877 West Indian natives living in the UK, a number that had almost doubled by 1964. [6] Objections had been raised to the arrival of West Indian immigrants however before the Empire Windrush had even docked and by the time of the Notting Hill riots in 1958 Britain's non-white population was less than 200,000 with only 125,000 coming from the West Indies. On the other hand, the Irish population was nearing 900,000 yet did not seem to receive anywhere near the same level of backlash. [7] Many public figures at the time framed immigration as an issue of overcrowding, with British politician Enoch Powell stating in 1968 that "In 15 or 20 years, on present trends, there will be in this country three and a half million Commonwealth immigrants and their descendants" and that "Whole areas, towns and parts of towns will be occupied by sections of immigrants". This attitude implied both a threat to the cultural make up of Britain, and a resulting threat to British culture.[8]

Powell's sentiment reflected the attitude of many people in post-war Britain, but the racial conflict had already begun to manifest itself well before 1948. According to Marcus

[2] Elizabeth Buettner, '"Would You Let Your Daughter Marry a Negro?": Race and Sex in 1950's Britain', in *Gender, Labour, War and Empire: Essays on Modern Britain*, ed. Philippa Levine and Susan R. Grayzel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 221.

[3] Mort, 'Morality, Majesty and Murder', 334.

[4] Mort, 'Morality, Majesty and Murder', 334.

[5] Muhammad Anwar, '"New Commonwealth" Migration to the UK', in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, ed. Robin Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 274.

[6] G. C. K. Peach, 'West Indian Migration to Britain', *The International Migration Review,* 1, no. 2 (1967), 34.

[7] Tony Kushner, 'Immigration and 'Race Relations' in Postwar British Society', in *20th Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, ed. Paul Johnson (New York: Longman Publishing, 1994), 412.

[8] Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 125.

Collins, West Indian citizens in the colonial Caribbean had come to view British manhood as the epitome of gentlemanliness. Owing to the nature of colonial rule, it was this sort of upper class 'gentleman' West Indians had the most contact with, leaving them with "romanticised visions of the metropole".[9] Many admired the gentlemanly traits of British men, with Trinidadian historian C. L. R. James remembering the "bristling Britishness" and 'devoted' behaviour of his headmaster. Others attempted to imitate what they saw with Jamaican born William Strachan's parents forcing him to wear an Eton collar to a predominantly white school in order to make him appear more aristocratic.[10] Unfortunately for West Indians this admiration was not reciprocated, and the British position tended to be that those from the colonial Caribbean 'represented everything the gentleman was not'. Any reformist arguments such as the idea put forward by John Stuart Mill, that the 'inherent goodness' of West Indian men could be released if certain environmental disadvantages were removed, were overshadowed by the notion that West Indian men possessed 'undesirable features', most notably 'promiscuity, patriarchy and fatherly neglect'.[11]

The way in which the West Indies were presented to the British public fed into this discourse of 'undesirability' which surrounded its people. Looking first at the issue of Employment, West Indian men were supposedly lacking the necessary work ethic to provide for themselves and their families. A 1939 Daily Mail article entitled ''Back To Land' To Save West Indies' argued that the solution to unemployment in the colonies was to increase the number of jobs in the agricultural sector. Although it's not explicitly stated in the article the text implies an inability to provide, describing the current generation as 'futureless'. In addition to this it seems to suggest a lack of responsibility and education among West Indians, stating that commodities such as rum and cinema tickets were deemed as 'necessary items' whereas books and newspapers 'appeared very seldom'.[12] Articles such as this fed into the idea West Indian men were 'sorry workers' with another official report from 1939 describing them as having a "lack of tradition of craftsmanship and pride in good work".[13] Not only did this contribute to the idea that West Indian men were unable to earn a living through their own efforts, but also that the money they did earn would be wasted, prompting the Moyne commission (tasked with investigating the situation in the West Indies following labour unrests), to question whether having a job would help a colonial citizen or his family at all.[14]

The issue of sex was perhaps one of the biggest barriers preventing the true assimilation of West Indians into post-war life, with mixed race relationships being a huge point of contention. As frowned upon as they were in the 1950's however, the subject was even more controversial fifty years prior, with a 1899 newspaper article entitled 'The Negro and Society' putting forward the case that black men should not be the social equal of those who are white, and going on to state that "the marriage of a white woman to a black man seems to bring no forfeit of social standing"[15]. Even a much more sympathetic article

---

[9] Marcus Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice: West Indian Men in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies,* 40, no. 235 (2014), 394.

[10] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 394-395.

[11] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 396-397.

[12] "'Back to Land' to save West Indies.", *Daily Mail*, 3 Aug. 1939. *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

[13] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 397.

[14] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 398.

[15] "The Black Scandal", *Daily Mail,* 14 August 1899, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

published in 1938 uses exceptionally negative language, when it argues that a mixed marriage between 'two degenerates' will deteriorate rapidly resulting in misery.[16] This racist view of West Indian men as unsuitable partners came from the general understanding that in the colonies, West Indian men wanted to control society yet neglected its female members. The idea that black men were sexually irresponsible was purported by prominent figures at the time, such as Clementine Churchill who in 1939 made the claim, that West Indian men 'upheld a sexual double standard' which was responsible for both high birth rates and the problem of sexually transmitted infections.[17]

The notion of the West Indian man being violent and temperamental was an assumption held by many since colonisation in the Caribbean began. One particular case that helped to build this reputation was the Governor Eyre controversy where Governor Edward John Eyre used shockingly violent means to suppress the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865 which resulted in the deaths of over 400 Jamaicans. By 1870 the last attempt to pin criminal charges to Eyre had failed, largely because of the way the information was presented, with the official message the secretary of state received from Jamaica stating that there had been "a most serious and alarming insurrection of the negro population . . . attended with a great loss of life and destruction of property".[18] Since the uprising numerous articles and reports have portrayed West Indian men as aggressive and unable to control their emotions with an piece from 1940, published in the popular photojournalistic magazine 'Picture Post' stating "the temperament which flares into violence as suddenly reverts to good humour".[19] British commentators tended to be of the position that the dangerous qualities that West Indian men had supposedly displayed in the Governor Eyre affair over eighty years before The Empire Windrush docked were still present, furthering the apprehension the British public felt upon their arrival .[20]

It is obvious then, that these preconceptions of West Indians as workshy, violent and promiscuous had already arisen in the colonial setting, years before mass migration to Britain had begun. The desire of West Indians to be seen as gentlemen was met with hostility by white men who deemed them to have 'flunked every test of masculine respectability'.[21] In the eyes of the British public they were already ill-equipped to handle day to day life and as a result, were never seen as 'British', but rather 'Negroes in Britain'.[22] These imperial narratives worked their way into post-war British life preventing the true assimilation of West Indian migrants, which this essay will now demonstrate.

The entrenched racial prejudices which had built up around the issues of employment, sex and violence endured during the post-war period with West Indian employment in British places of work bringing 'a new chain of frictions'. For many West Indians economic factors were the main reason for crossing the Atlantic in the first place and finding a stable job was of great importance to them. However, for the vast majority of employers and

---

[16] "The Astonishing Story of Mixed Marriages", *Daily Mail*, 23 July 1938, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

[17] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 397.

[18] B. A . Knox, 'The British Government and the Governor Eyre Controversy', *The Historical Journal*, 19, no. 4 (1976), 878.

[19] "Racing in Jamaica." *Picture Post*, 27 Jan. 1940. *Picture Post Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

[20] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 398.

[21] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 398.

[22] Buettner, 'Gender, Labour, War', 222.

white workers, the new immigrants were "shiftless and lazy, living off national insurance and off the immoral earnings of prostitutes".[23] They also experienced 'occupational downgrading', where the majority of migrants who were employed in the big cities such as Birmingham or London as either semi or unskilled labourers, found themselves filling positions of lower prestige than they had in the West Indies. [24] Paradoxically, West Indians also faced a shocking new wave of criticism for being overly ambitious which white commentators described as 'obstreperous individualism' which could turn 'psychotic'. Many immigrants were advised not to 'overdo it' by working through their breaks or taking too much overtime. Whilst the impressive work ethic of West Indian migrants was clearly down to their disadvantaged economic position, white workers saw it as an inability to fit in and abide by the social norms, with one factory workers position being that "Often [the West Indian worker] doesn't smoke, he doesn't stand his round of drinks in the pub after work, he may work too hard, he doesn't know or learn the factory gossip or protocol of behaviour or accepted forms of swearing".[25] The old notion of the West Indian migrant as a sorry worker, combined with this new idea of 'over ambitiousness' prevented the vast majority of them filling skilled positions and fitting into a workplace environment, leading to a greater lack of social cohesion. Whether they worked hard or not they were criticised one way or the other, and no matter how skilled they were, they could not successfully assimilate into the workplace in the same way other lighter skinned immigrants could, with one employer who had 90 West Indian's working for him, stating in a 1964 interview for The Sunday Telegraph, that if there were ever to be an unemployment crisis, "They would be the first to go . . . I mean, that's right, isn't it? Last in, first out".[26] It's clear that West Indians were not living and working in a meritocracy, but rather a society of colour prejudice where they were unable to escape the colonial preconceptions that had built up years before, and as a result were still seen as the 'out group'.

The association of black men with unfavourable sexual characteristics and the fear of mixed relationships were already concerns of the British people (most notably white men) prior to the1950's. As there was a disproportionate amount of West Indian men coming to Britain after 1948 it seemed inevitable that relationships between black men and white women resulting in marriage would take place. There was a huge backlash however, mostly from British men motivated by jealousy and a desire to maintain social norms. For them it served as a step towards the assimilation of people who they regarded as sexually irresponsible and in their eyes was 'placing British national identity at risk'.[27] The scholarship surrounding colonial history and episodic 'Black Perils' led to black men being seen as having 'insatiable appetites', 'lacking control', and 'potential rapists', with West Indians facing accusations of corrupting white women and even 'poncing' them as a means to live off the profits. In a time of declining colonial influence and growing challenges to British rule in the colonies, accusations such as these were easily made by white men who saw the actions of West Indians as a form of 'racial revenge' for colonialism.[28] White women who had relationships with black men were excessively demonized throughout the decade and faced

---

[23] Ron Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class In Britain* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1987), 196.

[24] Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class,* 198.

[25] Collins, 'Pride and Prejudice', 400.

[26] "The Dark People", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 3 May 1964, *Telegraph Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

[27] Buettner, 'Gender, Labour, War', 224-225.

[28] Buettner, 'Gender, Labour, War', 225.

criticism for being reckless sexual agents who had uncontrollable desires for black men. People feared that these relationships between corrupted white women and black men gave immigrants another gateway into British family life, with one researcher in 1952 writing, "Everywhere the British … resented the sight of a black man with a white woman, reacting rivalrously, sometimes violently".[29] These fears were exacerbated by events taking place in London at the time; perhaps most notably by the murders which occurred at 10 Rillington place. John Christie focused heavily on race in his account of events by claiming that West Indian men shared 'universal predatory sexual characteristics', whilst his lawyers framed him as a man under 'terrible pressure', just trying to maintain the status quo in a changing city.[30] The idea of black men being sexual predators and the coverage of the Rillington place murders resulted in Notting Hill being feared by the British public as a hotspot for mixed race relations, culminating in a series of articles and exposés. A 1954 article from 'Picture Post' entitled 'Would you let your Daughter Marry a Negro?' highlights the jealous attitude many white British men held towards the West Indian Immigrants. One quotation from the article reads "once a woman's had a nigger mate, she won't look at a white man again".[31] By the end of the decade the fantasised narratives of white men as victims and white women as easily corrupted by black men's 'rapacious and uncontrollable' sexual appetites had come to the forefront of British life.[32] Not only had the conception of black men as sexual predators endured through colonial times, but the resulting anger directed towards mixed relationships prevented the proper assimilation of West Indian migrants into British family life.

These imagined sexual narratives surrounding West Indian Men also helped to reinforce the notion that they were people of a violent nature, unable to control their emotions. They served as both a means to strengthen the defensive stance taken by gangs of 'Teddy Boys', who were growing increasingly hostile towards black families throughout the 1950's[33], and as a catalyst for the 1958 race riots.[34] British fears of those with dark skin being violent, sexual deviants were also heightened by events taking place in other parts of the world. The Mau Mau uprisings in Kenya had reached their peak in the 1950's, and despite most of the fighting being between Kenyans themselves, the British press obsessed over 'the threat to white women and their children'.[35] A 1953 article from the Daily Mail entitled 'The Courage Of The Women Of Kenya' talks of the need for British women to have escorts when going from place to place and describes people from the area of living in fear of being 'murdered or mutilated' should they not comply with the wishes of Mau Mau agents.[36] This idea spread not only through the headlines, but also through fictional literature of the time, with author Nicholas Monsarrat publishing a 1956 book (clearly influenced by the events in Kenya) entitled 'The Tribe That Lost Its Head' about a fictional tribe, with part of the story detailing how "30 intoxicated savages rape to death a pregnant white woman".[37] The events in Kenya

---

[29] Buettner, 'Gender, Labour, War', 226.

[30] Mort, 'Morality, Majesty and Murder', 335.

[31] "Marry a Negro?" *Picture Post*, 30 October 1954. *Picture Post Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

[32] Mort, 'Morality, Majesty and Murder', 334.

[33] Exploring 20th Century London: Notting Hill Riots 1958
http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/notting-hill-riots-1958 (Date accessed: 12/5/19)

[34] Mort, 'Morality, Majesty and Murder', 336.

[35] Mort, 'Morality, Majesty and Murder', 336.

[36] "The Courage of the Women of Kenya", *Daily Mail*, 26 Jan 1953, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

[37] "Brutal Monsarrat", *Daily Mail*, 20 September 1956, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

were presented not as anti-colonial, but anti-Christian, with Sir Andrew Cohen, the governor of Uganda calling the uprising "a reversion to tribalism in a perverted and brutal form". The coverage of the Mau Mau rebellions in this era constantly pushed themes of violence with sexual undertones and fed into the conception of black masculinity as a threat, in the imaginations of the British public.[38] Needless to say racial tension was at an all-time high in Britain, which inevitably resulted in violence. Following civil unrest in Nottingham, on the 30th August 1958 the infamous Notting Hill riots began, where 'crowds of up to 400 white youths chased Caribbeans in North Kensington'. The violence spilled over into other parts of London resulting in serious property damage and around 140 arrests.[39] Events such as the Notting Hill riots helped inform the conclusion of white commentators that; the aggressiveness of black men brought out equally violent behaviour in whites. Sociologist James Wickenden saw the riots as being rooted in the necessity for racial division. He argued that there will always be conflict between white and black men within close proximity of each other, stating "Violence and the danger of violence and hostility will always be present".[40] It was precisely this sort of sentiment, present in so many writings of the time which reinforced the idea of West Indians being violent, temperamental people, and prevented both social cohesion and true assimilation.

To summarise, this essay has assessed the reasons why West Indian migrants were not able to successfully assimilate into post-war life. It puts forward the case that racist preconceptions surrounding these migrants were allowed to develop in the colonies as well as in Britain and that they subsequently prevented West Indians from integrating themselves into British society. By examining the themes of employment, sex and violence it has shown how those of a different ethnic grouping were unfortunately unable to escape the prejudices that characterised them as lazy, sexually promiscuous and aggressive, and consequently prevented from enjoying key parts of both public and private life. Their desire to fit in was rejected by a society that had such a tightly wound view of 'Britishness', that its people found it easier to encourage social cohesion through the rejection of people they deemed to be different. As a result, it was not enough for this new generation of migrants to abide by the social norms of the time, as throughout the 1950's 'Britishness and whiteness became increasingly synonymous'.[41] On a final note, subject matter such as this may be depressing, but it is necessary. Significant progress has been made since the 1950's, but it would be ignorant to take the position that we live in a world today where people do not face adversity because of their skin colour. It's easy to condemn racial prejudices, but only through examining how they have manifested themselves with a detrimental effect on people's lives can we prevent them from doing so again.

---

[38] Mort, 'Morality, Majesty and Murder', 336.

[39] Exploring 20th Century London: Notting Hill Riots 1958
http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/notting-hill-riots-1958 (Date accessed: 12/5/19)

[40] Collins, 'West Indian Men', 410.

[41] Chris Waters, '"Dark Strangers" in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963' *Journal of British Studies*, 36, no. 2 (1997), 212.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

"'Back to Land' to save West Indies.", *Daily Mail*, 3 Aug. 1939. *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

"Brutal Monsarrat", *Daily Mail*, 20 September 1956, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

"Marry a Negro?" *Picture Post*, 30 October 1954. *Picture Post Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

"Racing in Jamaica." *Picture Post*, 27 Jan. 1940. *Picture Post Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

"The Astonishing Story of Mixed Marriages", *Daily Mail*, 23 July 1938, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

"The Black Scandal", *Daily Mail*, 14 August 1899, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

"The Courage Of The Women Of Kenya", *Daily Mail*, 26 Jan 1953, *Daily Mail Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

"The Dark People", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 3 May 1964, *Telegraph Historical Archive*, University of Sussex.

Secondary Sources

Anwar, Muhammad, '"New Commonwealth" Migration to the UK', in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, edited by Robin Cohen, 274-279. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Buettner, Elizabeth, "Would You Let Your Daughter Marry a Negro?": Race and Sex in 1950's Britain', in *Gender, Labour, War and Empire: Essays on Modern Britain*, edited by Philippa Levine and Susan R. Grayzel, 219-238. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Collins, Marcus, 'Pride and Prejudice: West Indian Men in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 40, no. 235 (2014), 391-418.

Exploring 20th Century London: Notting Hill Riots 1958

http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/notting-hill-riots-1958 (accessed 12 May 2019)

Knox, B. A., 'The British Government and the Governor Eyre Controversy', *The Historical Journal*, 19, no. 4 (1976), 877-900.

Kushner, Toby, 'Immigration and 'Race Relations' in Postwar British Society', in *20th Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, edited by Paul Johnson, 411-427. New York: Longman Publishing, 1994.

Mort, Frank, 'Morality, Majesty, and Murder in 1950's London: Metropolitan Culture and English Modernity', in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life*, edited by Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse, 313-346. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Peach, G. C. K., 'West Indian Migration to Britain', *The International Migration Review*, 1, no. 2 (1967), 34-45.

Ramdin, Ron, *The Making of the Black Working Class In Britain*. Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1987.

Ward, Paul, *Britishness Since 1870*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004.

Waters, Chris, '"Dark Strangers" in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963', *Journal of British Studies*, 36, no. 2 (1997), 207-238.

Understanding witchcraft accusations in the Early Modern period.

John Butcher

History B.A, University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

Abstract: This essay was written as a coursework piece for the 3rd year module *'Witches and Witch-Hunts'* and attempts to answer the question 'Are witchcraft accusations best understood as a response to misfortune?'. The essay considers the different historiographical approaches that have been adopted by historians in their understanding of witchcraft accusations. These range from the anthropological approach pioneered in the 1970s by Alan Macfarlane and Keith Thomas, to the more recent micro-studies of Alison Rowlands, and finally the broader regional work of Johannes Dillinger and Wolfgang Behringer. By evaluating the utility of these different approaches, the essay argues that only when these different approaches are used collaboratively can the best possible understanding of witchcraft accusations be achieved.

Keywords: Witchcraft, Misfortune, Anthropological, Micro-study, Macro-study, Little Ice Age Thesis, Alan Macfarlane, Keith Thomas, Alison Rowlands, Johannes Dillinger, Wolfgang Behringer

Witchcraft accusations should only be understood as a response to misfortune in the sense that they usually occur after the accuser has suffered in some way. The relationship between misfortune and accusations has been considered in the work of Alan Macfarlane, Keith Thomas, Malcolm Gaskill, Alison Rowlands and Robin Briggs, among others. What their work demonstrates is that accusations are better understood as response to pre-existing social tensions rather than the misfortune itself. However, this essay will suggest that it is also necessary to understand the external regional factors which influenced accusations quantitively, across time and place, as considered in the work of Johannes Dillinger and Wolfgang Behringer on persecutions. Only when the findings of both historiographical approaches are used can we achieve the best possible understanding of witchcraft accusations and what they were a 'response to'.

Adopting an anthropological approach to witchcraft trials in early modern England, Alan Macfarlane and Keith Thomas saw witchcraft accusations as a functional response to misfortune. They argued that accusations were a way people could reverse the guilt they felt towards their poorer neighbours. When early modern individuals denied one of their poorer neighbours requests for aid, they were likely to feel guilty at having failed to uphold early modern traditional ideals.[1] Macfarlane notes that 'instead of accepting ensuing

---

[1] Thomas, Keith. *'Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England'*. London: Weidenfeld, 1973. P. 659 – 669
MacFarlane, Alan. *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*. London: Routledge, 1970. P. 192 - 198

suffering as deserved punishment, he could project the blame onto the person who had ostensibly been upholding such values'.[2] The witchcraft accusation therefore became a 'mechanism'[3] for reversing guilt.

So, if we were to accept the model presented by Macfarlane and Thomas, we might conclude that witchcraft accusations are best understood as a response to misfortune in that they offered a functional way of dealing with it. However, the detailed study of trials since the conception of their model has shown it to be largely incorrect. The model projects that people accused of witchcraft held a position which was 'economically inferior' to that of their accuser.[4] The immediate issue here is that not all people accused of witchcraft in early modern England were economically inferior to their accuser. Malcolm Gaskill's study of witchcraft trials in Kent during this period has shown that the accuser and the accused were often of a similar standing.[5] Dorothy Rawlins, the wife of a brewer was accused of harmful magic in Kent, 1651 by Mary Blythe, the wife of a rival brewer in the same parish. It hardly seems likely that Dorothy was considerably worse off than Mary given that their families main source of income came from the same trade, located in the same parish.[6]

If then, the Thomas and Macfarlane model is not applicable, is their argument regarding the relationship between misfortune and accusations still useful? In short, the answer to this is yes. Two ideas which are still useful can be brought out from their model. Firstly, that witchcraft accusations usually occurred following the experience of misfortune, and secondly, that it was the social context in which the misfortune occurred that caused it to be interpreted as witchcraft. Let us consider the first idea. Thomas and Macfarlane identify the experience of misfortune as the point in which an accusation is made. The model provided by Thomas is as follows:

> The witch is sent away empty-handed, perhaps mumbling a malediction; and in due course something goes wrong with the household, for which she is immediately held responsible.[7]

Macfarlane and Thomas focused on English witchcraft accusations due to their misconception that continental persecutions originated from above.[8] However, their observation that accusations followed the experience of misfortune is useful both in England and on the continent. The trial records of Jeanne Mercier, from Autrepierre in France, show that she was suspected as a witch by her neighbour for 6 years, but that she was only formally accused following the death of her neighbour's son.[9] In the chronology of most witchcraft accusations, from the initial formation of a suspicion by a certain person, followed by the building of that suspicion over time, it is the subsequent experience of

---

[2] Macfarlane, Alan. P. 204

[3] Macfarlane, Alan. P. 204

[4] Thomas, Keith. Pg. 669

[5] Gaskill, Malcolm. "Witchcraft in Early Modern Kent: Stereotypes and the Background to Accusations." Chapter. In *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, edited by Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts,. Past and Present Publications. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. P. 257–87

[6] Gaskill, Malcolm. P. 269

[7] Thomas, Keith. P. 661

[8] Thomas, Keith P. 595 AND Behringer, W. "Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in Climate, Society and   Mentality." *German History* 13, no. 1 (1995): 1-27.

[9] Case B 3345; trial of Jeanne wife of Demenge Mercier, d'Autrepierre. Transcribed and translated by Robin Briggs. https://witchcraft.history.ox.ac.uk/pdf/w047.pdf (accessed 18th November 2019)

misfortune on the part of this person which leads them to formally establish their suspicion in the form of an accusation.[10] Are witchcraft accusations therefore best understood as a response to misfortune, given that they usually occur shortly after? The reason that they are not is that closeness in time does not equate to causal significance. This becomes evident when we consider the second useful idea which can be drawn from the Thomas Macfarlane model, that being the role of social tension.

Thomas and Macfarlane highlight that it was a pre-existing tension between the accused and the accuser which caused the latter to interpret their misfortune as witchcraft.[11] Even though their model falsely confines this tension to originating from one specific type of interaction – that of denied alms, their interpretation is still useful in that it demonstrates the importance of pre-existing hostilities within a witchcraft accusation. They observed that the real substance of an accusation was not the misfortune itself but the social tension which preceded it. Macfarlane notes that when someone denied a neighbour charity and then suffered a physical ailment, before subsequently making an allegation of witchcraft, what was being explained was, in fact 'the feeling between the two people rather than a physical injury.'[12] Witchcraft accusations cannot be best understood solely as a response to misfortune. It is only when the misfortune is coupled with pre-existing social tensions, that the individual might perceive their misfortune as the product of harmful magic and consequently carry out an accusation.

The idea that witchcraft accusations are a response to a breakdown in social relations has since been developed. Continuing to uphold the anthropological approach to witchcraft pioneered by Macfarlane, such theories highlight the range of neighbourly conflicts which could result in an accusation. In his study of witch trials in early modern Kent, Malcom Gaskill found that accusations could just as easily arise from the 'resentment and vengeful spirit between conflicting and competing parties of similar social status' as it could from feelings of guilt following the refusal of alms.[13] Meanwhile, in her study of the trial of Apollonia Glaitter from Rothenburg, Alison Rowlands found that it was Apollonia's success in dairy production and her ability to plough, rather than her economic standing which likely contributed to her neighbours perception of her as a witch.[14] Through his study of trial depositions in Lorraine, Briggs has shown the extent of variation in neighbourly conflicts which could lead to accusations ranging from declines of collaborative ploughing to the collection of tax and tithe assessments.[15]

When the findings of these historians are considered it becomes clear that no real pattern can be established with regard to the type of neighbourly disputes which led to an accusation. Rowlands' observation that accusations usually stemmed from 'behaviour by the [accused] which appeared to clash consistently with the ideals of everyday, interpersonal communal living'[16] is perhaps the closest we can come to generalizing the

---

[10] Macfarlane, Alan. P. 193 – 207. Thomas, Keith P. 638 – 668. Briggs, Robin. *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*. Second ed. 2002. P. 62

[11] Macfarlane, Alan. P. 195 Thomas, Keith. Pg. 663

[12] Macfarlane, Alan. P. 195

[13] Gaskill, Malcolm. P. 284

[14] Rowlands, Alison. "Witchcraft and Old Women in Early Modern Germany." *Past & Present*, no. 173 (2001): 50-89. P. 75 – 76

[15] Briggs, Robin. P. 125 - 131

[16] Rowlands, Alison. P. 77

kinds of social tensions which led to accusations. Any attempt to generalise about the nature of the disputes that goes beyond simply acknowledging their presence is likely to distort our understanding of witchcraft accusations as a whole. For Rowlands, this issue is evidence of the suitability of carrying out individual biographies of the accused in order to better understand the accusations themselves:

> while certain careful generalizations can be posited about them, they can arguably only be teased out and pieced together with any confidence at the level of the detailed micro-study.[17]

Rowlands is right in suggesting that this approach is the most practical if we are attempting to comprehend the range of possible socio-economic factors which caused one person to accuse another. Only by the study of individual cases is it possible to identify the various nuances within the trials of the accused which led to their formal accusation. In the case of Appolonia Glaitter, Rowlands found that she had held a reputation as a witch from her early twenties which had then built up over time. That Appolonia had been reputed as a witch for so long may have been just as instrumental in her formal accusation as the various disputes she had fought out with her neighbours.[18] Only by the detailed study of individual trials can important details like the length of reputation held by the accused, come to light.[19]

However, what the micro-study is unable to do is explain why the number of people accused of witchcraft in early modern Europe varies significantly across time and place. This essay suggests that witchcraft accusations can be understood both qualitatively and quantitively. In order to truly understand witchcraft accusations to the best possible degree, it is necessary to observe not only the factors which influenced each individual accusation - what they were a response to qualitatively, but also what led to variations in the number of accusations - what they were a response to quantitively. This task requires abandoning the thinking behind Macfarlane's approach that accusations were a result of 'particular pressures within the village' and not affected by external factors,[20] and going beyond the study of individual trials as recommended by Rowlands.[21]

Only when a macro-study of witchcraft accusations is carried out, can the necessary observations be made. The 'small states thesis' advanced by Johannes Dillinger and the 'little ice age' thesis advocated by Wolfgang Behringer identify regional factors outside of the everyday interpersonal relations of neighbours that led to the persecution of witches, both of which, this essay will now turn to consider.

Whilst analysing the regional disparity of witch-hunting in Germany, Dillinger discovered a correlation between the centralisation of power and the persecution of witches. He has argued that the fragmented organisation of the Holy Roman Empire and its distribution of power in the early modern period allowed witch-hunting to take place in some regions whilst not in others.[22] Despite focusing on the workings of political power, Dillinger's thesis is not simply a regurgitation of the top-down theory that witch-hunting was carried out entirely by Catholic Prince Bishops to the desperate opposition of the people.

---

[17] Rowlands, Ibid. P. 88 - 89

[18] Rowlands, Ibid. P. 82 - 86

[19] Rowlands, Ibid. P. 78 – 88

[20] Macfarlane, Alan. P. 95

[21] Rowlands, Alison. P. 89

[22] Dillinger, Johannes. "The Political Aspects of the German Witch Hunts." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4, no. 1 (2009): 62-81.

Instead, Dillinger shows that a considerable proportion of the witch-hunting that took place in Germany was driven by 'witch-hunting committees,' formed by village populations 'without or even against the will of their respective lords'.[23] Dillinger's research shows that persecutions in Germany were being carried out from the bottom-up and the agency was very much with the villagers and not their Lords. It is important to note then, from a historiographical point of view, that the agency of villagers in the persecution of their neighbours is not lost at the point that the anthropological approach is put to one side.

How then does Dillinger's thesis help us to better understand witchcraft accusations other than by reasserting the assumption of the anthropological approach that they were carried out from the bottom-up? It does this by offering an explanation for the significant disparity in levels of witch-hunting throughout different regions in Germany. Dillinger shows that in states where power was not yet centralised, the witch-hunting committees of towns and villages were able to usurp control over the legal system and carry out witch hunts, whereas, in regions where power was clearly centralised, and the rule of law ultimately ran all the way to the high council, the formation of these autonomous witch-hunting committees were prevented.[24] His thesis is supported by witch-execution figures in early modern Germany which shows a strong correlation between states with a decentralised system of power and witch-hunting, and alternatively, states with a well organised and executed legal system, and a notable lack of witch-hunting.[25] The extent to which power was centralised in different regions influenced the number of accusations which occurred in those regions. Accusations can therefore be understood as responding quantitively to decentralised forms of power. Dillinger's findings show that a regional rather than local factor, something that was external to everyday neighbourly life, increased the likelihood of accusations taking place. From a historiographical point of view, this demonstrates that if our approach to accusations is restricted to the context of neighbourly disputes, the best possible understanding cannot be achieved.

Dillinger's argument falls short in his suggestion that witch hunting was a means by which communities resisted the encroachment of the territorial state. Contrary to Dillinger's claim, witch-hunts were carried out by communities with the simple purpose of finding and subsequently executing witches. We only need to read accounts of the persecutions to see that this was the case. One contemporary from Trier while reflecting on the persecution that had Taken place there remarked:

> Because everyone generally believed that crop failures over many years had been brought on by witches and malefactors out of devilish hatred, the whole land rose up to exterminate them.[26]

Witch-hunts were carried out in order to combat the perceived threat that witches posed to communities, they were not some sort of twisted expression of autonomy as Dillinger suggests.[27] What can and should be taken from Dillinger's thesis is the correlation between regions where power was decentralised and the occurrence of persecutions.

Another external factor which led to increased witchcraft accusations is highlighted by Wolfgang Behringer in his analysis of the greatest witchcraft persecutions of early

---

[23] Dillinger, Ibid. P. 68
[24] Dillinger, Ibid. P. 73
[25] Dillinger, Ibid. P. 68 – 75
[26] Emil Zenz (ed.), *Die Taten der Trierer. Gesta Treoerorum* (Trier, 1964). vol. 7, p. 13. In Behringer P. 7
[27] Dillinger, Johannes. P. 71

modern Europe. As with Dillinger, Behringer adopted the macro-study approach to witchcraft comparing the 'spatial and chronological distribution of the largest witchcraft persecutions.' Through his comparative analysis of the greatest persecutions in Europe, he discovered that despite being geographically distant, they 'occurred in the same rhythm'[28], and correlate with years of particularly catastrophic weather.[29] According to Behringer, crop failure posed an existential threat to human life. As this threat existed alongside strong beliefs in the reality of weather magic amongst the populace, weather induced crop failure led to the persecution of witches.[30] Even if we were not to believe Behringer's framework for understanding the exact relationship between poor weather and witchcraft persecutions, the synchronicity of the height of the European witchcraft persecutions with the climactic deterioration of the little ice age, as well as the correlation between years of particularly harsh weather conditions and the years of specific persecutions cannot be dismissed as merely coincidence. Behringer's research shows the quantity of accusations which occurred in different regions at different times was in part a response to the weather conditions in those regions and at those times.

Where Gaskill and Rowlands adopt the micro-study in order to better understand the relationship between misfortune, and the various social relations which may have caused one person to accuse another person of witchcraft, Dillinger and Behringer adopt the macro-study in order to highlight the contextual factors which caused high numbers of accusations in some regions and not others.

Despite differing in scale, these two approaches are not irreconcilable. Dillinger's study shows that persecutions took place in the regions where power was decentralised, and the official judicial process was less strictly adhered to,[31] while Rowlands' micro-study highlights how cautious Apollonia's neighbours were to formally accuse her using the law.[32] Rowlands' observation that early modern people took caution in exercising the law to prosecute their neighbours can help to explain Dillinger's observation that persecutions occurred in regions where the law was applied far more loosely. The two approaches should be seen as complimentary rather than contradictory. Only when we embrace both approaches will we be able to achieve the most comprehensive understanding of witchcraft accusations and what they were a response to.

Witchcraft accusations can only be understood as a response to misfortune in sense that they usually occur after the misfortune has taken place. Suggesting that accusations are best understood solely as a response to misfortune ignores the essential role that is played by pre-existing social tensions in causing the individual to identify their misfortune as the result of harmful magic. This has been highlighted by the work of Macfarlane, Thomas, Gaskill, Rowlands and Briggs in their investigations of the neighbourly disputes which led to accusations. This historiographical approach has furthered our qualitative understanding of witchcraft accusations and the various socio-economic factors to which they were a response to. However, in order to best understand witchcraft accusations, it is essential that we also consider the external regional factors which influenced the quantity that they

---

[28] Behringer, Wolfgang. "Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in Climate, Society and Mentality." *German History* 13, no. 1 (1995): 1-27. P. 3

[29] Behringer, Ibid. P. 12

[30] Behringer, Ibid. P. 4 - 12

[31] Dillinger, Johannes. P. 68 - 70

[32] Rowlands, Alison. P. 84

occurred in across time and place. The macro-studies of Behringer and Dillinger allow us to do this through their comparative analysis of witchcraft persecutions in early modern Europe. Only when we have carried out a full consideration of the socio-economic tensions which led to individual accusations as well as the historical contexts which encouraged persecutions can we achieve the best possible understanding of witchcraft accusations and what they were a 'response to'.

<u>Bibliography</u>

Primary Sources:

Case B 3345; trial of Jeanne wife of Demenge Mercier, d'Autrepierre. Transcribed and translated by Robin Briggs. https://witchcraft.history.ox.ac.uk/pdf/w047.pdf (accessed 18th November 2019)

Emil Zenz (ed.), *Die Taten der Trierer. Gesta Treoerorum* (Trier, 1964). vol. 7, Pg. 13. Quoted in Behringer, W. "Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in Climate,
Society and Mentality." *German History* 13, no. 1 (1995): 1-27

Books:

Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*. London: Weidenfeld, 1973.

MacFarlane, A. *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*. Routledge, 1970.

Gaskill, Malcolm. "Witchcraft in Early Modern Kent: Stereotypes and the Background to Accusations." Chapter. In *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief,* edited by Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts, 257–87. Past and Present Publications. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Briggs, Robin. *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*. Second ed. 2002.

Articles:

Behringer, W. "Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in Climate, Society and Mentality." *German History* 13, no. 1 (1995): 1-27.

Rowlands, Alison. "Witchcraft and Old Women in Early Modern Germany." *Past & Present*, no. 173 (2001): 50-89.

Dillinger, Johannes. "The Political Aspects of the German Witch Hunts." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4, no. 1 (2009): 62-81.

Works in Progress

Lava Ali

History and Film Studies B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

The title of my History Dissertation which I am currently working on is *'Documenting the Homeland: constructions of Kurdish identity in Iraq and the diaspora'.* Although my special subject is 'Palestine in Transition', I have chosen to focus on the Kurds, an ethnic group in the Middle East native to a mountainous region of Western Asia known as Kurdistan. My interest in the subject stems from my ethnic background of belonging to Iraqi Kurdistan. Having this personal connection has enabled me to conduct interviews and use artworks and poetry from direct sources to give a voice to the Kurdish survivors and victims of the Iraqi genocidal campaign in the 1980s. Whilst carrying out my dissertation research, I have discovered the importance of documentation in protecting the Kurdish culture and preserving it for future generations.

Dan Thompson

History and Politics B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

I am in the initial stages of a dissertation which is going to be focused on the closure of music venues in Oxford and how this affects the wider community as well as those who own, work, or perform at them etc. Music venues and the significance of the 'live' will be at the centre of what I am trying to achieve. Looking at how they relate to musical and local identities, we can see the formation of subcultures in these contexts as a response to an increasingly globalised world; the relationship between individual creativity and social interaction was a big part of my upbringing and I fear we are losing the locations for this relationship to be carried out. My main case study will be that of The Cellar, a venue which I loved and have many fond memories of. Since it has closed, the nightlife in Oxford has really gone downhill in the opinion of me and my friends, many of whom have performed in the Cellar in the past but now say there's not many venues in which they can perform. These are issues I am looking to shine light on in my dissertation.

Tomas Heasman

History B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

For most of my childhood I was obsessed with theme parks. Whilst the adrenaline-rush of the rollercoasters remained an integral part of this interest, I always found the actual theming of the different lands captivating – the way each discrete area evoked a certain place and a certain time, from the fictive fantasies to the historical realities. My dissertation, analysing the historical accuracy of the American Civil War in Disney parks, allowed me to mediate my childhood interests with my historical study. As a result, I have produced a multidisciplinary thesis which looks at everything from the right of the amateur historian to portray history, the debate over history for education or entertainment, and the issue of what constitutes as heritage and who should have the authority to decide it. I argue in favour of the construction of the 1994 *Disney's America* park in Northern Virginia, basing my argument on the historical accuracy of its presentation, and its economic benefit to the region of national heritage. My principal sources are the planning schematics, patents for the parks, and newspaper articles arguing its depiction of history. I also utilise heritage studies in determining the impact of the park to the existing Civil War battlefields in the region, using critical analysis to evaluate its sustainability to both the environment and the historical authenticity of area. In this dissertation I have been able to conduct cutting-edge research in an area which is both personal to me, and relatively unexplored by academia.